

**Affirmative actions in higher education:
the case of the Post-graduation Program in Teaching, at Universidade Federal Fluminense**

*Ações afirmativas no Ensino Superior:
o caso do Programa de Pós-graduação em Ensino, da Universidade Federal Fluminense*

*Acciones afirmativas en la educación superior:
el caso del posgrado en docencia de la Universidade Federal Fluminense*

Francisca Marli Rodrigues de Andrade¹
Universidade Federal Fluminense

Jacqueline de Souza Gomes²
Universidade Federal Fluminense

Marcelo Nocelle de Almeida³
Universidade Federal Fluminense

Yuri Marx Silva Milagres⁴
Universidade Federal Fluminense

Abstract: Given the low representativeness of certain social groups in post-graduation courses, in Brazil, the current article –explores the implementation of affirmative actions, based on the experience of the “Committee for the insertion of quotas in selection notices” of the Post-graduation Program in Teaching, at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). The study follows a qualitative research methodology, based on the descriptive approach. Therefore, it emphasizes debates about the importance of having post-graduation programs setting criteria to enable representatives of social groups, traditionally excluded from the Brazilian educational system, to have access to, and to remain in, them. Furthermore, the article presents a set of recommendations to help deepening this discussion in post-graduation programs and beyond.

Keywords: Teaching. Master's degree. Affirmative Policies. Post-graduation studies.

Resumo: Face à baixa representatividade de determinados grupos sociais nos cursos de pós-graduação no Brasil, este artigo – inscrito com base na pesquisa qualitativa de abordagem descritiva – explora a implementação de ações afirmativas a partir da experiência da “Comissão para inserção de cotas no edital de seleção” do Programa de Pós-graduação em

¹ PhD in Education, Sustainability Culture and Development at University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) – Spain. Adjunct Professor at the Human Sciences Department (PCH) and at the Post-graduation Program in Teaching of Fluminense Federal University (UFF). E-mail: marli_andrade@id.uff.br; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4192469439181304>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6450-5911>.

² PhD in Philosophy at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), postdoctoral research concluded at PPGBIOS. Adjunct Professor at the Human Sciences Department (PCH) and at the Post-graduation Program in Teaching of Fluminense Federal University (UFF). E-mail: jsgomes@id.uff.br; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5288043215984971>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8609-5893>.

³ PhD in Sciences at the Post-graduation Program in Plant Biotechnology, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Associate Professor at the Exact, Biological and Earth Sciences Department (PEB) and at the Post-graduation Program in Teaching of Fluminense Federal University (UFF). E-mail: mnocelle@id.uff.br; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9926701743816225>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3363-9217>.

⁴ Master's degree student in Teaching at Fluminense Federal University (UFF). E-mail: yurimarx@id.uff.br; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1231840595385756>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7574-4579>.

Ensino, da Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). Reforça, portanto, os debates sobre a importância dos programas de pós-graduação materializem critérios para acesso e permanência de representantes de grupos sociais, tradicionalmente excluídos do sistema educacional brasileiro. Ademais, o artigo apresenta um conjunto de recomendações que podem ajudar ao amadurecimento dessa discussão no próprio programa e para além dele.

Palavras-chave: Ensino. Mestrado. Políticas Afirmativas. Pós-Graduação.

Resumen: Dada la baja representación de ciertos grupos sociales en los posgrados en Brasil, este artículo – basado en una investigación cualitativa con enfoque descriptivo – explora la implementación de acciones afirmativas a partir de la experiencia de la “Comisión para la inserción de cuotas en las convocatorias de selección” del Programa de Postgrado en Enseñanza, de la Universidad Federal Fluminense (UFF). Refuerza, por lo tanto, los debates sobre la importancia de los programas de postgrado materializan criterios de acceso y permanencia de representantes de grupos sociales, tradicionalmente excluidos del sistema educativo brasileño. Además, el artículo presenta un conjunto de recomendaciones que pueden ayudar a que esta discusión madure en el programa mismo y más allá.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza. Maestría. Políticas afirmativas. Postgrado.

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Introduction

Regulations⁵ on the implementation of affirmative actions in post-graduation programs are quite recent in Brazil. In addition, they reveal inequities and several implementation difficulties among regions, states and municipalities, mainly because each Post-graduation Program accounts for defining students' selection standards and criteria. Venturini et al. (2020) have analyzed 737 *stricto-sensu* Post-graduation Programs held in public universities in Brazil, which were accredited and recommended by CAPES in the last four years; they observed that 63.9% of them adopt the quota system. The low representativeness of certain social groups in post-graduation courses reinforces an excluding educational system that significantly reflects a structurally male-chauvinist, sexist, transphobic, ableist and urban-centric society. Thus, it is imperative mitigating disparities in access to education of quality by these segments, at all teaching-learning stages.

Given the herein exposed reality, the aim of the current article was to analyze the case of the *stricto-sensu* Post-graduation Program in Teaching (PPGE_n – Programa de Pós-graduação *Stricto Sensu* em Ensino) held by the Northwestern Fluminense Institute of Higher Education

⁵With emphasis on a) law n. 12,711/2012, which provides on students' admission in federal universities and in federal high-level technical education institutions; b) law n. 13,409/2016, which amends law n. 12,711/2012, to provide on the reservation of places for people with disabilities in higher- and secondary-education technical courses in federal education institutions; and c) MEC's Normative Ordinance n. 13/2016, which provides on the induction of affirmative action in post-graduation courses.

(INFES – Instituto do Noroeste Fluminense de Educação Superior), at Federal Fluminense University campus (UFF – Universidade Federal Fluminense), Rio de Janeiro State. The aforementioned state is one of the few Brazilian Federative Units to have a state legislation focused on regulating the herein investigated topic in order to set mandatory post-graduation quotas for state public universities - State law n. 6,914 and State law n. 6,959 - both from 2015. University councils of several federal universities started approving deliberations to force their Post-graduation Programs to incorporate quotas to their selection notices, as observed at UFF.

The aim of PPGE_n/INFES/UFF, according to its internal regiment⁶, “lies on providing high-level training and knowledge enrichment to qualified personnel committed to improve their knowledge and aimed at exercising professional, technical, scientific and teaching activities”. It is divided into two research lines, namely: “Epistemologies of Everyday Life and Instituting Practices” and “Teachers’ Training and Pedagogical Practices”; it comprises 21 (twenty-one) teaching professionals - among permanent and collaborating professors (9 women and 12 men) – and publishes selection notices (with up to 30 applications per edition), on a yearly basis; these notices focus on graduates from different knowledge fields, associated with both formal (from Basic to Higher Education) and /or informal education. The aforementioned Program is located in Santo Antônio de Pádua County, and it is the only course offering this modality in the region.

Santo Antônio de Pádua County⁷ is one of thirteen municipalities in Northwestern Rio de Janeiro State; its estimated population reaches 42,705 individuals (2021). According to IBGE Census⁸, although schooling rate in this county reaches 98.1% (2010), it has a significant number of individuals in the age group 15 years, or older, who cannot read or write – they are mostly brown and black individuals. According to the latest data made available at IBGE’s (2010) website, a significant number of residents still live in rural areas and a significant number of families live on up to half the minimum wage. Other municipalities in Santo Antônio de Pádua County’s surroundings present similar social indicators.

Since 2015, the Academic Master’s Degree in Teaching held by PPGE_n/INFES/UFF has been offering a *stricto sensu* course to the academic community, with positive impact on the investigated region. This course results from a proposal that was prepared and discussed in 2013, as well as submitted to, and approved by, CAPES in December 2014. Its first students’ selection process took place between February and April 2015; 15 (fifteen) students were approved in this process and they joined the first class in April 2015. PPGE_n/INFES/UFF

⁶ Available at: <http://infes.uff.br/mestrado-em-ensino-documentos/>. Access on Nov. 29th, 2021.

⁷ Available at: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/rj/santo-antonio-de-padua/panorama>. Access on Nov. 29th, 2021.

⁸ Available at: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/rj/santo-antonio-de-padua/pesquisa/23/25124?detalhes=true>. Access on Nov. 29th, 2021.

started its activities aiming at promoting interdisciplinary dialogues in courses focused on training both teachers and the academic community in the assessed Institute, from the micro perspective, as well as those of the Northwestern Fluminense region, from the broader perspective. Unfortunately, these interdisciplinary dialogues were not translated into other social inclusion forms, mainly with regards to the plurality and diversity of the student body.

PPGEn/INFES/UFF researchers have carried out several scientific studies since its launching and published them in qualified journals focused on reflecting about the local reality. This factor enabled the Program to contribute to the qualification of several graduates, as well as to regional development itself by beaconing local public policies focused on encouraging social control. Thus, establishing a quota system in the Program helped strengthening the interdisciplinarity underlying it since its launching, as well as enabled acknowledging voices that were once silenced, by materializing the right of social groups to have access to higher education. These groups had been neglected by educational policies throughout the history of the course's existence. In order to achieve such a goal, the "Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the PPGEn/INFES/UFF selection notice" was established in 2020.

The "Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the PPGEn/INFES/UFF selection notice" – whose appointment was published in DTS n. 5-2020, on June 10th, 2020, at PPGEn/INFES/UFF Collegiate scope – had temporary nature and comprised 02 (two) female professors, 01 (one) male professor and 01 (one) student. The aim of this Committee was to carry out studies aimed at inserting the Quota System in the selection notice of the Master's Degree in Teaching. The Committee's work at UFF itself was pioneer in outlining parameters to implement a quota system capable of fixing the injustices observed in individuals' access to post-graduation studies. Thus, the current article presents the final proposal resulting from the work done by such a Committee, which was already approved for implementation by the Collegiate by means of PPGEn/INFES/UFF 2022 selection notice.

Methodology

The present study followed the qualitative research methodology, based on the descriptive approach. Thus, it brings together some specific features, as indicated by Triviños (1987, p. 128-130): "1st) Qualitative research considers the natural environment as direct source of data, and researchers, as key instrument; 2nd) Qualitative research is descriptive; and 3rd) Qualitative researchers focus on the process, rather than just on results and product [...]". The current article emerges as descriptive proposal of PPGEn's response to a latent demand from the Brazilian society within the scope of this process, namely: access to university by some social segments, with emphasis on the African descendant population (comprising both

black and brown individuals), indigenous peoples, Quilombola communities; the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals with disabilities and socioeconomically vulnerable groups, among others. Such access goes beyond the perspective from undergraduate courses; therefore, it proposes the inclusion of these segments in a more selective space of the university, namely: *stricto-sensu* post-graduation courses, in the present case, PPGE_n/INFES/UFF.

PPGE_n/INFES/UFF has faced difficulties in elaborating a solid proposal to implement the quota system and affirmative policies since its launching. It is so, because of different interests and conflicting agendas. Such a proposal, as previously mentioned, was only implemented five years after the Program was launched – i.e., in 2020 –, when the “Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the selection notice” was created. The document prepared by this committee – which is described in the current manuscript – was approved by PPGE_n/INFES/UFF collegiate at the 1st extraordinary meeting, which was held on August 12th, 2021. Because of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the infeasibility of holding face-to-face activities, the work dynamics of this committee was based on using *Whatsapp* to exchange messages among its members and the *GoogleMeet* platform to hold the meetings.

The Committee has carried out technical document analysis studies through the aforementioned communication channels – i.e., *WhatsApp* and *Google Meet*. Later on, it discussed the main aspects associated with affirmative action policies, as well as with other social markers that have received an empathetic look in the construction and consolidation of post-graduation programs, nationwide. In order to do so, the committee also carried out a systematic study about the main national legislation and about international documents addressing affirmative actions and human rights policies associated with education. It is worth mentioning the most representative documents and legislation among the assessed ones during the process of guiding the choices and justifications for including each of the covered segments:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 1988 Federal Constitution.
- Law n. 9,394 - from December 20th, 1996 –, which sets the Guidelines and Bases of the National Education (LDB- Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional).
- Law n. 12,288 - from July 20th, 2010 –, which sets the Statute of Racial Equality.
- Law n. 12,711 - from August 29th, 2012 –, which provides on students' admission to federal universities, as well as to federal technical secondary-education institutions, among other provisions.

- Decree n. 7,824 - from October 11th, 2012 -, which regulates Law n. 12,711 -from August 29th, 2012 -, which, in its turn, provides on students' admission to federal universities, as well as to federal technical secondary-education institutions.
- Rio de Janeiro State Law n. 6,914 - from November 6th, 2014 -, which provides on the students' admission system implemented in post-graduation courses comprising master's and doctoral programs, as well as specialization and improvement courses in state public universities, among other provisions.
- Normative Ordinance n. 13 - from May 11th, 2016 -, which provides on the induction of Affirmative Actions in post-graduation courses, among other provisions.
- Law n. 13,409 - from December 28th, 2016 -, which amends law n. 12,711 - from August 29th, 2012 -, that provides on the reservation of seats for individuals with disabilities in technical courses in federal education institutions, both at secondary and higher education level.
- Law n. 13,146 - from July 6th, 2015 -, which establishes the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities).

In addition to national and international normative documents, the Committee carried out studies on public notices issued by post-graduation programs, as well as on other documents deriving from different national public institutions, with emphasis on University of Brasília (UnB - Universidade de Brasília), Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ - Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro) and Fluminense Federal University (UFF - Universidade Federal Fluminense). In addition, one of the Committee representatives participated in a meeting with PROPPI/UFF and AFIDE/UFF's (Permanent Committee on Affirmative Actions, Diversity and Equity) representatives, on September 23rd, 2020. The important points of this meeting are described in the current article, from a cross-sectional perspective, since they reflect, most specifically, the discussion about challenges faced by UFF's Post-graduation Programs to implement Assessment Committees in their selection processes.

Based on information deriving from the normative frameworks and cited documents, the Committee held a meeting - on March 26th, 2021 - to talk and deliberate about some of the main aspects associated with the insertion of the Affirmative Actions' Program in the following PPGE_n/INFES/UFF selection notices. Subsequently, the committee used a file on the Google platform - *GoogleDocs* - to prepare a collective document comprising notes considered, by the Committee, essential to approach PPGE_n/INFES/UFF's affirmative action policies in order to include some groups and social communities in post-graduation programs. After extensive analysis and discussions, the aforementioned document was sent to the Program's collegiate, which - after two

debate meetings - approved the report prepared by the “Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the PPGEn/INFES/UFF selection notice”.

Recommendations for the quantitative distribution of quotas in selection notices for students’ admission to PPGEn/INFES/UFF

The aforementioned studies and analyses enabled the Committee to recommend an affirmative action policy designed to include applicants who belong to certain groups and political minorities, as well as others who historically had/have difficulty in having access to *strictu-sensu* post-graduation programs in the country. In order to do so, the committee took state, national and international jurisdictional frameworks as reference, as well as took into consideration different political, social and economic scenarios that apply racist, sexist, classist and homophobic logics to exclude different groups and political minorities from the right to school education. According to Artes (2018), such exclusion gets even more evident when it comes to the access of these groups to *strictu-sensu* post-graduation programs. Thus, the Committee prepared a proposal that contemplates different social segments (Table 1) that have historically faced difficulties in having access to university education, mainly, to master's degree and doctoral programs.

Table 1. Committee’s recommendations for the distribution of seats the Master’s Degree Program in Teaching at UFF.

Total number of proposed seats = 30			
Categories	Specifications	N. of seats	Total
Broad competition	----	8	8 seats
Quotas provided on in the legal scope	African descendants	6	14 seats
	Indigenous	2	
	Quilombolas	2	
	Persons with disability	2	
	Social quota	2	
Other affirmative policies	Public Basic Education Teachers (with more than five-year expertise)	2	8 seats
	LGBTQIA+	2	
	Mother-women (with children up to 12 years old)	2	
	Internationalization	2	

Source: Prepared by the authors. Research data (2021).

The report prepared by the “Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the selection notice” of PPGEn/INFES/UFF included 9 different groups and prioritized the number of seats based on likely scenarios in the Program - in total, it made 30 seats available, on a yearly basis. The Committee has made this decision after extensive studies and debates about documents, public notices and specific legislation that addresses this topic, as well as after theoretical research. The literature on this topic emphasizes that “education is a fundamental tool to help mitigating social, economic and regional inequalities, which is an essential action to reach a true social-democratic rule of law” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 493). Since we believe in education’s potential in struggling for this rule of law, the analyses and justifications associated with each segment covered in the aforementioned report will be presented below.

African descendants (Black and Brown)

Access to higher education, mainly to *strictu-sensu* post-graduation programs, has been seen as portrait of the structural racism in place, in Brazil. In addition, this marker disrupts the racial democracy narrative/myth, which was forged in the Brazilian social imaginary as strong colonization logics-updating marker. Thus, according to Ferreira (2019, p. 476), several groups in Brazil are historically “marginalized and their members are excluded from the exercise of citizenship [...]. Many individuals advocate that the racial criterion was never relevant to define anyone’s opportunities in the country”. However, the social reality and statistics show the opposite; based on a deeper perception of reality, the demands and struggles of social movements, mainly of the Black Movement, have built new agendas and encouraged mobilizations for the exercise of citizenship.

According to Marques (2018, p. 3), social movements “from the 1990s, onwards, have pressured the Brazilian Government to implement affirmative public policies, based on specific programs, to enable black, indigenous and public school students to have access to this education level”. Such a demand gained strength after Quota Law, n. 12,711/2012 was enacted. This law can be understood as one way adopted to destabilize the institutional racism installed in universities, mainly when it comes to having access to post-graduation programs. Thus, based on technical studies, the Committee for the insertion of the Quota System in the selection notice of PPGEn/INFES/UFF has debated several proposals aimed at setting quotas for the black community in PPGEn/INFES/UFF, until it reached the recommended one.

The report presented by the Committee took into consideration the historical-social inequality imposed on the black population, within the Brazilian scenario, mainly when it

comes to black students having access to education in post-graduation courses. Thus, the Committee has recommended to make 06 (six) seats available for individuals who self-declare to belong to this social group. Furthermore, it recommended that self-declared black candidates should be interviewed, during the PPGEn/UFF selection process, by a racial ‘heteroidentification’ committee from Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) to avoid deviations from the purpose of implementing the affirmative action policy. Such a recommendation has different meanings for the anti-racist struggle; among them, one finds the historical issue, namely: “Brazilian citizens are ashamed to show their own prejudice; however, it does not mean that racial discrimination does not exist and it also makes it hard to fight racism by inhibiting open discussions on the topic” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 476).

Indigenous Peoples

In times of crisis in the capitalist matrix, such as the one we are experiencing during the Covid-19 pandemic, indigenous peoples are at the core of current disputes associated with social, economic and environmental issues. Such an insertion has been taking place in a systematic manner; it started with the European *invasion* in Latin America in 1500 and lasted, in a more brutal manner, until the current national political context. Throughout history, indigenous peoples living in Brazil have been the victims of ethnocide, genocide, ecocide and structural racism; therefore, they have been deprived of their fundamental rights (ANDRADE and NOGUEIRA, 2021). Such an issue can be mainly seen in the structural racism that is constantly reinforced by the State’s neglect and omission, as well as makes indigenous peoples’ right to school education vulnerable (MAHER, 2006; MARACCI, 2012; FAUSTINO et al., 2020).

In order to mitigate the vulnerability observed in the right to education of indigenous peoples, the “Committee for the insertion of Quota System in the selection notice” of PPGEn/INFES/UFF has recommended to make 2 (two) seats available for individuals who self-declare to belong to this social group. In addition to the legislative scope, which establishes the right to racial quotas for indigenous peoples, this recommendation is directly linked to the understanding about the existence of a historical debt – i.e., the need to expand the rights and autonomy of native peoples, both in and beyond the university. Therefore, we agree with Faustino et al. (2020, p. 22), who emphasized that the university “space becomes increasingly real in the lives of indigenous populations living in Brazil, as a way to acquire knowledge, fight for equality and social justice, reduce prejudice [...], and increase their inclusion and autonomy”.

The right to indigenous school education inserts the essentiality of indigenous teachers’ training in the debate about autonomy, since it understands that “indigenous teachers should be

the ones guiding the entire school process. It is understood that these professionals are the most suitable to carry out the political-pedagogical project in their community” (MAHER, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, for verification purposes - and in order to meet the aim of the affirmative action policy - the Committee has recommended that applicants who self-declare to belong to this group should submit a Declaration of Belonging to Indigenous Peoples, signed by an indigenous leadership or organization with the authority to certify their link to such a group. This recommendation was based on the understanding that, as pointed out by Baniwa (2019, p. 66), it is important paying attention “to the fact that, despite the deep ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, arrogant scientism of both science and the hegemonic university, it is necessary, desirable, as well as the right of indigenous people to have access to it”. Such an inclusion brings contributions to native peoples “in terms of citizenship; historical awareness; leadership; technical, scientific, political, economic and cultural empowerment; as well as cognitive and moral self-esteem” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 66). These contributions, which were emphasized by the aforementioned author, can be enhanced in the *strictu-sensu* post-graduation scope, mainly in Master’s degree programs in Teaching.

Quilombola Communities

Quilombola communities are seen as spaces of resistance towards a socio-political-cultural context that tries to deny the impacts of colonization and enslavement processes - and of all violence types entailed in them - on the Brazilian social formation. According to Freitas et al. (2011, p. 938), the word “quilombo” - which in its Bantu etymology means warrior camp in the forest - “was popularized in Brazil by the colonial administration - in its laws, reports, acts and decrees - to refer to the mutual support units created by those who rebelled against the slave-owning system, as well as to their reactions, organizations and struggles to end slavery in the country”. The term “quilombola”, as highlighted by Santos (2017, p. 29), had strictly repressive connotation until slavery was abolished; i.e., it represented a place of refuge; therefore, “quilombos were places that should be fought by authorities, in order to stop slave rebellions, to enforce the law that authorized to keep people as property, as well as to return rebellious and fugitive slaves to their owners”.

Nowadays, the connotation attributed to the term “quilombo” has gained other inclusive meanings in the scope of public educational policies due to intense struggles by social movements, mainly by the black movement (MARQUES, 2018). However, some points still need to be strengthened and expanded in order to broaden the Brazilian legislation scope by enabling the access of quilombola communities to *strictu-sensu* post-graduation studies in public universities. Accordingly, and in addition to other reasons, the Committee has recommended to make 02 (two) seats available for individuals who self-

declare to belong to this social group. This recommendation was based on the understanding that institutional racism has made these communities vulnerable in the Brazilian education context, since it imposes an inequality condition on them, mainly on their access to fundamental rights, such as education.

With respect to inequality, we agree that “the Brazilian racial democracy myth can no longer be sustained when so many data and studies highlight the exclusion of black individuals from the highest education levels and organizational positions, or even their prevalence in the Brazilian penitentiary system” (FERREIRA, 2019, p. 492). Therefore, the aforementioned exclusion has reinforced the Committee’s need to find management mechanisms to enable quotas allocated to quilombola communities yet to be taken by this social group. Thus, for verification purposes, the Committee has recommended that applicants who self-declare to belong to this group should present a Declaration of Belonging to the Quilombola Community, signed by a quilombola leader or organization, in order to attest to their link to this group.

LGBTQIA+

Struggles articulated by the LGBTQIA+ movement – previously under a different acronym – are seen as common phenomenon in Brazil, in comparison to other social movements that have gained strength in the 1970s, in the post-redemocratization context - its members fought to be acknowledged as subjects of law (FACCHINI, 2005). After half a century struggling, claims about the access of the LGBTQIA+ community to post-graduation programs have barely changed. Notices and documents consulted by the Committee have evidenced that the LGBTQIA+ community remains poorly represented in the higher education context. Consequently, the Committee has recommended making 2 (two) seats available to this group in order to help minimizing this social injustice, which is a latent marker of our mostly homophobic society.

Affirmative policies focused on including members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the higher education context favor the acknowledgement of gender identity and contribute - mainly in the educational training context - to encourage critical reflections on prejudice against, and exclusion of, these individuals in school environments, which tend to be extremely violent and to violate the rights of this community. Therefore, the Committee understood that reserving seats for this group will reinforce PPGEn/INFES/UFF’s commitment to a teachers’ training process capable of embracing this struggle for acknowledgement and that does not reproduce the cycle of violence and homophobia against it. The Committee has even suggested consulting LGBTQIA+ groups at the time to elaborate public notices in order to enable establishing selection criteria in a collaborative manner.

Persons with disabilities

Brazilian post-graduation courses – which are significantly featured by meritocracy and access inequity – have been experiencing changes due to the implementation of social policies, mainly of MEC Ordinance n. 13/2016, which favored the entry of representatives from social groups that used to be categorized as “incapable” or “inefficient”. Accordingly, proposals focused on including persons with disabilities in post-graduation courses were first implemented through the adoption of quotas. This process ended up reinforcing what was endorsed by national and international documents focused on safeguarding the right to education of this group. Among these documents, one finds the World Declaration on Education for All (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1998), the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994), the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law n. 9,394 - from December 20th, 1996), the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) and the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law n. 13,146 - from July 6th, 2015).

Thus, reserving seats for persons with disabilities helps ensuring rights previously provided on in the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, as well as in other national and international regulations. Consequently, it enables mitigating historical discrepancies in the access of this group to higher education and to post-graduation programs. Before the aforementioned Ordinance, law n. 12,711/2012 played extremely significant role in promoting the transitions of the Brazilian society towards the insertion of affirmative action policies in the higher education context. The establishment of quotas within the PPGE_n/INFES/UFF scope is also symbolic, since it encourages the application of counter-hegemonic and anti-ableist teaching and learning processes.

Based on the analysis of the aforementioned documents, the “Committee for the inclusion of Quota System in the selection notice” of PPGE_n/INFES/UFF has recommended to make 2 (two) seats specifically available for persons with disabilities in their next selection notices. Therefore, the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law n. 13.146/2015), as well as other legal provisions, must be taken into consideration at the time to establish the selection criteria and to create the appropriate conditions to carry out these selection processes. By having in mind that disability is a complex and multiple experience, the Committee’s final report has reinforced that it is not enough creating a number of seats in the public notice in order to enable persons with disabilities to join the Program; it is also essential predicting and providing accessibility conditions for these students, either at the time to carry out all selection process stages, or

to enable them to have access to and to properly circulate in the physical spaces of the Institute. It must be done to ensure an anti-ableist environment, as well as to avoid curricular conditions to become barriers to course completion by the approved applicants.

Mother-women (with children up to 12 years old)

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted inequalities between women and men in our society, with emphasis on work overload experienced by women. Such an overload has been exemplified in results of different theoretical and empirical studies, such as the ones conducted by the Atlas Político⁹ survey - commissioned by El País -, according to which, the absolute majority of surveyed mothers (80%) reported to be overloaded during the Covid-19 pandemic, in comparison to 48% of men who reported the same condition. With regards to the theoretical sphere, several authors, such as Gloria Steneim (1994), Bell Hooks (2020), Silvia Federici (2019), Pateman (1993), e Davis (2016), Gonzales (2020), among many others, have reasoned about the role played by women in society; they made us think about the association between gender and care, about the fact that women's domestic work and reproductive function should be acknowledged, as well as that they should not play the unrestricted and mandatory role of child caregivers, among other things. This lack of value attributed to the work performed by women, as well as to their own subjectivity, oftentimes does not allow them to benefit from their right to education.

Unfortunately, situations arising from social, political and economic inequities between genders persist as features of societies, just like ours, which are based on structural *machismo*. Thus, the Committee's report highlighted the need of having PPGEn/INFES/UFF rethinking its selection methods in order to reduce these inequities, because it understood that the structural *machismo* used as strategy to maintain the *status quo* has assigned to women the role of, and responsibility for, taking care of the family, with emphasis on the role of feeding, protecting and educating children, a fact that prevents many women from investing in their academic training and professional career.

Based on the aforementioned arguments, the Committee has to make 02 (two) seats available for mother-women with children up to 12 years old, by taking into consideration the concept of child as recommended by Art. 2 of Law n. 8.069/1990 - Statute on Children and Adolescents (BRASIL, 1990). For verification purposes, and in order to guarantee the purpose of this affirmative action, the Committee has recommended that applicants who self-

⁹Available at: <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2021-05-11/80-das-maes-brasileiras-se-sentem-cansadas-com-as-responsabilidades-domesticas-na-pandemia-entre-pais-indice-e-48.html>. Access on Nov. 29th, 2021.

declare to belong to this group must present the birth certificate and/or other documents proving the provisional custody of the child at the time to apply for the Program selection process. For the purposes of validating this criterion, the aforementioned child must be 12 years old by the last application day, based on the schedule provided in the public notice of the selection process. The Committee has also suggested that future reflections about this category should take into consideration caregivers of persons with disabilities, elderly individuals and other persons with specific needs.

Public Basic Education Teachers (with more than five years of experience):

Locatelli (2021) performed an extensive review of state plans focused on post-graduation studies for Basic Education teachers, by taking into consideration the National Education Plan (PNE 2014-2024). According to PNE (2014-2024) goal n. 16, 50% of Basic Education teachers should be able to reach the postgraduate level by 2024 (MATIJASCIC, 2017). Based on this perspective, Locatelli (2021) has stated that *strictu-sensu* post-graduation courses were very far from the reality of Basic Education teachers. Data collected in 2015 by Matijascic (2017) corroborated this information and highlighted that the rates recorded for postgraduate teachers working in the municipal, state and federal Basic Education in Brazil reached 6.3%, 8.9% and 47.1%, respectively. On the other hand, the rate of postgraduate teachers working in the private Basic Education network was 8.1%. Therefore, it was possible seeing that the federal Basic Education network was the only one presenting relatively satisfactory results.

Given the aforementioned scenario, it is imperative adopting affirmative policies to enable meeting PNE (2014-2024) goal n. 16, as well as providing conditions for Basic Education teachers to better qualify through *strictu-sensu* post-graduation courses. In addition, it is worth emphasizing that the aforementioned qualification is guaranteed by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (2020), in its 4th edition. Studies carried out by the Committee have indicated that some federal universities have implemented policies in their post-graduation programs in order to comply with PNE (2014-2024) and LDB (2020). However, this is not a recent topic, since Bill n. 608 was presented at São Paulo State Legislative House in 2004. The text of the aforementioned project determines that state public universities must reserve 30% of total seats available for post-graduation courses in different education fields – both at master's and doctoral levels – for teachers working in São Paulo public state and municipal networks.

Three post-graduation programs at Federal University of Paraná carried out selection processes for Masters' and Doctoral degrees, in 2009, when they offered quotas or

supplementary seats for minorities. Among them, one finds the Post-graduation Program in Environment and Development, which reserved 15% of the available seats for black, indigenous and quilombola applicants, as well as for teachers working in the public Basic Education network. Thus, based on the understanding that teachers' training is a continuous process, the "Committee for the insertion of Quota System in the selection notice" of PPGEn/INFES/UFF has suggested allocating 02 (two) seats in its selection process for Basic Education teachers working in the public education network, in order to expand their likelihood of having access to continuous training and, consequently, to help improving Public Basic Education in the region.

The Committee understood that the qualification of these Basic Education teachers - mainly of those who work in the region - cannot avoid the association between knowledge produced in post-graduation studies and academic research activities conducted at *strictu-sensu* level, if one takes into consideration future methodological, conceptual and school management challenges yet to be faced by them. Multiple barriers to the effective exercise of teaching, such as poor teaching materials, low remuneration, limited access to up-to-date information sources and poor interaction with the scientific community, appear to be reiterative in the continuing education context. These issues must be mitigated to avoid widening the gap between scientific knowledge assimilated in a long-term basic education and the classroom reality. Therefore, it is the broadest goal of this allocation-of-seats process.

Foreign students

The Committee has acknowledged the important role played by education in broadening PPGEn/INFES/UFF professors and students' understanding about the world and in strengthening the fundamental principles of respect for human rights, cultural differences and lifestyles, as well as the understanding and tolerance between nations. It also respected the principles established in the 1988 Constitution, in caput of article 5, which determine equality of fundamental rights and guarantees for both Brazilians and foreign citizens living in the country (BRASIL, 1988). In addition to legal issues and to the respect for the basic values of the modern world, the inclusion of this category - internationalization - can also contribute to greater Program integration with other cultures and knowledge productions. Thus, the Committee, in compliance with the perspectives presented by Milton Santos (2001), understands that the world is living a fairy tale; therefore, it calls itself a global village; however, in practice, it does not integrate the existing cultures, in a cross-sectional manner, or respect the fundamental rights of individuals undergoing migratory processes.

With respect to the integration agenda, the Committee perceived the potential of a Master's degree program in Teaching to create opportunities for more inclusive education-access processes focused on the non-Brazilian community, since the significant mix of peoples and ethnicities is a practical reality in all continents. Thus, the Committee also understood that it was necessary including a diversity of nations in the academic knowledge-production processes. Consequently, it has recommended that PPGEn/INFES/UFF should make 02 (two) seats available for resident aliens in order to promote internationalization as fundamental aspect of the scientific, technological, cultural and social integration of foreign people living in Brazil. For verification purposes, and in order to guarantee the purpose of internationalization and universal right to education, the Committee has recommended that applicants who self-declare to belong to this group must present their passport and/or other documents proving their nationality and legal status in the country at the time to apply for the selection process.

Social quota (family income per capita lower than 1.5 minimum wages)

Class-based division is a real rupture in our society, mainly when it comes to access to education. Thus, according to Bezerra and Gurgel (2011, p. 3), when it comes to quota policies, mainly to the social quota, "in addition to provide access to knowledge to individuals who were previously prevented from having it, it can also work as path towards social inclusion [...], as well as towards their acceptance in the new social group they become part of at the University". Accordingly, the Committee has perceived the need of implementing affirmative actions that take into account the enrollment of students living under low socioeconomic condition. Therefore, 2 (two) seats were reserved for applicants who presented the following conditions: a) income lower than R\$ 1,497.00 (amount corresponding to 1.5 minimum wage on the document completion date) per family member; and b) having fully attended high school in public education institutions.

It is essential meeting the two aforementioned criteria to have access to the social quota, since the Committee acknowledged economic inequality as marker capable of directly interfering in academic progression. Thus, guaranteeing these two seats is a strategy to fix these time and space distortions, wherever they happen and get worse. The ramification of these seats is justified from the perspective of fighting social inequalities, which is an elementary principle of a State understood as democratic and of law. In addition, the Committee has thought about distributive justice processes, according to which, all social groups can have access to public university education, most specifically, to *strictu-sensu* post-graduation studies. The Committee, in compliance with Rawls (1997), has pointed out that distributive justice can only be achieved when

the two principles of justice are taken into consideration, namely: equal liberty and fair equality of opportunities. Thus, it can – and should – be promoted within the scope of the *strictu-sensu* Master's degree in Teaching at PPGE_n/INFES/UFF.

Final Considerations

The current article has described the experience of the “Committee for the insertion of quotas in the selection notice” of PPGE_n/INFES/UFF at the time to implement an affirmative action policy focused on *strictu-sensu* post-graduation courses, with emphasis on the allocation of seats available to black/indigenous peoples, quilombolas, the LGBTQIA+ community, persons with disabilities, mother-women, Basic Education teachers, foreigners and individuals whose families live under economic vulnerability condition.

The current study aimed at emphasizing the need of discussing the importance of having post-graduation programs, mainly the *strictu-sensu* ones, setting criteria for the access and permanence of representatives from social groups traditionally excluded from the Brazilian educational system. This effort takes place in an extremely adverse social, political and economic context; i.e., in a revisionist, obscurantist and nefarious context that articulates and encourages – in an unscrupulous and irresponsible way – violence and oppression against certain social groups in the midst of the most devastating health crisis experienced in the last 100 years. In addition, it does not ignore the specificities of a campus that is located far from the institution's headquarters and that presents local, complex and challenging contingencies.

The work performed by the “Committee for the insertion of quotas in the selection notice” of PPGE_n/INFES/UFF has emphasized the urgency in contemplating the demands of certain social groups that have been historically distant from the most selective knowledge-production spaces - mainly from those in the region where the PPGE_n/INFES/UFF is located in -, without ignoring the tensions arising from the pragmatic, theoretical, political and legislative scopes.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, in addition to the 22 (twenty-two) quotas recommended for the next PPGE_n/INFES/UFF selection notice - in a scenario comprising 30 (thirty) seats -, the Committee has recommended that the following actions are also imperative: *a)* holding discussions and performing studies about quotas for mother-women in teachers' accreditation/re-accreditation processes at PPGE_n/INFES/UFF, as well as about the likely resizing of quotas in selection notices focused on female caregivers of persons with disabilities, elderly individuals and other individuals with specific needs; *b)* performing studies and deliberations about increasing deadlines for female students who give birth during the Master's degree course; *c)* promoting preparatory courses – or similar extension activities – to help

students who feel to be at socioeconomic disadvantage to join *strictu-sensu* post-graduation programs; *d*) reviewing criteria set for granting scholarships in the Program based on students' admission via quotas; *e*) elaborating a document with recommendations to the Collegiate of the Unit to enable greater accessibility of students with disabilities to the physical premises of the Institute, as well as to suggest the creation of a Specific Educational Assistance Center for Persons with Disabilities, which could also account for promoting continuous actions aimed at encouraging anti-ableist behaviors within the academic community; *f*) applying a sociodemographic questionnaire to help better understanding the profile of individuals applying for the selection process - and, consequently, of the approved ones -, in order to promote actions focused on minimizing students' evasion; *g*) forming committees to review the document prepared by the "Committee for the insertion of Quota System in the selection notice" of PPGEn/INFES/UFF every five years; and *h*) if the collegiate deems it necessary, controversial issues can be referred to the Dean of Research, Post-graduation Studies and Innovation (PROPI) of Fluminense Federal University. Certain that the greatest challenges to be faced are yet to come, we will not shy away from them and we will keep on working hard to build a more equitable and fair *strictu-sensu* post-graduation course, in a cooperative manner.

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