

REPORTS ON THE PERMANENCE OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN THE POST-GRATUATION PROGRAMS AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AMAZONAS

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ABSTRACT

By means of claims and affirmative action policies, more and more indigenous peoples have entered higher education. This research intended to investigate and understand the reasons for the indigenous people's permanence in the Post-Graduate Programs (PPGs) of the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM). Based on qualitative research, we sent questionnaires to the 42 coordination offices of these PPGs and, subsequently, we interviewed 7 indigenous graduate students from different ethnic groups, with transcription and content analysis according to Bardin. We included three thematic units and categories: academic path of postgraduate students (schooling records; entrance at university); confrontations to remain at the university (difficulties, resistance, resolutions); suggestions and proposals. We conclude that financial, pedagogical, cultural, and social difficulties are the result of a hegemonic logic that continues to generate discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, but the commitment to oneself, to one's family, ethnicity and indigenous causes provides them with the inspiration to resist and finish the course.

Keywords: indigenous; affirmative action; higher education; postgraduate studies

Relatos da permanência de estudantes indígenas em los programas de posgrado de la Universidad Federal do Amazonas

RESUMEN

A través de reivindicaciones y políticas de acciones afirmativas, cada vez más los pueblos indígenas han ingresado en la enseñanza universitaria. En esta investigación se pretendió averiguar y comprender los motivos de permanencia de los indígenas en los Programas de Posgrado (PPGs) de la Universidad Federal do Amazonas (UFAM). A partir de una investigación cualitativa, enviamos cuestionarios a las 42 secretarías de esos PPGs y, posteriormente, entrevistamos 7 posgraduados indígenas de etnias distintas, con transcripción y análisis de contenidos según Bardin. Llegamos a las unidades temáticas y categorías: recorrido académico de los alumnos posgraduados (trayectoria de escolarización; llegada en la universidad); enfrentamientos para permanecer universitario (dificultades, resistencia, resoluciones); sugerencias y propuestas. Concluimos que las dificultades financieras, pedagógicas, culturales y sociales son decurrentes de una lógica hegemónica que sigue generando discriminación, desigualdad y exclusión, pero el compromiso consigo, con su familia, etnia y causas indígenas dan resistencia para finalizar el curso.

Palabras clave: indígena; acción afirmativa; enseñanza universitaria; posgrado

Relatos da permanência de estudantes indígenas nos programas de pós-graduação da Universidade Federal do Amazonas

RESUMO

Através de reivindicações e políticas de ações afirmativas, cada vez mais os povos indígenas têm ingressado no Ensino Superior. Esta pesquisa pretendeu investigar e compreender os motivos de permanência dos indígenas nos Programas de Pós-Graduação (PPGs) da Universidade Federal do Amazonas (UFAM). A partir de uma pesquisa qualitativa, enviamos questionários às 42 secretarias desses PPGs e, posteriormente, entrevistamos 7 pós-graduandos indígenas de etnias diferentes, com transcrição e análise de conteúdos segundo Bardin. Chegamos às unidades temáticas e categorias: percurso acadêmico dos alunos pós-graduandos (trajetória de escolarização; chegada na universidade); enfrentamentos para permanecer universitário (dificuldades, resistência, resoluções); sugestões e propostas. Concluímos que as

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dificuldades financeiras, pedagógicas, culturais e sociais são decorrentes de uma lógica hegemônica que continua gerando discriminação, desigualdade e exclusão, mas o compromisso consigo, com sua família, etnia e causas indígenas dão resistência para finalizar o curso.

Palavras-chave: indígena; ação afirmativa; ensino superior; pós-graduação

INTRODUCTION

Committed to breaking away from the country's slave-trading heritage, affirmative action policies are efficient tools for confronting the different types of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion (Angnes, Freitas, Klozovski, Costa, & Rocha, 2017; Feres Jr. & Daflon, 2015; Godoy & Bairrão, 2016; Moura & Tamboril, 2018). In higher education, such policies materialize, for example, by means of quotas and bonuses that facilitate the entrance of historically excluded groups, recognizing identity differences by creating access and self-declaration requisites (Dal Bó, 2018).

One of the social groups that has been the target of affirmative action are the indigenous peoples. Despite this general term "indigenous peoples", each people/ethnicity presents peculiarities in their cosmologies, as well as in their social and cultural relations (Pereira, Amaral, & Bilar, 2020). Thus, the indigenous peoples are different ethnic groups whose lifestyles are quite diverse but share the common problem of domination and exploitation by society, which has always been the great producer of the prejudice and discrimination that befalls these peoples (Viana & Maheirie, 2017).

With the objective to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples to access to higher education, especially after the Durban Conference, in 2001, where the importance of two affirmative actions was discussed, and several projects were created for the inclusion of marginalized groups in Education, such as: the "Diversity at the University" Program (from 2002), the Program for Support to Plans for Restructuring and Expanding Federal Universities, or "Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais" (REUNI) (from 2007), and the University for All Program (PROUNI) (from 2012) (David, Melo, & Malheiro, 2013). In 2013, the Ministry of Education (MEC), created the Permanence Scholarship, or Bolsa Permanência, as a permanence strategy for students who have the right for affirmative action (Bergamaschi, Doebber, & Brito, 2018). Besides these programs, there is the Indigenous Intercultural Degree Program, or Programa de Licenciatura Intercultural Indígena (PROLIND), created in 2005, which is more specific for indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, with law number 12.711/2012, affirmative action established itself in the public universities, although some IFES already had policies that were previous to that law. To Moura and Tamboril (2018), the participation of historically discriminated groups was possible in Higher Education. They also

complemented that this law led to a change in the elitist, inaccessible academic space into a space of resistance and of protection of the rights of distinct social groups, including the indigenous ones.

The university is regarded as the most important basis for all technologies and knowledges that make up the history of our society, as well as its present scenario, and it's really important for indigenous students to appropriate these knowledges in order to work for the benefit of their communities (Viana & Maheirie, 2017). This occupation of the academic space and appropriation of western science is a strategy that is adopted by some indigenous peoples of the Amazonas, for example, to learn about western knowledge as well as to spread their own indigenous cultures in the societies around them (Calegare, Menezes, & Fernandes, 2017; Fernandes, Azevedo, Barreto & Calegare, 2021).

By means of affirmative action and other claims, the indigenous peoples could enter university (Angnes et al., 2017). However, the process of entrance into higher education must take into consideration also what comes after: permanence and conclusion of the course. In this sense, the entrance of indigenous peoples in the university did not eliminate all inclusion problems because remaining at the university is still a challenge that causes considerable psychological suffering (Herbetta & Nazareno, 2020). Indigenous individuals face situations of complex resolution such as, for example, not having financial resources to stay either in or out of the university (Oliven & Bello, 2017).

In a brief literature review on the policies of affirmative action with indigenous peoples in higher education, we found out that most of most of them are in areas of sociology and anthropology, with little contribution to psychology (Oliveira, Maia, & Lima, 2020), which indicates the relevance of our article to our area. Among the obtained texts, the ones that contained the indigenous people's discourses as sources of information, we were able to verify that permanence is a crucial point for these groups: they face prejudice, discrimination, disrespect to indigenous cultures, lack of specific policies for indigenous peoples, and consequently many drop out (Beltrão & Cunha, 2011; Bergamaschi et al., 2018; Cassandre, Amaral, & Silva, 2016; Calegare et al., 2017; David et al., 2013).

Beyond entrance at university and getting a degree in a graduation course, there are few indigenous individuals that resist, insist, and stay in the Post-Graduation Programs (PPGs) in the most diverse areas, and there are

still an insufficient number of works assessing policies of affirmative action at this level for the entrance, permanence, and the conclusion by these postgraduates (Pereira et al., 2020). Works obtained in the literature review, that also assessed the policies of affirmative action and postgraduation, such as Calegare et al. (2017), Dal Bó (2018), Pereira et al. (2020), and Venturini and Feres Jr. (2020), also pointed at a very important element in the discourses of indigenous peoples, which is permanence at the university, facing the same difficulties as the indigenous students in graduation. Therefore, it is necessary to get to know the reasons for permanence of indigenous students in post-graduation so that the policies of affirmative action become really effective, as well as assess the permanence programs in order to detect their flaws, their lacks, and effects in order to develop improvements (Saraiva & Nunes, 2011).

The difficulties that indigenous students face in higher education, whether in graduation or post-graduation, are of social and cultural nature, and it is necessary to understand and investigate the psychosocial relation of the indigenous student not only with the university, but also with western culture (Angnes et al., 2017). According to criticism by Herbetta and Nazareno (2020), our university system is provided with a hierarchy and a structure that make it impossible for these peoples to thrive in their environments as they still suffer the after-effects of colonialism.

There is an important distinction between coloniality and colonial. Toniai, Maheirie and Garcia Jr. (2017) explained that colonialism is characterized as a situation in which one people takes over the territory of another people, dominating, exploiting, and subjugating by political and military force. On the other hand, coloniality is the symbolic dimension of colonialism, which naturalizes and cultivates relations of power and domination by means of territorial, racial, cultural, gender, and epistemological hierarchies. These colonizing processes, which are still in progress nowadays, were characterized by Quijano (2011) according to the coloniality of power, of being, and of knowledge.

In this sense, indigenous students stumble upon the coloniality that is part of the university structure, as if it were their fate to never be able to occupy that place. In the psychosocial reading that we have adopted as referential, the one by Martín-Baró (2017), fatalism is the comprehension that everyone's destiny is predetermined and unchangeable. This results in the formation of the Latin American character expressed in ideas of inferiority and inaction, feelings of resignation, and behaviors of submission and conformism. It became possible to overcome that by rescuing historical memory and by the disideologization of the everyday life experience, which is understood as the act of "rescuing the original experience of the groups and of the peoples and giving it back as objective data" (Martín-Baró, 2011, p. 196), that

is, the process of deconstruction of the naturalization of the present and awareness of the historical production of reality.

Regarding the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM), the quotas for PPGs have been adopted by means of resolution number 010/2016-Consepe, with affirmative action for the inclusion (entrance quotas for supplementary vacancies) and the permanence (partnerships and other incentives) for Afro descendants, people of mixed races, and indigenous peoples in stricto sensu post-graduation, and it is up to each PPG to adopt affirmative action between 20% and 50% (UFAM, 2016). In this sense, it is important to investigate the motivations that PPG indigenous students stay in their respective courses of post-graduation at the UFAM.

By listening to the indigenous students of the UFAM PPGs, it was possible to demonstrate that for these students there was the desire to finish a PPG course and also the awareness of the problems involved in selecting a program that comprehended all the complexity over the indigenous cultures and that promoted indigenous protagonism. Other authors also indicated that the permanence of these students involved matters related to indigenous interests, to the support provided by the university, and to the diffusion of their works after finishing the course. Besides that, the indigenous students in this study complained that the granted assistance scholarships were not enough to cover all expenditures. On the other hand, the scholarship prevented them from getting a regular job. Therefore, the conclusion was that the affirmative actions were only realized because the university was forced to do it.

All that information points at our need to go deeper in the matter of indigenous permanence and the UFAM PPGs, since their rights are not fully respected. By assessing the vision of indigenous people regarding this aspect by means of a psychosocial reading, we can contribute to a reflection by the academic community on the process involved in taking a PPG for an indigenous individual, and we can also contribute to make the scenario more equal for all students. Thus, our objective in this article is to present and discuss the point of view of indigenous students regarding permanence in the UFAM PPGs.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a qualitative perspective, and of exploratory, descriptive character (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2009). As instrument for production of data, we used a questionnaire sent to the UFAM PPG coordination offices (with identification of indigenous students with quotas and policies they adopted) and semi structured interviews with indigenous students in the PPGs. The research was approved by the committee of ethics in research and followed the regulations from resolutions 466/2012 and 510/2016, by decision number 4.082.840.

7 indigenous students from the PPGs and social

anthropology (PPGAS) and in education (PPGE) participated in the research (six men and one woman), according to the profile described on Chart 1, after a diligent process of gathering information.

We reached this number of participants by initially producing a list from the “Sistema Eletrônico do Serviço de Informações ao Cidadão” (e-sic), or Electronic System Service for Citizen Information, available at the Departamento de Políticas Afirmativas (DPA), or Department of Affirmative Action at the UFAM, with 163 indigenous students in *lato sensu* or *stricto sensu*.

We identified 61 indigenous students in 27 PPGs. After that, we sent a questionnaire by e-mail to all 42 PPGs of the UFAM Requesting information on the indigenous students, and only 27 indigenous students were found: 17 students were in the mastering level and 10 students were in the doctorate level (Chart 2). After contact with all those students, some of them accepted the invitation to participate in the research.

This screening has already revealed one important fact: the registration in the e-sic, provided by the DPA, did not necessarily correspond to the data provided by the coordination offices of the PPGs, which reveals confusion regarding information on the students’ race (color or ethnicity). In addition, some coordination offices were not equipped with these data on their students or even if they were quota students – which had already been observed by Calegare et al. (2017).

Despite the lack of participation and the research by the indigenous students, part of the ones who did not wish to participate justify their decision by the fact that they lived in cities too far away, which were serious obstacles to the onsite interview, and part of them simply did not wish to approach this set of themes, which is also an important fact to be registered. We raised the hypothesis that the greater participation of the students from the PPGAS in the research is probably due to the fact that this program is equipped with expressive policies of attention to indigenous students: reservation of quotas and scholarships, acceptance of Portuguese as a second language, the existence of an indigenous student organization and the appreciation of these

students by giving them a voice and helping them feel comfortable to express themselves.

We realized onsite audio recorded interviews at the UFAM at the end of 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemics. After transcription, we proceeded into content analysis (Bardin, 2011), which was divided into the following stages: pre analysis (fluctuating reading and draft of the first categories); exploration of the material (with the framing of the excerpts from the interviews into theme units and definitive categories); treatment of the data with inferences and interpretations (presentation of the results by the narratives). Thus, we reached the following theme units and categories: (I) academic trajectory of the postgraduation students (education history; entrance at university); (II) difficulties to stay at the university (difficulties, resistance, resolutions); (III) suggestions and proposals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic trajectory of the postgraduation students

In this theme unit, we will approach the education trajectory of indigenous students until they enter university and the PPG. The assessments on the answers indicated 2 categories, which we will describe and discuss.

Education Trajectory

Education trajectory refers to the setbacks and hardships on their education trajectory since their villages until they enter university and the PPGs, in a globalized manner, according to the following excerpts:

I am from a generation that is not forced to deny our culture (...) My education is based on this logic, of cultural imposition (interviewee D2).

We were nine siblings, so you can imagine (...) So we did not know how to speak Portuguese. And, therefore, we were not keeping up to the level of difficulty in the school lessons, it was a shock (...) And then came prejudice (...) We arrived in Manaus (...) I got a job (...) I no longer wanted to study, I just quit (...) So, I came here [UFAM] and started

Chart 1 - Profile of the interviewed indigenous postgraduate students.

interviewee / Gender	place of origin	ethnicity	age	PPG	level
D1 (H)	Alto rio Negro	Tuyuca	59	PPGAS	Doctorate
D2 (H)	Alto rio Negro	Tukano	47	PPGAS	Doctorate
D3 (H)	Alto rio Negro	Bará	43	PPGAS	Doctorate
D4 (H)	Médio rio Negro	Munduruku	29	PPGE	Doctorate
M1 (H)	Peru	Yahua	43	PPGAS	Mastering
M2 (H)	Maués	Sateré-Mawe	35	PPGAS	Mastering
M3 (M)	Alto rio Negro	Tariana	32	PPGAS	Mastering

Chart 2 - PGs with or without indigenous postgraduates at the UFAM.

situation	PPG and the number of students
With indigenous students in the e-sic, but a different race in their registration at the PPG	PPGCASA (M=1 yellow) PPGCIFA (M=1 mixed) PPGGEOG (M=1 mixed, 1 no confirmation) PPGH (M=1 no confirmation) PROF-FILO* (M=1 no confirmation) PROFMAT** (M=2 no confirmation) PPGQ (D=2 mixed) PPGZool (M=1 mixed)
With indigenous students in the e-sic, but PPG possessed no information	PPGFIS (M=1) PPGCARP (M=1) PROFMAT** (M=3) PPGQ (D=2) PPGZool (D=1)
With indigenous students	PPGATR (D=1) PPGAS (D=6; M=13) PPGCARP (M=1) PPGE (D=3; M=1) PPGEC*** (M=1) PPGSSEA*** (M=1)
Did not provide answers, but with indigenous student in the e-sic	PPGBIONORTE* (D=1) PPGCEM (M=1) PPGE (M=1) PPGECIM (M=1) PPGECH (M=1) PPGL (M=2) PROFCIAMB* (M=6) PPGSCA (D=1; M=1)
Did not participate or did not have any indigenous students or quota students in the e-sic or in their answer to the questionnaire	PPGBIOTEC PPGCA PPGCIS PPGiMH PPGCTRA PPGCF PPGRACI PPGD PPGDIR PPGENF-MP PPGEP PPGGEO PPGIBA PPGI PPGM PPGO PROFNIT PPGPSI PPGSS

Note. Source: Research Data. PPGAS= Social Anthropology. PPGE= Education. H = Male. M = female.

Note. Data collected between December 2019 and June 2020. In the e-sic, all students are reported to be indigenous. D= doctorate. M= mastering. *PPGs that are not registered in the UFAM catalogue because they were not pole participants in a national network. **PPG suspended participation and the national network. ***PPGs deaccredited by the CAPES and finishing the orientations. In “no confirmation”, the coordination offices only made available the information that the student was not indigenous. Abbreviations PPGs “with indigenous students”: PPGATR = Tropical Agronomy. PPGAS = Social Anthropology. PPGCARP = Animal Science and Fishing Resources. PPGE = Education. PPGEC = Civil Engineering. PPGSSEA = Health, Society, and Amazonia Endemic Diseases.

studying (interviewee M3).

I had my basic education in Nova Olinda, but my real education was here. Part of it was like this, with intervals because we sometimes had to spend some time in the villages (...) We came to the state capital in 2000, which was when I started my basic education, a bit late (...) Today we do not have such difficulty (...) I believe that the minimum wage at the time was something around, 800, 700? But we lived out of that money, 5 children, it was complicated (interviewee D4).

The doctoring students exposed the difficulties they faced during their schooling process due to lack of financial resources, by the migration from village to city, by the forced abandonment of their own culture within the school environment, imposition of the dominant country (Eurocentric) and the prejudice experienced in this environment. On the other hand, one of the interviewees explained that he was always stimulated by his parents and teachers and was able to stand out during this stage of his schooling process.

By means of reports on schooling trajectories, we can see that the road to university life is permeated by difficulties stemming from the relation of imposition of western culture, fruit of colonization and coloniality, going through economic, social, and cultural difficulties, according to what was also emphasized by similar research works, such as the ones by Herbetta and Nazareno (2020) and Viana and Maheirie (2017).

Besides that, reports indicated that the schooling trajectory of these students did not follow a regular timetable, some of them had to stop for a while and then resume their studies later. According to Martín-Baró (2017), one explanation by the dominant ideology would attribute this delay to the "indolence" of Latin American indigenous peoples, which disregards the cultural and social context in which they live: the different conditions in the villages and in the city, cultural shock, and financial difficulties to support their families. Therefore, it was not a case of mere laziness to study, but rather of too many difficulties during their schooling trajectories.

Entrance at University

In this category, we found the memories of what it was like to come to the city and enter a post-graduation course at the UFAM, according to the following examples:

Third selective process, I got started on the seminars, at the nucleus in order to produce the project (...) I passed. I was approved. The mastering course cost me two years of effort despite my age and health situation (...) for the doctorate, I managed to think of my area in health (...) I came here. Two hours, and it takes me almost three hours and a half to get back home (interviewee D3).

I rented a house (...) It was a house and nothing

else. I slept on the floor for a whole month. I had no scholarship, no job (...) I left the comfort of my home, I was the lord of my home and lacked nothing (...) when I think about it, it makes me feel like going back home, you know? This is not our world (interviewee M2). /

I didn't have any problems (...) the PPGAS adopted me as a son and I adopted it too (...) they should give more opportunities to indigenous peoples (...) my family is here (...) family is an important point, more important than any post-graduation program (interviewee M1).

Unprepared even for education, psychologically unprepared (...) I didn't even want to go to class anymore (...) and there was stress (...) very bad situations. It was making me do badly on the tests (...) and then I kept blaming myself (...) underappreciating myself (interviewee M3).

Only one post-graduation student did not have any difficulties in his entrance at the university, due to the support he received from the PPGAS and to the presence of his family, which he considers to be a fundamental point, but he recognizes that more opportunities are necessary for the indigenous people. The other students went through difficulties during their permanence with the appearance of illnesses, the distance between home and the university, the lack of scholarships of any other sources of income to live in the city, the delay in getting a scholarship to pay for accommodation costs, and the lack of preparation to handle the everyday life experiences of higher education, which ends up compromising their self-esteem, increasing their stress and their impulse to give up.

The fact that most of these students feel out of place, guilty, or incapable to be in a PPG at the UFAM shows us that the analysis of Martín-Baró (2011, 2017), on the fatalistic character of the Latin American people are still valid at present: the oppressive social context leads to these subjectivities that are marked by humiliation and subjugation. In this sense, we corroborate Angnes et al. (2017) in the belief that the disregarding of indigenous cultures and their collectiveness are neglected at the universities, causing negative psychosocial effects in the lives of the students. This also characterizes an ethnical-political suffering from the underappreciation of beings, of knowledge, and of the indigenous power (Viana & Maheirie, 2017).

Thus, we found similarities with the research works by Bergamaschi et al. (2018), Herbetta and Nazareno (2020), and Viana and Maheirie (2017), who also indicated that, during the education trajectory up to higher education, the indigenous students still suffer forms of domination, and exploitation by coloniality, most often without previous knowledge of the difficulties that underlie university life, whether in graduation or in

port-graduation, according to the arguments of Oliven and Bello (2017).

Difficulties to stay at the university

In this theme unit, we present three categories that reveal how the interviewees developed strategies to stay at the university and finish their post-graduation courses.

Difficulties

We have selected excerpts that best illustrate the hardship faced by the students at the university:

So I went through a lot of difficult financial situations, sometimes I did not even have the money for the bus fares (...) with the scholarship, I managed to afford transportation costs (...) I even managed to buy a bed to sleep on, a closet. I also bought books and could really get myself organized (interviewee D4).

Having nothing to ensure my permanence is complicated. Especially for people from your own family that come from the village. These are the people that generally come to us, not just anyone (interviewee M2).

The indigenous students talked openly about the difficulties they had to face in order to stay in higher education, especially with the lack of financial assistance, which was also something observed by Oliven and Bello (2017). We agree with Angnes et al. (2017) that the difficulties the indigenous students go through are a source of suffering because of the lack of recognition of social structures, vulnerabilities, and the helplessness they have to face to come to the city and take their university course.

This experience is similar to the one found by Herbetta and Nazareno (2020): the indigenous students have they are subjectivities and cultures ignored in higher education, which is something that makes them suffer in addition to the difficulty they have with the written language and academic routine, and some of them end up dropping out of their university courses, some of them even become Alcoholics or commit suicide. To these authors, what we have here is the indigenous students' psychological suffering that comes from the condition of being an invisible and dehumanized at the university.

Regarding this scenario, we consider that the lack of permanent scholarships is a flaw in the affirmative action policies because they are not granted right after the students enter higher education, which leaves students unassisted after their entrance. According to Herbetta and Nazareno (2020) and Viana and Maheirie (2017), in order to provide solutions for the suffering of indigenous students and social injustice, it is necessary that affirmative action itself go through reformulation in order to recognize the specificities and the outlines of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and so on.

Resistance

Resistance refers to the way indigenous students deal with the adversities of taking a PPG, according to the excerpts below:

Time and maturity made me see my course, and my own project in another way (...) Maturity and time made me reflect on all this (interviewee M3).

I was very determined to do it (interviewee D2).

When you have a family (...) To guarantee your comings and goings, everything becomes possible (...) In my situation, my parents were the ones who helped me with contributions from other family members (interviewee D3).

Although they experience situations of vulnerability and difficulty during their permanence at the university, the students re-signify their trajectories and experiences as a strategy for finishing their courses. The students report the importance of time for reflection, the persistence to continue, and the importance of emotional and financial support by the family so that these students can travel constantly from their territories to the university and from the university to their territory. According to the explanation by Angnes et al. (2017) and Viana and Maheirie (2017), the indigenous identity is ruled by social, family, and collective interaction. These factors make up their sense of identity and of affiliation as individuals and as members of their group.

in this sense, we are in agreement with Martín-Baró (2017) when they argue that disideologization, as a reflexive act of examining everyday developments and denaturalizing the oppression generated by social structure is a necessary means to awareness and liberation of the oppressed. In addition, the networks of family and ethnic group support are the basis for personal empowerment. It gives these students the force and the resistance to go on and reach their goals in higher education.

Resolutions

In this category, we indicate that confrontation strategies adopted as personal resolutions that referred to the reasons for staying at the university and finished their courses, according to the following excerpts:

I'm not studying for myself. Of course it's going to help me directly but I'm doing all this for them, for my people. I want to finish this course because of them, to feel more at equal terms with the great ones (Interviewee M2).

I believe that studying can change my life (interviewee M1).

Listen, first I want to be an example to my sisters, and to my family. I want to show them (...) That we

are capable, that we can be professionals, that we can serve our community (interviewee M3).

I use everything that I learn here as a tool to think of myself as an indigenous person. Learning how to build a research instrument, a thought instrument, a writing instrument. This is what motivates me (...) This is what showed me the possibilities to create a center of medicine that is something new in Brazil (...) My degree makes my dream possible (interviewee D2).

My mother came from a poor family, she does not speak Portuguese, but she has told me that she is very proud of me for finishing this postgraduation course. I want to prove that we can be just like other people, that we can be intellectuals too. (...) That is what I'm going for in this crazy academic life (interviewee D3).

My historical responsibility. I am the first Munduruku to ever get a doctorate degree (interviewee D4).

The reports have something in common: the students believe in the power of studying to change their realities, but with different perspectives according to each experience. These significant changes serve the purpose of changing their own lives, facilitating intercultural dialogue in a non-hierarchic manner, developing new creations by the validation of academic titles, and becoming examples of realization within the academic environment for other indigenous people, as well as for people who are not indigenous.

Martín-Baró (2011, 2017) pointed at the fact that the task of liberation and development of awareness involves also the recovery of historical memory and the class practice – in our context, the latter must be reconsidered as an ethnical collective practice. Consequently, the indigenous students already possessed awareness that the benefit of a doctorate degree is not only individual. It is also something that empowers their collectiveness, and becomes a strategy for the recognition of their culture and their causes.

According to the arguments of Moura and Tamboril (2018), the confrontations and solutions for difficulties are not strictly linked to the reasons for staying at the university. There is also the complementary information that indigenous students count on their community and family to manage to stay in college say no and resist the various forms of interference that hinder their subjectivities and their lifestyles. In this sense, Calegare et al. (2017) pointed at the fact that indigenous students finish the post-graduation course for their own personal benefit, as well as for the sake of their families and communities, always paying homage to their ancestry.

Suggestions and proposals

In this theme unit, the indigenous students share

their suggestions and proposals to the university regarding what should exist and/or what should be improved to help them stay at the university according to the following excerpts:

There should be psychological support (...) Most of the indigenous students come from far away, leaving behind their families, their homes, their habits, and come to a totally different culture (...) we should give more support to the indigenous people (interviewee M1).

Affirmative action for entrance of indigenous people, quilombo people, Riverside dwellers (...) We have another logic, another epistemology (...)

Affirmative action should take into consideration epistemological facts (interviewee D2).

We should create an indigenous institute (...) We should be discussing our own policies, where we could bring our own pajé and other individuals who know our culture (interviewee M2).

A faster device for solving problems (...) Building student accommodations (...) Assistance policies for helping with the cost of educational material and books (...) If you think about it this scholarship is not really enough (interviewee D1).

You do not have access to information (...) Maybe we should publish in the media, in the UFAM website, to facilitate access for people who need it (interviewee D3).

Scholarship, accommodations, linguistic policies (...) Improvements in complementation to courses, (...) Updating in the references for discussion of indigenous policies at the university (...) Confronting prejudice at the university against students that still suffer a lot (interviewee D4).

Based on the criticisms and suggestions made by the indigenous students, we can observe that one major request regards the need for recognition of those who come from realities that are not western, and support for these people so that they can stay and adapt to the university routine. Another suggestion is that different models are created in the university in order to embrace the indigenous culture and experience: differentiated selection process, texts and orientations, as well as an indigenous institute or center. Therefore, it is necessary that the university take action against hegemonic mentality so that indigenous students have a chance for a satisfactory experience at the university.

After claims by the indigenous movement and the 1988 constitution, all stages of education make the transition from an imposition to a right. This is something that has been progressively accomplished and the result is the appreciation of identities and lifestyles, as well as the promotion and construction of dialogue between

diverse epistemologies (Calegare et al., 2017; Pereira et al., 2020; Viana & Maheirie, 2017). In this sense, it is important that affirmative action for the permanence of indigenous people at the university be specific because of their reality, culture, and subjectivity that are unique for every people. And it is necessary to try and respect diversity rather than trying to fit everyone into the same uniform universal standard (Angnes et al., 2017; Bergamaschi et al., 2018).

The proposals of the students reflect the reality of affirmative action policies. According to the arguments by Herbetta and Nazareno (2020), the struggles for a more egalitarian, fair society must be conducted in a critical way in collaboration with indigenous peoples, in order to promote democracy and rights for all society structures. They also argue that for us to have democracy in an ideological society, it is necessary for us to have our dominating, exploitative ideologies exposed, antipopular ideologies that are present in everyday life. According to what was defended by Martín-Baró (2017), it is necessary to disideologize oppression by means of the development of knowledge (power) from the perspective of all peoples.

In order to do so, it is necessary that we satisfy the necessities of oppressed peoples, and construct a new way of thinking that is ruled by solidarity and collectiveness. And finally, we need to construct a new national social and popular personality, in the terms of Martín-Baró (2017). Thus, Moura and Tamboril (2018) argued that psychology as a science must act and fight for the autonomy of indigenous peoples, contributing to social change towards a new reality.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The permanence affirmative action policies, although they minimally help the students and contribute to the presence of some of them in academic environments, still leaves them in situations of vulnerability. Not only in the financial sense, but also in the symbolic sense because by this way of regarding the culture of indigenous peoples we also underappreciate and submit them to western logics for them to have their existences validated in academia.

The discourse is presented and discussed in this research work exposed the financial, pedagogical, cultural, and so for difficulties faced by the indigenous postgraduation students at the UFAM, exposing the lack of preparation for higher education in order to guarantee the permanence of these students with dignity, and because it is a system based on a hegemonic logic. Consequently, they shouldn't suffer diverse forms of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion that we might regard as the perpetuation of coloniality in everyday life.

On the other hand, being in a PPG means occupying a place of projection and expanding indigenous knowledge to the society around the indigenous

peoples, in order to change the false hierarchy ranking the different types of knowledge. In this sense, despite the fragility of the affirmative action policies targeting indigenous postgraduation students, they revealed that they resist in their attempt to exist in the university logic of postgraduation. They face difficulties and get their energy from their social relations such as family, community, and people. And then they managed to stay at the university by means of a commitment to themselves, to their families, to their ethnicities, and to their indigenous causes.

This study, despite going deep in the indigenous discourses, had a limited number of participants (most of them male), due to the fact that not only the students are unaware of the university organs. The PPGs also do not know about their indigenous students, and their unwillingness to participate in post-graduation courses. Thus, there are new possibilities for future research works investigate the reason for the lack of complete information on quota and/or indigenous students, as well as the lack of engagement in answering questions for research works on ethnic racial themes. It is also a good idea to research further on schooling topics, gender differences in education trajectories, re-existence modes, and their relations with colonial structures.

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