







AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PUBLIC POLICIES AT THE FEDERAL TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF PARANÁ: REFLECTIONS ON THE QUOTA POLICY AND HETERO-IDENTIFICATION BOARDS¹

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to reflect on the admission of Black and Indigenous students based on the hetero-identification panels conducted at the Federal Technological University of Paraná during the 2024 entrance exam. The first part will discuss how structural racism is entrenched in our society, marginalizing the Black and Indigenous populations. Next, the history of the Federal Technological University of Paraná will be outlined, emphasizing its origins as a School of Apprentice Craftsmen, designed to serve impoverished communities and train labor for the industry. The institution attained university status in 2003 and implemented racial quotas under Law No. 2,711 of 2012, but established its hetero-identification boards in 2024. Finally, the data from the initial hetero-identification boards for the 2024 entrance exam will be presented, concluding that there is a significant number of absentees, while the majority of students are validated, underscoring the importance of hetero-identification boards in ensuring the effectiveness of public policy.

Keywords: Hetero-identification boards; Affirmative action policies; Federal Technological University of Paraná.

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POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DE AÇÕES AFIRMATIVAS NA UNIVERSIDADE TECNOLÓGICA FEDERAL DO PARANÁ: REFLEXÕES SOBRE A POLÍTICA DE COTAS E AS BANCAS DE HETEROIDENTIFICAÇÃO

Resumo: O objetivo deste artigo é refletir sobre o ingresso de estudantes negros e indígenas a partir das bancas de heteroidentificação realizadas na Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná, no vestibular de 2024. Na primeira parte, será apresentado de que forma o racismo estrutural se consolida na nossa sociedade, marginalizando a população negra e indígena. Em seguida, o histórico da Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná, ressaltando seu início como Escola de Aprendizes Artífices, voltado a população em situação de pobreza e criada para a formação de mão de obra para a indústria. A Instituição se torna Universidade em 2003 e inicia as cotas raciais a partir da Lei nº 2.711 de 2012, instituindo, porém, suas bancas de heteroidentificação a partir de 2024. Ao final, serão apresentados os dados das primeiras bancas de heteroidentificação do vestibular de 2024, concluindo-se que há um grande número de ausentes, e a maioria de estudantes são validados (as), ressaltando-se a importância das bancas de heteroidentificação para a garantia da efetividade da política pública.

Palavras-chave: Bancas de heteroidentificação; Políticas afirmativas; Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná.

POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS DE ACCIÓN AFIRMATIVA EN LA UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA FEDERAL DE PARANÁ: REFLEXIONES ACERCA DE LA POLÍTICA DE CUOTAS Y LAS COMISIONES DE HETEROIDENTIFICACIÓN

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar a respecto del ingreso de estudiantes negros e indígenas originarios de comisiones de heteroidentificación realizados en la Universidad Tecnológica Federal de Paraná, en el examen de admisión de 2024. En la primera parte se presentará cómo se consolida el racismo estructural en nuestra sociedad, marginando a la población negra e indígena. A continuación, la historia de la Universidad Tecnológica Federal de Paraná, destacando sus inicios como Escuela de Aprendices de Artífices, dirigida a la población en situación de pobreza y creada para formar mano de obra para la industria. La Institución se convirtió en Universidad en 2003 e inició cuotas raciales a partir de la Ley Nº 2.711 de 2012, estableciendo, sin embargo, sus comisiones de heteroidentificación a partir de 2024. Al finalizar, se presentarán datos de las primeras comisiones de heteroidentificación del examen de ingreso de 2024, concluyendo que existe un gran número de ausentes, y la mayoría de los estudiantes están validados, resaltando la importancia de la verificación para garantizar la efectividad de la ley.

Palabras clave: Comisiones de heteroidentificación; Políticas afirmativas; Universidad Tecnológica Federal de Paraná.

Introduction

The objective of this article is to reflect on the admission of Black and Indigenous students through the hetero-identification committees conducted at the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UTFPR) during the 2024 entrance exam. This research was carried out within the scope of studies and readings of the Research Group of the Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies Center at UTFPR. It should be noted that the hetero-identification committees for undergraduate programs began to be implemented in 2024, following the approval of COUNI Resolution No. 122, dated December 19, 2023, with UTFPR being one of the last universities to regulate this anti-fraud mechanism in racial affirmative action policies. Thus, this study begins with a reflection on structural racism in Brazil and the resistance strategies employed by these social groups to combat racism and secure their rights, particularly those related to the educational system. Next, we will reflect on the importance of hetero-identification committees and their initial implementation process at UTFPR.

Considering affirmative action policies for Black and Indigenous populations in this country is a complex endeavor, as such initiatives require confronting numerous historical wounds that Brazilian society is often unwilling to address. Claudete Alves, in her book *Negros: o Brasil nos deve milhões – 120 anos de uma abolição inacabada*, defines affirmative action policies as:

“[...] a set of measures in the public and/or private sphere, capable of creating special and temporary conditions so that socially recognized discriminated groups can achieve emancipation, autonomy, and equality of opportunity” (Alves, 2008, p. 81).

Thus, we understand that the existence of such measures implies the acknowledgment that there are discriminated groups in our country; in other words, creating policies for Black and Indigenous populations is to recognize that Brazil is a racist country. Indeed, it is not without reason that, even with statistical data exposing racial inequality in Brazil, there remain significant challenges both in discussing such measures to combat racism and promote equity, and in implementing them. An example of this is the various attacks that the Racial Equality Statute, approved in 2010, and the Quota Law of 2012 have faced and continue to face before and after their enactment. Let us consider the following excerpt:

The principle of political and legal equality of citizens is a fundamental cornerstone of the Republic and one of the pillars upon which the Brazilian Constitution rests. This principle is threatened with extinction by various provisions in the Quota Law Bill PL 731/1999 and the Racial Equality Statute Bill PL 3.198/2000, which are soon to be submitted to a final decision in the National Congress (Full text [...], 2006).

The words cited are the opening lines of the “Manifesto Against Racial Quotas” (2006), which was widely disseminated and supported by several Brazilian personalities and intellectuals from diverse fields of knowledge, in the context of the debate over the approval of public policies aimed at racial equity. Alleging unconstitutionality, the authors of the manifesto argued that the existence of such laws would violate fundamental principles of Brazilian legislation, such as the principle that all citizens are equal before the law; that the government is prohibited from creating distinctions or preferences among citizens; that no one shall be discriminated against or privileged due to birth, age, ethnicity, race, color, sex, marital status, rural or urban labor, religion, political or philosophical convictions, physical or mental disability, having served a sentence, or any particular condition; or that the State must guarantee access for all citizens to all levels of education, according to each individual’s capacities.

The Brazilian government has historically adopted quota policies, ranging from the various “benefits” granted to white immigrants who came to Brazil after the abolition of slavery, to the implementation of Law 5.645, nicknamed the “Ox Law,” which was in force from 1968 to 1985 and reserved 50% of the seats in Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine programs at public institutions for landowners and their children, whether or not they owned land (Brazil, 1968). In other words, for nearly two decades, the State guaranteed university places for the children of the Brazilian rural elite, and there are no records of manifestos expressing indignation or protest against this law.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the main “issue” surrounding affirmative action policies does not lie in the idea of reducing inequalities, but in the perpetuation of racism. That is, for a segment of the population, the problem is not the reservation of places per se, but the reservation of places for Black and Indigenous people. We believe that what concerned those who spoke out in 2006, and continues to concern people today, was not the false argument that the constitution would be violated, but rather the potential loss of privileges associated with Brazilian whiteness, especially those linked to education, access, and permanence in universities. As Black and Indigenous people gain access to these spaces, crucial or even structural changes can occur in the country.

Some of these changes could include the fact that whiteness would no longer constitute the majority in positions of power in Brazil, would no longer control intellectual production in the country, would no longer dominate narratives about Brazil, and would no longer occupy the top of the social hierarchy while claiming that such dominance was based on merit rather than the racism that structures the nation.

On Public Policies in Education for Black and Indigenous Populations in Brazil: A Trajectory of Resistance and Struggles for Rights

As previously mentioned, the objective of affirmative action is to reduce or eliminate inequalities, providing conditions for socially recognized discriminated groups to achieve equitable opportunities.

According to IBGE (2022a), in the study *Social Inequalities by Color or Race in Brazil*, the Black population presents the worst indicators in all areas analyzed, such as housing, employment, safety, sanitation, and education. Regarding Indigenous populations, the context is also concerning. According to the 2022 Demographic Census *Indigenous Peoples: Literacy, Birth Records, and Household Characteristics*, although illiteracy rates have decreased, there is little to celebrate. Despite 84.9% of the 1.2 million Indigenous people aged 15 or older being literate in 2022, up from 76.6% in 2010, this figure remains below the national average of 93.0%. Another census indicator concerns basic sanitation, which showed no significant improvement, as the majority of Indigenous people, whether residing in private permanent households or on Indigenous lands, lived with at least one form of precarious or absent basic sanitation, related to water supply, sewage disposal, or waste management (IBGE, 2022b).

These outcomes are the result of racism, a system of oppression that denies rights and discriminates, either consciously or unconsciously, based on race or color (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 12). In Brazil, this phenomenon occurs due to the very structure of society, which was built through the exploitation and marginalization of Black and Indigenous populations.

Among the various affirmative action policies that could be developed for these groups, it is clear that social movements have always fought primarily in the field of education, believing that, given the structural organization of Brazil, this would be the most effective path to promote social transformations in the country.

It is well known that shortly after European arrival in Brazil, the first enslaved labor force was Indigenous, predominant in the 16th century and lasting until the 17th century, when

it was gradually replaced by Black labor. This shift occurred for several reasons, including high Indigenous mortality due to cultural estrangement and diseases contracted through contact with Portuguese and African peoples, as well as the Catholic Church's interest in increasing the number of faithful by catechizing Indigenous people. Consequently, the process to obtain Black enslaved labor began, continuing until the 19th century. Brazil thus became the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery, through the signing of the Golden Law (Lei Áurea) in 1888.

It is also recognized that this abolition movement only occurred because the system of exploitation was no longer economically advantageous, despite the persistent resistance or "hostility" of Indigenous and Black populations.

Among Indigenous peoples, resistance manifested in religious refusal to undergo Catholic baptism and catechesis, acts of anthropophagy, escapes to quilombos, and countless conflicts (Oliveira & Freire, 2006, p. 53). Similarly, Black resistance, according to Abdias do Nascimento (2016), was strong and organized, expressed in diverse violent and nonviolent forms, such as abortion, suicide, crime, flight, insurrection, revolt, faith, and *banzo*, spreading across Brazilian territory from the arrival of the first slave ships, throughout the colonial period, and continuing to this day. By the time Princess Isabel signed the Golden Law, few enslaved people remained, as many had sought refuge in quilombos or had already obtained manumission, the result of decades of struggle (Nascimento, 2016).

Another factor influencing the signing of the Golden Law was pressure from commercial partners, such as England, which sought to develop a consumer market in Brazil, something incompatible with enslaved labor.

Furthermore, during this period, eugenics theories gained prominence—a movement created by Francis Galton, cousin and follower of Charles Darwin, in the second half of the 19th century, which aimed to achieve the "improvement" of the human race. These ideas emerged from the works of:

To purify the race. To perfect man. To evolve with each generation. To surpass oneself. To be healthy. To be beautiful. To be strong. [...] To be the best, the most capable, the most adapted, it is necessary to compete with and defeat the weaker through competition. Race struggle. For politics, class struggle" (Diwan, 2007, p. 21).

In the Brazilian context, according to Pietra Diwan (2007), this theory consolidated a project aimed at making Brazil a country of whites and, therefore, a "developed" and "pure"

nation, legitimizing the idea of the inferiority of Black and Indigenous populations and the superiority of the white population. To achieve this, it was necessary to suppress and exclude Black and Indigenous people from Brazilian socioeconomic and cultural dynamics.

Considering that, due to the large number of Africans forcibly brought to Brazil and the rapes of Black women, which led to a forced process of miscegenation, the Brazilian population in the 19th century was predominantly Black, one of the measures taken to “whiten” the country was to abolish slavery without providing any conditions for the integration of formerly enslaved individuals into post-abolition Brazilian society.

According to Guerreiro Ramos (1957) and Gisele de Alencar (2011), this project of exclusion and marginalization of Black people manifested both in symbolic and concrete spheres. In the ideological sphere, a load of pejorative meanings about being Black developed in collective consciousness and imagination, often supported by laws, such as the ban on practicing capoeira in 1890 or the prohibition of practicing Candomblé, stipulated in the 1824 Constitution. In the concrete sphere, a range of legal strategies was also implemented to prevent any possibility of survival or rupture of the marginalized condition of Black populations, including immigration policies that encouraged the arrival of white Europeans while prohibiting Black people from entering Brazil in 1890; the law facilitating credit for white immigrants to purchase land; and the Vagrancy Law of 1941, which facilitated the mass incarceration of Black people, as it stipulated the imprisonment of those without verified employment found in bars or on the streets—people who were predominantly Black.

Abdias do Nascimento (2016) further recalls that in 1911, in London, during the First Universal Congress of Races, scientist João Batista de Lacerda stated, after reflecting on contemporary immigration policies and the power of miscegenation and “Aryan blood,” that by the year 2012, the Black population would be extinct in Brazil (Nascimento, 2016, pp. 86–87).

Regarding the Indigenous population, in addition to mass killings during so-called “just wars,” that is, wars considered defensive or as punishment for the practice of cannibalism, attempts at extermination also occurred ideologically. Many Indigenous peoples were “aldeados,” meaning those willing to accept European customs, be baptized and catechized, and be relocated to areas closer to the colonizers. They then lived near Jesuit missions, serving the interests of the Portuguese government. Under the colonizers’ oversight, Indigenous people were subordinated, and although not enslaved, they worked for their subsistence and the

enrichment of the missions. Additionally, they were constantly called upon to participate in wars against hostile Indigenous groups or European conquerors (Almeida, 2000).

Stereotypes about Indigenous peoples were also widely disseminated in Brazil due to the whitening process, including generalizations about their character, labeling them as savage, lazy, unproductive, or claiming they should remain secluded in forests and not access universities or other spaces, being accused of not being “true” Indigenous people if they pursued education or work outside the villages.

By undermining any possibility of mobility for the survivors of slavery, proponents believed that Brazil could become a country of whites within a few years. From this racist perspective, the Brazilian nation-state project emerged, rendering invisible all scientific, technological, and cultural contributions of Black and Indigenous peoples, reducing them to merely strong arms “accustomed” to manual labor, portrayed as savage, submissive, and politically apathetic.

In this context, reflecting on the Brazilian educational system, as well as the society in which it is embedded, means examining an institution built upon racist values, operating under a project of exclusion that affects both the knowledge of Black and Indigenous peoples and their physical presence in schools and higher education. Some laws that consolidated this project are worth highlighting.

Regarding basic education and the Black population, we have: Decree No. 1,331 of February 17, 1854, which regulated primary and secondary schools in the capital, making education free but prohibiting enslaved individuals from attending public schools nationwide (Brazil, 1854); Decree No. 7,031 of September 6, 1878, which allowed Black people to attend public school only at night, dependent on their enslavers’ goodwill and their physical conditions after a long day of work (Brazil, 1878); and the Rivadávia Correa Reform of 1911, which, intending to “improve the clientele” of public schools, implemented tuition fees and admission exams, effectively making access to education for Black people nearly impossible (Almeida & Sanchez, 2016, p. 238).

Even after the implementation of mandatory, public, and free basic education for all in 1961, through the Law of Guidelines and Bases, Black populations continued to face obstacles in obtaining quality education. Although they could access schools, they often could not remain due to racist attitudes within the school environment (humiliation and discrimination) and curricula that erased Black knowledge and contributions to the development of Brazil. Thus,

exclusion of Black people from the educational system occurs not only physically but also symbolically, through epistemicide. This concept, coined by Boaventura Santos (1996) and observed in Brazilian society by Sueli Carneiro (2005), refers to the systemic erasure of practices, productions, ways of being, languages, and knowledge produced by oppressed groups. It invalidates African and Indigenous worldviews, labeling them as savage and primitive. Therefore, even when these groups access the educational system, their permanence is compromised, leading to dropout. Carneiro (2008) highlights this phenomenon.

In this dynamic, the educational system has been constituted, almost entirely, for those who are racially marginalized, as a source of multiple processes that undermine cognitive capacity and intellectual confidence. This phenomenon occurs through the lowering of self-esteem caused by racism and discrimination in the school environment; through the denial of Black people's status as knowledge subjects, by devaluing, denying, or concealing the contributions of the African continent and the African diaspora to humanity's cultural heritage; through the imposition of cultural whitening; and through the production of academic failure and school dropout (Carneiro, 2008).

The result of this movement is the inequalities that plague Brazilian society. According to IBGE data (2005), among so-called absolute illiterates over the age of 15, 7.1% are white and 16.9% are Black. Regarding those classified as functionally illiterate, 18.4% are white and 64.6% are Black. In basic education, a strong Black presence is observed in elementary school, with a decline in high school, where the white population corresponds to 63.7% and the Black population to 49.3%. In higher education, according to IBGE (2014), the presence of white students was 23.4%, while that of Black students was 10.7% (Santos; Pinto; Chirinéa, 2018).

Considering the Indigenous population, the reality is even more complex, as they were, until recently, almost completely excluded from the educational system. Observing this trajectory is essential to understand that there has been—and still is—a process of exclusion of Black and Indigenous populations from the Brazilian educational system and, consequently, from Brazilian society. However, it is also important to recognize that Black and Indigenous resistance has always been active since the colonial period, continuously fighting against racism in Brazilian society, particularly by advocating measures to guarantee constitutional rights for all.

Nilma Lino Gomes (2017), in her work *Movimento negro educador*, emphasizes that throughout history, among the various forms of resistance to submission to the imposed system,

the struggle for access and retention of Black people in education has been one of the most intense, as education is understood as an effective means to combat racism and, consequently, reduce inequalities. Therefore, it remains a priority agenda of the Black Movement.

During the period of slavery, although public education was denied to Black people, there existed a small group of Black intellectuals such as Luís Gama, Maria Firmina dos Reis, Cruz e Sousa, among others. This was possible because they could attend private institutions or receive domestic instruction. Reports indicate that some slaveholders provided instruction to enslaved people to perform specific tasks (Almeida; Sanchez, 2016, p. 237). Additionally, there were Black organizations in which the enslaved population was taught literacy and arithmetic, while also preserving cultural and religious practices. Instruction was also offered by priests, who, despite aiming for catechization, enabled literacy for some enslaved individuals, who would in turn teach others. Learning could also occur by observing the lessons of the “sinhas” on plantations (Silva; Araújo, 2005).

After abolition, the Black population began to organize as the Black Movement, demanding public actions while also proposing initiatives independently in response to state neglect. One of these organizations was the Brazilian Black Front (Frente Negra Brasileira, FNB), which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was active in politics, media, culture, and education. Regarding education, according to Petrônio Domingues (2008), the FNB implemented the first school with a structured pedagogy directed toward Black students.

In the 1970s, the Black Movement strengthened and acted more systematically within Brazilian society, seeking strategies to more effectively combat racism. It was during this period that a small presence of Black activists from the movement could be observed in positions of power, including universities. In these spaces, they participated not only as students but also as researchers and professors, bringing knowledge derived from Black and popular wisdom into a racist environment. This was the case for Lélia Gonzalez, Beatriz do Nascimento, Luiza Bairros, Gizêlda Melo do Nascimento, Abdias do Nascimento, Guerreiro Ramos, Milton Santos, among others, who strategically and resiliently occupied academic spaces, fostering a Black intellectuality that continues to circulate and shape Brazilian thought today.

During the 1980s, in the redemocratization period, Black Movement activists occupied positions as city councilors, deputies, and senators, fighting for anti-racist legislation and various projects to combat racial discrimination.

A significant milestone was the March of Zumbi dos Palmares Against Racism for Citizenship and Life, held in 1995 in Brasília, which resulted in the *Program for the Overcoming of Racism* presented to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. This document demanded affirmative actions for Black people. On the same day, the president signed a decree establishing the Interministerial Working Group for the Valorization of the Black Population, marking the first time the head of state officially recognized that Brazil was a racist country. According to Delton Felipe and Lima (2022), the march generated a national and international agenda to discuss racism in Brazil and strategies to combat it, including quotas for Black students in universities and the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture in schools.

Politicians and policies such as Abdias do Nascimento and Benedita da Silva proposed, during this period, laws establishing racial quotas in universities, which were only enacted in 2012 under President Dilma Rousseff. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, before the law came into force, Black Movement activists, in collaboration with university militancy, were already considering ways to implement a quota system. Consequently, institutions such as the State University of Rio de Janeiro, the State University of Bahia, the State University of Londrina, and the University of Brasília implemented racial quotas, with UNB being the first federal university to do so in 2004 (Santos; Scopinho, 2016).

Indigenous social movements were also present at crucial moments in Brazilian society, resulting in the conquest of rights such as cultural recognition, legal rights, and land rights for Indigenous peoples. The state was obligated to ensure these rights, as enshrined in the 1988 Constitution, including the right to Indigenous school education, guaranteed by the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB), which established differentiated, bilingual education on Indigenous lands. In 2002, Indigenous peoples secured the right to manage their own lives, recognized in the Civil Code, as they were previously considered legally incapable.

Additionally, both Black and Indigenous movements achieved the enactment of laws such as 10.639/03, which amended the LDB to mandate the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture; 11.645/08, which mandates the teaching of Indigenous history and culture; 12.288/10, which defines the Statute of Racial Equality; and 12.711/12, which establishes racial quotas (Brazil, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2012).

Racial Affirmative Action Policies at the Federal University of Technology – Paraná

After presenting the historical background of the public policies of affirmative action in education for Black and Indigenous people in Brazil, this section aims to reflect on the implementation of these policies at the Federal University of Technology – Paraná (UTFPR).

The Escola de Aprendizes Artífices do Paraná, in Curitiba, was inaugurated on January 16, 1910, occupying a building on Praça Carlos Gomes, previously belonging to the Conservatório de Belas Artes, founded by Paulo Ildefonso d'Assumpção, who was appointed director of the new institution. His brother, Pamphilo d'Assumpção, president of the Paraná Commercial and Industrial Association, played a significant role in gaining the support of the main political and economic sectors of the state. Initially, courses in tailoring, carpentry, and shoemaking were offered, followed by courses in mechanical locksmithing and saddlery.

In 1930, with the rise of President Getúlio Vargas, the Escola de Aprendizes Artífices do Paraná received new infrastructure in line with the governmental ideology, which encouraged the strengthening of civic values, discipline, physical vigor, and work. In 1938, the operation of night courses in the so-called liceus was regulated, requiring students to be at least 16 years old, of good conduct, workers, and free from contagious diseases (Leite, 2010, p. 37).

With Decree No. 4,127, of February 25, 1942, the Liceu Industrial do Paraná was renamed Escola Técnica de Curitiba. Industrial courses, aimed at training highly skilled artisans, lasted four years and allowed enrollment of youths between 12 and 17 years old.

Exceptions included courses in sewing and interior decoration, predominantly attended by women, who were also required to take Domestic Economy courses, aiming to prepare them for domestic roles.

Thus, the institution had a technical-educational character with a clear gender-based division of labor between men and women.

In 1944, the Ministry of Education and Health allocated 1 million cruzeiros to the Escola Técnica de Curitiba for the acquisition of machinery and equipment. President Getúlio Vargas signed Decree No. 16,399, declaring the properties around the institution to be of public utility, expropriating areas owned by private individuals, which generated local resistance. In 1946, various reforms were carried out, including the creation of a boarding facility for students from

rural areas, who were provided with meals while attending the first and second years of the basic industrial course (Leite, 2010, p. 47).

In the same year, the Brazil-US Industrial Education Commission (CBAI) was created, a bilateral cooperation program aimed at training teachers for industrial education. The development of general culture courses at the Technical School caused friction between teachers with higher theoretical education and workshop masters with lower schooling, resulting in the creation of differentiated spaces, including physical ones, for these professionals. Courses requiring higher technical skills or physical strength were predominantly male.

On February 16, 1959, President Juscelino Kubitschek enacted Law No. 3,552, transforming industrial and technical schools into autonomous institutions. The Escola Técnica de Curitiba became Escola Técnica Federal do Paraná (Leite, 2010, p. 55).

On April 25, 1961, President Jânio Quadros enacted Decree No. 50,492, transforming the Basic Industrial Course into the Industrial Gymnasium. Law No. 4,024, the National Education Guidelines and Framework (LDB), divided technical secondary education, comprising industrial, agricultural, and commercial courses, into four-year Gymnasial Education and at least three-year Collegiate Education (Leite, 2010, p. 56).

On October 5, 1973, Engineering Operation courses were approved, offering 40 spots in Civil Construction. By 1976, the Escola Técnica Federal do Paraná offered programs in Civil Construction Engineering, Electronics, and Electrotechnics.

Law No. 6,545, of June 30, 1978, established a “verticalized” education system, integrating secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate education in technological areas oriented toward industrial activity (Brazil, 1978). Thus, the Escola Técnica Federal do Paraná became the Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica do Paraná.

The transformation from the Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica do Paraná into the Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná occurred on September 15, 2003, through Decree No. 6,096, of April 24, which established the Program to Support Plans for Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI), aiming to expand access to and permanence in higher education.

Currently, the Federal University of Technology – Paraná has 13 campuses, standing out in programs in the exact and technological sciences. Observing its origins, the presence of Black students can be noted since the time of the Escola de Aprendizes Artífices do Paraná, when the institution had a vocational character and served children in vulnerable social situations.

Figure 1 – Escola de Aprendizes Artífices do Paraná



Source: (Curitiba, 2022).

Today, however, after 21 years of history as a university, this Black presence is not prominent, especially in the campuses located in the countryside. UTFPR implemented social quotas in 2008, reserving 50% of places for students coming from public schools. This was 30% higher than the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) regarding so-called social quotas, and racial quotas were only implemented in 2013, following Law No. 12,711/2012, known as the “Quota Law,” which establishes:

Article 1 – Federal institutions of higher education linked to the Ministry of Education shall reserve, in each selection process for undergraduate courses, by course and shift, at least 50% (fifty percent) of their places for students who have completed their entire high school education in public schools.

Sole Paragraph – In filling the vacancies referred to in the head of this article, 50% (fifty percent) shall be reserved for students from families with a per capita income equal to or lower than 1.5 times the minimum wage (one and a half times the minimum wage) (Brazil, 2012).

Even so, the university did not conduct heteroidentification panels, relying solely on the self-declaration of candidates who identified as Black or Brown. Due to pressure from the academic community, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the entry of Black faculty members and administrative staff into the institution—who joined under Law 12.990/14, which guarantees 20% of federal public service positions for Black individuals—there emerged a push for the implementation of heteroidentification panels at the university. The UTFPR was one of the last universities not to conduct such panels at the undergraduate level, which was necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the quota law.

Consequently, COUNI/UTFPR Resolution No. 122, dated December 19, 2023, was approved, establishing the procedures for the implementation and operation of heteroidentification commissions and panels in selection processes for undergraduate, postgraduate, and public service examinations at UTFPR. According to this resolution, the panels cover all university selection processes and stipulate:

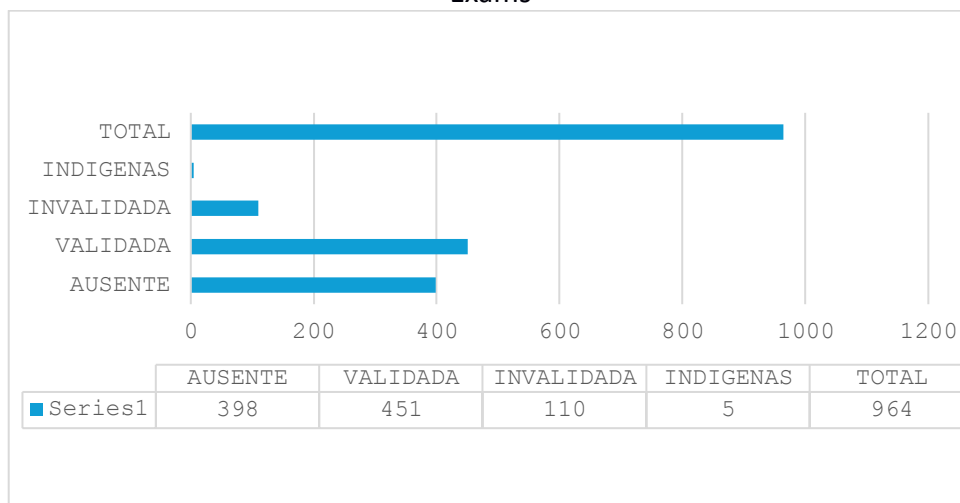
Art. 3. The target audience of affirmative action policies for the reservation of vacancies for Black or Brown candidates is defined in Article 3 of Law No. 12,711, of August 29, 2012, and Law No. 12,990, of June 9, 2014 (UTFPR, 2023).

The heteroidentification committee is a mechanism for validating or invalidating a candidate's self-declaration. An odd number of members is designated to assess the candidate's self-declaration.

The first two heteroidentification procedures in undergraduate admissions were carried out during the 2024 entrance exams. As this process was conducted by the Foundation for the Support of the Federal Technological University of Paraná (FUNTEF), the committee included both the most experienced members and others from different institutions with expertise, research, and study in the field of racial affirmative action policies. The committees operated synchronously and online, covering multiple UTFPR campuses, with three members per committee.

The two entrance exams evaluated a total of 964 candidates, as shown in the following chart:

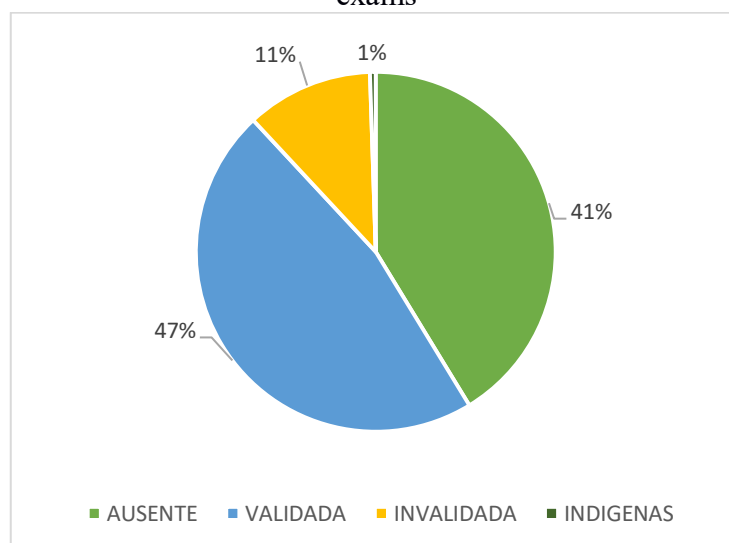
Chart 1 – Candidates in the Heteroidentification Committees for the Two 2024 Entrance Exams



Source: Organized by the authors, based on data from the UTFPR entrance exams

It should be noted that these data include self-declared Indigenous candidates, even though they did not undergo heteroidentification panels, since their evaluation, unlike that of Black and Brown candidates, is based on ethnic belonging within their community and ancestry. Of the total, there were only five Indigenous candidates.

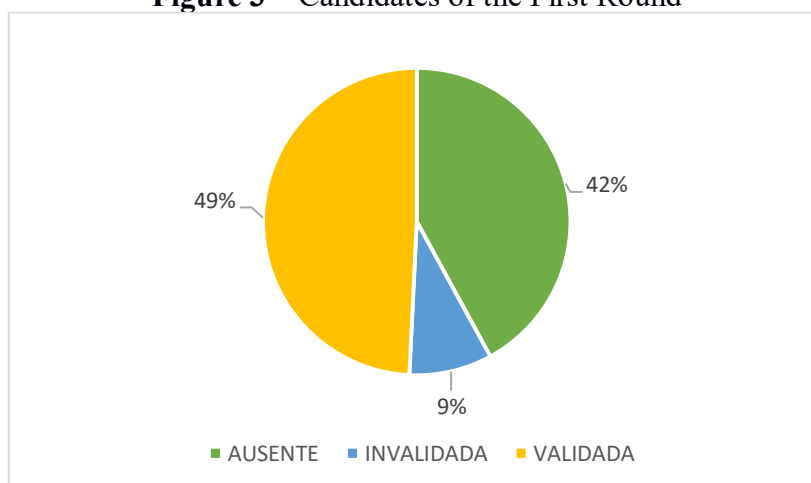
Figure 2 – Candidates evaluated in the heteroidentification panels for the two 2024 entrance exams



Source: Organized by the authors, based on data from the UTFPR entrance exams

In these figures from the two selection processes, we observe a significant number of absentees (41%). The number of validated candidates is 47%, while those not validated account for 11%, highlighting the importance of conducting the hetero-identification panels. The graphs for each individual process will now be analyzed. In the summer entrance exam, held at the beginning of the year, there were 395 students.

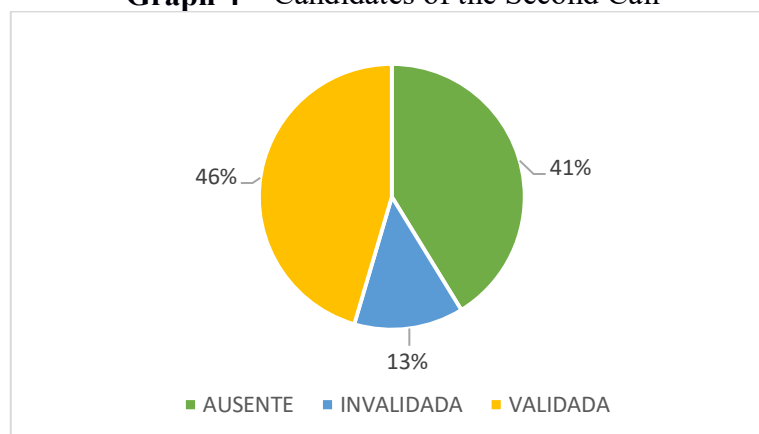
Figure 3 – Candidates of the First Round



Source: Organized by the authors, based on data from the UTFPR entrance exam

Of these students, 42% were absent, 49% were validated, and 9% were not validated. In this call, 5 Indigenous candidates registered. It can be observed that 58% of the students participated in the hetero-identification panels, slightly more than half. Now, regarding the second selection process, the situation is as follows:

Graph 4 – Candidates of the Second Call



Source: Organized by the authors, based on data from the UTFPR entrance exam

In this process, 41% of the candidates were absent, just 1% less than in the first call. The number of validated candidates was 46%, representing a 3% decrease compared to the first call. Thirteen percent were invalidated, an increase of 3% relative to the first call.

This number of candidates is significantly lower than the overall competition, indicating that the presence of Black students under the Quota Law has increased, but remains much lower than at its origin, in the Escola de Aprendizizes Artífices.

There is still much to improve at UTFPR regarding ethnic-racial issues. Most candidates self-declare as Black or Brown, often stating that they are “not dark enough to be considered Black, nor light enough to be considered White,” reflecting insecurity regarding identity assertion. The invocation of mixed ancestry is frequently used as a strategy to secure a place, with many of these candidates being White. Additionally, the university lacks racial literacy and programs for the retention of this demographic. In 2024, the Office of Student Affairs (Pró-Reitoria de Assuntos Estudantis) was approved, and discussions are currently underway concerning racial diversity (Black, Indigenous, and women students) to establish a directorate dedicated to this agenda within the Office, which is still in its early stages.

However, the consolidation of affirmative action policies still faces multiple barriers, including budget constraints for NEABI initiatives, whether for training, research, community engagement with Indigenous, Quilombola, Black, and Brown students, or work with the wider academic community and other university professionals. These efforts aim to mitigate structural racism, which persists across various university spaces and society at large.

Final Considerations

In this text, we traced the history of structural racism in Brazil and observed that Black and Indigenous people have historically been excluded from both material conditions and education in the country, creating a clear reparative debt.

However, this reparative action only began to take form through policies established by Law No. 12.711/2012, which mandates racial quotas in federal universities and institutes. Some universities started implementing racial quotas as early as 2003, recognizing them as a constitutional guarantee. UTFPR complies with the Quota Law, but it only formally structured and regulated the heteroidentification committees in 2023, implementing them in the 2024 entrance exams.

Although UTFPR's historical trajectory shows that it was initially founded not as a university but as the Escola de Aprendizes Artífices in 1910, created to serve children in vulnerable situations through social quotas that benefited Black students, today, a century later, UTFPR cannot be considered a Black or Indigenous university. As we observed, like most higher education institutions in Brazil, UTFPR systematically distanced Black people from the university, even becoming one of the last institutions in the country to formalize quota policies, which officially began in 2024, preceded only by isolated initiatives from professionals advocating for diversity within the institution.

The activities of the Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies Centers (NEABIs) at the university also began institutionally rather late, with an initial organization in 2023.

Therefore, we conclude that efforts must go beyond merely granting access to the university; they must also ensure the retention and support of Black and Indigenous students throughout their academic journey.

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