The Afro-Brazilian University Experience: How Racial Quota Policy Beneficiaries at the Federal University of Bahia Perceive Racial Quota Debates, UFBA Quota Policy, and Life as Quota Students

Vivian O. Ekey
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How Racial Quota Policy Beneficiaries at the Federal University of Bahia Perceive Racial Quota Debates, UFBA Quota Policy, and Life as Quota Students

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Abstract

For my project I will explore the experiences of Afro-Brazilian students enrolled in the Universidade Federal da Bahia through the University’s Resolution 01/04. Through interviews with six students admitted through the quotas system at UFBA along with interviews with civic society leaders, and university advisors, I aim to identify the varying attitudes that these students may have in response to criticisms of racial quotas, the implementation of the quota system on their campus, and their own experiences as quota students. The implementation of affirmative action in Brazilian Universities has sparked serious debate and questioning of racial politics and what many see as the importation of American racial models. One possibility that has not been deeply analyzed, however, is the likelihood that quota students themselves might present valuable input to these debates – especially after entering the university setting, where as quota students their place in the university is disputed. Along with interviews, I will perform field observations following a day in the life of one particular student. I aim to answer the question: What are the attitudes of Afro-Brazilian quota students at UFBA towards criticisms of racial quotas, the implementation of the racial quota system on their campus, and their own experiences as quota students?

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1 UFBA 2011 Vestibular Guide. ISP Field Journal
Introduction

The broad area of interest here is Afro-Brazilian identity politics. For many Latin American countries, the 1990s period of democratization created an opening for the demands of social movements. Afro-descendant and Indigenous movements are examples of the ethnicity-based movements that gained recognition during this time. Identity politics, or political action based on identity group claims, is a means by which some social movements advance their interests.

Affirmative Action

Yoruba T. Mutakabbir compares Brazil to the United States where race-based affirmative action policies have decreased in favor of race-neutral policies. Brazil, he says, seems to be following America’s example in experimenting with affirmative action in order to increase educational access for blacks, browns and the poor. Quota spaces began to appear in federal agencies in the early 2000s and at the elitist Rio Branco Institute, subsidized admission was granted for twenty black students. Affirmative action in Brazil is characterized by a variety of initiatives meant to address inequalities that disproportionately impact the Afro-Brazilian community. This includes initiatives to teach about the Afro-Brazilian experience in public schools. In this research I concentrate on those Affirmative Action measures that specifically involve the use of racial quotas in educational institutions.

The recent public policies have been made possible thanks to the concerted efforts of the black movements along with academics and international organizations who collectively produced or instigated the government’s production of a great deal of research indicating vast disparities and a need for policy initiatives. PL 650/99 was passed in the senate in 2002. It sought to provide 20% quota space in civil service entrance positions, public and private universities, funding for poor students and compulsory affirmative action programs for private businesses competing for public funds. In 2003, Federal law 10.639 was promulgated. It mandates the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history in school curricula at all levels of education.

The university is one of the most coveted spaces of social advancement. For many Brazilians it is an impermeable space due to a lack of resources. Self-identifying Afro-Brazilian university students are a very small minority in this space and their experiences are important to follow because they provide insight for social policy aimed at increasing their demographic.

Social movements have exerted considerable pressure on the government to institute affirmative action programs in public universities but as there is still no federal law, many universities have acted independently in creating or rejecting affirmative action programs. Perhaps beneficiary students, who are living this experience, might contribute some insight to discussions about affirmative action programs. For instance, perhaps there are ways in which the implementation of affirmative action can actually cause Afro-Brazilian students to feel isolated or singled out in their universities. The backlash generated by law projects for affirmative action and the federal Law 10.639 mandating teaching of Afro-Brazilian history in schools is strong and calls into question the principles behind the passing of Affirmative Action in Brazil. One criticism is that black students will be given an advantage when they are not as prepared, thus imperiling their prospects for success. The experiences of affirmative action students at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio demonstrate otherwise, however. Students admitted with scholarships through the community-based gratuitous University

Admissions Preparation Courses for Blacks and Poor People (PVNC) achieved high results and although they were often admitted with lower grades, they often graduated with higher grades than their paying peers. The pro-affirmative action argument here is that students overcoming disadvantage often seize opportunities and work harder than their peers. It is possible that the experiences of quota students at the UFBA may reproduce the tensions pointed out in these arguments and it is also likely that these students might speak directly to criticisms of affirmative action, asserting their own experiences in their opinion.
Social Relevance

While the literature on Afro-Brazilian identity and identity politics is vast, a gap exists in the literature focused on University students. The University is often an excellent environment in which to follow social phenomena. The most recent literature that I’ve encountered which focuses specifically on University students focuses on the 1970s.³ I hope to update this literature by working with University students in the new post-affirmative action era.

It is valuable to examine the efficacy of affirmative action by monitoring the experiences of beneficiaries and asking the students themselves for opinions. While the UFBA is only one of the universities practicing affirmative action in the form of racial quotas, it is also respected for its particular model which combines race and class, first accepting only graduates of public schools and then prioritizing spaces based on race, in a percentage model that correlates to the demographics of the state of Bahia. Seth Racusen states that the current federal proposals for affirmative action would set aside seats in this manner adjusting proportions based on state by state demographics.⁴ As the UFBA’s model is likely to be mimicked by the federal government, it is important to conduct a sort of policy review for the University in order to anticipate the sorts of problems that the federal government should contemplate in formulating a nationalized version.

Those who have access to university education will inevitably become important leaders in Brazilian society. The extreme inequality of the Brazilian educational system is in large part responsible for Brazil’s world-class inequality.⁵ As Brazilian society looks for new ways to address the issue of inequality, it is important to keep track of specific critical populations, especially black quota students who are effectively setting a precedent almost always as first generation college students. Research should point out where policy intended to help this specific population may be underperforming or affirm where it is in fact serving its purpose.

History of Brazilian Race Relations

Scientific Racism, Whitening, and Racial Democracy

Peter Fry⁶ discusses the history of different Brazilian racial theories as an orientation to the discussion of quotas in Brazil today. He begins in the year 1859, discussing the visit French ambassador Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau to the court of Emperor Dom Pedro II. Gobineau’s work inspired the most pernicious of 20th century scientific racism. He advocated that for Brazil’s progress, it should invest in importing European races to populate its country, deprecating what he saw as backwards race mixture. By importing white people from Europe, it was hoped to gradually “whiten” the population as the superiority of the “white blood” would gradually replace African and Amerindian heritage. This period can be called Brazil’s period of scientific racism and whitening theory. The next school of thought begins in 1933 with the publication of sociologist Gilberto Freyre’s Casa Grande a Senzala, which argues that miscegenation would actually be Brazil’s salvation:

The racial democracy thesis (for its original incarnation see Freyre 1986) insists that the disproportionate impoverishment of blacks and their absence among elites is due to class discrimination and the legacy of slavery, and that the absence of state-sponsored segregation, a history of miscegenation, and social recognition of intermediate racial categories have upheld unique racial order.\(^7\)

Vindicating the process of racial mixing, Freyre was engaged in nation-building. The notion that relations between masters and slaves were more amicable in Brazil than in the United States began to spread in Brazil throughout the 19th century. This nation building and the numerous comparisons to the United States that it generated gave birth to the racial democracy theory. Up until the 1940s, Freyre’s vision of Brazil was largely accepted both within and outside of Brazil. Fry suggests that there is reason to believe that the idea of racial democracy was consolidated by activists, writers and intellectuals looking at Brazil from lands where racial segregation was legally enforced – namely the United States.

**Revisionism and Today’s Critiques of Revisionism**

In the 1950s, a process of racial questioning began as a UNESCO sponsored study revealed the parallel existence of a strong belief in racial democracy on the part of Brazilians as well as the existence of a Brazilian style of racism. Howard Winant\(^8\) refers to this period as postwar Brazilian racial theory. He states that it has been effective in dismantling the myth of a nonracist national culture where racial democracy flourishes and has helped to question the role of various elites in maintaining this myth. The UNESCO studies sparked an ongoing racial revisionism in Brazil.

Many have sought to address criticisms of Brazilian society, explaining inequality in terms of economic s alone. Florestan Fernandes, for example, felt that racial discrimination was the result of the legacy of slavery and the inability of Brazilian blacks to adapt to capitalism. But in 1979, sociologist Carlos Hasenbalg is the first to conduct research controlling for class and still demonstrates racial inequality. Subsequent research has corroborated his. Fry states that “Research on social mobility indicates that nonwhite members of the middle and upper classes experience less social mobility than similarly placed whites and that they have more trouble transferring their new status to their children.

Research produced from then into the 1990s continues to demonstrate racial inequality and has been used by activists to demand public policies. In the 1988 as Brazil drafted its new constitutions, provisions were included that Afro-Brazilians have successfully used to achieve compensatory policies. It can be said that Brazil is now in a period of politicized race and subsequent backlash has ensued from groups who find it contrary to the principles outlined by Freyre. The recent discussions include critiques on the trend of intellectuals to completely abandon Freyre’s racial democracy theory, question the feasibility and legitimacy of dividing Brazilians along racial lines, and questioning whether racial policies actually get to the heart of the problems of inequality. Sales Augusto dos Santos makes the point:

> However, now that the implementation of public policies specifically geared to their (Afro-Brazilians’) advantage is being discussed in an effort to ameliorate the damage caused by said discrimination, some of the same social scientists who brought to the forefront studies that concretely proved that

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blacks are disadvantaged have begun to question who these blacks are, given their racial impurity and the country’s inscrutable grades of miscegenation.9

History of the Afro-Brazilian Movement

Edward E. Telles describes the Black Movement in Brazil saying the following:

- It has exposed the racial-democracy ideology among the general population
- Changed the thinking of elites on race along black-white lines
- Engaged the government in discussing policies to redress racism and
- Secured public policies that make impacts on discrimination and inequality10

Dictatorships Stifle Afro-Brazilian Movement until 1970s

In 1937, the Brazilian Black Front (Frente Negra Brasileira) a pro-civil rights social movement based out of São Paulo, was shut down along with political parties by the New State (Estado Novo) dictatorship. The FNB had been vocal along with the black press, in criticizing the exclusion of blacks from the new industrial economy, now being worked by Brazil’s newly imported European labor. In 1944, Abdias do Nascimento created the Black Experimental Theater (TEN), which worked to rescue and reconstruct African heritage in Brazil. From the TEN came the Afro-Brazilian Democratic Committee in 1945. Its manifesto contained six demands to the Brazilian nation, two of which were: subsidized admission of black students to public and private secondary and higher educational institutions as well as antidiscrimination legislation complemented by public policy measures. The military coup suppressed all activism, especially antiracist work.11 In the 1970s, still under this dictatorship, blacks managed to mobilize, but not only culturally in movements like the “Black Soul” movement that prompted a black identity consciousness. Out of a 1978 rally against racism in São Paulo emerged the Unified Black Movement (MNU). In the 1970s, the growth of African consciousness was a trend across South and Central America.

1980s Democratization and 1990s Politicization

The 1980s period of democratization saw the election of Abdias do Nascimento, veteran Afro-Brazilian activist, as federal deputy. He introduced the first pieces of legislation openly calling for compensation and anti-racist public policy. 1988 marked the re-establishment of the democratic Rule-of-Law State. Nascimento’s demands were greatly ignored until the 1990s, but after his proposals, the trend of leftist intellectuals discussing the possibility of implementing affirmative action measures in Brazil became more common. 1995 was a critical year for the Black Movement in Brazil. On the 300th anniversary for Zumbi dos Palmares there was a march of over 20,000 black militants to the capital. They brought with them a list of reclamations to hand to the president. Brazil also received an official visit from the United Nations Human Rights Committee. The visit produced a report pointing out persistent racial inequalities and calling for research and policy measures aimed at closing the cycle of discrimination and general denial about the existence of racial inequality.

The period from the 1990s to today marks a politicization of the Afro-Brazilian movement and the granting of some concessions by the Brazilian government. By the mid 1990s, racial inequality and the prospect of affirmative action had officially entered general dialogue, as Afro-Brazilian senator Benedita da Silva presented Bill of law 14/95 which proposed a ten percent quota for entrance into higher educational institutions for socially discriminated groups like blacks and indigenous. Thomas Skidmore\textsuperscript{12} mentions how in academia, opinion began to shift with debates about how Brazilians of color lacked in Universities. In preparation for the 2001 3rd World Conference against Racism in Durban, Afro-Brazilian organizations build extensive networks with other Latin American social movements/ Afro-Latino Movements. International support made it possible for them to exert pressure on the Brazilian government and diplomatic agents, pushing Brazil to take on some rather advanced positions such as the promise to follow through with compensatory policies for the African descendant population.

	extbf{Affirmative Action}

Yoruba T. Mutakabbir compares Brazil to the United States where race-based affirmative action policies have decreased in favor of race-neutral policies.\textsuperscript{13} Quota spaces began to appear in federal agencies in the early 2000s and at the elitist Rio Branco Institute, subsidized admission was granted for twenty black students. Affirmative action in Brazil is characterized by a variety of initiatives meant to address inequalities that disproportionately impact the Afro-Brazilian community. This includes initiatives to teach about the Afro-Brazilian experience in public schools. Recent public policies meant to benefit the Afro-Brazilians have been made possible thanks to the concerted efforts of the black movement along with academics and international organizations who collectively produced or instigated the government’s production of research indicating disparities and a need for policy initiatives. PL 650/99 was passed in the senate in 2002. It sought to provide 20% quota space in civil service entrance positions, public and private universities, funding for poor students and compulsory affirmative action programs for private businesses competing for public funds. In 2003, Federal law 10.639 was promulgated. It mandates the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history in school curricula at all levels of education. The Afro-Brazilian movement today continues to perfect its means and tools of monitoring the implementation of public policies.

	extbf{Impact of International Factors on the Course of Race Relations and the Afro-Brazilian Movement}

	extbf{Brazilian Racial Exceptionality and the UNESCO Study}

According to Skidmore, since the 1940s and 1950s, intellectual elites in both Brazil and the United States defined their race relations in terms in opposition to one another. Brazilians pointed to North American segregation and rampant lynching. The US was criticized for its claim to be a model democracy, particularly in France, which was the intellectual model of the Brazilian elite. Gilberto Freyre’s work helped to support the feeling of moral superiority that Brazilian elite had. When UNESCO chose to study Brazil to determine how a racially mixed society could live in harmony, these elites felt further justified. Out of the constant comparison of US and Brazilian race-relations enough international interest was drawn to inspire the unintended expose carried out by UNESCO. UNESCO’s findings demonstrated the presence of racism in differing forms throughout most of the country.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Skidmore, Thomas E. “Racial Mixture and Affirmative Action: The Cases of Brazil and the United States,” American Historical Review (December 2003): 1391 -1396.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Mutakabbir, Yoruba T. “Affirmative Action in Brazil,” Charles H. Houston Center for the Study of the Black Experience in Education: Research Brief 5 (January 2009).
\end{itemize}
Although more interest grew in academia in the 1960s, only a small group of academics formed a consensus that traditional explanations for Brazilian race relations were no longer convincing. Little changed in academia through the 1970s and 1980s, but by the 1990s the tide began to turn in Brazilian universities. Earlier Stimuli for the Afro-Brazilian Movement included the USA Civil Rights Movement, the decolonization of African countries, and the Anti-Apartheid Movements. Htun points out that by 2001, intra governmental debate was accelerated during preparations for the world conference on racism, held in Durban. Martins adds that pride of the elite diplomatic corps on its avant garde sophistication is a factor that facilitated the gains won in the wake of the 3rd world conference –or in other words that the diplomatic elite took progressive stances on the international stage as a matter of image preservation and later these stances lead to support for efforts of the black movement.

Third World Conference Against Racism

Ciconelo discusses the ways in which the preparatory processes for the third world conference against racism held in Durban, South Africa in 2001 helped to allow the black movement access that it needed into the federal government to be able to pressure for policy changes. In late 2000 a national committee was established for preparing the Brazilian delegation to Durban. This committee was comprised of both government and civil society (most from the black movement). The committee stimulated debates on racial issues in order to build the Brazilian position and in the process created a very participatory debate where through seminars and workshops held throughout the country there was significant participation of Brazilian men and women.14 In October 2001, after the conference, the Brazilian federal administration created the National Council Against Discrimination, which was the first permanent council made up of government and civil society representatives, aimed at evaluating affirmative action policies. Small changes were made in the state framework towards recognizing racial inequality and along with the Declaration and Action Plan, the possibility as now apparent to foster the institutionalization of policies for racial equality. Through preparation for and participation in this international conference, the government opened up a space for civil society which allowed it to voice grievances as well as participate in the evaluation of new policies.

The Issue of National Authenticity

As a part of nation-building, Brazilian elites had defined race relations in their country in opposition to that of the United States. Beginning in the 1950s, they found their discourse trumped by a slew of research exposing racial inequality in Brazil. Now as a result of the policy measures enacted in response to the black movement and international pressure, Brazilian elites and some non-elites question whether such measures are nationally authentic. Once again evoking their historical comparison to the USA, they argue that cultural imperialism from the United States is responsible for these changes in racial dialogue. The cumulative impact of the 1950 UNESCO study, changes in Brazilian academia from the 1960s through 1990s, the 1990s Cardoso Government’s implementation of quotas for government jobs and the mounting pressure of the black movement, has been the adoption of racial quotas for admission in some Brazilian Universities. Skidmore talks about how schools like the State University of Rio de Janeiro set quotas that even adopted the United States’ “One drop rule.” Writing in 2003, Skidmore states that the embrace of affirmative action in Brazil will certainly generate backlash, especially from members of Brazil’s white elite. These members of the elite, he predicted, would charge that advocates of affirmative action are servants of ‘cultural imperialism.’ The publication of Divisões Perigosas in 2007 is major evidence that Skidmore was

correct. The prologue reveals this point of view most explicitly, quoting Aldo Rebelo of the Brazilian House of Representatives: “Temos de buscar soluções mais brasileiras.”

Affirmative Action in Brazil

Existing Legislation

Martins states that the resolutions set forth in the Santiago Declaration and Plan of Action which were maintained in the final document drafted at the Durban conference in August of 2001 were integral, in spite of their noncompulsory nature. In the Plan of Action, states were requested to consider affirmative or positive action initiatives in communities of primarily African descent. Urging states to ensure educational access, it calls for the full and accurate inclusion of the history of African peoples in educational curricula. On the heels of the Durban conference, affirmative action measures began to pop up in Brazil.

In September of 2001, while the conference was still in session, the ministry of agrarian development announced a race and ethnicity affirmative action program to accelerate the building of ‘racial equality in the countryside.’ This entailed allotting minimum quota spaces of 20% for blacks in decision-making positions in 2001, 30% by 2003; minimum of 20% black participation in out-contracted projects, and a minimum of 20% spaces available in public employment contests that the ministry might post in the future. Next the ministry of justice followed. Presidential decrees in May of 2002 introduced quotas for public administration. The Ministry of Foreign Relations offered 20 black students subsidized spaces at the prestigious and notoriously elitist Rio Branco Institute. Htun points out that President Henrique Cardoso in 2002 issued an executive decree creating a National Affirmative Action program which would study the ways in which government agencies could adopt percentage goals for blacks, women and the handicapped. In the National Program for Human Rights for that year, Cardoso endorsed compensatory measures to expand black access to universities and public service. These measures were symbolic and did not create quota spaces in universities.

Vania Penha Lopes states that while Congress has yet to approve the establishment of quotas for the federal universities, states have been free to do so. The first was Rio de Janeiro, in 2001, at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ—State University of Rio de Janeiro) and the Universidade do Estado do Norte Fluminense (UFENF—State University of the North of Rio de Janeiro). An August 2010 article from The Chronicle of Higher Education states that about 150 of Brazil’s 2,000 institutions of higher education have adopted some form of affirmative action since 2002. The Brazilian government does not keep figures on how many universities use affirmative action.

Garrett Wilson describes the legal measures of affirmative action undergone in the state of Rio de Janeiro, as a result of the Durban conference. In November of 2001, Rio instated a 40% quota for negros and pardos at the state universities UERJ and UENF. Then in September 2003, law no. 4151 was put into place. It reduces the number of quota spaces available exclusively to Negroes to 20% and...

15 “We have to seek out more Brazilian solutions” (Translation by author)
16 Vânia Penha-Lopes, Ph.D. Paper from BRASA VIII talk
Nashville, October 13-16, 2006
allocates 20% to public school students and 5% to non-black ethnic minorities and people with handicaps. Currently the UERJ follows law no. 5346 which preserves previous criteria but also extends part of the 5% quota space to students of deceased public servants (military, police etc).

**Quota Initiatives from 2001-2008**

As there is no federal law to mandate, the majority of Universities that have instituted affirmative action have done so through autonomous administrative actions, often instigated by pressure from social movements. In 2006, *O Globo* Magazine reported that there were 21 universities using the quota policy. By 2008, the following institutions had enacted affirmative action:

- 2001: Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) & Universidade do Norte Fluminense (UENF) adopt quotas
- 2002: Universidade Estadual da Bahia (Uneb) & Universidade Estadual do Mato Grosso do Sul (UEMS)
- 2003: Universidade de Brasília (UNB) *1st Federal Institution to adopt & Universidade de Alagoas (Ufal)
- 2004: Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA) & Universidade Federal do Paraná

Out of 224 public institutions of higher education, 79 practice some form of affirmative action. All of these institutions use quotas except for the following, which use a point system, in which minority status is awarded a certain amount of points:

- Universidade de Campinas (Unicamp)
- Universidade de São Paulo (USP)
- Faculdade de Medicina de São José do Rio Preto (FAMERP)
- Faculdade de Tecnologia de São Paulo (FATEC)
- Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE)
- Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN)
- Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF)

The institutions responsible for the implementation of affirmative action can be state or municipal government or autonomous resolutions by Universities. Below is a current legal timeline on the affirmative action debate:

- 2002: Ex-President José Sarney’s PLS 650/99 (Senate Law Project/Bill) 650 of 1999 is approved by the Senate
- 2005: PLS 650/99 is sent to the Camara dos Deputados (House of Representatives) where it sat and waited until

18 “The Effect of Legal Tradition on Affirmative Action in the U.S. and Brazil” by Garret Wilson for Professor Dana Zartner Falstrom

0801-867-01 Comparative Law, University of San Francisco School of Law

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19 LEI Nº 5346 DE 11 DE DEZEMBRO DE 2008

O GOVERNADOR DO ESTADO DO RIO DE JANEIRO, SéRGIO CABRAL

20 “Cotas de 50% nas federais.” *O Globo* Magazine. Evandro Éboli


22 Senado Federal, Secretaria-Geral da Mesa, Atividade Legislativa - Tramitação de Matérias PROJETO DE LEI DO SENADO Nº 650, DE 1999 Autor: SENADOR - José Sarney
• 2007 – PLS 650/99 is indefinitely archived
• 2006 – O Globo’s Evando Éboli reports that the house approved a bill that institutes a 50% quota space in federal universities for public school students, blacks and indigenous. The bill was then sent to the senate.
• The *Estatuto de Igualdade Racial* (Statute for Racial Equality) was passed this year on the 16th of June. It has been through both houses now and on July 20th O Globo reported that Lula signed it into law officially. It calls for various affirmative action measures, including a reinforcement of the 2003 federal law 10.639, which has been barely implemented due to lack of resources allocated for its execution.

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23 20/07/2010 16h16 - Atualizado em 20/07/2010 16h43
“Lula cria universidade e sanciona Estatuto da Igualdade Racial
Documento estimula políticas afirmativas para a raça negra.”
Today’s Legal Battle

Most recently, Brazil’s Supreme Court has been deliberating on 2 cases that have the potential of bringing the use of racial quotas to an end in Brazil. An August 2010 article published by the Chronicle of Higher Education explains that reconvening on August 2nd, the Brazilian Supreme Court began to hear two challenges to quotas, one at the University of Brasilia and the other at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. At the same time that the court hears these challenges, new affirmative action bills are being discussed in Congress. Several versions of a University Reform Bill are pending in the Senate. Such a bill would mandate across the board affirmative action at the over 50 federal universities in Brazil. This would set a precedent for all public universities (although state and municipal schools follow state and municipal laws). Some private schools such as the Pontifical Catholic University already enact their own forms of affirmative action.

One bill, which passed in the lower house in 2008 calls for fifty percent quota space in federal institutions, to be divided amongst low income students, Afro-Brazilians, and other minorities. The current legal battle is critical in mapping the future of affirmative action in Brazil:

If the Supreme Court rules the Rio laws unconstitutional, then our law could also be declared unconstitutional," says José Penafort, legislative assistant to Sen. Serys Slhessarenko, author of one of the proposals up for debate. "But if the affirmative-action laws implemented in Rio’s state universities are ruled legal, then that gives our law backing in the Senate. It might also help some senators get on our side. (Chronicle of Higher Education 2010)12

Essentially, the prospects for federal law instating affirmative action in the form of quotas throughout Brazilian federal universities are in legal limbo. If the Supreme Court rules against quotas, many existing programs will be in danger of subsequent legal challenges. In the case that the Supreme Court defends quotas, the UFBA’s system might be reproduced throughout Brazil.

Racial Quotas at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA)

Setting

This research takes place in the city of Salvador in the state of Bahia in northeastern Brazil. Brazil is known for having the highest concentration of people of African descent, second only to Nigeria on the continent of Africa. Bahia is the state which concentrates most of this population, since it was a major site for the cultivation of sugar cane during the colonial era. Salvador, the capital of Bahia, is thus a key city in which to note the drastic socio-economic disparities between Brazilians of European descent and those of mixed and African ancestry. The landscape of Salvador is a series of hills and valleys. I discover that many times when I am lost I simply need to find one of the many giant staircases and go up or down. This is particularly true in the Canela area where many UFBA buildings are located.

The primary areas of Salvador that this research takes place in are the neighborhoods of Canela and Ondina where two campuses, Education and Letters, of the Federal University of Bahia are located. Apart from here I travel to the neighborhood of Pelurinho, home to the Steve Biko Institute, an organization aimed at reducing racial inequalities by increasing the access of young Afro-descendants to the University. One interview was carried out at the home of the interviewee in the populous neighborhood of Brotas. The locales of my research are very much disjointed in nature and getting around them requires a bus fare of R $2.30 in each direction. I personally found this to be costly and upon interviewing many of my informants found that the difficulty of paying for crucial
and frequent transport between home and school as well as between UFBA campuses, which are scattered around the city of Salvador, shaped a lot of their experiences as students at the UFBA.

**UFBA Quotas Model**

Available at the UFBA’s Serviço de Seleção is the candidate manual for UFBA Vestibular 2011 which includes a copy of the UFBA Council of Teaching, Research, and Extension (CONSEPE) Resolution 01/04. This resolution reserves 43% of spaces at the university for quota students. Of this 43% it is mandatory that all have spent all of their high school in public schools as well as at least one year of study between 5th and 8th grade. Within the allotted spaces, 85% are designated for students who self-identify as black or brown (preto ou pardo). 2% of quota spaces are for indigenous descendants with priority to those coming from public schools. In the case that all 43% of quota space is not filled, remaining spaces will be filled by self-identifying black and brown students who come from private schools.

**Methodology and Informant Background**

The methodology of this research consists of formal interview and participant field observation. Ten interviews were conducted in total with two personnel at Instituto Cultural Steve Biko, two advisors of quota students from support programs Conexões de Saberes and Programa Permanecer, and six student participants of the afore-mentioned programs who are also quota system beneficiaries. These interviews are complemented with a day of field observation during which I shadowed another student who is a quota system beneficiary. Initially, I planned to hold a group discussion between all six of my student interviewees to analyze how they responses to the issues we discussed individually in their interviews while in a group dynamic. Unfortunately this was not possible due to time constraints.

Six of the informants can be considered key informants in that they were able to provide information which guided the course of my investigation. The Instituto Cultural Steve Biko is a hybrid community center and educational program which preparatory courses for afro-descendant youths to compete on the vestibular exam as well as provides pride in their identities as Afro-Brazilians. At Steve Biko I interviewed Silvio Humberto Cunha and George Oliveira. Cunha has been executive director at Biko since its founding in 1992. He represents the institution legally and politically, as well as calls meetings. Oliveira is an ex-student of Biko who now is an administrative officer responsible for the maintenance of the site, PR and communications and elaborating projects as well as fundraising. As members of the social movements that pressured the UFBA into offering racial quotas, these two had privileged access to information about this process.

I interviewed Leticia Maria de Sousa Pereira from Conexões de Saberes Conexões de Saberes is the result of a partnership between the Secretariat of Continued Education, Literacy, and Diversity (SECAD) within the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Rio de Janeiro Observatório de Favelas, a civil society organization. Its objective is to strengthen ties between academic institutions and popular communities. It seeks to support students by providing academic support scholarships in exchange for then carrying out projects or research or teaching courses in popular communities. The research they produce is meant to be offer diagnostics, propositions, and evaluations of affirmative action policies for access and permanence in federal universities. Participant of the program must meet the following requirement: be residents of popular neighborhoods, earn below three minimum wages, and be a first generation college student. In UFBA, priority is given to quota students who meet the above criteria. Pereira’s role as coordinator puts her in contact with many quota students, and in our interview I question her about the sentiments that these students have expressed to her
The same line of questioning follows in Henrique Freitas’ interview. He is a researcher and advisor from the Programa Permanecer. Permanecer is funded by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) and was created in 2007 at UFBA to help reinforce the university’s affirmative action policies. The MEC grant provides 600 scholarships of $300 Reais per month to UFBA. 500 of these are divided amongst the UFBA’s Salvador campuses and the remaining 100 go to the Barreiras and Vitória da Conquista campuses. Freitas also has privileged information about the experiences of two students that he has worked with through Permanecer.

My student interviewees have all received scholarships from either Conexões or Permanecer, with the majority (4) receiving Permanecer scholarships. Two key student informants, Luiz Carlos Ferreira dos Santos and Cristina Severiana dos Santos, helped me to locate these interviewees as well as my field day observation participant, Adenilza Almeida. Luiz is an ex-scholarship recipient from Conexões and Cristina works currently on a Permanecer research scholarship. From Conexões I interviewed Francisco Flores dos Santos and from Permanecer I interviewed Bruno Cupertino de Jesus, Michele Alves da Silva Alves, and Clezilda Borges dos Santos.

Interviews with students were conducted without a fixed questionnaire but a flexible set of topics which each interview was meant to address, corresponding to the sub-questions of the research question: What attitudes do Afro-Brazilian quota students at the Universidade Federal da Bahia express regarding criticism of racial quotas, implementation of quotas at UFBA, and their experiences as quota students? Student interviews also sought to generally assess the topics: socio-economic profile, educational background, and participation in Conexões or Permanecer. In many cases, asking one question, such as, “could you start by telling me your life story” resulted in a response which covered several topic areas. Guiding questions as well as transcriptions of entire interviews are located in the field journal.

A day of field observation was carried out with Adenilza Almeida, during which note was made of the particularities of her schedule, her interaction with other students, and her saliency of her status as a quota student in her daily life in the University. Although no formal interview was carried out with her, nor did I spark conversations on the topic of her quota status with her, at certain points in the day this issue become apparent and she made conversation of it. Her statements/observations provide valuable information about her views on the quota system.

Results

The bulk of interviews were conducted between the UFBA campuses of Educação and Letras. The Faculdade de Educação primarily houses classes for those students majoring in Pedagogy. It also serves as one of the main spaces through which many UFBA students circulate. It is located in the valley area of the Canela neighborhood. Many students from the Letras campus take classes there and also use it as a central meeting space. The student body here is mixed in color and much like Letras it has been one of the major spaces in the UFBA system to receive a large number of quota students. Most of the interviews done here are carried out in the Redepect research room located on the third floor next to the Teixeira Library. Similar to the Education campus, the Faculdade de Letras is a very racially diverse campus. It houses the central library so it is also a highly frequented space, not only by language and literature majors, who are the primarily population served here. It also houses the University Restaurant and receives a lot of traffic as a result of this. It is located in the Ondina neighborhood near the UFBA’s school of dance and math department.
Themes from Student Attitudes about…

Racial quota Criticism
- That negative criticisms are based on lack of understanding, elitist mentality, or invalid notions about the nature of Brazilian society and of quota students
- That racial quotas are to be seen as a temporary measure
- That quotas are fair due to real inequality

Implementation of Quota Policy at UFBA
- All affirmed UFBA’S adoption of quota policy
- That UFBA’s adoption of quotas need not be seen independently but as a result of UFBA’s succumbing to social pressure
- UFBA lacks consistent and sufficient assistance programs

Experiences as Quota Beneficiaries at UFBA
- Although not socially isolated, quota students occupy a controversial space and are not treated equally by professors
- Quota students bear the burden of feeling the need to prove that they deserve the space they are in
- Lack of open discussion amongst peers about quotas: sometimes leading to awkward/tense exchanges when the issue comes to the forefront
- If not having discrimination experience, they affirm possibility of such
- Feeling of alienation from UFBA curriculum
- Difficulty keeping up with UFBA demands: time, money and overall struggle for permanence in spite of scholarships
- Almost everyone said that still being enrolled is their greatest success
Luis Carlos

Luis was one of the most informed interviewees when it came to the quotas debate; he named outspoken critics of affirmative action like Demétrio Magnoli, author of *Gota de Sangue*, and Ali Kamel, author of *Nós não somos racistas*. He also identifies academics who he explains wrote about African culture in Brazil and then manifested against quotas once they became a reality, including Peter Fry and Yvonne Maggie. He also talked about the point of view which expresses that Brazil is importing the black/white vocabulary most characteristic of the United States and that the Brazil is not racist enough to employ the American one drop rule. He is also able to name academics who support affirmative action like University of São Paulo professor Kabengele Mulanga and members of the black movement. In summary of what he understood of quotas before entering University he says: “What I heard was the consensus presented by the media. For example, that the quotas are going to divide Brazilian society. But I knew that that was the discourse of elite that had no interest in societal change.” He also adds that “People try to say that the quotas have brought the quality of the school down but in fact, statistics show that this is not the case and that many quota students get better grades than non-quota students.”

In relation to UFBA’s implementation of quotas, Luis made clear that he did not credit UFBA alone for this advent. He asserts that the UFBA is a profoundly white university with a profoundly white discourse and that it was the black movement that helped to break its elitism.

How he applied through quota system

When I ask him whether he has experienced discrimination at the UFBA he replies yes and expresses the manner in which he feels that discrimination happens at the UFBA:

> When professors discriminate they go by the criteria of color, because the student doesn’t write on their test ‘I am a quota student.’ But the professor who pursues the black student is consequentially against quotas...racism is the first problem. Since the central problem for a lot of people here in Brazil is racial quotas. Social quotas pass but the problem is always racial quotas.

He tells a story about an experience he had once in class. He was sitting next to an older black female student, a dread-locked follower of the Candomblé religion. She said loudly to him and to some white students nearby, “I was talking the other day to one of our classmates who didn’t know who Alberto Santos was (the ex-governor of Bahia). But you know why that is, he’s a quota student. A quota student in the class, who identified as Afro-Brazilian but had considerably lighter skin and more European features than the woman who made the comment, spoke up to oppose her, affirming that she was a quota student and was offended by that comment. He tells the story to point out that quotas are a contentious topic and the discussion of them in the University can cause conflict. He says that unlike other students in the university, he feels like his status is disputed and controversial.

As Cristina Santos also expresses later, Luis expresses disappointment with the curriculum he studied at UFBA which he feels does not incorporate Afro-Brazilian topics. This is the case in spite of Brazil’s 2003

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24 Ferreira dos Santos, Luis Carlos. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 9 November 2010
25 Ferreira dos Santos, Luis Carlos. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 9 November 2010
26 Ferreira dos Santos, Luis Carlos. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 9 November 2010
law 10.639. Luis expresses that there is still a lack of qualifies professors to teach these topics in spite of the fact that the law in seven years old.
Francisco Flores

Francisco is the only student to state that quotas ought to be understood as temporary measures. He says: “It’s a mechanism that makes it unequal in order to make it equal...we don’t want quotas forever. We want quotas until there’s black intellectual elite that can create the mechanisms so that we no longer need quotas.”

Corresponding to the attitude which sees quotas as fair due to existing inequality, he explains the reasoning that led him to understand quotas as just: “I began to perceive that the problem was not whether I was better or worse than them, but that the problem was that they have and have always had better means with which to compete. And so there was inequality. It’s as if we were competing in a race and they were driving the Ferrari and I was in a Fusca I would get to the end eventually, but always last.”

Francisco demonstrated understanding and approval of the UFBA’s quota policy:

- The UFBA is known and respected nationally for working with affirmative action. The very design of the quota system at the UFBA stands out at the national level because it takes into account the social and racial dimension of educational inequality, using proportions which mirror the data of the IBGE. For example the IBGE says that 85% of Bahia is black so the UFBA takes that statistic and makes it a beneficiary proportion in the 45% allocation. So of all the quota space allocated, 85% of it will be for blacks, who inhabit the periphery and 2% is for the indigenous. So it follows that there is a feeling of quota students that through our performance, we have to show that we deserve a space in the university.

- When explaining his personal experiences as a quota student he speaks about the financial difficulties of paying for Xeroxes for class and how this hardship encouraged disadvantaged students to say together and help one another. “We began to apply the solidarity of the favela in the University. We created a network of quota students, black students, resident students...We started to create a sort of network in order for us to in school and help ourselves.”

- He also expresses what he sees as another anxiety of being a quota student. “There is a feeling of quota students that through our performance, we have to show that we deserve a space in the university.”

Bruno Cupertino

27 dos Santos, Francisco Flores. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
28 Known for being a weak cheap old style Brazilian model car
29 dos Santos, Francisco Flores. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
30 Brazilian Census Bureau
31 Referring to University of Brasilia 2007 controversy: http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Vestibular/0,,MUL43786-5604-619,00.html
32 dos Santos, Francisco Flores. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
33 dos Santos, Francisco Flores. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
34 dos Santos, Francisco Flores. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
Bruno demonstrated an understanding of how the quotas system works which he explains was learned during his time as a student at Steve Biko. His responses demonstrate a sense of empowerment about the necessity of quotas:

As far as what I’ve been told and what I remember learning here at Steve Biko, the quotas are a process of selection that is differentiated. While you have a determined percentage that you have to get on the UFBA’s exam to come in by the normal system, there are a certain number of spaces that are allocated for a different percentage score. I believe the quotas are there to allow access of the student into the university because of the difficulties that we faced in high school. High school (public) here in Salvador is quite bad and the way in which teaching is done is even worse. The fact that the quotas allow you to enter with a slightly smaller percentage grade I find to be valid in spite of the fact that many students are against it, which I think is a result of lack of understanding but I find quotas in university to be valid.35

Bruno Expresses that time is a major difficulty in his experience since he lives an hour and a half away from school, in the peripheral neighborhood of Aguas Claras. When I asked him if he’s experienced discrimination as a quota student he responded as follows:

Not that I perceive. If so, it’s not been in my face. If so it’s behind my back. If it’s ever apparent, I, like many other Steve Biko students have the proper tools that it takes to defend myself. So if it’s happening behind my back, honestly I’m not going to stress myself out with things which I do not have any real certainty are happening. If it ever becomes apparently I know what my rights are and I know the proper ways in which to assert them and to defend myself.36

This answer was atypical in that it had a tone of empowerment and confidence that a discriminatory incident could be handled under the student’s control.

Bruno adds that his greatest difficulties in school have been academic and financial, and that for him one usually implies the other – for example lack of money usually implies lacking grades. Much like all the other interviewees with the exception of Luis and Francisco, Bruno says that his greatest victory is still being enrolled currently in spite of his financial/academic difficulties in the first semester. Like the other interviewees, he does not find his $300 Reais monthly Permanecer scholarship to be sufficient for his needs:

Today its 300 reads, but I think if the quantity was 500 reias that would be excellent. 300 takes care of basic necessities and sometimes it’s still not enough. And the UFBA demands a lot of you, financially as well as academically. Xerox, Books, supplies for lab. It demands all of that from you but the 300 reais of permanecer is very little. There’s the issue of feeding yourself, transport…37

When I ask him what he would say if he had the opportunity to speak with the UFBA administrators responsible for creating support services and scholarships for the quota students he responds:

35 de Jesus, Bruno Cupertino. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 18 November 2010
36 de Jesus, Bruno Cupertino. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 18 November 2010
37 de Jesus, Bruno Cupertino. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 18 November 2010
I would say that they should do a general reformulation. Because to this day, the way the UFBA works is to favor that student that comes from private school, whose parents have a certain financial power, who doesn’t work at the same time that he studies etc. So I think they should rethink the structure of the UFBA from the administration of classes…For example the scheduled times at which classes are offered. This should be rethought…The thinking that I told you about…for the student that has a…how can I say…a stable financial capacity. Financial resources. And so that should be rethought at the UFBA. So all in all, the scheduling of classes, the structure of the university to be able to welcome the students coming from public schools, residences for those who live very far and have to spend a lot of time on the bus everyday… scholarships should be bigger because in spite of the fact that they exist, the number is small in comparison to the size of the university. And a greater inspection, because these scholarships are supposed to be made for students with financial difficulties yet we have a lot of students who don’t have difficulties that are able to take advantage of these scholarships.  

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38 de Jesus, Bruno Cupertino. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 18 November 2010
Cristina responds to my question of what background knowledge she had on the quota debates by responding that she had little and that it was not something she’d discussed before the vestibular: “No it wasn’t discussed. I always identified as black as independently of the quotas I identify as black. But it’s like this, quotas are in my favor because today I would not have the scholarship or access to the Permanecer Project or other research projects if not for them. I didn’t have a lot of prior discussion about quotas but I believe that the reserve of spaces for quota students is beneficial.”

In response to questions about her experiences in the university, Cristina talks about her exhaustive schedule: “I leave home really early, at about 6am. I live in the neighborhood of Uruguay, which by bus is about 30 minutes away but in the mornings it’s usually about an hour due to traffic. I go to sleep after studying at around 1am or 1:30 am, or at some points at 2am. During the day I’m very irritated because I’m not able to sleep more.”

Most importantly for her, she expresses great displeasure with the teaching style and content at the UFBA: “The real problem I have is with the method of teaching and the curriculum itself. These things displease me and make me not want to do the pedagogy course and also make me want to graduate and then specialize in a different area – Pedagogy is in need of a lot of change. The University curriculum does not include mandatory classes about the areas that I want to inform myself or for the research that I want to do here or when I leave here—topics related to blacks. There are no mandatory courses that deal with black women and the issues of inequality that come along with gender. These are things that I seek out when I go to the CEAO where I feel a lot more comfortable and represented… It’s important to use this space to recognize and affirm myself.”

Cristina makes clear that her relationships with professors are peaceful and she has not been discriminated against, citing that an individual’s status as quota student is not obvious or discussed in school. However, she also states that discrimination does in fact exist in general against quota students and gives an example of a scenario where this tension plays out: “But in spite of the fact that the professors don’t discuss it, if we produce work that is not of the desired quality she, the professors will think that’s it’s the work of quota students.”

(She stutters, looks up into the air and sighs) Nossa, é difícil. They make this association. They make comments like, ‘the appearance of the university has changed, the quality of the work has changed.’ Mainly one professor from the Evaluation of Learning one semester... because we had a paper to do any everyone sent it in by email except for one classmate who forgot to send the citations. The professor said that the students that come from public school and who entered the university at a certain period of time, if I...

39 dos Santos, Cristina Severiana. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
40 dos Santos, Cristina Severiana. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
41 dos Santos, Cristina Severiana. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
42 Translates roughly to, “Oh My God, this is tough.”
remember correctly in 2005 or 2006, have difficulty producing work. Later we came to the understanding that she was referring to quotas. When she came to the topic of quotas she mentioned it quickly and left it and said that she was not in agreement with it and that she would leave it alone as it was a topic for another day. I believe it’s because she knew that the majority of her students in that class would call her statements into question.43

When asked what she would say to the UFBA administrators responsible for the quotas policy she says the following:

Honestly, the biggest implication is not the quotas but the permanence. They create spaces but the fight to stay in University is hard. I have a lot of friends that have dropped out because they couldn’t maintain. This 250 (housing scholarship) is supposed to be my rent and my transport by bus but it costs more. This was always the value given since I entered the university and it hasn’t changed. We have a group of housing scholarship recipients (because it’s divided between residence hall, food and housing scholarships) that meet and we put together an act to demand the increase of the scholarship. We calculated our total costs which included; bus fare; food; the salary in Brazil compared to the cost of water an energy (because when salary goes up all costs go up but for those who don’t receive salary, they suffer)...but none of what we asked for was taken into consideration. Actually they told us that we shouldn’t question the scholarship and that we should be satisfied that we have it at all.44

Clezilda Borges

Clezilda admitted to being little informed about the quotas debate. Her criticism of the UFBA’s quota policy was the only to implicate it as not sufficiently focused on race. “I think there needs to be more focus on race because there are whites from public school who do very well and you will see here a disadvantage because you will see kids here who come from really good public schools like the military school.”45 At the end of her interview she adds that there needs to be an increase in admissions spaces, particularly for racial minorities.

Clezilda tells me about her daily life describing her schedule. “I wake up at 5 or 5:20am. I go to bed at 1:30 to 2am. Maximum lateness I wake up at 6am. It takes up to an hour and twenty minutes to get here (school) depending on traffic (from Sao Gonçalo).”46 When I ask her if her Permanecer scholarship is sufficient to take care of her needs alone she responds, laughing. “In no way at all. I have to pay for Xerox, transport, to help my mom in the house, clothing, shoes…”47 When I ask her about her experiences with discrimination, she does not name any personal ones but states the following. “There are some professors here who are prejudiced against public school kids and scholarship kids. Like those who get the PIBIC scholarship (for public school kids). They think begin form public school means that you are incompetent.”48 I ask her about her greatest challenges and victories and she notes academic challenges but is at a loss for words for victories. “I don’t even

43 dos Santos, Cristina Severiana. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
44 dos Santos, Cristina Severiana. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 17 November 2010
45 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
46 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
47 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
48 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
know if I have one to tell….being here still. I was supposed to be graduated by now. I take few classes because I have to work. I don’t think there’s a big victory. Pre-getting here I would have said getting into school and now I think, just being here.”

When asked what she would say to UFBA administrators she says: I would say for them to expand the number of scholarships. Even as small as the scholarships that we get are, there are some people who don’t even have that. They come from the interior and end up selling snacks (salgados) on the street to pay for their transport. Increase the value of scholarships. As well as increase the number of quota spaces, racial quota spaces. And generally the number of spaces in the University.

49 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
50 dos Santos, Clezilda Borges. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 26 November 2010
Michele Alves

Michele, like Luis was very informed about the quotas debate but had taken the side opposite to Clezilda’s view. While like all of my interviewees, she identifies as black, she feels that the UFBA’s policy is correct to not focus entirely on race. “I already had been against the understanding that the point of the quota was to correct inequality so that blacks can have access. Who gets to decide this? You don’t know the parents of the person. I think this doesn’t fit, it encourages prejudice. No. Quotas should be for public school students.”

Michele does not name any experiences with discrimination but does not dent that such incidents may be common in other majors:

“I feel like anyone else. We don’t even know who’s here by quotas or not, unless you get into a friendship with someone and let them know. Professors don’t discuss that. But I want to be clear to let you know that I do pedagogy and this is a practically popular major. Elites don’t have an interest in this major. Who knows if I was in the medical or law school if this issue would be more apparent.”

Like other interviewees, she does not find her Permanecer scholarship to be sufficient for her needs. “No because for transport alone that’s 50 reias. Then there’s Xerox, food. And it’s hard to maintain. But I prefer this sort of money than to be instead working outside because it allows me to concentrate on school.”

“Like others, she also stated her greatest victory was still being enrolled and arriving to her 5th semester. “Hopefully a year and a half form here I’ll have my degree. I think that’s a victory looking at the reality of where I’ve come from. Even if it isn’t a popular major, since education isn’t valued. But I think it’s very important. The quality of teaching is currently low. But even though it’s difficult it’s not impossible.”

Discussion

The topic areas examined through the student interviews and interviews with Leticia Pereira and Henrique Freitas were: student attitudes about racial quota criticisms and debate, implementation of the quota system at UFBA, and personal experiences as quota students. While this research meant, in part, to spark discussion with quota student about their responses to critics of affirmative action, I found that only two interviewees had a strong command of the arguments circling in this debate. The divergent nature of these two responses, however, was valuable in that it represents the possible diversity that exists in beneficiaries’ opinions of affirmative action. While Luis favored racial quotas and found critics of them to be elites resistant to change, the other Michele agreed with critics of racial quotas and felt that use of race as criteria sparked prejudice.

When I asked for opinions about UFBA’s particular quotas policy, three of the students gave an adequate description of how the UFBA’s quota system works. All but one interviewee approved of the system as is. Clezilda criticized that some students entering through the quota system actually came from very good public schools and were not in need of affirmative action. She does not say.

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51 da Silva Alves, Michele Alves. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 25 November 2010
52 da Silva Alves, Michele Alves. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 25 November 2010
53 da Silva Alves, Michele Alves. Formal Interview. ISP Field Journal. 25 November 2010
that these students are not Afro-Brazilians, but it is implied, because her solution is for the UFBA to make more vacancies exclusively available to Afro-Brazilians.

Most interviewees were more vocal when it came time to talk about their personal experiences. The greatest issue impacting the experience of quota students is the struggle for permanence, or to stay in school in spite of the severe challenge posed by money. Many had taken time off to work. All receive or have received scholarships from the UFBA, but find the scholarship amounts to be inadequate to satisfy the basic demands of life as a University student. The primary costs identified by the interviewees were Xerox, books, and transport, as well as food and personal maintenance. Clezilda stated that she uses part of her scholarship to help her mother.

There was a notable tension between responses about quota student anonymity and responses about quota student discrimination. While some students said that no one knew their status unless they shares it, and that they did not feel singled out for being quota students, others said that professors and peers were in fact aware and that when they became aware discriminated against them or other quota students. Overall it appeared that the issue of quotas was somewhat of a social taboo and not treated in open discussion. Whenever it became an issue, it would be tense or problematic. Like in Luis and Cristina’s examples.

I found that Leticia and Henrique were not as well-positioned to describe the specific student attitudes. Instead they gave descriptions of the hardships from which many students come, corroborating with the students’ own descriptions about their backgrounds. This background information helped to explain reasons behind why the bulk of students felt that quotas are justified, such as the conditions of the communities and the primary and secondary schools from which the students come. In terms of the need to reinforce support programs which several students pointed out, Leticia and Henrique echoed this need, speaking from their own points of view. Field observation with Adenilza provided information which corresponds to attitudes of the interviewees concerning the major constraints of time and money.
Conclusions

These results paint a problematic picture. For all of the students the cost of life as a student is extremely high and not covered by UFBA scholarship. For some, these demands were so high, that they overwhelmed or precluded the desire to follow the political processes and debates in the media about racial quotas in Brazil. While these students are effectively in the spotlight of political debate about quotas, they do not have the means with which to follow this debate and take active part in it. The number one response when asked about their greatest victories as students was to have managed to stay in school. This is a poor indicator for the success of UFBA’s affirmative action program. This struggle for permanence should be replaced by a process of academic and civic maturity, by which beneficiaries of UFBA’s quotas policy can grow in awareness and citizenship as well as participate and compete on the same playing field as their peers.

While nationally respected, and set to eventually be imitated by the federal government should the Supreme Court rule in favor of quotas, the UFBA affirmative action policy lacks in its ability to provide quota beneficiaries with the means to be full citizens in the university. While it addresses half of the problem of access, it fails to follow through with sufficient financial resources and to prepare beneficiaries and the University at large for the social realities of affirmative action. More attention should be paid to orienting the university community as well as beneficiaries themselves about the social realities of Brazil which have led to the UFBA adopting quotas as well as preparing beneficiaries with the tools needed to participate fully in the university community.

Extension

Future research should follow the actions of quota beneficiaries who have successfully organized to take part in the national debate on affirmative action. Similarly, it would be ideal to research the process by which leaders in such a group motivate and mobilize other quota beneficiaries to participate in this discussion. A related project could be to create a blog or website in which Brazilian university students of any ethnicity, and without regard to quota status, could interact and take part in the national debate, receive updates on legal battles, and join in hot button political discussions.
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1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

   I could not have carried out this project in the USA because the population that I worked with, Afro-Brazilian quota system beneficiaries at the UFBA, exists only in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Since my research relies on data about attitudes, interviews with these individuals was crucial.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different? How?

   I could have only researched background information from the United States, but a lot of the specific information about the UFBA policy, could only be found at the UFBA. For example the 2011 Vestibular Candidate Manual with Resolution 01/04 printed within it.

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

   My home institution, The University of Maryland Baltimore County, provides funding to undergraduates who conduct research, and I have been awarded a grant to carry out independent research, prior to this experience. As a result I was familiar with the process of individual-led, hands-on learning in the field.

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

   My monograph is split evenly between primary and secondary data. In order to orient the reader, I provided a lot of historical background information. Some of this background I was able to get from interviews, but the bulk was secondary information. However, following the methodology section, all new information is a result of interviews carried out with informants.

5. 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 used the attitudes which occurred most frequently and the attitudes that stuck out the most to become the guiding themes in my analysis.

6. How did the "drop-off's" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

   I do not think the field exercises were helpful to me because my research took place in a different city from the home site, Fortaleza. I would have benefitted more from an orientation on how to navigate Salvador using the bus system as well as a good map.

7. What part of the FSS most significantly influenced the ISP process?

   The community project helped me a lot in learning how to maintain a field book.

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

   The biggest problem was transcribing long interviews in an accent much different from that of Fortaleza. I did not ever resolve this issue but in the future I will make my questioning more direct, and concise.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?
As stated in the previous response, more concise questioning would have condensed the time it took me to transcribe my interview.

10. **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?**
    When I became aware of the existence of Permanecer and Conexões, I incorporated them into my research design rather than selecting random students. I also reduced the number of student interviews from ten to six due to time constraints.

11. **How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc.?**
    My advisor introduced me to two students who helped me select others. My advisor is also a professor at the UFBA and this also provided me a great deal of access.

12. **What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)?**
    Interviews were the logical method since I was seeking to find out attitudes. I could have also used survey but this would not have given me such in depth responses.

13. **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 was very helpful in helping me to understand the themes coming from my interviews. Although his was very busy he helped to put me in touch with the proper school organs and individuals to help me carry out my research.

14. **Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?**
    I conducted an interview that I was unable to use in the end because it became apparent that the student did not fit the profile I had specified. I was able to substitute this interview with another.

15. **What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?**
    I learned a lot about the communities from which many quota students come. I would be interested in returning to Bahia to somehow work in/with students from these communities again.

16. **Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?**
    The ISP Period helped me a lot with the language as well as personal growth. I learned how to navigate the city independently and became more fluent in Portuguese. Being in Bahia also helped to train my ear for accents foreign to me.

17. **What were the principal lessons you learned from the ISP process?**
    I learned that in order to carry out work in a desirable time frame it requires planning very much in advance (for example, with scheduling interviews and getting responses to emails). It is also ideal to have very clear and direct questions planned previously and to have patience most of all, because things may not go as efficiently as desired.
18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/her?

   Do everything in your power to locate interviewees and plan interviews in advance. Get all possible contact information from all informants and do not be embarrassed to ask people to repeat and speak slowly.

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again

   ABSOLUTELY!