

Educational democracy in graduate education: Public policies and affirmative action

Hugo Augusto Vasconcelos Medeiros

Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil

Ruy de Deus e Mello Neto

University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Afrânio Mendes Catani

University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

This paper is a discussion on the possibilities of educational democracy in Brazilian Graduate Education, with a focus on the current Graduate Education Field regulations and the recent affirmative actions and public policies of access. We analyzed laws, decrees, government plans and selections edicts, through categories derived from historical materialism and praxeological sociology. Hence, this is a qualitative and critical research paper that aims at pointing paths to overcome the conflicts between the interests of different social groups by defending the need and urgency of an overall discussion and structural change.

Keywords: *educational democracy; affirmative action; graduate education; historical materialism; praxeological sociology*

Introduction

In 2003, a World Bank report stated that knowledge was, in current society, the main factor for economic development and poverty reduction. Therefore, higher education was recognized as a very important component in development and inequality reduction—being graduate education (GE) and scientific research (SR) the central factors for attracting and retaining the most capable minds in order to provide innovation and develop a country.

In Brazil, graduate education and scientific research are very close, since most of the research is done within graduate programs using public investment. The latest Brazilian National Plan for Graduate Studies (PNPG) confirmed World Bank's interpretation and defined graduate education as a strategic level for developing a country, since, through research, innovation and knowledge production, it is possible to educate and qualify human resources who will occupy places in private companies

and in public service (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior 2010).

Despite World Bank's and Brazilian government's expectations, knowledge accumulation alone has not been able to bring about development or reduce poverty. In Brazil, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students from non-white families faced strong difficulties in accessing higher education (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2011; Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2015a).

In the country, access to higher education - since undergraduate studies - is restricted to few. Only 15.1% of the population (student and not student) between 18 and 24 are enrolled in higher education. Unequal access is evident when 66.6% of white students between 18 and 24 attend higher education, whereas for black and pardo this percentage drops to only 37.4%. This effect happens mainly in the admission process, since most of the candidates in the exam are students from disadvantaged backgrounds, though this profile changes when we consider higher education itself. (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2014; Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2015b; 2015c)

Approximately¹ 41.1 % among young people who sign up for Enem (National admission test for enrollment in public higher education and for high school students/institution evaluation in Brazil) in 2009² (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2010b) were concomitantly from the Black, Pardo or Indigenous ethnicities (BPI) and from public high school education (all years at public high school). However, the observation of the percentage of senior students at undergraduate level in the same year (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2010) shows that only a small proportion (17.9%) of that group access and complete this step. Moreover, it is important to note that many students from public school do not even enroll in the admission test (MELLO NETO et al 2014). Therefore, the access becomes exclusive to the few who manage to overcome the barrier of the selection.

Seeking to reduce the effects of this disparity, the Brazilian government has developed affirmative action programs targeting the access to undergraduate education. These programs already have significant results in increasing the number of non-dominant students in higher education - especially those with low income, BPI (Black, Pardo and Indigenous) and coming from public high school education. Since 2005, programs like ProUni (University for All Program), and the Social/ Racial Quotas in Federal

Universities changed the structure of Brazilian higher education at the undergraduate level. Between the year of implementation of the first programs (ProUni in 2005) and 2014, there has been an increase of 27.6% in the youth percentage of Black, Pardo and Indigenous (BPI) and of 18.9% in the percentage of young people from public schools among senior students at undergraduate level in Brazilian institutions (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2006; 2015b).

Moreover, persistent historical inequalities, which became even more expressive when we considered Graduate Education, kept students from non-dominant groups away from universities. Thus, non-dominant groups were not able to conduct responsive scientific research or create scientific alternatives oriented by their social groups' perspectives. Therefore, despite the massive policy for increasing the number of graduate programs in Brazil (between 2005 and 2014 there was an increase of 78.1% in the number of master's programs and 78.2% in the number of doctoral programs, and an increase of 85.9% in the number of PhD output per year and 63.6% in the annual number of Master output) (Centro de Gestao e Estudos Estrategicos 2016), there were no equivalent actions to expand access to groups traditionally excluded from this process. As an example, between 2006 and 2014, observing the active subjects in the labor market (Ministerio do Trabalho e Emprego 2007; 2015), there was only an increase of 4.8 percentage points for BPI workers with master's degrees and only 4.3 percentage points for Doctoral level.

In addition to the traditional barriers of access to higher education, graduate education has limits connected to the hegemonic ideology of science, founded in teleological reason (Habermas 2007), social neutrality, knowledge accumulation, self-induced questions, objectivities and so forth. Other barrier is the way scientists are formed, in accordance to ideas like excellence, authority and paradigmatic regulation (Hochman 1994). Consequently, graduate students must be the chosen ones able to endure hard training, and, only through that, be able to *do science*.

As a result, the restricted access of non-dominant groups is a consequence of the restricted access to the capital required for completing scientific training. Thus, efforts towards educational democracy must, sooner or later, reach Graduate Education, both because of its strategic role in an intellectual's formation, as well as for its resistance/leniency to self-modification, since the majority of its rules are deeply influenced by an adjacent field (scientific field).

Our aim in this paper is to discuss the possibilities of educational democracy in Brazilian GE, with a focus on the current attempts to democratize access through government public policies and graduate programs' affirmative actions. To that end,

we analyse laws, decrees, government plans and graduate notices of selection, through categories taken from historical materialism and praxeological sociology. Thereby, this is a qualitative and critical research paper that aims to dialectically reflect on the conflicts of interests in Brazilian Graduate Education, and propose paths to overcome the current state of conflicts between dominant and non-dominant groups.

Materials and methods

Historical materialism and the praxeological sociology approach

This paper is based on historical materialism, through its appropriation by researchers inside the Brazilian educational field, and on Bourdieu's version of praxeological sociology. In our analysis of educational Census data, laws, decrees, government plans and notices of selection of graduate programs, we perceive these documents as products of the transformation of regularities of social relations in juridical forms (Marx 2008). These forms are built through the constitution of rules in the Graduate Education field, which concerns science production and scientific training. A field can be taken as the environment in which the groups dispute for power according to their capital, their positions and the interests of the field (Bourdieu 2013). Therefore, the positions in the field (dominants/non-dominant) are determined by the relation between each group's global capital, the relative power of the specific possessed capitals in the composition of the global capital, and the efficient capital of the field (Pereira & Catani 2002; Bourdieu 1989). The dominant position will allow the occupant group to put their ideology as hegemonic, perpetuate the social relations that benefit them.

Hence, the documents are products of the specific work of groups in dispute for the domain of the field, which is mainly regulated by the fraction of the dominant class (i.e., the dominant fraction of the dominant class, considering a specific field) due to their position and capital. This fraction tends to succeed in making their interests and vision as the hegemonic ones, documenting interests and visions in written rules that will not only regulate, but also legitimate the social relations comprehended by them (Gramsci 1971), and make other groups believe that their interests and vision are universal, and desirable to all classes (Carnoy 1988). Surely, this process affects the capitals in play, since the dominant group can elect its capitals as the most significant and powerful ones (Bourdieu 1998b), directing the ways in which use values are socially constructed. By performing these three actions, hegemonic ideology, capital election and rules institutionalisation, the dominant group guarantees not only group unity but also the election of potential participants, through the recognition of mutual characteristics and the sharing of useful capabilities.

Inside this overall process, graduate education is a central field, as the highest level of formal education, because the direction and sense of science research is build inside this field, throughout the training of new professors and scientists (Lamont 2009), with the dominant group being able to absorb the intellectuals of other classes (Gramsci 1982) and, then, guarantee the reproduction of its interests, capital definition and distribution, subjects' *habitus*.

Research questions and guides to interpretation

Considering the theoretical approach above, we chose a dialectic debate of the formation of the conceptual basis, research questions and data interpretation. The first step is to distinguish ideas that are usually comprehended as if they mobilized and signified the same things. Inside a specific conservative ideology called “Knowledge Society Ideology” (Masson & Mainardes 2011) there is an effort to conciliate contradictory ideas, such as universal, mass and democratic access to higher education. The search for universal, mass or democratic access to education is related to the crisis in contemporary capitalism. This crisis happens due to a gap between productive forces and relations of production (Marx 2008), since flexible production, compression of time-space, increase of information circulation and production, growing of the third-level sector, faster circulation of capital, labour power and goods, economies of scope, *just in time* logistics, etc. (Harvey 1989) are not completely followed by changes in the relations between workers and capitalists.

Universal, mass or democratic education are neither just answers to humanistic desires or class struggle demands nor a movement oriented to workers' emancipation: they are ways to deal with the new market structure, which demands constant modifications in social relations, new forms of social capital, new *habits*, and new ideologies to prevent the falling rate of profit (Marx 2009) and keep revolutionising the means of production (Marx & Engels 2016).

Universal education concerns the expansion of education to the new generations of non-dominant groups, as a byproduct of social struggles, answering both to market demands for more qualified workers and to demands from social organizations (Bruno 2012). Different class interests are precariously united, since workers want their children to have access to the knowledge demanded by the labour market, and capitalists want their workers to be qualified capable of operating the new technology.

In universal education, these are not necessarily considerations about the quality of education, the equality of educational opportunities or the social conditions for students from different social backgrounds. Thus, universal education has little to do

with the post-war illuminist project that aimed to guarantee democratic rights, cultural capital and education opportunities (Peixoto 2013) because it is frequently reduced to universal enrollments and used by dominant groups for their own purposes (Boli, Ramirez & Meyer 1985).

As Bourdieu (1998a) says, access to higher education is a result of direct and indirect selection due to the inequalities of cultural capital distribution (Bourdieu, 1979) among the different groups and fields. Universal access does not equalize different opportunities, conditions, etc. It is necessary for overcoming unfair social practices that only promote formal equality (Bourdieu 1998a) while maintaining the hegemonic ideology on course, the traditional cultural and social capital distribution, rule formulation and constitution of *habitus*.

In its turn, mass education represents the reduction of education to training, responding to exigencies of the labour market that involve the accumulation of skills and the formation of a new *habitus* of work (Bruno 2012). Thus, mass education is in a way a radical consequence of rationalized and standardized dimensions (Boli et al. 1985) of universal education, in interaction with the new *just-in-time* ideology, which asks for cost reduction, fast human capital formation, and deviation of workers from knowledge that is not important to their functions, through a super valorisation of specialized workers (Harvey 1989). Formation is reduced to training and knowledge to broken information, alienating students, preventing them from reflecting about their jobs and their social condition and keeping them from becoming organic intellectuals (Gramsci 1982).

Finally, educational democracy means an open school, which can only be achieved through public policies (de Carvalho 2004b), assuring that, if not social conditions, at least social opportunities are more equally distributed through parity in the decision-making progress and the reserving or creation of places (Marginson 2006; 2016). It is a product of social struggles, for neither the market nor the capitalists are interested in opening the school, for it facilitates social displacements and threatens the new generations of dominant groups. Educational democracy operates on the unequal distribution of cultural capital, trying to reduce educational inequalities and make it possible for students from different backgrounds to attend good quality institutions.

The access of students from non-dominant groups to certificate contests provokes a momentary shock in social relations and ideology. Dominant groups try to intensify the relative power of their certificates, by increasing their rarity, and reinforce their social positions (Bourdieu 2007): they try to convince agents and dominated groups that there is no relation between scholar capital, cultural capital, social capital and

success, disguising the connections between previous cultural capital in the family and further conditions of capital accumulation (idem). Also, they create stronger filters, assuring that the highest education levels, the social and political diligent functions and the best paying jobs remain in the grasp of the dominant groups.

The three ideas (universal, mass and democratic education) are thus efforts to answer new conflicting social demands, by modifying higher education offerings and educational opportunities. This movement tries not only to conciliate social interests and visions of different groups—in fact, they are contradictory, but ideology may “harmonize” them—, but, also, conciliate contradictions of agents within their own dominant groups: how to educate non-dominant groups inside new relations of production without threatening their superior positions? Partial forms of opening (like flexible courses formation, precarious distant education, increasing of second category institutions) are put in place without changing the main rules of the field.

Still with regard to the democratic access idea, we must draw parallels between de Carvalho’s (2004b) reflections on democracy ideologies and Engels’s (1982) thoughts on utopic socialism; then, we must transpose these ideas to the graduate education field. To Engels, utopic socialism is limited because utopian socialists are not the worker’s representative; thus, a utopic world, in practice, is based not on the vision and interests of the working class, but on the interests and vision of the ruling class, since the utopian are members of this class – and, therefore, live according to a *habitus* very distant from that of the dominated groups. To Carvalho (2004b), democracy may then be used as a restrict ideological form (i.e., lose its characteristics of transcendental value and be transformed into a dominant group’s specific way of thinking) when it puts in motion faith professions, individualist actions, self-centred changes and localized openings, emptying the social struggle dimension, as if the problem were placed in the individuals and not in the social relations and rules.

Through mediation via Bourdieu (2013), we can transfer these premises to the graduate education field: individual graduate education actions are not strong enough to produce a democratic opening in graduate education because they are built upon dominant interests and aim to maintain the field. Even when they try to, professors, the dominant group in graduate education, cannot represent the interests of graduate candidates because such interests carry contradictions in relation to the field’s interests. Therefore, the interests of the non-dominant groups can only be partially addressed.

The dispute for the control of administrative and juridical rule formulation and for ideological devices takes place inside an overall state dispute because it is through state institutions that rules are set up and controlled. Hence, when we compare the three ideas of access with the *polity*, we notice that there are separations according to the educational levels: concurrence of universal and mass access in basic education, being the first more present at primary school and the second at high school; while higher education (based on an anti-universalistic idea, according to Brazilian educational law) faces a strong debate about diversification and expansion.

According to the previous National Education Plan (Federal Law No. 10,172, January 9, 2001), higher education expansion occurs due to an explosion of demand by the lower classes, which needs to be supplied by the state. Even considering regional inequalities (Item 4.3.3) and the difficulties of access to minority groups (Item 4.3.19), the plan understands that the expansion shall not occur at the expense of education quality (in other words, shall not defy the field maintenance)—so the expansion must happen through a diversification in the supply. New courses and new modalities congregate public and private education, and so forth. However, since capital distribution remains unequal, this effort of a conservative change tends only to create different categories of courses, modalities and institutions; the main question, correction of inequalities, remains at the same point where it started. Concerning the graduate education field, there is already in the 2001 Plan a preoccupation with expansion, but restricted to promote an increase in the number of masters and doctorates. It is, however, with the 2014 Plan (Federal Law No. 13,005, June 25, 2014), that graduate education expansion takes shape: the increase of graduate programs comes with actions to reduce inequalities, focusing on protecting the access of indigenous people, quilombola³, brown, black, women, etc. Nevertheless, there are not material rules; there is only a concern and a faith profession.

In Brazil, Graduate Education rule formulation and assessment is charge of a regulation agency: the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). Using a very large and rigid assessment, CAPES orients the field interests and objectives, and assures that public money is well expended. Programs that fail in meeting the rules lose their credentials, have their fellowships cut and have their maintenance resources redistributed, whereas successful programs receive a larger amount of resources, fellowships, and, most important, autonomy.

However, there are two parallel systems in the Brazilian graduate education field. There are *Stricto sensu* courses and *Lato sensu* courses, distinguished mainly by the presence, in the former, of academic and scientific research. Thus, *stricto sensu*

courses are the Master and Doctoral degree programs, and *lato sensu* courses are specialization courses with a minimum of 360 hours of classes for students who already have a degree. Also, *Stricto sensu* form an almost-market (Afonso 2003), due to the non-monetary relations of commodity within them, and are dominated by public institutions and their graduate programs, in constant competition for research funds, prestige and status. The *lato sensu* are a true market, mainly disputed by private institutions, and attended by workers hoping to acquire *expertise* and certify their knowledge. Nevertheless, *stricto sensu* courses are mostly formed by full-time students receiving fellowships.

Field diversification is focused on course offerings, with the explosion of *lato sensu* courses in private institutions. These courses, submitted to a less present and efficient quality assessment, do not target researchers' formation, innovation or social problem solving: students pay expensive fees to certify their specialties, hoping to pass public exams and (re)ingress in the labour market. While CAPES closes the *Stricto Sensu* system to some selected programs capable of fulfilling assessment exigencies, it opens the *Lato Sensu* system to market self-regulation (of prices, quality and so forth).

Results and discussion

In Brazil, even with recent public policies of expansion, private institutions are still responsible for the majority of higher education enrollments (Sguissardi 2006; 2013; Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2015a). Following the 2001 Plan, the government made efforts to raise young students' schooling rate by 30%, via fellowships in private school and an increase in places in public institutions. Therefore, ProUni (fellowships in private institutions to secondary public school students) and FIES (school loans to low income students) concentrated on private institutions, while REUNI (a huge public investment in public universities expansion) focused on the public system (Cunha 2007, Mello Neto 2015). REUNI was efficient in expanding public higher education system through the opening of new campuses and restructuring of the old ones, but even though it successfully increased the number of enrollments, it was not able to invert the private/public enrollment relation.

Parallel to the expansion of the public system, we have a fast and persistent movement, under the tutelage of the World Bank, to guarantee that education remains a public service open to private exploitation. The World Bank, since 1994, defends that higher education problems will be solved by the diversification of supply and the association between state and market. Brazilian state, in accordance with the World Bank's perspective, recognized education as a commodity, subject to mercantile trade,

accumulation and profit pursuit (Sguissardi 2006), with the 1996 Educational Law and 1997 Executive Decree. This perspective is used in ProUni to support private institutions, through scholarships to low income students from public middle schools.

Thus, we can detect three changes in the expansion of higher education (Trow 2005): increase in enrollment rate, absolute growth of the systems with new campuses and new institutions and an increase in liquid enrollments. This expansion causes tensions in traditional professor-student relations and alters everyday practices in the higher education field. The admission of social groups historically excluded from higher education incorporates social, economic, cultural, racial, ethnic and regional differences; puts in check the traditional relations and the conservative ideology of merit; and opens the field to new discussions about affirmative action (Mello Neto 2015).

Aside from the expansion of private schools and the transformation of education in a commodity (submitted to market rules), we also have affirmative action and overall public policies trying to correct inequalities. These actions and policies create opportunities for excluded groups (Francis & Tannuri-Pianto 2012; Oliven 2012; Schwartzman & Silva 2012), aiming to break the vicious cycle of horizontal and vertical inequalities which, through the ideology of merit, have been naturalized and taken as inevitable (Brow, Langer & Stewart 2012). The federal government defined the target group of its higher education affirmative action as the low income students from secondary public schools, also with stratification concerning racial and ethnic aspects. Then, differently from fundamental education, which the government acts in order to expand, universalize and massify, in higher education, the government congregates expansion actions with affirmative action.

Concerning the graduate education field, we have a process centred in mass access, since the government's main preoccupation is raising graduation rates. In the 2001 Plan, none of the six items about GE addressed democratic access: increase the number of doctors (5%/year); double the number of qualified researchers; create strategies to attract good researchers; stimulate research practices as an educational practice; expand the presence of public investments on GE and research development. The goal is to reinforce GE in order to form good researchers.

Another important point in the 2001 Plan is the cooperation between the Ministry of Science and Technology and the state foundations that support scientific research (FAP). The FAP acquire an important role, since they channel their investments to regional socially congruent research. However, once the definition of the priority areas

is done based on an ideology of productivity, the areas are frequently chosen among those that produce technologies and directly generate income. Plus, strong and traditional FAP (that can grant better fellowships than those from the federal government) frequently impose more rigid criteria to their researchers: the São Paulo FAP (FAPESP), for example, demands that its doctorate fellows conclude the course within 36 months (12 less than the average term); and the Pernambuco FAP (FACEPE) has a rigid process of enrollment and demands many more reports than the average program.

Even with the expansion being successful, graduate education lacks a more appropriate discussion about model, target groups, social impacts, process of selection, and so forth (Lopes & Costa 2012; Mancebo 2013; Maraschin & Sato 2013). As it is now, we have a confusing mix of massifying access (in the sense that research is directed to market issues), and affirmative action focused on individuals (the applicants). The Brazilian government invests in strategic areas through the FAP, the Program “Ciência sem Fronteiras” (Science without Borders)—with fellowships to study in other countries—and the Support Program to Graduate students of private schools (PROSUP)⁴. All these actions have a focus on strategic areas, chosen in accordance with an ideology of productivity, so they do not promote democratic access, only mass access. The investments from a government social fund to students or higher education private schools (FIES) only attack the problem as matter of the individuals – i.e., as if the access to higher education depended only on individual effort to study and do a good exam.

In summary, the federal government guides the system to massification, through directing the investments to strategic areas; the FAP follow the orientation and select their own strategic areas, considering not only productivity terms, but also regional problem solving and interstate competition. Additionally, the federal government grants fellowships to individuals according to their personal capabilities. In doing so, the graduate education system does not grow toward democratic access but to mass access. The expansion with area diversification, opening of new graduate programs in the countryside or in states without an academic tradition, the cooperation of the FAP and the increase of strategic areas resources, all point to localized actions that increase inequalities or throw the responsibility of success to the individual.

But what is and what should be the role of graduate programs? Graduate programs are organized in lines of research that congregate students, professors, disciplines, events, etc. with the same focus. This organism is powered by the annual applicants, selected according to a “system of preferences,”⁵ fulfilled with subjective and directive steps,

such as interviews, oral tests on the research projects, letters of recommendation, etc., and frequent appreciation not of the applicant's capacity, but of their adjustment to the program directives (Carvalho 2003; 2004a). Once the "system of preferences" is not disclosed, the selections tend to appeal to ideas such as merit and excellence, creating a sense that only the best applicants are selected. However, behind these ideas lie others, such as adjustment and alignment, which turn the selections into the result of collegiate preferences and the desire to maintain the lines of research already in progress (Carvalho 2004a) – and, therefore, maintain the traditional *habits*, relations and structures of capital distribution. Then, based on an ideology of academic productivity, measured by the number of qualified academic products, successful graduate programs tend to be a very cohesive organism, directing all their efforts to enhancing production.

We would be naïve to believe that a graduate program selects students based only on its own interests. Considering the larger field of graduate education itself, it is possible to see group disputes: refractions of class struggle, disputes between different areas and models of science, etc. Graduate programs build their rules and materialize them in notices of selection having in mind not only their interests, vision or ideology, but the very strategic expectations to respond to CAPES's demands, rules and interests. Graduate programs adjust and align their selections because this strategy has proven to be the most effective to harmonize CAPES's interests, Graduate Program's interests and student's interests. Thus, it is more effective to the field that professors (the dominant group in graduate programs) train their students not only to be good researchers, but to research the hot themes in vogue and use the dominant theoretical-methodological perspective of the graduate program.

Currently, we have a small amount of affirmative action programs of access, especially when we consider the number of higher education institutions and the number of recognized graduate programs. These actions are mainly spontaneous graduate program practices, satisfying very different premises and interests; dispersed within the geographic territory; and based on different (and sometimes conflicting) definitions of the target group, benefits, etc.

In the list below, we summarized the most relevant current affirmative actions, considering the importance of the universities, to analyze their differences and common points.

Table 1: Summary of GE Affirmative Actions.

Institution	Program/Grad School	Research Line	Funding	Typology	Target group
University of Sao Paulo (USP)	Law School	Human Rights Line	Ford Foundation	Reserved places (33%)	Black and indigenous people; severe disability; poverty
Federal University of Paraiba (UFPB)	Law School	Human Rights Line	Ford Foundation	Six reserved spot; priority in fellowships	Blacks (2); handicapped people (2); Indigenous (2)
Federal University of Para (UFPA)	Law School	Human Rights Line	Ford Foundation	Four reserved places	Black people (2); handicapped people (2)
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)	National Museum	Social Anthropology	Self funding	Additional places; indigenous face less? entry requirements and reduced stages	Indigenous; Black people
Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC)	Anthropology	Social Anthropology	Self funding	Additional places.	Indigenous; Black people
National University of Brasilia (UNB)	Sociology	Sociology	Self funding	Reserved places (20%)	Black people
National University of Brasilia (UNB)	-	Preparatory course (“Pós Afirmativas”)	Self funding	Preparatory course	Black people
Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE)	-	Preparatory course (“Pré-Pós”)	Self funding	Preparatory course	There’s no target group. The selection is based on motivation letters.
Ford Foundation	-	-	Self funding	Fellowships	Students with works or activities aimed at community, regional, national or social development + a. Born in North, Northeast or Centre-West regions; b. negro or indigenous race; c. poor or less educated families.

National University of Brasilia (UNB)	Sustainable development	Sustainable development	Self funding	Reserved places (50%)	Indigenous
Bahia State University (UNEB)	All	All	Self funding	Reserved places (40% and 5%)	Black people (40%) and indigenous (5%) from secondary public schools, per capita household income up to 10 minimum wages

Sources: Universidade de Sao Paulo (2016); Universidade Federal da Paraiba (2016); Universidade Federal do Para (2016); Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (2016); Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (2016); Universidade de Brasilia (2016); Universidade de Brasilia (2011); Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (2014); Universidade de Brasilia (2016b); Universidade do Estado da Bahia (2016); Santos (2010); Rosenberg (2013).

According to Marrara & Gasiola (2011) and Gomes & Moraes (2012), affirmative action policies in graduate education are related to social inclusion, diversification of the student body, excluded groups' citizenship and leadership, institutional change, responsive research, and fostering of individual talents. In doing so, Graduate Education creates an affirmative action policy not only to promote democratic access, but also to benefit from the capital of the excluded groups. Affirmative action programs have considerable variations regarding the beneficiary, the benefits, and the social gain for graduate education, but they are concentrated in human and social science programs. Target groups range from no restrictions at all to racial, ethnic, income and handicap restrictions; the benefit varies among reserved places, exclusive additional places, bonus scores, and reductions of stage selections, preparatory courses and fellowships. Very frequently, the definitions of benefit and beneficiary are mixed together (Sousa & Portes 2011), even in the most aggressive affirmative action programs (e.g., the UNEB quota program).

The Ford Foundation had an important role in inducing graduate programs to create affirmative action policies, especially in the area of human rights (Santos 2010). Nevertheless, even within the Ford Foundation program there are significant differences of benefit, beneficiary quantification and definition —which is intriguing because either the social realities are substantially different or the perceptions and interests are just as much different, from area to area.

Regarding the universities, National University of Brasília has three different affirmative action policies, one of them being a preparatory course. Federal University

of Pernambuco also has a preparatory course that draws attention due to the absence of beneficiary restrictions. Also, Federal University of Pernambuco has a tradition of preparatory courses to support students from secondary public schools—currently, there are 16 courses. So, it seems that the Federal University of Pernambuco focus is on preparation and not on a direct opening. Bahia State University, on the other hand, has a tradition of quota programs: in 2002, Bahia State University created an overall quota program that reserves places and offers fellowships in every selection of the university. Bahia State University mobilizes the symbolic and cultural capital of a university located in Bahia, the Brazilian state where African tradition, culture and history have a strong preservation. At least, we must consider the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro Social Anthropology Graduate Program because of its dominant position in the anthropology field: the program is related to the National Museum and has the maximum score on the CAPES assessment. Because of that, we highlight the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro Social Anthropology Graduate Program affirmative action program for it not only reserves places, but also changes the selection process itself, reducing the difficulties for applicants.

Except for the UFRJ Social Anthropology Graduate Program, the affirmative action policies are still immersed in the ideology of excellence and merit, since there are no changes in the regulations or the expected student profile. The fellowships, reserved places, or the preparatory courses do not change the field—its positions, rules or *habitus*—since they only create a more extensive and efficient filter for a field in expansion, which can benefit from the diversified cultural capital brought by the new students.

The opening of a graduate education field is done bearing in mind the maintenance of the interests and rules: select the best students, without considerations about the differences of either education capital or individual trajectories. In addition, applicants from non-dominant groups are exposed to a similar problem that we noticed in other research (Mello Neto, Medeiros & Catani 2014; Medeiros & Mello Neto 2014; Mello Neto 2015), which is that there may be a more difficult selection process inside the quota group than outside it, due to the high number of applicants.

It is possible to say that the multiple ways to define the beneficiary and the benefit, (with predominance of reserved places and mixed criteria) show that the perception about non-dominant groups remains diffuse (even with racial criteria being more frequent), being hard to determine which groups should be the focus of the affirmative actions (Rosemberg 2010; dos Santos 2012). This diffuse perception shows that democratic access is still conceived as faith professions and individualized actions,

and that the idea of democracy competes with different ideologies, such as merit, excellence and productivity, the latter remaining hegemonic due the influence of the economic system. Thus, the current actions do not promote structural change or material equality, since they put emphasis on offering diversification and individual selection.

Conclusions

Not long ago, the panorama of higher education was not different from what we show in this paper: efforts to democratize access through isolated actions and attempts to open the field while also maintaining the regulations, positions and interests of dominant groups. Recently, this panorama has been altered with the edition and regulation of quotas law, the strengthening of student assistance through the creation of a national program (Executive Decree No. 7,234, July 19, 2010), and the unified selection within it. Despite their limits, it is possible to foresee a large modification in the graduate education field, since these actions combine the obligation of quotas in all courses, shifts and entrances, with an elevated number of reserved places (50%). We see that the graduate education field dilemma is how to democratize access and maintain the characteristics recognized by the scientific field regarding what is science and what constitutes scientific research practices. Although this is not always evident, the comprehension of science as a prerogative of groups and individuals able to mobilize very specific social and cultural capitals would be in check if the field were open to groups and individuals without access to these specific capitals. Thus, the conflicts within and for the domination of the scientific field are derived from the disputes of individuals and groups with positions socially prefixed within the field, who try to maximize (make hegemonic and, if possible, monopolize) the scientific status, authority and capitals, recognized in the field (Hochman, 1994). It appears that the options for giving better access conditions to individuals who already have scientific habits is a way to keep selecting such individuals and filter out the unfit applicants.

It is necessary to debate the limits and contradictions of the ideologies and practices that support the graduate education field, as well as the possibilities of democratizing access and retaining the student during the whole course. It is clear, however, that material democracy in education will be built only when democratic access reaches all levels. The echelon perspective of universalizing, massifying, diversifying or democratizing according to the level, justifying it with criteria foreign to the field is an ideological strategy to maintain social order. To keep the graduate education field in closure and divided between *lato sensu* (strongly massified) and *Stricto sensu* (starting to be guided by diversification) is a way to obstruct the creation of a more democratic

society. Also, because of the difficult access for non-dominant groups to the necessary capitals to produce organic intellectuals and create counter-hegemonic ideologies of their own, and to contest the traditional dominance and promote social changes, the field remains training heirs (new researchers) with homogenous characteristics. All this is an effort to keep dominated groups from creating social changes that would affect the field itself, because their only way to access the field is by playing by its rules, and accepting the current regulation of power.

¹ Between those who answered the specific questions (race and schooling) at National Socioeconomic Survey. About schooling, it was observed only those who declared completion of a fully scholar period at public high school institution.

² First year that Enem became a National admission test for enrollment in public higher education.

³ Descendants of slaves.

⁴ Ordinance No. 181, December 18, 2012.

⁵ The concept of “system of preference” must be taken very carefully, because we shall not read it as if professors simply selected whoever they wanted, whenever they wanted. Other important point is that the autonomy of the university is an important principle, and it comprehends the autonomy of each PG program to choose how it selects its students.

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Author details

Hugo Augusto Vasconcelos Medeiros – PhD Candidate in Education at Federal University of Pernambuco; And Public Manager at Pernambuco Department of Planning.

Ruy de Deus e Mello Neto – Postdoctoral researcher at University of São Paulo University of São Paulo, School of Education, Educational Administration and Economics of Education (Financial Support from Fapesp – process n. 2014/26481-8). Visiting Scholar at Harvard Graduate School of Education (from February 1, 2017) – (Financial Support from Fapesp – process n. 2016/ 16981-9).

Afrânio Mendes Catani – Professor at University of São Paulo University of São Paulo, School of Education, Educational Administration and Economics of Education.