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Publication Date
2016

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Assessing the Law of Social Quotas: A qualitative approach to the perspectives of black

University Students in São Paulo

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Satisfaction of the

Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

in Latin American and Iberian Studies

by

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September 2016

The thesis of Alexander K. Scarlett is approved.

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September 2016

ABSTRACT

Assessing the Law of Social Quotas: A qualitative approach to the perspectives of black university students in São Paulo

Alexander K. Scarlett

This paper provides some preliminary understandings of how well the Brazilian law of Social Quotas is working since it's passing in 2012, focusing on student attitudes toward this law, their progress towards university degrees, and presumably middle-class status. By interviewing ten students (selected largely from the educational non-profit, Educafro) from various universities throughout the city of São Paulo, this essay peers into the lives of black students enrolled in affirmative action programs. In addition to public university students, I also include private university students who have received financial assistance (grants, loans, and scholarships) from programs to increase accessibility for underrepresented communities. I chose black university students as my primary informants as they are the population most equipped to comment on and detail the successes and failures of affirmative action policies. I confirmed my hypothesis that black students would generally provide positive responses to the Law of Social Quotas, as the majority of informants reflected positively of the legislations. Though some rejected the Law of Social Quotas, all of the informants closely understood why some applicants might opt for preferential selection through the law of Social quotas. Informants seemed to understand how dire the economic situation is for many poor afro-Brazilians, regardless of their personal opinions on affirmative action. Furthermore, many support affirmative action legislations as academic

research has disproven misconceptions regarding the intellectual capability of quota students.

My research argues that most Black university students have a holistic understanding of the issues that closely considers both sides of the debate. These students reflect critically upon the societal and social implications of the "Law of Social Quotas" as they must negotiate their personal politics with consistent claims of a post racial society.

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I. Introduction

For much of the 20th century, the assumption that racism did not exist in Brazil prevailed within the country. Though more than half of Brazil's inhabitants are of African descent, black social movements often floundered in their quests for equality and representation. This can be attributed largely to Brazil's deep seeded nationalism coupled with histories of miscegenation that essentially established colorblind ideologies as a fact of Brazilian life. In recent years however, Brazil has no longer been able to hide behind suppositions of racial harmony, and serious answers to problems of racial inequality have been called for.

Of these policies, the "Lei de Cotas Socias," or Law of Social Quotas, is undoubtedly the most polarizing, as it seeks to bolster the cripplingly small Afro-Brazilian and indigenous university student populations. According to this legislation, half of its yearly admits must come from a public high school. Within its public school quota (50%), there exists a supplementary quota to ensure that at least half of the students admitted into university under the law show a family income less than or equal to 1.5 times the minimum wage (25%), the remaining (25%) of student show a family income greater than 1.5 times the minimum wage. The law of Social Quotas then establishes the racial makeup of the incoming class for each of these subcategories based upon census data from the previous year. Although the Law of Social Quotas was created with the intent to promote a more equal society (where all of the country's citizens have equal educational opportunities), many find this new legislation unconstitutional as it provides unequivocal advantages to specific groups of students while disregarding others. (*Secretaría De Políticas De Promoção Da Igualdade Racial)*

This is especially important, considering Brazil's highly meritocratic University admissions process; admitting students solely on the basis of their performances on the Vestibular (the Brazilian university entrance exams). Consequently, many Brazilians are against these policies because they make an already competitive process even more so by decreasing the number of admissions available for the traditionally white private school students who take the test. This feeling of unfairness is further amplified by the fact that many of the students who spend years studying and preparing for the Vestibular may lose out to a lesser-qualified black student from a public school. Further arguments against affirmative action policies abound; however, the idea that a distinction between black and white peoples simply does not exist is by far one of the most popular among detractors of the policy.

Conversely, proponents of the Law of Social quotas cite the debilitating historical legacy of slavery as a primary supporting argument. They argue that centuries of slavery and racial inequality have created an everlasting divide between blacks and whites within the country. Similar arguments delve further into white's intrinsic socioeconomic advantage; considering generations of wealth built upon exploitation. Affirmative action policies like the Law of Social Quotas are thus necessary reparations to the injustices that have led to lasting racial and social inequality.

As I stated earlier, the Law of Social Quotas was intended to benefit underrepresented communities that have been historically excluded from access to higher education. This becomes particularly clear considering disparities in preparedness for the Vestibular between public and privately instructed applicants. These disparities are further intensified along color lines. Poor Afro Brazilians have been historically underrepresented largely due to the legacy of poverty and disenfranchisement set forth by histories of

subjugation. As a result of this legacy of slavery, and the structural subjugation that followed, there are only a small percentage of wealthy black Brazilians who have attained access to quality schooling over the years. These policies thus serve as reparations for black public school attending students; who almost always have significantly lower educational foundations than privately educated students.

Considering the Law of Social Quota's target constituents, I modeled my informant base on black students who historically have not had access to higher education. Because Brazilian public schools are very commonly associated with mediocrity, having limited quality institutions of primary and secondary schooling, I met with informants largely from Brazil's only historically black college, *Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares*, and also *Educafro;* a grassroots non-profit organization promoting black scholarship.

To make access to a relatively small population of Afro Brazilian university students less cumbersome, I interviewed a small sub group of students associated with these two particular minority-serving organizations. I chose to interview this smaller group of students because they reflect the most underrepresented population in higher education, the poor black student; who is doubly disadvantaged because of his/her race and state funded education. Finally, I chose this particular data set to intentionally center the discussion on the Law of Social Quotas around the constituents it was designed to serve. Their experience and insight on the Law of Social Quotas will most accurately attest to whether or not this new legislation can attain its ambitious goals for social change.

Though the personal histories of each informant I spoke with differed, they often shared similar morals and life experiences that have shaped their perspectives on race and identity; and the effects affirmative action legislation has had (or intends to have) on education in Brazil and by extension Brazilian society.

During my nine-month stay in Brazil, I collected my ethnographic research data largely through interviews and informant data, as secondary source information is rarely ever centered on the constituents it was meant to serve.

I originally hypothesized positive responses from my informant base to the Law of Social quotas, as they are the primary beneficiaries of this legislation. From the conversations I had with my informants, I confirmed this hypothesis. Interestingly though, of the countless conversation I had with black students, almost none of them outwardly repudiated this legislation, and if they had, they understood the reasons why some applicants accepted preferential selection through the Law of Social Quotas." More specifically they understood how dire the economic situation is for poor (usually black) people in Brazil, regardless of whether or not they attributed disparities to issues of race or class. This is particularly important considering the proliferation of colorblind ideologies (especially when Brazilian histories in population control and "whitening" have been taken into consideration).

In his work "Race in Another America, " Edward Telles provides a detailed account of the ways 'whiteness' has been historically preferred over 'blackness' in Brazil (from before the First Republic to the year 2000). Citing first the country's history of miscegenation and state sanctioned European immigration that hoped to "whiten" the tropical nation, Telles systematically uncovers the tendency amongst Afro-Brazilian to lighten themselves in the present day by analyzing census data from the First Republic through to the year 2000. Telles found that over the years blacks tended to classify themselves with a wide array of terms that essentially distanced themselves from the all-encompassing term "black". As a result some census data showed hundreds of different racial classifications. (Telles, 2004)

Where a one drop-rule of black inheritance exists in the U.S., a more blurred categorization system exists in Brazil, based upon phenotypic characterizations, and not necessarily ancestry. This perspective on race thus establishes a color continuum in Brazil that often blurs racial identity (Telles, 2004). As a result, determining who is and who isn't black becomes an even more difficult question to answer, especially when competitive university admissions are at stake. These uncertainties with respect to race and identity manifested itself in 2007, when two twin brothers applied to the Federal University of Brasilia under affirmative action policies. One sibling was considered black by the review board (then utilized at the Federal University of Brasilia to determine whether or not an applicant was to be considered for admission under affirmative action policies), while the other was not (Bassette, 2007). Though the law of Social Quotas aims to promote inclusivity, there remains no safeguard to ensure affirmative action policies will reach the populations it was meant to assist.

During my time in São Paulo, Educafro was engaged in a campaign to expose white applicants appointed to positions in government under new affirmative action legislation. These policies reserved a percentage of public service positions to underrepresented communities like disabled persons and Afro Brazilians. As the name and information of these appointees were made public due to governmental transparency, Educafro ensured each selected applicant was phenotypically black; checking and exposing Facebook profiles of applicants unfairly taking advantage of policies that weren't designed for them. It is fair to assume then that there is concern amongst the black community for whether or not applicants utilizing affirmative action quotas are exploiting legislation for personal gain.

Based on the informant data I compiled during my stay in Sao Paulo, I was able to connect with black university students from a generally lower socioeconomic background to

get a sense of how the Law of social quotas was being perceived by poor black students and whether or not this legislation is working towards reaching it's goals of social inclusion. I conclude that though the law of Social Quotas has managed to provide opportunities to poor black students that were once nonexistent (and are being perceived positively amongst black students) there is still much work ahead as the Law of Social quotas should work more closely at financially sustaining students while they focus their attentions on their studies instead of work. This makes practical sense as it thus gives *cotistas* more leeway to catch up to their privately educated classmates. Though initially there may exist discrepancies between public and private school instructed students, these division eventually erase themselves over time. In his 2008 study of law students at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), researcher Andre Cicalo found that though initially non-quota students outperformed quota students during the first year of evaluations, the performance of quota students improved consistently throughout the second and third year of coursework. Testimony from university instructors at UERJ can attest to the performances of quota students, despite their personal beliefs on quotas. Cicalo's conversation with the constitutional Law professor at UERJ further attests to quota student's proficiencies:

" If I talk from a political point of view, I believe that quotas are not the best way to fight inequality in Brazil… However, if I talk by looking at the results, my testimony has to be different. Quota students are, overall, very motivated students from the beginning of the course. In comparison to the catastrophic predictions when the system was introduced, these students do quite well."(Cicalo 2013)

By centering the discussion on the real lived experiences of Afro Brazilian university students, I aim to expand their voice while also attesting to the most important perspectives

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on Brazilian university quotas, the proposed constituents they were designed for, poor black students.   Their enterprising spirit coupled with astute observations that attest to holistic understandings of institutionalized racism, black subjugation and disenfranchisement has lead to a profound understanding of the larger issues at stake, and a fundamental understanding that affirmative action policies are not a solution to systemic issues but rather a band aid that hopes to temporarily consolidate and heal the wounds of slavery and exclusion that have led to a system where black Brazilians are consistently excluded from opportunity. Though it is often commonly perceived that affirmative action policies would only degrade the once prestigious status of Brazil's federally funded public Universities, research has shown that *cotistas* often work hard enough to not only catch up with their private school partners but sometimes surpass them in terms of proficiency and understanding. (Cicalo 2013)

In the following chapter I will provide a literature review of Brazil's history with affirmative action, beginning with the presidential initiative of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and the 2001 Durban conference against racism. I will discuss these events among the other catalysts that shifted perspectives on race and race relations within the country that lead up to the Law of Social Quotas. The third chapter will discuss my research methodology, followed by a close discussion of my findings. The final chapter will review some of the main findings of my research, and finally suggesting further research related to affirmative action policies in Brazilian instittutions of higher education.

II. Literature Review

After Fernando Henrique Cardoso's 1995 election to the Brazilian presidency followed a marked difference in the way that the government approached social issues. Mala Htun's article "From Racial Democracy to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil," posits that the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso took more initiative in regards to social issues than did previous administrations. This certainly held true for problems felt within the Afro-Brazilian community, as he created an "Interministerial Working Group to Valorize the Black Population". It was also during the Cardoso administration that then secretary of state for human rights Paulo Sergio Pinheiro published Brazil's tenth report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission proclaiming Brazilian legislation compatible with affirmative action policies. (Htun 2004)

The following year, the National Human Rights Program, now equipped with Pinheiro's report advocating affirmative action policies in Brazil, proposed public policy legislation aimed specifically at Afro-Brazilians. This included for example, support for private businesses with affirmative action programs and proposals to increase access to universities. This document also suggested that the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) adopt more rigid definitions of race. This was of major importance considering Brazillian's historical aversions to black identity.

Debates and seminars on affirmative action policies in Brazil continued on both the national and international stage all the way up until the World Conference on Racism held in Durban in September of 2001. Intranational debate intensified especially during preparations for the Durban conference, and the final report submitted to the conference recommended that the government adopt quotas or other "affirmative action mechanisms" to increase the number of black students in public universities. The document cited various

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constitutional precedents to assert the validity and constitutionality of affirmative action policies based upon race. More specifically, these constitutional precedents included: the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) of 1943. Implemented during the Vargas era, this law required that two thirds of all workers in privately owned businesses be Brazilian citizens; a 1990 law creating quotas for people with physical disabilities in civil services positions; and a 1997 law requiring political parties to provide a minimum percentage of female candidates in legislative elections, all served as important precedents. (Htun 2004)

Brazil's generally positive experience at Durban prompted the enactment of actual policies seeking to undo racial inequalities, and moreover a national dialogue on issues of race within the country. For Brazil, the 2001 Durban Conference Against Racism was undoubtedly a turning point in the country's history, as it not only demonstrated to the world that racism was indeed a problem within the country once believed a racial democracy, but more importantly sought progressive means to undo the paralyzing effects of racial inequality. In the months following the national and international announcement of Brazil's endorsement of affirmative action for black people, state agencies at various levels began championing affirmative action policies. In December of 2001, the Justice Ministry issued a decree creating quotas for blacks (20%), women (20%) and handicapped people (5%) in management and senior advising positions, as well as other firms and organization involved with the ministry's national and international efforts. In addition to these quotas Fernando Henrique Cardoso also called for a diplomatic corps that better reflected the diversity of the Brazilian populace. As a result he created an affirmative action program within the country's foreign service (*Itamaraty*) that sought to financially support prospective black career officers studying for Brazil's highly competitive and rigorous Foreign Service exam. (Htun 2004)

Fernando Henrique Cardoso's presidency made huge strides, not only in terms of reformulating the way that Brazilians saw and interacted with one another, but also the way that other nations perceived this growing country. Unlike previous administrations that opted to either deny or disregard racial inequalities, President Cardoso utilized his political power to promote change and disrupt racial inequalities persistent within Brazil. Though President Cardoso played an instrumental role in the adoption of affirmative action policies as a viable means of abating racial inequalities, he certainly was not alone in prompting the spread of affirmative action policies and the rejection of the racial democracy thesis. In fact, one of the most pivotal moments towards the spread of legislation seeking to undo inequalities of the past occurred not with the actions of a single person, but rather through the economic research of the federal government (Htun 2004).

Brazilian citizens could no longer neglect persisting racial inequalities once the federal government's Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) uncovered racial inequalities through hard statistical data. However, it was not the content of this study that forced Brazilian citizens to speak about a subject as taboo as race, but rather the simple fact that the debate did not occur due to the militancy of the black movement, but rather because of the appearance of evidence of racism brought forth by an institution with an undeniable reputation. In an interview with author Mala Htun, Ricardo Henriques, author of one of the IPEA studies, explained how the work of the IPEA facilitated discussions on the inequalities of race, despite its general unacceptability within academic economist and governmental circles. He stated, " The issue had been taboo for academic economists on the one hand and the government on the other. When the IPEA published its studies, the government could no longer remain deaf to the [race] discussion." (Htun 2004, 77)

It is also important to note that unlike the academic research conducted on the perversities of Brazilian racial inequalities of decades past, the information presented by Henriques and the IPEA was much more easily digestible by the media and the general public, as Henriques and the rest of the IPEA staff devoted more effort to presentation style, colorful graphs, diagrams and PowerPoint than did the academics of previous years. (Htun 2004)

In addition to more easily demonstrable information, a general shift in the priorities of the Ford Foundation was another major catalyst toward the discussion of once taboo racial matters and the subsequent adoption of affirmative action policies. Though the Ford Foundation had played an integral part in Brazilian race studies during the late 1970's and early 1980's by producing quality research information, beginning in the mid 1990's their priorities shifted from being solely a research institution to becoming a major supporter of organizations committed to fighting racism. According to Ford Foundation representative in Brazil, Nigel Brooke, this shift in orientation grew out of the primary belief that "Brazilian democracy is hollow until it can include all of the population." Ford began a period of action, explicitly supporting organizations in favor of affirmative action. With new initiatives geared towards action, the Ford Foundation's spending on race issues more than tripled as they helped to fund Afro-Brazilian movements endorsing affirmative action, a network of black attorneys, academic research on racial discrimination, and leadership training for black professionals. This support also included millions of dollars to Afro-Brazilian groups to prepare, participate in, and follow up on the Durban World Conference Against Racism. In addition to the monetary resources that the foundation was able to provide to Afro-Brazilian movements, the Ford Foundation also proved to be an invaluable

resource in fostering connections between Brazilian black movements and other anti-racist organizations around the world. (Htun 2004)

As the Ford Foundation continued to find ways to support black movements, socially, economically, or politically, black people were also gaining prominence within Congress. Though the percentage of Afro-Brazilians in Congress has remained historically low (never before surpassing 3 percent of the total number of federal deputies and senators before the year 1998)* black PT (*Partido Trabalhista*) members in Congress grew more successful in organizing a black caucus and by the early 2000s a caucus comprised of nine black congressional members met regularly to ensure that Afro-Brazilian issues such as race and affirmative action were discussed (Htun, 2004). It is important to note however that though more black congressional representatives were present in government during this time period, not all of them believed it necessary to align oneself politically with the black caucus. Indeed, as real progress was beginning to occur regarding issues of racial inequality and Afro-Brazilian rights, it is fair to posit that many black congressional persons still found themselves more ideologically in-line with the racial democracy thesis. They found such groupings based on color unnecessary or simply did not agree with president Cardoso's affirmative action efforts. (Htun 2004)

General rejections of FHC's affirmative action policies were based largely in the belief that affirmative action policies violated constitutional precedents of equality set forth in the Constitution. Besides this though, skepticism about the effectiveness of such affirmative action policies impeded the President's ability to garner partisan and legislative support for them. Indeed, as aforementioned, President Cardoso acted largely from his own personal political opinions, often not even soliciting counsel from his own political party.

Secretary of State for Human Rights Paulo Sergio Pinheiro clarifies this position in a statement he made about the advances the president had fostered. He states:

"…in the struggle against racism, most of the advances are due to presidential decision . . . affirmative action, the defense of quotas, it's the president of the republic… these measures [resulted from former Justice Minister] José Gregori and I negotiating with the president. . . . All of this was a personal presidential decision. He didn't consult anyone, not even the party."

(Htun 2004, 80)

However impressed Pinheiro was at the president's tenacity and eagerness to promote change, the Secretary of State also realized that presidential initiative without a strong social movement and legislative support would undoubtedly lead to a weak system whereby enforcement of recent policies suffer immensely from what Pinheiro calls a "fragile architecture." (Htun 2004, 81)

The government of Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva would pick up where his predecessor Fernando Henrique Cardoso left off by creating the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality to enforce and oversee the implementation of federal government programs like affirmative action.

If racial inequalities were not clearly accepted as a serious social problem within the country, further supplementary research by the IPEA had not only made this point blatantly clear, but also exposed the country to sobering statistics uncovering the racial disparities within the country. Education lies at the heart of Brazilian inequalities, as a generally weak public school system coupled with excellent private schooling created a system whereby a small elite minority can attain a decent education, which in turn makes them more

competitive for admission into Brazil's prestigious public Universities. Admission into these universities is not an easy task, as these universities select applicants on the basis of the mandatory entrance exam, known as the *vestibular*.

Generally speaking, Brazilian private schools tend to produce significantly much better prepared prospective examinees, as their curriculums are much more academically rigorous and extensive. Access to this type of academic preparation doesn't come free. The price of enrollment varies from campus to campus. Rio de Janeiro's American School for instance prices their educational services for high school students at R$ 7,141.00 per month (about $2,001.43 at an exchange rate of R$3.57 for $1). (*Escola Americana Do Rio De Janeiro)*

The exorbitant fees observed at Rio de Janeiro's American school certainly don't reflect the prices of all private schools throughout Brazil. However, these fees do represent extreme exclusivity for families who can afford to pay them.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the educational goals implicitly set by the school system for less advantaged poor students are significantly diminished in comparison to those of their wealthier counterparts. The schooling these students receive can in no way measure up to the resources available to private school students, subsequently making them less competitive university applicants. Although it is the general aim of education to prepare students for careers in the real world, what we see here in Brazil is a clear distinction between what careers the educational system makes available for wealthy students, in comparison to those for poorer students.

In conjunction with the class system organized through the scholastic subjugation of poor students, Brazil's educational system also disseminates a form of institutionalized racial inequality, as Afro-Brazilians form the overwhelming majority of the country's poor.

Indeed, Afro-descendants make-up about 70 percent of the country's poorest decile, a whopping yet unsurprising number considering the country's massive historical origins in African slavery.   As a result of this reality, an overwhelming majority of black students are unable to pay for private schooling, and are subsequently forced to study in lesser achieving institutions. This is not to say that there aren't scholastically proficient public schools available in Brazil, but these schools are extremely scarce in poorer neighborhoods where the majority is unequivocally black.

According to the most recent *Pesquisa Nacional por a mostra de Domicilios* (PNAD) of 2009, a national survey of households conducted by the IBGE, 97.6% of children and adolescents between 7 and 14 years old are enrolled in school, which represents about 26 million students. Although the remaining 2.4% may seem small, it represents 680,000 children out of school. Of these children 66% (450,000) are black. Moreover, the percentage of children out of primary school in the North region is double that of the Southeast. These statistics are all the more unnerving considering that they reflect only primary school aged students, the only level of education made mandatory by the government. (Educação - Mão Na Roda)

Although further reform of Brazil's public education system is necessary, government officials as well as many institutions of higher learning realized the need to promote diversity at the university level. Indeed, before affirmative action policies were introduced in higher education, Afro-Brazilians made up only about 2.2% of university students in 1997, compared 9.6% of whites (Cicalo 2012). In response to this abysmal percentage, the Diversity in Education program financed preparatory courses for poor and black students to pass the *vestibular.* Meanwhile, significant debate was occurring in congress, as the Senate considered former President José Sarney's proposal to implement a

20% quota for Afro-Brazilians in the civil service and public federal universities. Sarney's aim was to "break the current inertia, which prevent blacks from competing in equal conditions with whites in access to higher education and the labor market… Without access to education, blacks are condemned to segregation" (Htun 2004, 70).

Meanwhile, state and municipal governments began adopting affirmative action policies, and on October 8th 2001, the Rio de Janeiro state legislature approved a 40% quota bill for both of its state funded universities. Following the implementation of this bill, a 50% quota was also established in Rio's public university system for students coming from public schools. Soon afterwards, other governmental municipalities began adopting their own forms of affirmative action.

Though much debate, discussion, and in extreme cases violent outcry ensued as a direct response to affirmative action policies in Brazil's public universities, the subsequent presidency of Dilma Rousseff would continue championing affirmative action policies. Wholly recognizing the necessity of change at a social level, President Rousseff passed legislation in 2012 that would obligate public universities throughout Brazil to reserve spaces for Afro-Brazilian students in accordance with the black population of the particular state. The Law of social quotas mandates that all federal universities offer half (50%) of their university admission to students coming from public schools. Within this quota, half of the universities admits are reserved for need based applicants, while the other half represents students whose family income is greater than 1.5 times the minimum wage (as of April 2016, the Brazilian minimum wage is R$880 a month. Students seeking admission based on need may earn no more than a total family income of R$1320 per month). Within these socioeconomic categories, the university will subsequently reserve spaces for Afro-Brazilian, mixed

raced and indigenous students based upon the demographics of the particular state. If for example the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro has 100 admissions for their upcoming school year, 50 students would be reserved for public school students. Because the state show a 51.8% population of black, brown and indigenous people, 13 need based students who identify as black, brown or indigenous will be accepted into the university, while the remaining 12 within the need-based category will be reserved for student's who've attended public school but do not claim racial quotas. This exact proportion is maintained within the non-need-based public school subcategory (13 black, brown or indigenous students who've attended public schools, 12 non-quota who've attended public schools). The remaining 50 seats remain open to the highest scoring students who've attended private schools. (*Secretaría De Políticas De Promoção Da Igualdade Racial*)

80 of Brazil's 81 senators voted in favor of the Law of Social Quotas (LSQ), affirming the fact that racial and social inequalities remain pervasive within Brazilian society. Although this law passed almost unanimously, however, that did not necessarily mean that it has been accepted and appreciated among the entire Brazilian populace.

Indeed, many still believe that adopting such policies will adversely affect Brazil's education system in particular and society at large. They argue that it lowers the prestige and level of instruction taught in Brazilian universities, under the assumption that black students who normally would not have earned a seat at a given university would struggle significantly in their efforts to attain their degrees, forcing instructors to slow their pace or cater special attention to black students. Opponents of the quota system also maintain that such quotas are unlawful, as they provide preferential treatment to certain Brazilian citizens, which violates the constitutional law of civic equality. Additionally, many believe quotas

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are simply unsuitable for Brazil, as its use is an attempt to mimic historic American policies, despite the fact that both societies differ immensely in term of social climate, and history.

Proponents of university quotas however, posit that such legislation is necessary to undo the stifling effects of slavery that have undoubtedly maintained immense social inequalities within the country. Championing statistics on poverty, literacy, and income distribution for Afro-Brazilians, proponents consider these policies a matter of necessary social justice, as opposed to a government handout.

Though the debate initially focused on the constitutionality of race based affirmative action policies, more than ten years after Rio De Janeiro's State University (UERJ) accepted the first class of *cotistas,* the debate around affirmative action policies in higher education has shifted. Contemporary research is centered more so on how affirmative action has influenced student's racial identity, and their performance at the university level as opposed to its constitutionality. According to Andre Cicalo's article *Race and Affirmative Action: The implementation of quotas for "Black" students in a Brazilian University*, though students who may traditionally categorize themselves as "brown" may self-identify as black to compete for university admission through quotas, this administrative self-identification does not directly correlate to increased black identity. Indeed, according to his research of Law students at UERJ, Cicalo found that it was the university experience in general, and participation with black university groups in particular, that contributed to reinforcing black identity and consciousness. These topics are important considering Brazil's long history of miscegenation. Many feared that the adoption of quotas would undo this history or racial flexibility by imposing fixed definitions of racial identity, not unlike the United State's one-drop-rule for instance. Conversely, many Afro-Brazilian activists seek a more inclusionary

approach to racial classification that unites that black community as opposed to fragmenting it based on skin tones. (Cicalo 2013)

Contrary to Cicalo's findings (which downplays the effect the state has had on student racial identities as a result of quotas) Andrew Francis-Tan and Maria Tannuri-Pianto's piece *Inside the Black box: affirmative action and the social construction of race in Brazil* suggests that the state has indeed made an effect on student racial identification. Collecting data on students who matriculated before and after the implementation of racial quotas at the University of Brasilia, their findings suggest that quotas had inspired a shift in racial identification from non-black to black and from lighter to darker skin tones. Utilizing a difference-in-difference methodology from the surveys they collected from UnB students (conducted during and after college), the authors were able to quantitatively prove the significance of quotas on racial identity after college. In short, this work found that quotas had increased black identity for brown and black students (Francis Tan & Tannuri-Pianto, 2015)

Three years after the implementation of the Law of Social quotas, more than 150,000 student's have enrolled in university quota programs designed for Afro-Brazilians throughout the country (*Secretaría De Políticas De Promoção Da Igualdade Racial* , 2015). Statistics from the IBGE mark a significant increase in the number of black and brown students attending Brazilian universities. Percentages of Afro-Brazilian students (between the ages of 18-24) enrolled in a university increased from 16.7% in 2004 to to 45.5% in 2014. Percentages of white students of the same age bracket (18-24) attending a university also increased from 47.2% in 2004 to 71.4% in 2014 (Sales, 2015). One can assume that these increases within the Afro-Brazilian community may be attributed largely to affirmative action policies present in both private and public institutions throughout the country.

However impressive these statistics may seem, the widespread policies of self-declaration may in many cases lead to fraud.

In a recent case made public by *Consultor Jurídico*, a Brazilian legal magazine, a student originally accepted into the Federal University of Santa Maria through racial quotas lost his seat and was not allowed to matriculate for falsely declaring himself as a brown afro descendent while applying to the university. Though the student took legal action against the University for asking him to provide further documentation to prove his racial identity beyond that of self-declaration. The university claimed however that the commission responsible for verifying student self-declarations did nothing illegal, and was simply doing it's do diligence in ensuring that quotas remain equitable at their university. (*Consultor Jurídico*)

Considering that the Law of Social quotas only states self-declaration as sufficient for students utilizing quotas for university admission, some universities, (like the Federal University of Santa Maria) have created commissions comprised of black professors and students to verify the phenotypic traits of would be *cotistas* accepted into public universities though quotas. If recent articles citing cases of fraud within university quotas, that is phenotypically white passing students self identifying as black or mixed to gain an advantage in university admissions, many university may need to further evaluate this process of self-identification alone. In April of 2016, *Folha de São Paulo*, published an articled entitled, "False *cotistas* have become the target of black university student" (*Falsos cotistas viram alvo de universitarios*) that succinctly highlight some contemporary issues around racial fraud within the country's federal Universities. The article serves as a basis for understanding the complexities of racial identity from the perspective of black activist and scholars. A student from the *Coletivo Negrada*, a black student organization at the

Federal University of Espirito Santo explains why black appearance as opposed to inheritance is a necessary distinction in the debate surrounding quotas. She states:

"I'm black. My grandfather is Italian, but I can't say that I'm white. Why is then that a white person can claim that he/she is black without question? We aren't addressing blood heritage, because what counts in our day-to-day experience is our appearance, not our ancestors." (Belmiro, 2016)

Proponents of affirmative action, black activists and specialist admit that though the current "color" criteria can be subjective, there is a need for additional legal limits to further discourage racial fraud (Belmiro, 2016). Michael Kent and Peter Wade's article, *Genetics against race: Science, politics and affirmative action in Brazil* further deconstructs the ways in which information on genetic data or ancestral roots are used in the affirmative action debate. The author state: "Genetic data and arguments are deployed in the affirmative action debate in three main ways: to deny the existence of human races in general; to deny their relevance specifically for Brazil and to deconstruct black identity" (Kent and Wade, 2015, p. 823). These three approaches to genetics are amongst the most common arguments opposing affirmative action in Brazil. Furthermore, they tacitly disregard the lived experiences of Afro-Brazilians, while also downplaying social perception of race. (Kent and Wade, 2015)

Though the Law of Social quotas may by no means be defined as the ultimate solution to Brazilian social and racial inequalities, its ambitious goals of racial and socioeconomic inclusion have proven successful (to varying degrees) for poor Afro-Brazilians throughout the country. It is clear that Brazil is taking a serious stand against inequalities historically pervasive within the country as it has shed its self-image of racial

democracy to directly address inequality by extending educational opportunities to blacks, mixed and indigenous people from public schools.

III. Methodology

Upon first arriving to Sao Paulo, I spoke with anyone willing to discuss the topic of race and affirmative action policies with me. These preliminary conversations with Brazilian citizens, coupled with a myriad of journal articles and research on race and educational inequality, helped me further establish a baseline in terms of the discussions being held regarding affirmative action policies in Brazilian universities. I noticed that the majority of the conversations I had with respondents didn't concern the actual efficacy of affirmative action, but instead its constitutionality. In other words, these conversations focused on whether or not affirmative action policies were fair as opposed to whether or not they were effective. Conversations were often limited to racial identity politics in a presumed racial democracy, as some believed that forcing black and mixed race students to identify under the umbrella term *negro* would create unnecessary racial tensions and divisions. Though many agreed that racial inequality within the country persists today, (and generally agreed that something should be done to remedy the issue of social and racial inequality) not all were certain that affirmative action was the necessary course of action.

As a result of preliminary talks with neighbors, friends and university colleagues, I decided to base my research on the perspectives and experiences of exclusively Afro-Brazilian students. In doing so, I would get a better idea as to the real effect affirmative action might have on the constituents they were meant to serve. Though I was able to receive valuable data from various constituencies through the discussions and seminars I attended, I focused my research largely on conversations with informants from Educafro and Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares, two majority Afro Brazilian serving institutions in Sao Paulo.

Tracing the trajectories of Afro-Brazilian university students through ethnographic research proved initially taxing because of the limited access I had to willing participants. Due to the comparatively low percentage of Afro-Brazilian university students within the country, it was difficult to gain access to my desired informant pool until I stumbled upon the Educafro office in downtown Sao Paulo. Upon informing Educafro's president and director *Frei* David of my research I was graciously received by the organization and was free to conduct interviews and participate with student activists of the non-profit organization.

Educafro's mission consists in expanding access to higher education for poor black students around the country. In partnerships with national and international organizations and universities, Educafro provides university preparatory courses, grants, and community organized practice *vestibular* exams for poor students hoping to enroll in university.

Attending Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares for a short time was also instrumental in providing me with access to black university students. Established in 2003, Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares is Brazil's only historically black university. Though it is a private institution, the university offers grants and reasonable tuition costs to extend educational opportunities to individuals who wouldn't normally have access to a conventional Brazilian university.

In an effort to best characterize the backgrounds, educations and aspirations of the students I spoke with, I focus here on the qualitative data that these interviews garnered, as opposed to quantitative information. I conducted these interviews by crafting a series of research questions divided into eight separate sections. Each section was meant to illustrate a particular facet of the respondent's life.

The first section of the study questions is based on the informant's personal background. This section briefly examines the respondent's socioeconomic background by focusing on education and its impact on the household. Considering the scope of this project, I felt it necessary to establish educational and socioeconomic connections with each respondent to better understand the person's trajectory within Brazilian society. For example, question 1.b asks whether or not the respondent's family could afford to pay for private schooling. Of course the underlying assumption is that Brazilian private schools outperform and better prepare students for university admission than do public schools. Responses to this section of questions attest to the level of investment the household could afford to place on education, in addition to providing preliminary background information (i.e, age, university, etc.).

The following section comments on the respondent's educational background. Here I ask about primary and secondary schooling to get a sense of what their early educational experience was like. This line of question includes, but is not limited to: Were there any particular issues that you had with your schooling? If so how would you remedy those issues? Did you feel motivated to attend school regularly? Did educators throughout your schooling motivate you to pursue higher education? With this section of questions I wanted to further uncover educational inequalities between private and public schools.

In the third section, I examine the respondent's performance on the *Vestibular* exam. This exam is particularly important in the debate on educational inequality and affirmative action as it serves as the primary gatekeeper to quality public universities in Brazil. Consequently, private courses taken to prepare for the exam known as *cursinhos* have become almost mandatory for university applicants who want to remain competitive during the admissions process. However these *cursinhos* come at price that many poorer applicants

cannot afford. In this section I ask respondent about *cursinhos*, whether or not they were

able to afford them, and alternatives to the *Vestibular*. I also explore their experiences with

affirmative action policies designed to bolster the scores of black public school students (so

that they may be competitive with applicants from private schools).

The fourth section covers university life, including queries on both academic and

non-academic hurdles that students might face. One obstacle that university students

regularly reflected upon during my preliminary conversations was being able to afford

academic materials and housing. I ask respondent how they are able to afford university

essentials, in an effort to once again illustrate commonalities between Afro-Brazilian

university students.

Next I ask respondents questions related to university quotas. This section is

particularly important because it tackles debates related to the LSQ directly. Similarly, I

also peer into their perspectives on self-identification, as debates surrounding colorism

remain hotly contested in Brazilian scholarship.

Section six asks respondents questions related to broader ideas of inclusion and

upward mobility. I ask these questions to get a sense of whether or not respondents had

faith in the system in general.

Section seven explores the respondent's faith in the Brazilian educational system.

With these questions, I wanted to gauge whether or not participants believed that Brazil's

educational system could be improved. If so, respondents were also given the space to detail

their strategies for improving education within the country.

The final section (section eight) attempts to peer into each respondent's prospects for

the future, in relation to their academic or professional career. This section seeks to uncover

the ways in which higher education has changed the respondent's career prospects presumably for the better.

My interviews serve as the foundation to my primary research question: "What do Afro-Brazilian university students think of affirmative action policies and how have they affected their hopes for the future?"

Respondents of my research identify as black university student with opinions regarding Brazil's Law of Social Quotas. Subjects were fully informed of my research goals and procedures prior to engaging further with the project. More specifically, this project aims to assess Brazil's Law of Social quotas from the perspectives of black university students through recorded interviews with black university students. Upon explanation of my project, informants were welcomed to ask further questions before agreeing to participate in the study. Willing participants consented to an audio recorded interview detailing their perspectives on Brazil's Law of Social Quotas as well as their own personal aspirations.

Respondents pooled from Educafro and Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares included five men and five women between the ages of 18 and 27. These respondents generally identified themselves and their families as low-income though two respondents claimed middle class status.

IV. Findings

After conducting interviews with black university students living in the city of Sao Paulo, I was able to gain a broad understanding of the types of students affirmative action policies were meant to assist. These generally lower income students often face many of the same challenges, as their backgrounds and aspirations for future success are similar. Two of the most pressing challenges black university students face is first accessing the university and subsequently maintaining financial stability. Most of the students I spoke with come from families who do not possess the means to cover educational expenses for their sons or daughters, forcing the student to take on a job or internship while also concurrently completing their university coursework. Not unlike the rigorous admissions process, money acts as yet another barrier for young black students seeking university degrees.

To better illustrate the perspectives of black university students, I highlight some of the responses that I received from my survey interviews. Of the ten interviews that I conducted with black university students, respondents voiced critical opinions towards Brazil's meritocratic admissions process. Though the LSQ was designed to assuage the inequalities that the Vestibular inherently preserves, a vast majority of black students remain left behind. This can be attributed largely to the fact that Brazilian public schools often don't incentivize students to pursue higher education. One informant explained to me how high school was not compulsory, as students could opt out of study after their 3rd year of middle school.

She states:

"Public schools in Brazil only incentivize the student to complete middle school. After your 3rd year of middle school you're done wit the basics that you need to go out into society without further study"

As a result, secondary schools often don't properly prepare their students to take the vestibular exam. A student from Sao Paulo's top law school (*Faculdade Autonoma de Direito*) explained to me how public school students taking the Vestibular are usually grossly underprepared and often times the student will see material that was never covered in their regular classes. This creates a strong disadvantage for public school students competing for university seats with those given the opportunity to study in private institutions. This disadvantage lies heavily in the fact that private institutions often teach to the test, have the resources and instructional materials readily available to the students and generally incentivize students to go onto pursue a university education.

As a result of this educational inequity, public school students seriously seeking university admission have no option but to take preparatory courses to account for the gaps in their public schooling and to generally better prepare them to score competitively on the test. I should note here that access to preparatory vestibular courses isn't necessarily available to any student who seeks them. Like many educational institutions in Brazil, affording these preparatory courses (or *cursinhos*) is often beyond the means of those who need the instruction most. As a result, poor black students who hope for high scores on the vestibular must often work while they study to afford the instruction they need. In my opinion, it is this enterprising mentality that motivates *cotistas* in institutions of higher education to work harder than their classmates to fulfill their aspirations. They have a real stake in their own education and by extension their careers, as more often than not they've

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paid for their own instruction, and academic materials. One student from *Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares* explains:

"Public schools don't incentivize students to go forward with higher education, if a student want to go to university they have to find the proper resources on their own. If a public school student wants to attend university, more likely than not, they will need to complete a *cursinho*."

Though there are government-funded programs that provide educational support with *cursinho* courses offered at no cost to the student, they are very competitive and difficult to come by. This 21-year-old law student at Faculdade Zumbi dos Palmares paid for *cursinhos* out of pocket so that she could better compete on the Vestibular. She studied in a *cursinho* program throughout the course of a year while she worked full time to pay for it. Though these courses were expensive, she explains that they made a huge difference in her performance on the Vestibular and her academic proficiency at large. She adds:

"There's a huge difference between public and private schooling. The way that private instructors lead their classes and the material is completely different from public school. I went to school and worked during the week to pay for the Saturday curinsho course, which is the cheapest at R$100 per session. Every Saturday we'd study from seven in the morning to seven in the evening, it was hard, but it was worth it."

A realistic understanding of the stark contrast in public and private schooling can be no better attested to than someone like this particular student. She comes from a poor socioeconomic background, studying her entire life in public institutions that didn't properly prepare her for the rigor of the Vestibular. Most notably, she adds, the exam simply exudes more of you than she had been prepared with her public high school education. The exam requires you to discuss readings that public school students often haven't seen and do not have access to.

The Vestibular's meritocratic nature coupled with Brazil's history of subjugation and disenfranchisement, has worked to the benefit of those with the highest levels of scholarship. Unfortunately in this context, those with the highest levels of scholarship come primarily from the white socioeconomic elite.

My conversations with a 22-year-old law student at the *Faculdade Autonoma Especializado em Direito* or the Autonomous University Specializing in Law shed further light as to the inherently unfair nature of the Vestibular exam. He succinctly explains flaws in the meritocratic approach Brazilian institutions of higher education take to admit new students, using a simple analogy. He explains:

"Taking the vestibular to get into university is like climbing to the top of a tree in the animal kingdom. The climb would be fair if we were all monkeys, but only a select few are monkey, some of us are lions, and some alligators.   Clearly, monkeys will more easily reach the top of the tree than the lion, but imagine the alligator! Now, if we all had the same preparation, then the meritocratic model would work. We are the alligators my friend, those of us who have attended public schools and have been excluded from opportunities because its so hard for us to get up that tree! Our scores

are never going to be as high as those who were more adequately prepared. Also, there have been studies proving that cotistas have the ability to succeed at the university level. Thus it is not a matter of will, but rather opportunity that has kept black students out of college."

This particular student's perspective in favor of affirmative action policies was shared amongst many of the students I interviewed. Not unlike this informant, most of the interviewees surveyed understood the inequalities established and perpetuated with Brazil's university admissions process. This in conjunction with the lived experience these students have had in public schools may explain why the LSQ is perceived so positively amongst black students (besides the fact that this policy serves black students). Most of the students understood, however, that affirmative action policies benefiting black students from public schools isn't the ultimate solution to end social and racial inequality within the country, however it is a necessary step to increase black student representation at the university level in the immediate future.

Though he was once a stark detractor of affirmative action policies, believing affirmative action policies would unfairly favor undeserving black students. When this student began exploring more deeply as to why socioeconomic divides between white and blacks in Brazil abound, he began to realize the importance of education as a means to a successful career and prosperity. He explains:

"Here in Brazil, the University is like a bridge that will help give you access to other more profitable career opportunities and a better lifestyle overall. The problem

is gaining access. The rich pay for private schooling so their children may be admitted to a free public university! Those universities were meant for us!"

This student's understanding of Brazil's seemingly backward educational system (that pays for the university education of wealthy students with taxpayer moneys, while poorer public school students are left excluded from opportunity) reflects the sense of frustration black students face in securing their educational opportunities. He reflects further upon the discrepancies between public and private school students expressing an important detail, often overlooked within the affirmative action debate. When asked what were some of his biggest difficulties in University, I was expecting him to express difficulties in understanding the material or generally feeling inadequately prepared because of his public schooling (he revealed to me that in the seventh grade he did not have a single steady math instructor throughout the entire year). However, he explained that his biggest difficulty was financial, as he was forced to work and commute to the city center of São Paulo from the far eastern outskirts of the city. Affordable housing within the city is practically impossible to acquire, considering (like many Afro Brazilian students studying at the University level) he is supporting himself through college to ease the financial burden on his family.   He explains to me that the biggest luxury that rich kids have that he doesn't is the luxury to simply study, undistracted by any other externalities.

When I asked him whether or not he took *cursinhos* to study for the vestibular he succinctly explains:

"I don't use *cursinhos*, because I simply don't have the money to study on my own because *cursinhos* are very expensive, often costing upwards of R\$2,000-R\$3,000.

I don't have time or money, because I work and go to school at night. So I study on my commute from home to work and school, because otherwise I would have no time. It is important to manage your time effectively, because if you don't then the time passes quickly."

Though this student's road to higher education may seem like an exceptional story of triumph and perseverance, considering he managed to get into one of the country's top law schools from humble beginnings, many of the informants I connected with shared similar backgrounds. In this student's case for instance, he was able to parlay his connections at Educafro into a paid internship at a Law firm. The extra effort he took to attain his goal of an advanced law degree is not uncommon amongst many black university students who take on campus jobs and internship to sustain themselves while studying.

When prompted with questions regarding contemporary race relations within the country, few reported actual encounters of outwardly racist attitudes within academia, but instead noted how racism is a veiled and systemic issue at a societal level. While responding to questions related to racist attitudes, one respondent from the *Escola Paulista de Medicina* discussed how in Brazil, platonic interracial relationships may seem progressive on the surface, but when it comes time to recommend a black friend for a job or speak on his behalf, his color becomes a major issue. She added that there exists a mentality amongst Brazilians (of all races) that black people belong in positions of servitude (i.e. garbage men, seamstresses, maids etc.) as tradition dictates. She adds that often these societal hierarchies (dating back to the slave era) remained so engrained within the Brazilian psyche that poor Afro-Brazilians do not (and often cannot) strive for careers outside of the service industry or worse yet drug trafficking and gangs.

Though the law of Social quotas is making college more accessible for black Brazilian students, there still remains much work to do as university campuses have still yet to reflect the more than 50% population of black citizens within the country, remaining still relatively exclusive to the white socioeconomic elite. This tends to be the case especially for prestigious public universities like the University of São Paulo. Moreover, efforts to ensure student financial stability are necessitated, considering the situational realities many black university students face.

On a positive note, many of the respondents that I spoke with confirmed to me that if it were not for affirmative action policies, they likely would not be able to attend college. This shows that affirmative action policies are making positive strides in helping promote a more equitable society. However, it is clear that still more representation is necessary if Brazil is serious about extending equal opportunities to all of its citizens. The majority of my respondents viewed the LSQ as a temporary, though necessary, fix to the legacy of slavery and subjugation that has systematically excluded black people from positions of power. One informant brilliantly explains this sentiment by comparing the LSQ to a candle. He states:

"When the electricity goes out in your house, you must use candle light to maintain visibility in the household. Quotas are like candle lights, acting as a provisionary light in the darkness, while the light is out because there is no electricity. Once the electricity comes back on, that candle will no longer be necessary. But until the electricity comes back on the candle is there to make things a bit more visible."

Here, light represents social equality, which cannot be attained without electricity (or educational representation), unless there is a candle (quotas) to make up for it in the short term. Though quotas have increased the percentage of afro-Brazilian students enrolled in public institutions of higher education, these policies often don't realize that entrance into the university is merely half the battle. This is especially the case for black university students accepted into public universities away from home. These students often don't come from families who can afford to cover their living and educational expenditures away from home. As a result, these students are severely limited in their educational opportunities if their prospective university does not provide auxiliary grants for low-income students. Unfortunately for many *cotistas*, university budget cuts nationwide have adversely affected these grants, forcing many low-income students to drop-out of college. A recent article written By Raul Montenegro for the Brazilian magazine Istoé entitled *Cotista em risco* (Quota students at risk) highlights the lack of federal funding for low-income Afro-Brazilian students. Of the several cases documented within the article, one of the most striking comes from a student at the Federal University of Pernambuco, who throughout his university career received around R$900 in auxiliary grants from his university to pay for living expenditures, food and educational materials. However, due to budget cuts, this grants will be reduced to a number somewhere between R$100 and R$400 in May. This student explains:

"If I don't get the money, I will be on the streets. I fear the day in which I will have no place to live. I don't even want to think about quitting, but I know that if I don't have a place to stay, I won't have any other option"

This student will likely face some very tough decisions in regards to his educational career, and like many others will likely be forced to work in addition to tackling a full course load or as he mentioned, give up on his schooling and return home.

Many students often were not fortunate enough to even receive auxiliary grants to begin with. This was the case of one Educafro student who was accepted into an Engineering program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina and the mathematics program at the Federal University of Tocantins. This Educafro student explains:

"I matriculated at the Federal University of Santa Catarina and I called the university to ask about auxiliary grants. The woman I spoke with told me that benefits would not be distributed for about 3 or 4 months, and there was no guarantee that I would receive them. I felt betrayed, how can the government say that education is for everyone?"

As a result, the student was unable to attend either of the prestigious public universities that he had been accepted to. The ministry of education affirms that the universities themselves are responsible for the application of monetary resources that in fact have increased in recent years. However, the fact remains that these funds are not reaching the students who need them most. At the Federal university of Minas Gerais for instance, low-income students were forced to protest as grants for educational expenditures were cut. (Montenegro, 2016)

In my discussions with a medical student at the *Escola Paulista de Medicina*, I learned that one of the major issues with quota programs in his experience is that the students arrives at the university and are not economically prepared to cover the necessary

expenses like housing, books, food, etc. Though he mentioned that there exists programs whereby students may receive a stipend for their academic and housing expenditures, these programs are few and far in between and are often difficult to receive. In this student's case, courses in medicine are so rigorous and time consuming that it is near impossible for him to work while attending classes, like students in other departments often do. Fortunately for this student however, he was able to afford living and educational expenditures by sharing a small apartment with other students and securing a research assistantship within his department. Though this student was forced to work hard and make necessary sacrifices, he wholeheartedly believes that if it weren't for quotas he would not be able to attend courses in medicine (one of the hardest disciplines to enter and graduate from nationwide).

Coming from a public school in the interior region of Sao Paulo, this medical student not only faced financial deficits upon entering university, but also educational shortcomings. He said that upon first reaching the university he and other quota students in his course felt behind, but worked hard to succeed throughout the course of their studies. As a result none of the quota student in his or his girlfriend's cohorts (she is also a medical student at the *Escola Paulista de Medicina*) were held back. In fact, he reports that the only students forced to re-take classes were non-quota students who simply did not work hard enough.

In his perspective, primary and secondary public schooling does not properly prepare students for life in the real world, let alone university coursework because teachers aren't being properly incentivized. As a result, many of them don't care to inspire their students to strive for academic success, are often unprepared, and generally just don't care about the student's learning. He adds:

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"Teachers in public schools are grossly underpaid, and because of programs like progresso continuo (continued progress) students are discouraged from repeating a grade as it would force the government to pay more for that student's education"

In this student's perspective affirmative action policies like quotas are a means for making up for past and present exclusion. Though he affirms that these policies may be unfair to a certain extent (considering they provide benefits to poor Afro-Brazilians), he notes that his primary and secondary schooling was also unfair, considering the weak resources, teaching, and college preparedness many Afro-Brazilians like himself received through the public schools. Nevertheless, university quotas have the potential to drastically alter the lives and career prospects of generations of Afro-Brazilian students to come, as - younger generations of Afro-Brazilian students have begun recognizing an identity once obscured and set aside by histories of tacit subjugation.

V. Conclusion

Though students enrolled in Brazil's public universities through quotas are often at an academic disadvantage to students who've studied in private schools throughout their lives, research has proven that these students work hard to achieve their academic goals, becoming just as proficient as non-quota students in the long run. As a result of affirmative action policies, many students who have traditionally been excluded from access to Brazil's public universities are now beginning to realize the opportunities a university degree can provide. Though opponents of quotas may hold that these policies unfairly benefit Afro-Brazilians in a supposed meritocratic society, my respondents believe that the burdens they've faced because of their skin color and subpar public schooling justify the need for quotas. As a result of being placed in the middle of the debate on public university quotas, these students are forced to closely consider both sides of the debate. More specifically this includes longstanding histories of subjugation, contemporary racial politics, and unseen hopes for the future.

Affirmative action policies like the Law of Social quotas have greatly changed the perspective Brazilians have towards race. In the country once hailed as a racial democracy, affirmative action has forced the country to truly examine the racial inequities present within their country, namely within education. Data shows that the percentage of non-white (brown and blacks combined) Brazilians with a university degree was just 4% in 2007, compared to 13.4% of whites (Cicalo 2013). Even more staggering perhaps, of the total graduates in Brazil in 2009 only 4.7% were black and 5.3% were mixed (Davis 2014). Though Brazil's public universities are prestigiously known for their first class curriculums, the country's public schools are severely lacking. Informants from this research have reported for instance that public school teachers are often underpaid, overworked, and in

some cases don't care for the educational well being of their students.   In one student's case, he did not have a fixed math teacher throughout his entire seventh grade. Affluent families however, may enroll their students in private primary and secondary schools that better prepare the students for Brazil's meritocratic university entrance exam. As a result of these major discrepancies in education, many poor black students are excluded from the university, and the career prospects that come along with university degrees.

Through personal conviction and initiative president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, helped bring to light many of the inequalities pervasive within Brazilian society, and with the help of the IPEA, extensive debates leading up to the Durban World conference against racism, his administration managed to debunk the racial democracy thesis to adopt affirmative action policies.

University quotas for Afro-Brazilian were first implemented in Rio de Janeiro's State University (UERJ) in 2003. Since this pioneering legislation reserving 20% of its seats for black or indigenous peoples, an additional 20% for students from public schools and a remaining 5% for disabled students, affirmative action policies looking to support these constituencies have spread across the nation in different formulations. In August of 2012, president Dilma Rouseff further solidified quotas in Brazilian public Universities passing the Law of Social quotas which requires these universities to reserve half of their seats to public school students, half of those seats to low-income students (regardless of race) and for those who declare themselves as black, mixed or indigenous with respect to demographic data by 2016 (Davis, 2014).

Though students enrolled in Brazil's public universities through quotas are often at an academic disadvantage to students granted the opportunity to study in private schools throughout their lives, research proves that these students work hard to achieve their

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academic goals, becoming just as proficient as non-quota students in the long run. As a result of affirmative action policies, many students who have traditionally been excluded from access to Brazil's public universities are now beginning to realize the opportunities a university degree can provide. Though opponents of quotas may hold that these policies unfairly benefit Afro-Brazilians in a supposed meritocratic society, my respondents believe that the burdens they've faced because of their skin color and subpar public schooling justify the need for quotas. As a result of being placed in the middle of the debate on public university quotas, these students are forced to closely consider both sides of the debate. More specifically this includes longstanding histories of subjugation, contemporary racial politics, and unseen hopes for the future.

Considering the needs of poorer afro-Brazilian university students, further research may delve more completely into the various ways separate universities work to sustain their quota students. Additionally, research may be expanded to include a close survey of the types of grants available to quota students along with the fiscal limitations they may pose on the universities.

Though the Law of Social quotas may provide new routes to Brazilian institutions of higher education to student historically excluded from them, this access is often severely stifled due to the lack of assistance these students need in order to complete their studies. Without auxiliary assistance grants or programs, public university degrees may remain just as elusive for poor Afro-Brazilian students who seek them most.

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Appendix

Survey Questions
Perguntas de Pesquisa

1) Personal Background
    Informação Pessoal

    a) Age, University, Gender
Idade, Faculdade, Gênero

    b) Was your family able to provide you with private schooling?
    A sua família possui as condições para prover-te uma educação privada?
        I) Did your private schooling greatly affect the financial stability of your family?
        A sua educação privada afeitou gravemente a estabilidade financeira da sua família?

        II) Did attending private school affect your family's financial stability because it limited how much you could work?
        Assistindo aulas afeitou a estabilidade financeira da sua família porque limitou o tempo que você poderia trabalhar?

    c) Was higher education prioritized in your household?
    A educação universitária foi prioridade na sua casa?

    d) Were you the first in your family to attend a university?
    Você foi a primeira pessoa na sua família para se inscrever na faculdade?

    e) How did you know that pursuing a higher education was the right decision for you?
    Como você sabia que perseguindo uma educação universitária foi a melhor escolha para você?

    f) How do you identify racially?
    Como você se identifica etnicamente?

    2. Educational Background
    Formação Educacional
    a) Did you attend a public or private primary and secondary school?
    Você recebeu escolaridade privada ou publica no ensino fundamental e médio?

    b) Do you feel that your schooling efficiently prepared you for studies at the university level?
    Você acha que sua educação pré-universitária te preparo eficientemente para os estudos no nível universitário?

c) Were there any particular issues that you had with your schooling? If so how would you remedy those issues?
Exisitiam problemas em particular com seu ensinamento escolar? Se existiam problemas, o que você faria para remediar essas problemas?

d) Did you feel motivated to attend school regularly? Did your peers feel motivated to attend school regularly?
Você se sentiu motivado para assistir aulas normalmente? Se sentiam motivados seus companheiros de aula?

e) Did educators throughout your schooling motivate you to pursue higher education?
Educadores trás o percurso da sua carreira escolar te motivaram para receber uma educação universitária?

3. Vestibular
Vestibular
a) How did you perform on the Vestibular?
Como foi seu desempenho no Vestibular?

b) Did you take preparatory classes for the Vestibular? If so how much did they help you with the exam? Were they expensive?
Você fiz cursinhos antes de tomar o Vestibular? Ajudaram muito? Foram muito caros?

c) What other alternatives are there to the Vestibular? (18:40)
Quais outras alternativas existem ao Vestibular? Ex. Enem (fuvest = USP)

d) What are the benefits (if any) of taking an alternative exam to the Vestibular? (ie. ENEM etc.)
Quais sao os beneficios (se existem) de exames alternativas como o ENEM?

e) What was most challenging about the Vestibular?
Na sua experiência, o que foi mais desafiador do Vestibular?

f) Did you receive bonuses to your score on the Vestibular because of your ethnicity or public education?
Você recebeu bônus na pontuação final do Vestibular por causa da sua etnia ou formação publica?

4. University Life
A Vida Universitaria
a) What sorts of academic hurdles do you face at the university level?
Que tipos de desafios acadêmicos você se encontra no nível universitário?

b) Do you have problems paying tuition or affording academic material (i.e textbooks, calculators, readers, etc.)? How do you pay for your education?
Você tem problemas pagando mensalidade universitária ou matérias acadêmicos (i.e textos, calculadoras, etc.)? Como você paga pela sua educação?

c) Do you have problems affording non-academic essentials (rent, groceries, entertainment, etc.)?
Você tem problemas pagando essências não acadêmicos (aluguel, comida, entretenimento, etc.)?

d) Do you receive any scholarships? Ex. ProUni, Fies, etc.
Você é recipiente de alguma bolsa de estudo? Ex. ProUni, Fies, etc.

e) What makes a university education valuable in your opinion?
O que faz uma educação universitária valiosa na sua opinião?

f) What have you learned most from your university experience?
Sobre tudo, o que voce tem aprendido da sua experiência universitária?

5. Quotas
Cotas
a) Do you agree with affirmative action policies in Brazil's pubic universities? Explain.
Você concorda com o sistema de cotas nas faculdades públicas brasileiras? Elabora.

b) What do you think about self identification?
O que você acha das pessoas se auto-declararam negras?

c) How have affirmative action policies affected you?
Como você foi afeitado pelas cotas raciais?

d) How do you feel affirmative action policies in public universities can be improved?
Como poderiam ser melhorados ações afirmativas nas faculdades publicas?

e) What are some of the popular claims both in support of affirmative action policies?
Quais são os discursos que mais apoiam a necessidade de cotas nas faculdades publicas?

e) What are some of the popular claims against affirmative action policies?
Quais são os discursos mais populares em contra das cotas?

6. Inclusion and Inequality in Brazil
Inclusão e Desigualdade no Brasil
a) Do you believe that upward social mobility is possible for all Brazilians?
Você acha que a mobilidade social positivo é possível para todos brasileiros?

b) What groups are most commonly excluded from opportunity in Brazil? Why do you think these groups are excluded?
Quais grupos sociais no Brasil são comumente excluídos de oportunidades no Brasil?

Por quê são excluídos esses grupos?

c) Does inequality exist in Brazil? If so why?
Você acha que existe desigualdade no Brasil? Por quê?

d) Does racism exist in Brazil? If so how is it expressed?
Você acha que existe racismo no Brasil? Como é expressado?

7. Restructuring Education in Brazil
Reconstruindo Educação no Brasil

a) Does Brazil's educational system work? What does it do efficiently and inefficiently?
O sistema educacional brasileiro funciona? O que esse sistema faz eficientemente e ineficientemente?

b) Do you believe that Brazil's educational system can be improved? How?
Você acha que o sistema educacional brasileira poderia ser melhorado? Como?

8. Future Prospects
Expectativas do Futuro
a) How do you envision education in Brazil after affirmative action policies?
Como você imagina educação no Brasil depois das políticas de ações afirmativas?
b) What lies ahead for you and your academic or professional career?
O que tem pela frente no seu futuro académico ou profissional?

c) How have affirmative action policies affected your future career prospects?
Como tem afeitado ações afirmativas seus opções para carreiras no futuro?

d) Final thoughts or remarks?
Você tem algumas considerações finais?