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# From Quilombo to Bairro: The Maintenance of a Permanent Afro-Brazilian Underclass

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**From Quilombo to Bairro:  
The Maintenance of a Permanent  
Afro-Brazilian Underclass**

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## **Abstract**

Inequalities in access to education, as a result of institutionalized racism and social exclusion, are contributing to the maintenance of a permanent Afro-Brazilian underclass. Beiru, a community that sits on the periphery of Salvador, Bahia is an example of what the results of this physical and social marginalization is doing to Afro-Brazilian communities all over the Northeast. In my research, I sought to gain an understanding of what the young Afro-Brazilians that attend secondary school at the Escola Estadual de Zumbi dos Palmares and youth in the community are getting from these schools (in terms of what they are learning, what resources they have, self-esteem building, and encouragement), what they are bringing to the schools (as far as family background, living conditions, environment, desire to learn, behavior), and what alternatives exist for them in their community. What I found was that the difficulties in these students' lives, such as having children or having to work at a young age, makes it hard for them to continue moving at a normal rate in their education or see a reason to use school as a vehicle to change their lives. This is compounded by their moving through a school system that is set up to maintain the status quo and continue the cycle of poverty in the community. Finally, I found that there are no organizations or opportunities set up to offer alternatives to youth in the community.

## Introduction

The institutionalized racism, and the refusal to address it, has maintained a permanent Afro-Brazilian underclass. This underclass is largely maintained through socialization to failure. As Paulo Freire explains in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor."<sup>1</sup> Brazilian dominant culture holds white, middle/upper-class culture at the center and Black culture on the margins, both socially and physically. It is difficult for Afro-Brazilians to obtain employment, quality education, or even decent housing. This continues to be a problem even in Salvador where Blacks represent 81 percent of the population.<sup>2</sup> During my time in Salvador I noticed that the beaches, theatres, movie theatres, music performances, and other events were, for the most part, frequented by white Brazilians. Although Salvador does have a middle/upper-class Black population, many Afro-Brazilians continue to live on the periphery. I conducted my research at the Escola Estadual de Zumbi dos Palmares. The district of Beiru was once a plantation, then a Quilombo, and today it continues to be inhabited by a people that are still slaves to a system that refuses to change.

This is the information I went in. What I did not know and wanted to learn about was what was specifically happening in this community—the conditions of the school and the community it serves, what students were getting from the school and what the school offered, and most importantly, what the needs of the community were and how they were being met by the various organizations there.

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<sup>1</sup> Freire, Paulo. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." Continuum International Publishing Group: 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Jorge de Carvalho, Jose. *Inclusao Etnica e Racial no Brasil: a questao das cotas no ensino superior*. Attar Editorial: Sao Paolo, 2005. p20

## **Motives for Choice of Topic**

Theresa Santos, a Sociologist and self-described black militant, has been an activist in the black movement in Brazil for many years. I once read a piece written by her that inspired me more than anything else I have read. It begins, “Brazilian society taught me how to be a black woman. Every day I thank that profoundly racist society for the opportunity to discover myself as a person. And I discovered that as a black woman I am different in society. I discovered that the official literature gives me nothing other than the dominant sectors’ perspective, which allows them to dominate blacks more thoroughly. I thus began to search for myself.”<sup>3</sup> Although she was writing about her experience as an Afro-Brazilian female, I identified with her sentiments. My experiences in the U.S. are shaped by my identity as an African-American female. It is during my experiences learning about and growing in my identity as an African-American female that I have learned the most about my people and I and our place in the world. I am certain that this self-discovery, understanding, and thus a will to make change begins with education.

As an African-American female who had the opportunity to attend a private school after attending one of the most under-funded and problematic public middle schools in Washington, DC, I know first-hand how important a quality education is to the development, success, and self-esteem of young blacks. In seeing the aftermath of friends dropping out of school, I also know that an additional few years of education can make a world of a difference in the quality of life one can make. This is even more important in Brazil where most in the country have yet to acknowledge the existence of institutional

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<sup>3</sup> Santos, Theresa. “The Black Movement: Without Identity There is No Consciousness or Struggle” in *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization*. UCLA Latin American Center Publications: California, 1999.

racism or the systematic marginalization of Afro-Brazilians. I chose education as my research topic because it is by stripping the oppressed of their identity and self-worth that the oppressor is able to control the oppressed. I want to dedicate my work, in Brazil and in the future, to uplifting the African diaspora.

## Importance of Research

In Brazil, Afro-Brazilian leaders have been struggling for many years to fight against racism and uplift their communities. Quality education is extremely important to this struggle. Afro-Brazilians, who represent 47% of the population, represent a mere 3% of university students. In addition, although 12.9% of white Brazilians complete secondary school- *ensino medio*- only 3.3% of black Brazilians are able to complete it.<sup>4</sup> These inequalities in education attainment and standard of living are larger in the Northeast, where Afro-Brazilians make up a much larger percentage of the population than in the rest of Brazil. In Salvador, Bahia signs of discrimination are even more pronounced. Although Afro-Brazilians account for more than 81% of the population in Salvador, they only represent 3 percent of the city's university students.<sup>5</sup> Given that Brazilian public schools and universities are free, it seems clear that black Brazilians are, for various reasons, either being excluded from entering the universities or lack the quality of education and preparation necessary to compete with non-black students for entry into the universities.

This exclusion is contributing to the creation of a permanent Afro-Brazilian underclass. According to the United Nations, 70% of the impoverished and 63% of those living *below* the poverty line in Brazil are black Brazilians.<sup>6</sup> The Black Movement in Salvador has taken on the cause of affirmative action to address the inequality in education, but because of inequalities in the quality of life between those on the periphery and others, lower-class Afro-Brazilians are not benefiting from the gains made in this

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<sup>4</sup> Jorge de Carvalho, Jose. *Inclusao Etnica e Racial no Brasil: a questao das cotas no ensino superior*. Attar Editorial: Sao Paolo, 2005. p21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p20.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p22.

struggle. It is important to understand the various factors that affect the ability of young Afro-Brazilians to focus on their studies and imagine a future at a university and beyond. Research into the needs and difficulties of young blacks is extremely important for the future of the black community and the Black Movement in Brazil. Young Afro-Brazilians are the future leaders of the Salvador community and the Black Movement in general. As of now, they are much more likely to go to jail than continue in their education—a basic necessity for improving one’s quality of life. Without a proper education and identity young Afro-Brazilians cannot effectively participate as contributing citizens in Brazilian society nor create a sustainable life for themselves and their children, which should be a basic right of every living human being.

## Location of Research

I conducted my research at the Escola Estadual de Zumbi dos Palmares, which is located in the community of Beiru in Salvador, Bahia. Beiru is a lower-class community that lies on the periphery of the city. The land now considered Beiru was once owned by the Helio Sia Garcia family. It is named after a former slave, Preto Beiru, who was also owned by the family. After slavery was abolished, the family decided to pay homage to the late Beiru by naming their farm after him. According to administrators at Zumbi dos Palmares, Beiru brought the freedom of many slaves. In 1985, the name of the community was changed to Tancredo Neves, the name of a former white president, but many residents fought against this and now the community bears two names.

Candomble is widely practiced in the community. According to administrators at Zumbi dos Palmares, the community is very spiritual and has many terreiros, Catholic and Evangelical churches. They also added that the community is much safer than it was 20 years ago: “Twenty years ago this community was very violent, but not as much today. Now here and around the school is much more safe. They understand that this is the community’s school. (Alba)”<sup>7</sup> Still, they said young people in the community do not have much to do in the community outside of school and religious ceremonies. There is little entertainment and activities for youth.

Zumbi dos Palmares is a relatively new school—only 13 years old. The school sits at the end of a main avenue, from which the rest of the community seems to descend into houses and narrow roads. This main avenue is lined with small lanchonettes, bars, grocery stores, and small stores that meet the various needs of the community, such as

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Administrators in Field Journal, 1.16. Conducted and Translated by Calisha Myers. May 23, 2006.

hair and clothing stores. It is always full of people and buses pass frequently. The buses stop right in front of the school, which makes it more convenient for students to get to school, although most of the students live within walking distance. This main avenue is lined with overflowing dumpsters—one of which sits in front of the school.

The school itself sits behind a wall, which is guarded by one or two security. When you walk in, you come to a small courtyard where students gather until they are let into the second set of gates. These gates guard the stairs to the upstairs classes and the courtyard that sits in the middle of the downstairs classes and offices. Next to school, but also sitting behind the wall, is a soccer field. The walls of the classes are made of a very thin-- almost cardboard-like—material. Some of the classrooms have holes in the walls, but all of the classrooms seem to have ample chairs and writing boards. Before school starts the teachers gather in the teachers' lounge and watch Brazilian soap operas and prepare for class. The school seemed to be devoid of any technology other than television.

## **Methodology**

My proposed methodology was geared towards gaining an understanding of what students were bringing to the school, what they were getting from the school, and what efforts and initiatives existed within CEAFFRO and the Black Movement that are addressing the lack of quality education and preparation available to young Afro-Brazilians. I wanted to gain an *in-depth* understanding of the condition of young Afro-Brazilians in Salvador and the impact of public education on the ability of blacks to gain entrance to the universities in Salvador. Due to several obstacles I encountered over the three weeks, my proposed methodology had to be modified significantly. Ultimately, the methodology I used positioned me as an outsider and did not allow for an in-depth understanding of young Afro-Brazilians. I traveled to a school on the periphery several times and interviewed students, teachers, and administrators, observed classes, and attempted to get to know the community. Because I did not live in Beiru, I was not able to really observe and make the necessary connections with the community.

CEAFRO is a non-profit organization that operates under the College of Philosophy and Humanities at the Federal University of Bahia. The organization works to create a dialogue between organizations of the Black Movement, the Federal University of Bahia, and the public and primary schools in Salvador. Among other initiatives, they seek to increase the number and permanence of Afro-Brazilians that attend UFBA and ensure the inclusion of African and Afro-Brazilian history in the public school curriculum. I had intended to spend 10 days in a homestay in a community that CEAFFRO worked with interviewing the students, teachers, and administrators and observing classes at one secondary school. Another 10 days would have been dedicated to learning about

the organization's Education of Adolescents and Young Adults initiative and other programming offered by CEAFFRO and its affiliate organizations in the Black Movement.

Some of the challenges I faced were a lack of substantial assistance from my advisor, a lack of contacts in my chosen community, and a bus strike that left the city virtually shutdown during our last week. It was very hard to get in touch with my advisor and get help in making the necessary contacts. During our meetings she did not seem to understand the importance of me visiting a school on the periphery and talking with students there, although she told me several times she had read my proposal. She introduced me to several students that happened to be at CEAFFRO during our meeting and when interviews with them fell through and I asked if she could help me make contacts with a school, she agreed to meet with me a week later. Luckily, another student's advisor had made contacts at a school for her and because she had to go there at night, we both decided it would work well for both of us if we conducted our ISPs at the same location.

Once I made the decision to conduct my independent study project at Escola Estadual de Zumbi dos Palmares, I encountered more challenges that changed my ISP. Beiru, the community where Zumbi dos Palmares is located, is a 1.5-2 hour bus ride away. I considered conducting my ISP with the day school so that I would not infringe on my colleague's research, but it would have been extremely difficult to get to Beiru and conduct interviews before the day classes started. Other challenges included the fact that night school was only held three days a week, we could only interview people before classes started (and most people did not start arriving until 30 minutes before classes, which did not leave much time to interview each person), we did not have contacts in the

community outside of the school, and because of safety reasons, we could not stay at the school or in the community too after interviewing and observing classes. During our last week in Salvador, a student that I had interviewed at Zumbi dos Palmares agreed to take me around the community and talk with me more, but a city-wide bus strike made this impossible.

## **Definition of Terms**

Movimento dos Negros: The Black Movement

Ensino fundamental: primary school in Brazil, 8 years

Ensino medio: Secondary school, 3 years (plus one year for final tests and Vestibular preparation)

Ensino superior: higher education

Quilombo: a community of former slaves or their descendents

EJA (Ensino para Jovens y Adultos): an alternative to regular ensino medio, usually night school

UFBA (Universidade Federal da Bahia): The Federal University in Bahia, located in Salvador

CEAO: Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais

CEAFRO: an educational and professionalization initiative of UFBA and CEAO

Baixa-renda: lower-class

Linha de pobreza: poverty line

Analfabeto: illiterate

Anafabelto funciono: functioning illiterate

Preriferia/Gueto: preriphery/ghetto, lower-class communities that lie on the outskirts of the city, similar to the inner city or “projects” in the US,

Favella: shantytowns, lower-class communities that are literally built from the ground up by residents

Terreiro: a compound where Cadomble ceremonies and rituals are held

## Conclusion

### What are these students bringing to the school?

In Brazil poverty has a color. Of the 58 million Brazilians who live in poverty, which is a minimum of 200 Reais each month), 63 percent are Afro-Brazilian. Of the 25 million people who live below the poverty line in Brazil (total pop: 180 million), 70 percent are Afro-Brazilians. Although many in Brazil argue that the condition of Afro-Brazilians is not a race issue, but a class issue, the two cannot be separated. Afro-Brazilian children are at a major disadvantage: 61 percent of Afro-Brazilian children 7-14 years old and 47 percent of those 15-24 years old live in poverty. These children grow into adults who are ill- prepared to enter the workforce or provide for their families.<sup>8</sup>

“...a desigualdade entre crianças brancas e negras so tende a crescer na vida adulta. As causas sao previsiveis- mais pobres, entram mais cedo no mercado de trabalho e se preparam menos, o que as confina as posicoes inferiores na sociedade e das quais nao tem como sair.”

“The inequality between white children and black children tends to grow in the adult life. The causes are foreseeable—they are more poor, enter earlier into the work force and are less prepared, which then confines them to inferior positions in society and from which they do not have to leave.”<sup>9</sup>

Afro-Brazilians are more likely to be in the service industry, prostitution, or be unemployed. Why? 84 percent of Afro-Brazilians have not completed ensino medio, and 75 percent have not completed ensino fundamental; 20 percent are illiterate while 47 percent are only functioning illiterates.<sup>10</sup>

It is within this national context that we need to look at Beiru. It is a community of lower-class blacks that not only physically lies on the margins of the city (referred to

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<sup>8</sup> Jorge de Carvalho, Jose. Inclusao Etnica e Racial no Brasil: a questao das cotas no ensino superior. Attar Editorial: Sao Paolo, 2005. p23

<sup>9</sup> ibid, p23

<sup>10</sup> ibid, p24

as the *periferia*, by Brazilians) but is also socially marginalized by the culture. In Brazil, the impoverished live on the outskirts of the city in *favellas* and *guetos*, while those with money frequent the Center and are able to take in all the culture it has to offer. Many other Brazilians are afraid to go to Beiru, as I found out when I told other Brazilians that I would be doing my research there. I received many weird stares and “good luck”s. Everyone I talked with, including other Brazilians outside of Beiru, said Beiru is a violent district, but is not as violent as it was 20 years ago. Nevertheless, residents of Beiru still do not have much in the way of entertainment, alternatives, or opportunities.

Much of the entertainment and socializing in Salvador is found in the Center. Beiru is at least an hour-long bus ride—usually 2 hours--- from the Center. There are no organizations in the community for young people—no one helping them prepare for the Vestibular or offering them alternative things to do with their lives. There are small bars and *lanchonettes* that line the main street of the school, but the community descends into narrow roads and cramped houses from there.

Most of the people who live in Beiru do not have a lot of money for food and clothing and many live in shacks, as one teacher explained,

3.2 “This community does not have much. They don’t have a lot of healthy food, good clothing. Most are lower-class, living in houses with roofs built only to protect them from the rain. The majority of the students are participating in government programs. (Professora Ana)”<sup>11</sup>

Many of the students live in homes that, because of the physical environment, are not conducive to studying. Also, because of a lack of food, clothing, and other things, many of the students have other more pertinent worries outside of school. A lot of the young students that attend the night school do so because they have to work during the day for

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<sup>11</sup> *Interview with Teachers* in “Field Journal.” Interviews conducted and translated by Calisha Myers, May 23, 2006- May 31, 2006. Salvador, Brazil. 3.2

one reason or another. Many of the students also come from untraditional homes where there may be only one parent, they live with a family member other than a parent, they have children, or other situations. Eve Silvio, 22, lives with his aunt, who is a nurse. He attends night class because Zumbi dos Palmares is the closest school to him and he does not have time to travel to other schools because he also has to work. He currently works informally as a party promoter. Evanete, 23, does not work, but takes care of her 7 year old son during the day. She attends night classes while her parents care for her son at night. As explained earlier, Afro-Brazilians tend to enter the labor market earlier because they are already impoverished, further pushing them back in their education and continuing the cycle of poverty. In a culture where everyone is expected to work and need to work, and are looked down on if they do not, it is hard for many of them to see beyond getting and maintaining a job.

### **What are they getting from the school?**

Inequality in access to education, especially quality education, is a big problem in Brazil. In 2001, the rate of illiteracy for black boys aged 10-14, is 8 percent while it is only 2.4 percent for white boys of the same age. Black girls aged 10-14 have an illiteracy rate of 4.5 percent while white girls of the same age only have an illiteracy rate of 1.3 percent. In The illiteracy rate for Brazilians 15 years and older (according to the study, this is the age used for international comparison) was more than twice as high for Afro-descendants (18%) than for whites (8%).<sup>12</sup> In the Northeast alone, where the Afro-Brazilian population is most concentrated and which accounts for 33 percent of the

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<sup>12</sup> Rede Nacional Feminista de Saúde. *Assimetrias Raciais No Brasil: Alerta Para A Elaboração de Políticas* in “Desigualdades Raciais no Brasil.” (2001)

school age population in Brazil, access to education is most problematic. This region holds 70 percent of all those in Brazil that have no access to education and the greatest number of Brazilians who will become illiterate adults.<sup>13</sup> Non-whites in this region are likely to have even less access to education.

Afro-Brazilians are more likely to start school at a later age, usually 6 or 7, than white Brazilians, who tend to start nursery school much earlier. Although a large proportion of Afro-Brazilian and white Brazilian youth have little or no access to education at age 7—55 percent and 40 percent, respectively—white children are absorbed into the school system at a quicker rate. By age 11, 95 percent of white children are attending school, while only 85 percent of Afro-Brazilian children are attending school at that age. Not only do Afro-Brazilians start school at a later age, they are more likely to fall behind. By age 8, 70 percent of Afro-Brazilians have fallen one grade behind. By age 10, twice as many Afro-Brazilians have fallen three or more grades behind white Brazilian students (33.3 percent of pretos and 35.2 of pardos). On average, it takes whites 13 years to finish 8 years of school while it takes Afro-Brazilians 32 years.<sup>14</sup> “Thus, on a whole, nonwhite children enter school later than white children, with negative consequences for school performance, and the proportion of pretos and pardos that have no education at all is three times greater than for whites.”<sup>15</sup>

The problem of a failure to start school and advance at a normal rate was clearly visible at Zumbi dos Palmares. The ensino medio at Zumbi dos Palmares serves 1, 400

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<sup>13</sup> Halsenber, Carlos and Nelson do Valle Silva. “Race and Educational Opportunity in Brazil” in *Relacoes Raciais no Brasil*. Editoa Rio Fundo: Rio de Janeiro, 1992. p58

<sup>14</sup> Jorge de Carvalho, Jose. *Inclusao Etnica eRacial no Brasil: a questao das cotas no ensino superior*. Attar Editorial: Sao Paolo, 2005. p29

<sup>15</sup> Halsenber, Carlos and Nelson do Valle Silva. “Race and Educational Opportunity in Brazil” in *Relacoes Raciais no Brasil*. Editoa Rio Fundo: Rio de Janeiro, 1992. p57

students three times a week. The students are all returning adults, usually at least 22 years old. The younger students who attend ensino medio have usually fallen behind in their studies or must attend night school because they work or have other responsibilities during the day. The school does what it can to offer an education to returning students, but it lacks the necessary resources and environment to encourage the students to care more about their education and show them that there is a future beyond where they are. Although teachers I spoke with said they encouraged their students to think about going to college, very few students choose to take the Vestibular. When asked why this was, Professora Beticia responded,

“I think it’s the culture. They’ve already come through this primary school routine. It’s not exactly the same, but the structure in which we work is the same. We have 70 hours per week for classes—classes in the morning, afternoon, and at night. You teach with-- I do not know how many different periods—with almost 300 students. So it is the structure, it is the system”.<sup>16</sup>

The students have come through the ensino fundamental, where they likely started school late and fell behind. They enter ensino medio where they have few resources and teachers that are overloaded with students and work. They begin ensino medio at night where the teaching style is geared towards working adults that do not have time to study and are not considering going to college. The curriculum in the night school, although they offer courses such as physics and chemistry, is geared towards the basics—reading, writing, and comprehension:

2.3 The content is the same, now only the work is different. The same content, but with a different form. Students who come at night are adults, they are not adolescents. They have less time to study. The work is in a form that is more practical for night students.<sup>17</sup> (Professora Beticia)

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<sup>16</sup> *Interview with Teachers* in “Field Journal.” Interviews conducted and translated by Calisha Myers, May 23, 2006- May 31, 2006. Salvador, Brazil. 2.2

<sup>17</sup> *Interview with Teachers* in “Field Journal.” Interviews conducted and translated by Calisha Myers, May 23, 2006- May 31, 2006. Salvador, Brazil. 2.3

This practicality is another form of complacency. Although it is easier for the teachers and the students if the students learn the basics, it does not help them and will not help them change their conditions. To learn what is practical in the here and now does nothing but maintains the status quo.

In truth, as Professora Beticia stated during our interview, it is the system. While teachers may encourage students to consider studying to better their lives or advance on to college, the system has already socialized them to accept their position in life. Evanete said she did not want to go to college and did not seem to have an interest in going. Although Ele Silvio expressed a great interest in continuing his education, his desire was to enroll in a tour guide course, which seemed more out of a need to be practical. There are many foreigners passing through Salvador and tour guides are in great demand. When asked if the students ever expressed an interest in going to college, Professora Ana responded,

“They have some knowledge. We talk to them about it. We talk with them, “let’s go, you are going to be a teacher, going to college,” but their self-esteem is very low. They think that their life is not going to change, that their conditions will not change. They take a test, exam, or some work and they say, “Ai, e zero, ei prof? (Hey, it’s a zero, isn’t it teach?)” Because their self-esteem is low, they don’t see a big future for themselves. And we have a lot of this. (Professora Ana)”<sup>18</sup>

“The problem is that they do not face their studies with a better outlook on life. And in the classroom, they are always ashamed. This is the problem. They have no interest in studying. (Professora Ana)”<sup>19</sup>

They accept their position and are less likely to want to change it because they have already come through a system where they have been socialized to do so--where they have been stripped of any self-esteem or desire to change their lives.

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 3.3

<sup>19</sup> *Interview with Teachers* in “Field Journal.” Interviews conducted and translated by Calisha Myers, May 23, 2006- May 31, 2006. Salvador, Brazil. 3.4

### **What initiatives exist to meet the educational needs of the community?**

What I found was disheartening. Every person I interviewed in Beiru said that there are no organizations in the community that meet educational needs, offer alternative extracurricular activities, or other opportunities for youth in the community. While there are organized extra-curricular activities at the school such as theater, soccer, and capoeira, these are only available to students who attend ensino fundamental. Considering that only 30 percent of Afro-Brazilians complete ensino fundamental, these programs are likely serving only a small portion of the youth in the community. In addition to alternative activities, Ele Silvio expressed a desire for more organizations within the Hip-Hop Movement and the Movimento de Negros to do more in the community and other communities on the periphery.

## **Further Research**

My research was only able to uncover manifestations of national inequalities that exist within Beiru. Further research needs to be done on what type of initiatives would best meet the needs of the community and get the best response from young people in the community. The community would benefit greatly from research that identified concrete necessities and ways in which people in the community and other organizations can work to meet those necessities. Ele Silvio expressed a concern with the fact that other people in the city do not like visiting Beiru. This is obviously contributing to the marginalization and isolation of the community and more in-depth research into why that is and how that stigma can be countered is also needed.

More research into the lives of the people in the community need to be done as well. Those who are graduating ensino medio and going on to college, what are they doing? What type of jobs have they been able to attain? Are they returning to their communities? Are they finishing college? If so, what help can they or are they offering their community?

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## Appendix

Could you have done this project in the U.S.? Would results have been different? How? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did your project?

I could have done this project. There are communities in the U.S. that are marginalized, although in the U.S. it is more likely to exist in the inner city or in the interior. But the results would have been different. Although many lack access to quality education in the states, many more opportunities and alternatives exist for African-American youth in the US. Also, the Black Movement established unity within the Black community in the US decades ago so that now there is more solidarity among the different groups and communities and a more unified voice that has the power to make change. In Brazil, the Black Movement has not fully won the support or achieved solidarity among all Afro-Brazilians. Because of the history of whitening, many Brazilians do not identify as Black or Afro-Brazilian and so, do not identify with the national movement or with a unified Black community. Thus, diminishing the numerical power of Afro-Brazil.

Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different than your previous style and approaches to learning?

The ISP process reinforced what I have learned in various Sociology courses. Although many of my courses have discussed theories, the courses that have helped me the most discussed concrete manifestations of social problems. Without an advisor to help me make contacts and plan out my research, the ISP process taught me to actively seek out what I needed and deal with problems that arose. In addition, I was forced to learn the language and norms in the field, making mistakes and correcting them in front of others.

How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

The final monograph is mostly primary sources backed by statistics and national facts from secondary sources. Because of various complications and setbacks, I had very little time to do in-depth interviews and really get to know the community.

What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

I did not have enough data to have the option to exclude large portions, but I used the data that most pertained to the cohort of students I wanted to learn about. I excluded data about the older students at the school because I was most interested in young Afro-Brazilians. I also chose to exclude personal data on the teachers I interviewed for this same reason.

How did the drop-offs or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

The drop-offs were helpful in getting through the initial nervousness when seeking out contacts and speaking with a stranger in Portuguese for the first time.

What were the principal problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

I encountered a lot of problems during my ISP:

- A) I received very little help from my advisor, who rarely answered my emails or phone calls and so had no contacts, no homestay, and nowhere to start my ISP. I resolved this by going with a colleague to her research location and conducting my research at the same school
- B) The site where I conducted my research was almost a 2 hour bus ride away, which did not leave me much time to do follow-up interviews or observations. I tried to resolve this by asking as many questions during the initial interviews as possible. I encountered more problems with the location when bus drivers went on strike during our last week there and I had no way of getting back to the school.
- C) Because I do not speak or understand fluent Portuguese, I relied on my tape recorder to capture most of my interviews while I took notes. Unbeknownst to me, my tape recorder cut off during two principal interviews. I resolved this by using my notes and what I could remember from the interviews, but this does not suffice for what they actually said.

Did you experience any time constraints?

My project was extremely constrained. Because of a lack of contacts, I missed a week in the beginning and because of the bus-strike I miss several crucial days at the end, which left me really with only about 15 days to conduct research. This was cut down into even less time since the school is only open three days a week.

Did your original topic change and evolve as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?

My topic did not change so much as the way I went about collecting data did. Without contacts or resources in the community, I could not live in the community and really get to know my subjects as I had planned. As well, without doing research in a community that CEAFFRO worked with, there was no need for me to conduct research and observe CEAFFRO as I had originally planned.

What methods did you use? How did you decide to use such methods?

I interviewed teachers, administrators, and students as well as did informal interviews with Brazilians outside of the community to learn more about the community. I observed classes and the community before and after interviews. I decided to use these methods because they are the most useful when trying to gain an in-depth understanding of your subjects.

Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Not very helpful? At what point was he/she most helpful? Were there cultural differences which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

My advisor did not seem to know what I was doing. She said she had read my proposal, but when I asked her about helping me make contacts to do a homestay and visit a school, she asked me why I wanted to do this. She also did not seem to understand that I was in

Salvador to conduct research on the periphery and not in the Universities. After my initial interviews did not work out, I asked to meet with her and she could not meet with me until a week later. Besides the books she gave me, my advisor did not help me at all.

Did you reach any dead-ends? Hypothesis which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?

I reached a dead end with the first student I interviewed. She did not seem to want to talk to me or have anything to say. This is not surprising considering that we did not know each other, but it was hard for me to make a connection with her to get her to open up to me more. All of her answers were yes or no answers or one-liners. I could use her lifestory, but she did not give me much background.