AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

AND AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN IN BAHIA, BRAZIL

By

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Abstract

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In 2001, the federal government of Brazil under President Fernando Henrique
Cardoso (1995 - 2003) passed laws to remedy racial and socioeconomic inequality.
Responding to pressure from civil society and especially from black feminist and black
social movements, Cardoso's affirmative action policy set quotas to expand access to
Brazil's public services and universities for blacks, women, indigenous peoples, and
people with disabilities. My thesis focuses on affirmative action in higher education and
examines to what extent Afro-descendant women can actually attain upward mobility,
and to what extent Cardoso's program enhances educational opportunities, closes
socioeconomic gaps, and decreases racial inequalities for black women in southern
Bahia, Brazil. Through qualitative research interviews, I present the perspectives of
university female students regarding Cardoso's reforms and their impact on Brazil's
higher education system. This research illustrates central aspects of Brazil's racial
dilemma—a dream of racial democracy versus the reality of racial inequality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem-posing education, it affirms women and men as beings
who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead,
for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking
at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly
what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future.[1]

- Paulo Freire*, Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

For more than five centuries, Afro-descendants have helped develop Brazil with their work, first as slaves in the colonial period and subsequently, after independence, during monarchy and republic rule. In contemporary Brazil, Afro-descendant women continue to have unequal access to power and resources, more so than Afro-descendant men. The women are continuously subject to discrimination not only based on their race and their class, but also based on their gender. A study from 2000 found that black women in Brazil earn less than 60 percent of any other group in the country. Additional studies have shown that Afro-Brazilian women still hold the largest single job category of domestic servants: 32.5 percent compared to 12.7 percent of white women.[2] In fact, many black women populate the lowest strata of Brazilian society.[3]

 In May 1888, when thousands of Brazilians celebrated the Golden Law of Emancipation and the end of slavery,[4] Afro-descendants did not realize that it would take

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[1] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1970, 2008): 84.

[2] Maria Aparecida Silva Bento, "A Mulher Negra no Mercado de Trabalho (Women in the Labor Market)," *Estudos Feministas* 95 (1995): 482.

[3] Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004) and Kimberly F. Jones-de Oliveira. "The Politics of Culture or the Culture of Politics: Afro-Brazilian Mobilization, 1920-1968," *Journal of Third World Studies*, 20 (2003): 103-120, accessed March 29, 2009, from University of Kansas Library.

[4] Thomas Skidmore, *Five Centuries of Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

another century for Brazil to incorporate them into the political and social systems. The post-abolitionist policies of the Brazilian state failed to integrate the former slaves into the economy and promoted European immigration instead. These immigration policies and the marginalization of black citizens were influenced by contemporary race theories that had won scientific[5] recognition in Europe and in the United States in the late nineteenth century. The Brazilian elite agreed with the racist ideas that blacks were inferior and presented a problem for Brazil's social and economic progress. In fear of racial upheaval, the elite decided to overcome this problem by using foreign racist ideologies, which they hoped to fix Brazilian mixed population.[6]

However, Brazil's mixed race population presented a problem due to its greater racial blending, and segregation was not an option. As a substitute, Brazilian government officials and intellectuals came up with their own ideas of "whitening," *branqueamento*.[7] They promoted European immigration in combination with lower reproduction rates of the black population, hoping to eliminate the racial dilemma in a short period and make Brazil a nation equal to Europe.

In the colonial period (1500 – 1822), the mixing of races were encouraged due to the fact that the Portuguese colonizers were mostly male and their women counterpart were not allowed to migrate, and they were expected by the crown to "populate themselves" and "join with the natives through marriage."[8] Although, the crown favored the intermarriage with Indian mates and the Catholic Church reprimanded any race

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[5] Foreign ideologies, especially ethnological-biological historical (Aryan) and the Social Darwinist schools of thought, influenced Brazilian intellectuals. For more explanation, see Kimberly F. Jones-de Oliveira, 2003, "The Politics of Culture or the Culture of Politics: Afro-Brazilian Mobilization, 1920-1968."

[6] Kimberley F. Jones-de Oliveira, "The Politics of Culture or the Culture of Politics," *Journal of Third World Studies*, 20 (2003): 104.

[7] Telles, 2004: 28 and Jones-de Oliveira, 2003: 104.

[8] Telles, 2004: 25.

mixture, many Portuguese men intermixed with both Indians and Africans.[9] This mixing

of races marked the beginning of a racial hierarchy based on a slave economy and highly

unequal relationships between the colonizers, who were mostly male, and the Indians and

Africans. Thus, in the early colonial period, African and Afro-Brazilian women's social

status was inseparable from their legal and civil status. However, as the free population of

color gradually grew, it became difficult for the Brazilian colony to continue classifying

status based on race. The colonial society was divided by civil status as slave or free and

by racial status as white or black.[10]

Furthermore, skin color became a symbol of social difference and reflected the

civil condition of a slave or emancipated person.[11] What changed over time, from this

period to the abolition of slavery? The answer was "Skin color, once 'forgotten,' now

established an unbreachable [unreachable] divide between rich and poor. […] The old

families, bankrupt or not, prided themselves on their supposed all-white ancestry, despite

all the evidence to the contrary. 'Purification' became a necessary prerequisite for

upward mobility."[12] The whitening theory is the result of preference of racial

identification based on color in Brazil as compared to hypo descent in the United States.[13]

After visiting the southern United States in the 1930s, Gilberto Freyre, the first

Brazilian intellectual to articulate the Brazilian concept of race relations, contended in

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[9] For more about slavery, see A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom* (London: McMillan, 1982).

[10] Kia Lilly Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007): 52-53

[11] Ibid., 53.

[12] Katia M. de Queiros Mattoso, *To Be a Slave in Brazil 1550-1888* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991): 211.

[13] For more about racial classification in Brazil, see Robin E. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001): 45, 51. For racial classification in Nicaragua, see Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard* (Chapter XVII, The Negro of the Family– 211- 234).

The Masters and the Slaves[14] that Brazil created a multiracial society free of racism

(unlike the United States) through its unique process of miscegenation and equal

contributions of European, African, and Indigenous peoples. For many decades after

Freyre's publication, scholars and the government in Brazil adhered to Freyre's idea of

racial democracy. They supported the idea of "racial democracy" by referring to the fact

that Brazil had no civil rights war or apparent racial conflicts similar to those found in the

United States. Freyre and the majority of "North American Brazilianists," a group that

includes Donald Pierson, Marvin Harris, Charles Wagley, and Carl Degler, agree that

"miscegenation [w]as a positive aspect of Brazilian race relations." These scholars

believed that in Brazil, in contrast to the United States, "racial differences were fluid and

conditioned by class, and racial discrimination was mild and largely irrelevant."[15]

However, Caldwell notes that Freyre's book depicts Afro-Brazilian women in

roles of servitude to whites as domestic servants, as sensuous *mulata*, and in charge of the

development of the white society. In fact, Afro-Brazilian women are expected to fulfill

the needs and desires of the white males "from the time they suckled until they were

initiated into lovemaking." Thus, Afro-Brazilian women are portrayed in the Brazilian

national identity into two categories, as domestic laborers and as sexual objects, and still

hold the same social roles as in the colonial period.[16]

Meanwhile Bailey (2004), Winant (1994), Omi (1994), and Telles (2004) reveal

how racial democracy has affected race relations in Brazil, first by the belief in a united

society achieved through miscegenation of Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous peoples.

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[14] Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1933] 1986. Published in Portuguese as *Casa Grande and Senzala.*
[15] Telles, 2004:7.
[16] Kia Lilly Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007): 57.

Second, by eliminating the concept of race, Brazil failed to help the subordinated class along color lines. Instead, scholars attributed inequality to class, thus enabling the upper class to justify its status and undermine social movements based on race.

As participants in the white feminist and black movements in the late 1970, Afro-Brazilian women challenged the dictatorship and demanded change. Historically, although Afro-Brazilian women participated in many other black movements across Brazil, such as Salvador, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, their male counterparts held the leadership positions in most of these organizations. While Afro-Brazilian women held membership either in the black movement or in the white feminist movement, neither organization addressed the questions of race and gender, which mattered to them. Even though black women tried to engage the race and gender debate during the mid-1970s, neither the white feminist movement nor the black movement seemed to understand their needs. By 1985 they decided to found their own movement and this had the result of establishing a number of black women's collectives in Brazil.[17]

As Brazil changed from being an empire, to being a republic, a dictatorship, and finally a democracy, the government decided to tackle economic and racial inequality in Brazil by implementing affirmative action programs in 2001 in order to expand opportunities and access to blacks, indigenous people, women, and people with disabilities. Brazil did so, but only under the pressure from national and international groups and scholars as well as the black feminist and black movements.

Affirmative action programs in higher education in Brazil are a set of policies

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[17] Kia Lilly Caldwell, 2007: 157.

that public or private institutions can implement to remove barriers or to promote opportunities for people denied access to the universities based on gender, socio-economic status, and race.[18]

Research Questions

My thesis focuses on affirmative action in higher education. I examine the effect that affirmative action policies and the racial quota system have on Afro-descendant women in present-day Brazil and to what extent Afro-descendant women can actually attain upward mobility.

My analysis primarily examines higher education affirmative action programs in southern Bahia. Through a case study at a state university, I investigate the perspectives of female students to determine how the implemented affirmative action measures are helping Afro-descendant women. Personal interviews with female students help me answer the following questions: Should gender be added to the existing affirmative action policy in higher education? Will the affirmative action programs be sufficient to enable black women to acquire middle class status? What type of assistance is available to women enrolled at universities? What types of degrees are they seeking? Are there programs that would help women enter the labor market? Have affirmative action programs helped them improve their socio-economic status?

Affirmative Action in Brazil: A Review of the Literature

According to the intelligentsia in Brazil, affirmative action has many meanings and interpretations.[19] These meanings are visible through other policies implemented

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[18] For more on affirmative action see Arabela Campos Oliven, "Ações afirmativas, Relações Raciais e Política de Cotas nas Universidades: Uma Comparação entre os Estados Unidos e o Brasil," *Educação,* 61 (2007): 29-51.
[19] Heriger, 2006: 81.

prior to 2001. For instance, in 1943 the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) 5.452[20] reserved quotas for two thirds of workers in private business and required workers to be Brazilian. This law intended to protect individuals based on their nationalities and facilitated women's employment by eliminating gender discrimination. In addition, the Law 5.465 was implemented in 1968 to benefit farmers' sons by reserving fifty per cent of the places in high school and higher education in Agriculture and Veterinary courses.[21] Furthermore, the 1988 Brazilian Constitution reserved a specific percentage of occupations in the government for people with disabilities; Gomes (2005b) states that this facilitated the implementation of affirmative action program for this group.

In 1995, the Law 9.100 established that twenty percent of candidacy for municipal elections would be reserved for women and the Law 9.504/1997 determined a minimum of thirty percent and maximum of seventy percent each for female and male candidates in a political party or coalition.

These examples show that the Brazilian state's policies in securing its citizen' rights were based on nationality, gender, and occupation. The affirmative action programs initiated in 2001 targeted Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, and indigenous people based on their racial and socio-economic status.

In Brazil, the Afro-descendants were the last ones to benefit from affirmative action, and affirmative action has sparked a debate by bringing race relation conversation to the forefront of Brazilian society. For many years, Afro-descendants in particular and Brazilians in general demanded that the legislation enable blacks to secure a better life.

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[20] http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil/decreto-lei/del5452.htm downloaded in October 19, 2010.
[21] Ahyas Siss, *Afro-Brasileiros, Cotas e Ação Afirmativa: Razões Históricas* (Rio de Janeiro: Quartet; Niterói: PENESB, 2003) and Lilia G. M. Tavolaro, "Affirmative Action in Contemporary Brazil: Two Institutional Discourses on Race," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19 (2008): 145-160.

For instance, in 1983 Abdias do Nascimento, who was a federal deputy and black activist, proposed a law with concrete measures and significant compensation by advocating twenty percent of quotas for each male and female Afro-Brazilian to enter government employment and to get access to the higher hierarchy of the public services. Moreover, in 1993 Florestan Fernandes advocated for Afro-descendant children, youth, and adults to have access to scholarships. In the same year, Benedita da Silva proposed two laws. The first was a quota of ten percent in higher education to benefit Afro-descendant and indigenous populations. The second required a minimum of forty percent inclusion of Afro-descendant artists and professionals in media such as film, television, and public campaign casting.[22] However, not one of the laws proposed in the 1990s was implemented.

There are various explanations and reasons for the Brazilian state's willingness eventually to implement affirmative action. Ribeiro (2009), Martins et al. (2004), and Htun (2004) state that the change of state policy was due to several factors including civil society, presidential initiatives, and international events. The black movement, the black feminist movement, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's acknowledgement of racism, and the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, helped change state policy and break silence about racial inequality in Brazil. Nevertheless, with changes came challenges, and the debate over affirmative action began.

Several scholars have debated over the legality of the law and some have suggested that it might go against the 1988 Constitution, which promotes no prejudices or

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[22] Ahyas Siss, *Afro-Brasileiros, Cotas e Ação Afirmativa: Razões Históricas* (Rio de Janeiro: Quartet; Niterói: PENESB, 2003) and Michelle Peria, "Ação Afirmativa: Um Estudo Sobre a Reserva Devagar para Negros nas Universidades Públicas Brasileiras. O Caso do Estado do Rio de Janeiro." (MA. thesis de Federal University of Rio de Janeiro: PPGAS/MN/UFRJ, 2004).

discrimination based on origin, race, gender, color, and age. Other scholars counter this argument by suggesting there are already provisions in the Constitution's Article Seven and Thirty-Seven intended to help women and disabled people hold government service positions.[23] Therefore, scholars agreed, affirmative action programs to reduce racial inequality are legal.

Historically, the government's measures were based on policies focusing on social classes but not racial differences. Guimaraes (1999) suggests that the Brazilian state rebuked the debate for three reasons. First, recognizing the existence of race contradicts the Brazilian ideology of racial democracy that Brazilians are one people, one nation. Second, there was adoption of universalistic measures, which Brazil's government believed would have the same effect. Third, Brazilian society disagrees that color and race are the basis of social inequality.

Furthermore, Kabengele Munanga (1996) and Sergio Guimaraes (1999) suggest that the debate over affirmative action in Brazil consists of two major perspectives. One focuses on individual merit independent of the socio-economic situation. The other is concerned with the socio-historical position of the population: their culture, politics, and collective actions to help develop measures to ensure their rights. The opponents of affirmative action are mostly the white elite and the proponents are mostly the black and feminist activists and scholars.

Heringer (2005) examines all affirmative action programs and private initiatives in Brazil between 2001 and 2004. She states that the 124 programs implemented were distributed as follows: one-third in education, one-fifth in occupations, and one-fifth

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[23] Sabrina Moehlecke, "Fronteiras da Igualdade no Ensino Superior: Excelência & Justiça Racial." (PhD. diss., University of São Paulo, 2004).

related to human rights. Rocio (2007) and Benedito (2005) also examine possibilities that affirmative action policies provide opportunities for Afro-Brazilians to enter the private sector. Tavolaro (2008) investigates two discourses. One discourse revolves around affirmative action initiatives presented because of a process that revealed the real plurality of races in Brazil. The second discourse revolves around discussions that present affirmative action as an imported model that is not only incompatible but also imposed on the Brazilian racial classification system and symbolic order.

Scholars and activists in the black movement and the black feminist movement have challenged the idea of racial democracy by arguing that Brazil's racial inequality is located at the center of economic relations in Brazilian society.[24] Moehlecke (2002)[25] argues that the black and feminist movements had three goals in pushing for affirmative action programs:

1) To establish a mechanism to improve the socio-economic status of black people and other minority ethnic groups.

2) To challenge the idea of racial democracy in contemporary Brazil in order to achieve real racial democracy in the future.

3) To reinforce a political and cultural identity for Afro-Brazilians.

Seth (2009) argues that for the affirmative action program to succeed, there need to be race-based and class-based criteria. It will have to include Afro-Brazilian public school students, Afro-Brazilian private school students, and white public school students. This measure, in his study, will curb the argument against race-based affirmative action because empirical evidence shows that class-based policies will not remedy Brazilians'

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[24] Telles, 2004: 7.
[25] Sabrina Moehlecke, "Propostas de Ações Afirmativas no Brasil: O Acesso da População Negra ao Ensino Superior" (MA. Thesis, University of São Paulo, 2000).

inequality. In addition, it neither will provide Afro-Brazilian private school students with better opportunities nor challenge racial inequality.

Regarding the affirmative action program in higher education, the contribution of Francis and Pianto (2009) and their study of affirmative action programs in the first federal university to establish racial quotas in 2004 are important. They analyzed the introduction of affirmative action policies and the racial continuum as criteria for students to participate in the program. In addition to Francis and Pianto, Schwartzman (2004) investigates the first state university to adopt race-based quotas at Rio de Janeiro, where the entrance process required students to self-identify according to a new racial project. Moreover, Siss (2003) and Domingues (2003) analyze and identify the history of Brazilian government measures in dealing with racial inequality and the interactions of the black movements in advocating citizenship through the implementation of affirmative action programs for Afro-Brazilians in higher education. In general, evidence from the studies show that eliminating affirmative action programs might prevent Afro-Brazilians from attending college. Other studies present equally persuasive data in support of affirmative action programs and suggest that students' performance in the program is either equal or better when compared to non-affirmative action.[26]

A Theoretical Perspective

I draw from the theories of Paulo Freire and Michael Omi and Howard Winant to analyze Affirmative Action in Higher Education and Afro-descendant Women in Bahia, Brazil. Freire was a Brazilian educator and scholar who formed his theory on

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[26]Fernando Henrique Cardoso. "Democracy as Starting Point." *Journal of Democracy* 12.1 (2001): 5-14. Accessed December 3, 2008 <http://muse.jhu.edu>, and Renato Emerson dos Santos. "Políticas de Cotas Raciais nas Universidades Brasileiras: O Caso da UERJ." In: *Ação afirmativa e universidade: experiências nacionais comparadas*, ed. João Feres Júnior and Jonas Zoninsein (Brasília : Editora Universidade de Brasília, 2006), 110-135.

education based on his life experience dealing with hunger and poverty. Omi and

Winant are American sociologists and race theorists.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire asserts that society is comprised of

oppressors and *oppressed*. Freire posits that *oppressors* control society through the

educational structure, while the *oppressed* are neglected by the educational structure and

pushed to the margins of society. According to Freire,[27] education should become "the

practice of freedom – as opposed to education as the practice of domination." Freire also

contends that the interaction and dialogue among individuals and the world should be

based not on the abstract, but rather on their history and realities. This dialogue will lead

to two outcomes. First, people will become aware of their reality, and the second, they

will emancipate themselves by challenging their underprivileged place in society.

Freire's theory will help explain the effects of the Brazilian education system in the lives

of Afro-descendant women.

Omi and Winant's theories on racial formation and racial projects analyze race

and class in Brazil. The authors analyze racial paradigms in the United States. Race

they define as "… *concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests*

by referring to different types of bodies,"[28] and "…despite its uncertainties and

contradictions, the concept of race continues to play a fundamental role in structuring

and representing the social world."[29] According to the authors, the fundamental

explanation of the theory is to acknowledge race as component of social structure rather

than a biological fact.

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[27] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* 2000: 81.
[28] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, Second Edition* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1986, 1994): 55 [Italics in original].
[29] Omi and Winant, 1996, 55.

Additionally, Omi and Winant present race from the standpoint of racial formation, which they describe as "the socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."[30] Based on this perspective, race consists of social structure and cultural representation and it is developed by several historically situated racial projects. Omi and Winant define racial projects as "*simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines.*"[31] They posit that racial projects are constructed at two levels, the macro and the micro. The macro-level, or collective, takes place in social structure, which includes the political arena, state apparatus, and policy formation, while the micro-level, or individual, takes place in everyday experiences. Thus, the affirmative action policies, namely the quota system and university scholarships that redistribute educational resources along racial lines are macro-level racial projects and the participants' experiences are micro-level. Although the authors' analyses and concepts of race and racial formation projects are based entirely on data from the United States, their work is applicable to and effective for understanding racial projects in Brazil.

Method

I received the opportunity to travel to Brazil on a Tinker Summer Grant from the Center of Latin American Studies at the University of Kansas. My research project and methodology were approved by University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee. During the month of June 2010, I stayed in Bahia, where Afro-descendants represent eighty percent of the population. This state is located in Brazil's northeastern region,

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[30] Omi and Winant, 1996, 56 [Italics in original].
[31] Omi and Winant, 1996, 56 [Italics in original].

which frequently suffers from chronic and devastating droughts.

My research method drew from a combination of statistical analysis, social and racial theories, and personal interviews in the field. I used open-ended interviews with thirty-nine female students, and had access to the women's library at the Carlos Chagas Foundation in São Paulo, where I gathered data about black women. I conducted interviews with female students from two groups: the first, a group of twelve students, were enrolled through the affirmative action program; the second group was composed of twenty-seven students who were not enrolled in the affirmative action program. The interviews took place in Bahia, in a university setting: in classrooms, the cafeteria, and the dormitories. I conducted the interviews in Portuguese and used a digital voice recorder to record them for eventual transcription. The open-ended format of my interview questions allowed the participants to respond in their own words and express their ideas on the affirmative action program rather freely.

To determine which ethnic groups were represented among the affirmative action participants and non-participants, I based race identification questions for my interviews on the categories used by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística--Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics--(IBGE), the government institution in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census. These categories include (branco, preta, parda,[32] amarela, and indígena) white (Euro-Brazilian), black, brown (mixed-race), yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and indigenous (native-Brazilian).[33] In keeping with the IBGE racial classification and the black movement and feminist movement, I

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[32] Parda means the mixture of white with black or indigenous.
[33] Brazilian race classification in based on a color continuum. Black is associated with the negative and white with the positive. The gradient depends how close to black or white one is. For more on race and color classification, see Telles 2004, Sheriff 2001, and Hasenbalg 1999.

employ the Afro-Brazilian or Afro-descendant category, which combines black and brown populations throughout my study.

Among the women I interviewed, twelve were participating in the affirmative action program that uses race and/or socio-economic status in addition to having a public high school education. Seven of them were black (preta), three were brown (parda), and two were white (branca) students. The non-affirmative action students, on the other hand, were as follows: eight black, twelve brown, six white, one yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and one indigenous. All of them graduated from public high schools. Among those who attended private high school were nine brown students and one white student. I provide more detailed information about my methodology in chapter four.

Overview of the Study

This research project analyzes the affirmative action program in higher education, using a state university as a case study. The investigation examines to what extent this program is enhancing educational opportunities, closing the socio-economic gap, and addressing racial inequality for black women who are subject to discrimination based on their race, gender, and class. The study reviews the forces propelled by the black movement and the black feminist movement, the World Conference Against Racism, and President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's 2001 implementation of affirmative action policies. Ultimately, my thesis illustrates the dilemma of Brazilian society caught between a dream of racial democracy and a reality of racial inequality. Chapter Two shows the historical and social history of Afro-descendant from colonization, independence, and democracy in Brazil. Chapter Three explores the forces propelled by racial relations to the implementation of affirmative action programs. Chapter Four

presents the case study of students from southern Bahia and the students' view of affirmative action in higher education. The case study combines statistical data gathered from archival sources and interview data from female students, some of who are covered by affirmative action and others who are not. The results reveal the perspectives of students on affirmative action, both positive and negative, and the aspirations of students to enter the private sector or acquire further education. Chapter Five, the concluding chapter, reviews and discusses the affirmative action measures implemented based on this case study. I present the findings and suggest changes for improving affirmative action for Afro-Brazilians women.

CHAPTER II

AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN: AN HISTORICAL

ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

Introduction

  This chapter provides an overview of the historical position of African-descendant Brazilian women in Brazilian society to illuminate their prolonged underrepresentation in education and to contextualize the affirmative action programs that were implemented in the 21^s century.

  From the beginning, education in Brazil was reserved mainly for free whites, both the elite landowners and the poor, but was also available to indigenous peoples. The educational system was based on the colony's social and economic organization and inspired by European culture.

  First, this chapter examines Brazil's slavery period (1530-1888), during which African-descendants were not allowed to attend schools established by the Jesuits in 1549. Higher education only appeared in 1808 when the Portuguese crown escaped to Brazil in fear of Napoleon's invasion.[34]

  Second, this chapter will examine the changes that occurred after emancipation in 1888. Having earned citizenship, Afro-descendants became a threat in the minds of the powerful elite because Afro-Brazilians outnumbered the minority elite. To counter their fears, slave owners campaigned against blacks as labor wage and promoted public policy to bring European immigrants to Brazil. Africans and Afro-Brazilians, who had participated in Brazil's economic and social construction, were now excluded from the

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[34] Fay Haussman and Jerry Haar in *Education in Brazil*, 1978: 30-31.

labor market and replaced by European immigrants. Afro-descendants were widely

marginalized and stigmatized through their portrayals as unskilled, unsafe, and

undisciplined.[35]

In 1889, liberal politicians from the military and civilian population established

a Republic.[36] The Constitution of 1891 placed the responsibility of the educational

improvement in the hands of the state and the federal government. However, the

masses' educational needs still were not met.

Finally, this chapter examines beginning of the 20th century when Afro-

Brazilians in general and Afro-Brazilian women in particular, publicly demanded their

inclusion into a Brazilian society. They resisted marginalization that was justified by

race ideologies, such as "whitening" and racial democracy. Here, racial democracy was

indeed a form of social control. This chapter will shed light on the difficulties of Afro-

Brazilians when they demanded education for access to better living conditions during

Getúlio Vargas' regime as president and as dictator. The growing participation of the

black women's movement depicted race, gender, and class inequality by situating their

struggle to shape their own identity in a country that celebrates racial democracy

without multiracial identity and equal opportunity.

THE ROOTS OF INEQUALITY

Colonial Period: 1500s to 1822

During the colonial period, African and Afro-descendant women were

considered as legal outsiders without agency or access to even the most rudimentary

educational system. Even though their servitude, race, and gender defined their social

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[35] Nascimento, 2007: 52-53 and Jones-Oliveira, 2003: 103
[36] Fay Haussman and Jerry Haar in *Education in Brazil*, 1978: 33.

status, black women were determined to change their positions as economic possessions and to gain their citizenship.

In the late 1500s and late 1800s, more than four million slaves were shipped to Brazil. The Portuguese colonizers implemented plantation agriculture and African slavery. The class structure of the colonial period placed black women in the position of domestic servants to whites. The forced roles, as black mothers or "mummies" and wet nurses, were central to limit their agency and autonomy. As surrogate mothers, African and Afro-Brazilian women had to nurse white children because their white mothers could not or wished not to breast-feed their own children. Thus, African and Afro-Brazilian women had no ownership of their bodies and no control over their maternal roles and rights.[37]

Furthermore, during the colonial period, the legal and civil status of free and enslaved blacks could not be separated from their social status. However, with the increase in numbers of emancipated blacks, colonial separation was based not only on race (black or white) but also on a civil status divide (enslaved or free). The color classification already defined the social status. For instance, black and *preta* were used for slaves and *senhora of cor* or "Mrs. Colored" for a free mulatto or black woman.[38]

The colonial construction of gender was also based on concepts of race, color, and social status. However, Africans and Afro-Brazilians were excluded from colonial norms of womanhood and femininity and were treated as economic possessions to generate profit for the colonial economy and serve plantation households.[39]

Black women were also forced into being prostitutes, concubines, and

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[37] Kia Lilly Caldwell, 2007: 52-54.
[38] Kia Lilly Caldwell, 2007: 52-53.
[39] Kia Lilly Caldwell, 2007: 53.

mistresses, all roles that were, indeed, central to the colonial economic and social systems. For instance, Saffiote (1978) notes that black enslaved women's occupations in the domestic servitude within white households provided the ideals of white femininity and womanhood. Enslaved women's sexual exploitation by the white men allowed white women to maintain their virtue as white women.

Furthermore, Meade (2010) notes that slaves and freed Africans and Afro-Brazilian women were expected and sometimes forced to be sexually accessible to white men, which rendered them stereotypes of lower moral standards. The liaisons between black women and white men never translated into marriage.

However, the slaves fought against the social domination of the time.[40] For instance, runaway slaves, both male and female, formed a community called *quilombo,* such as the Quilombo dos Palmares that existed from 1607 to 1695.[41] They formed this community to forgo the harsh treatment and the subjugated position they held during slavery. "The Palmares quilombo represented a safe haven and a remarkable experiment in the outlaw communal living." Fugitive slaves also plotted against their owners or colonial authorities. In Bahia, farmers employed residents of *quilombos* to tend cassava.[42] These workers, male and female, were seen as hard workers in comparison with the slaves on the plantations. This attitude highlights the ways the enslaved population resisted their masters by producing less than expected.[43]

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[40] Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, Relações Raciais entreNegros e Brancos em São Paulo (Race relations between blacks and whites in Sao Paulo). (Org.) São Paulo: Anhembi,1955) 89.
[41] For more on Quilombos see Maria Lucia de Barros Mott, *Submissão e Resistência: A Mulher na Luta Contra a Escravidão*. São Paulo: Editora Contexto (Repensando a História), 1988.
[42] Levine 1999, 48.
[43] Bastide and Fernandes 1955, 89.

As early as the seventeenth century, religion was influential in expanding the Brazilian colony by controlling the educational system.[44] However, African, Afro-Brazilian, and even white women were not allowed access to education. At the time, the church, not the state or the crown, provided education. The priests, from the Order of Jesus, established the first schools in Brazil. They provided religious and vocational, basic and extensive academic education for some of the indigenous people and sons of the white elite. Secondary education was reserved for men and for the children of landowners. The Jesuits prepared them to do advanced work at Coimbra, Portugal. While poor and indigenous children benefitted from religious education and basic literacy, black men and women were forced to be workers only. [45]

In 1759, the Minister of War and Foreign Affairs, Marquis of Pombal, expelled the Jesuits from Portugal and Brazil, hoping to align the country to European "Enlightenment."[46] The Jesuit's expulsion dismantled the entire system of education by closing seventeen schools and seminaries, and a number of smaller schools for reading and writing.[47] Due to this reform, the educational system collapsed; both primary and secondary education was made available by private tutors only. During the years of 1759 to 1808, the number of primary and secondary students declined, and the only ones being educated were the elite children.[48]

In 1808, after the Portuguese crown fled to Brazil with England's help, higher

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[44] Mark L. Grover, "The Book and the Conquest: Jesuit Libraries in Colonial Brazil," *Libraries & Culture* 28 (1993): 267.

[45] Fabio Konder Comparato, *Educacao, Estado, Poder* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1987) 76.

[46] Worcester, 1973. 46.

[47] Worcester 1973, 48.

[48] Simon Schwartzman, The Challenges of Education in Brazil, 2003.

education was established mainly in the fields that would benefit the white elite:

medicine, surgery, economics, agriculture, chemistry, design, and mechanical drawing.

The arrival of the Portuguese crown marked the end of the colonial period and the

beginning of independence and nation state.[49] Thus, in 1822, the Monarchy replaced

the colonial period when Pedro I declared Brazil's independence from Portugal.

The Constitution of 1824 provided everyone the right to attain elementary

education. However, both enslaved and emancipated men and women were prohibited

from attending the schools.[50] By 1855, the quality of education for women was not as

good as the education for men. Women were not allowed to attend public secondary

education. This level of education was reserved for boys and aimed to prepare young

men for higher education, while girls' education was to prepare them for marriage.[51]

Independence and Empire- 1822 to 1889

The period of 1822 to 1889 in independent Brazil continued to favor the white

elite; Afro-Brazilian women remained underrepresented in society. As in the colonial

period, women were unable to get access to education. The patriarchal system

established by the colonizers was still the norm in independent Brazil.

In the past, Portugal had resisted implementing any institutions of higher

education in the Brazilian colony, because they were afraid this could lead to

independence.[52] The native elite tried to modernize the institutions, but they left the

slave institution intact. The Brazilian elite were well educated, mainly at the university

of Coimbra, Portugal. They were trained in civil law and most of them were

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[49] Worcester 1973: 55.
[50] José Antonio Tobias in *História da Educação Brasileira*, 1972: 97.
[51] Saffioti, 1978: 149.
[52] José Murilo de Carvalho in "Political Elites and State Building: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Brazil," 1982: 383.

bureaucrats, such as judges and magistrates.

Although, the native male elite acquired their higher education both in Brazil and Europe, the white elite women received just formal education, and African and enslaved Brazilian women received no education at all. A large number of women in Brazil worked as field workers, weavers, domestic laborers, and prostitutes.[53] Even though the Enlightenment thinking of the eighteenth century had influenced the white elite--that all men are created equal--the liberal thinking of the time did not apply to the slaves. In fact, it became a "dilemma" [54] of the white elite to promote the principle of liberty and to maintain slavery at the same time.

Furthermore, during the Empire (1822- 1889) the illiteracy rate was eighty-five percent. In fact, the basic education was not on the government's agenda, which tended to ignore poor whites and both free and slave blacks. The political elite of the time saw no value in primary education for the underprivileged whether black or white, emancipated or slave.[55]

Although the Constitution of 1824 warranted universal education to its citizen, it failed to provide free public education to the large underprivileged population due to a lack of human and physical resources, and because they were not considered citizens. The additional Act of 1834 was the most important legislation that decentralized the basic and secondary education system by granting responsibilities to the provinces, and higher education to the federal government.[56]

However, no other measures regarding subsidies to implement public education

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[53] Robert M. Levine in *The History of Brazil*, 1999: 61.
[54] Wlamyra R. de Albuquerque and Walter Fraga Filho. *"Uma História do Negro no Brasil,"* 2006: 66.
[55] Ahyas Siss in Afro-Brasileiros, *Cotas e Ação Afirmativa: Razões Históricas.* 2003: 26-27-28.
[56] Fay Haussman and Jerry Haar in *Education in Brazil,* 1978: 32.

were passed. Scholars note that the Empire was concerned with higher education and with the Pedro II magnet secondary school. [57] The attitude toward basic education affected the lives of black and poor Brazilian women who were unable to attain an education and were left on the margins of society.

In the 1824 Constitution, the Empire granted political citizenship to black and white men. Even though illiteracy was not an obstacle for participation in the political system, property qualifications did exist for voters and officeholders. During the election, few voted and the results were manipulated. In the late 1870s, the Saraiva Law was enacted to curtail the corruption in the electoral system. The objectives of the law were to limit political participation of the poor both blacks and whites, who were illiterates.[58]

After three centuries, the slave trade finally ended and slavery was abolished in May 13, 1888.[59] However, prior to the abolishment of slavery, a number of laws were enacted that would affect the lives and education of Afro-descendants after emancipation. These laws highlight the contemporary debates about abolition of slavery and education. The Free Womb Law of 1871, for instance, declared that all children born from slave mothers would be free. However, instead of benefitting black women, this law sought to minimize the loss of slave owners, which did not have to provide for younger children. [60]

In 1872, the national census had recorded: emancipated males and females were

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[57] The Pedro II Secondary School is a sort of magnet schools that although is public it is difficult to get in.
[58] James Holston in Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil. 2008: 100-102.
[59] Klein and Luna, 2010: 302.
[60] Marcus Vinicius Fonseca in A educação dos Negros: Uma Nova Face do Processo de Abolição do Trabalho Escravo no Brasil. In *Educação e Relações Étnico-raciais.* Número especial. Belo Horizonte: Faculdade de Educação da UFMG, 2000.

4.2 million, the enslaved population was 1.5 million, and whites were 3.8 million. [61]

Thus, free and enslaved blacks outnumbered the white population prior to the end of

slavery. In 1885, the Sexagenarian Law stated all slaves older than sixty-five were

free.[62] However, this last law was unlikely to benefit many slaves due to the high rate

of mortality in the 19th century.[63]

Finally, on May 13, 1888, the Golden Law abolished slavery. However, both

ex-slaves and emancipated blacks were still at the bottom of the social hierarchy. While

the abolitionists challenged slavery for being immoral and ineffective, they disappeared

after emancipation, leaving the former slaves in a predicament. The black population

was destitute.[64]

POST-ABOLITION

In the early 1860s, national and international pressure to end slavery increased.

However, Brazilian slave owners sought to keep slavery as a feasible labor force.

Attempting to justify slavery, many slave owners discredited Afro-Brazilians and

claimed that they were ineffective wage labors. They suggested that blacks' racial

inferiority prevented them from functioning in freedom and contributing to society.

The slave owners, even the abolitionists, had concerns about blacks as employees, and

they believed that European immigrants were better suited to work as wage earners in

the capitalist system.[65]

Emancipation and their transition to free labor changed the place of Afro-

Brazilians in society and the economy. As slaves, they were seen as profitable. As free

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[61] Klein and Luna, 2010: 252.
[62] Matoso 1991: 158.
[63] Levine, 1999: 68 and Skidmore, 1999: 69.
[64] Levine, 1999: 69.
[65] Nascimento, 2007: 51-52.

people, their race was seen as an impediment to their proper social development. In the mid-19th century, Brazilian intellectuals and government influenced by European and U.S. race theories, which portrayed both Afro-descendants and natives as inferior. They saw miscegenation as solution lowering the size of the black population; and they implemented so-called "whitening" policies.

In order to understand the underrepresentation of Afro-Brazilian women in education today, I will analyze how the white elite dealt with the changed status of slaves during the end of the nineteenth century and twentieth century. First, the ideologies of "whitening" and "racial democracy" will shed light on how scholars and government viewed Afro-descendants and how, over time, they changed their views. Second, I will illustrate how Afro-Brazilians coped with their underprivileged position, organized the black movements, and made their demands for education.

The Republic-1889 to 1930

The end of the nineteenth century brought not only social and economic but also political change. The Empire was overthrown by a military coup and replaced by the Republic in 1889. As in the past, "illiteracy continued to represent a social evil that guaranteed the victories of the oligarchy, owing constitutional restrictions on the right to vote".[66] The Republican system failed to unify the public schools; however, they succeeded in organizing the schools into two segments: one for the masses in occupational training and the other for the elite to take position in the higher echelons of society. The reality of an inadequate educational system and only five percent of the population being eligible to vote sustained a rural oligarchy, and an elite-dominated

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[66] Rodrigues, 1967: 134.

country that continued to subjugate Afro-descendant women.[67]

European Immigration and the Whitening Ideology

After Afro-Brazilian men and women had been forced to work for 350 years, the landowners no longer wanted them as paid laborers. Instead, they claimed that blacks had no work skills and turned to Europe as a supply of laborers. However, scholars note that Afro-Brazilians not only had the skills to compete with European workers, but in some cases, their skills were superior. Thus, Brazilian landowners' preferences for European workers over blacks shed light on race and racial relations at the time.[68]

The state subsidized massive immigration from Europe to replace Afro-Brazilian workers both in the field and in the factory and thereby to "whiten" the Brazilian population. While European immigrants were given work, free transportation, housing, and food, blacks were not. Afro-Brazilian women remained underrepresented. European immigration was favored, first to fulfill the labor shortage, due to lower reproduction rate of the blacks, and secondly to whiten the population.[69] As Afro-descendants, both male and female, migrated to urban areas, they were unable to enter the labor market because employers preferred European workers who already outnumbered blacks.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the widening economic gap between the southern and northern Brazil grew. While São Paulo invested in education, the northeastern states had to pay their debts and were unable to invest in education. For example, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the public school system provided "good

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[67] Heleieth Saffioti, 1978: 163.
[68] Graham, Richard. "Free African Brazilian and the State in Slavery Times." In: Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil, ed. by Michael Hanchard – 30-58. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
[69] Thomas E. Skidmore, Black Into White, 1974: 24.

quality education to all students" and "many opportunities exist[ed] for youths from all

walks of life."[70] The public school system, well organized and well-funded, was

founded only in the southern and urban areas, where economic progress was taking

place. During the years of the Republic, the illiteracy rate remained at seventy-five

percent,[71] and some states offered no free secondary schools. When they offered

secondary schools, their model was based on the French *lycée*. The traditional subjects

required were numerous and difficult, and it did not reflect the local reality.[72] This

practice prevented even the best students from being admitted to higher education.

Unfortunately, this requirement still is a part of the entry exam or *vestibular* to attend

university in contemporary Brazil.

Although higher education expanded from 1889 to the 1930s, the Republic did not

provide the masses with a public education, which would have helped them to participate in the

Brazilian economic development.[73] In fact, Afro-Brazilians in general and Afro-Brazilian

women in particular, were kept in occupations that were common for them during the colonial

period. They were mainly domestic servants and as sexual objects for whites in patriarchal

Brazil.

The pressures of the early 20th century, caused by urbanization and

industrialization, drove the changes for the educational system. Influenced by the

United States and Europe, the "Progressive educators" in many states tried to

implement policies to adapt the schools to " 'modernization,' democracy, and economic

growth." These reformers were responsible for the foundation of the Brazilian

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[70] Levine, 1999: 89.
[71] Paulo Ghiradldelli Jr., 2008: 33.
[72] Hausmann and Haar, 1978: 34.
[73] Hausmann and Haar, 1978: 34.

Education Association and published a number of books and articles. They institutionalized what became known as *escola nova* (the new school). In addition, many Afro-Brazilians saw education as way for them to attain social and economic prosperity.[74]

The Brazilian Education Association met in three National Educational Conferences in 1927, 1928, and 1928. However, the question to eradicate illiteracy among Afro-Brazilians was never discussed. In addition, the Amended Constitution of 1926 brought no revisions about the education of poor whites either. However, the importance of the debate about education influenced by liberal thinking (which meant believing in education), helped Afro-Brazilians demand a better education in order to obtain socio-economic integration into society.[75]

The social and political tensions, in addition to the economic inequalities between urban and rural Brazil, showed the way to the 1930s Revolution led by Getúlio Vargas. In 1932, the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação* was published. This document declared that every citizen was entitled to an education, and the government was obliged to implement a public school system that would provide "universal, secular, co-educational, compulsory, and free, in order to ensure equal opportunity to every child."[76]

Racial Democracy and the Vargas Era - 1930 to 1954

The Vargas Era was marked by political reforms, economic change, modernization, and most importantly, by nationalism. By promoting *carnaval* and *futebol*, Vargas showed to the world "Brazil's self-image of multiracial harmony and

[74] Ahyas Siss, 2003: 40.
[75] Ahyas Siss, 2003: 40-41.
[76] Plank, 1996: 65.

festiveness."[77] Helped by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre's book *Casa Grande and Senzala, The Masters and Slaves*, the book became a great tool to propagate the belief that Indigenous, European, and African cultures were creating a national Brazilian culture, where they were valued equally. Vargas promoted the 'racial democracy' by including the underprivileged black men and women, and disguised the white-supremacist ideology of "whitening." This made it irrelevant for Afro-Brazilians to protest against their underprivileged place in Brazilian society.

During the early years of the Revolution in the1930s, there were diverging opinions about education for the masses in Brazilian society. On the one hand, Getúlio Vargas was influenced by proponents of the *Escola Nova* (New School) to adopt John Dewey's educational philosophy. This philosophy posits that schooling be used as a social and political means for democratic change. On the other hand, other advocates insisted that the government should invest in basic education to eliminate the mass' illiteracy.

The Vargas government structured and controlled basic and secondary education from above. The responsibility for the management and administration of the schools remained the responsibility of state and municipal authorities or it remained in private hands. While a research center on education, the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira--National Institute for Pedagogic Studies--(INEP), was implemented,[78] the slow pace of growth in higher education during this period was notable. [79]

By the end of World War II, Vargas was forced to step down. His minister of

[77] Telles, 2004: 37.
[78] Schwartzman, "The Challenges of Education," 2003: 15.
[79] Haussman and Haar, 1978: 35.

war, Eurico Dutra, was elected president in 1946. After the war, Brazilian industrialization was on the rise, employment rates increased, and public services expanded. Although economic gains were mostly visible in the urban areas, rural migrants went to the cities searching for employment. However, with positive gains came negative pains such as inflation and the wider gap between the have and have-nots.[80] Furthermore, the government-implemented measures to set the poor apart as noncitizens and politically controlled the masses by granting social rights and citizenship only to formal workers. This tactic was applied by Vargas' populist policies in order to identify as citizens, those who held jobs in the government institutions or industries and were recognized by law as working and registered in the worker identification booklet, enacted in 1933, or *carteira assinada*.[81]

In the *Citizenship and Poverty in Brazil*, Camille Goirand asserts, "[t]he system of the *carteira assinada* perpetuate[d] inequalities and maintain[ed] the gap between citizens and noncitizens." Although the majority of Afro-descendants did not have access to education, a number of Afro-descendant males attained economic mobility through government employment in regulated citizenship.[82]

The legacy of regulated citizenship was an obstacle to informal workers, because it guaranteed different treatment according to occupational prestige and social status based on a national labor code. These inequalities were clearly visible in race and class. For example, blacks were less educated, earned less, lived in favelas, and died earlier than did whites.[83]

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[80] Haussman and Haar, 1978: 37.
[81] Carteira assinada is a document that defines a worker in the formal labor market.
[82] Goirand, Camille. "Citizenship and poverty in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 30 (2003): 22.
[83] Medea Benjamin and Maisa Mendonça in *Benedita da Silva: an Afro-Brazilian Woman's Story of*

Furthermore, it is evident that the Estado Novo period (1937-1945) defined honor and citizenship by the rights to social benefits acquired by discipline and loyalty to the state, and limited to urban workers who held *carteira do trabalho.* Rural workers, informal workers, and women in general, and Afro-Brazilians in particular, who did not have *carteira de trabralho*, were excluded in urban Brazil. The Vargas social legislature and labor union policies left poor people unprotected, ignorant, and in misery.[84]

Basic education expanded under the Capanema Ministry and the Constitution of 1937 mentioned vocational education and universal primary schooling for the masses. This marked the division of public and private schools based on socio-economics status. The majority of students had access to a practical education in the field of agriculture, industry, and commerce. However, higher education was considered unnecessary. Technical schools, which provided basic practical education, were the responsibility of the industrialists and the private sector that expanded and provided education for children of the lower class.[85] Thus, higher education was still a privilege for the upper classes.

In 1943, an Organic Law of Secondary Education passed under Capanema. The law meant to modernize secondary schooling, but it failed due to its rigidity nature. In the *Estado Novo,* quantity replaced quality in education; also, the curriculum became homogenized, strict methods were applied, and temporary solutions were implemented to confront the problems at all educational levels.[86]

In 1947, the Minister of Education Clement Mariani attempted to change the educational system to better prepare for the demands of social and economic

Politics and Love. 1997: 128.
[84] Caulfield, 2000: 188-9.
[85] Schwartzman, 2003: 15-16.
[86] Haussman and Haar, 1978: 36.

development. A year later, a comprehensive education bill was sent to Congress. The liberals and conservatives and the proponents of centralized and decentralized educational system debated this bill's provisions for thirteen years. The Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB) "once again decentralized education by setting a dual system: federal and state." The LDB concentrated on primary and secondary education, and higher education remained unchanged. In sum, the law revised the existing educational system.[87]

In *Restructuring Patriarchy*, Susan Besse states that patriarchal relations were a central component of the larger political transformation during and after the Getúlio Vargas era. First as president from 1930 to 1937, later as dictator from 1937 to 1945, and from 1951 to 1954 as president again, Vargas cultivated the compelling image as the "father of the poor." His paternalistic authoritarianism sought conformity and docile following among the masses. In return, the working class men and women would benefit if they knew their places and stayed in them. The women were directed to please their husbands in the bedroom and tend to the children in the kitchen. While middle and upper urban class women enjoyed the benefits, the urban poor white and Afro-Brazilian women were without legal protection, and with low wages and poor working conditions.[88]

The large number of migrants flooded the Center-South in hope of finding employment and housing. The urban poor black men and women were mostly northeasterners. They had access to buildings in deteriorating neighborhoods, and they built shacks out of scrap wood, tin, and cardboard. Marshal Eaking (1997) argues that urbanization out ran industrialization at a fast pace, and that industry did not absorb the

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[87] Haussman and Haar, 1978: 37
[88] Besse, 1996: 8.

rural population into cities. Thus, the lower class had no other choice but to head to inhospitable hills for residency, the well-known *favelas*.[89]

Afro-descendants and white literate women received the right to vote in 1932. However, no elections took place between 1933 and 1945, and they were unable to challenge the government until the 1950s when Vargas won the presidency. However, Vargas made "the first efforts among Brazil's black and mixed-race citizens to address the needs of that community." For that, Vargas became known as the "father of the poor."[90] Even though Vargas used his propaganda machine to inflate his accomplishments, as a father, he preferred the children who had the potential to carry his dreams of national construction, and he neglected the children of the countryside who lived in the *favelas*.

From Dictatorship to Democracy – 1964 to 1985

Throughout Getúlio Vargas' regime and the modernization of Brazil, the poor people were driven into to the hills, especially in Rio de Janeiro. During the 1950s, there was an increase of favelas in Rio de Janeiro. The government created neighborhood associations in the favelas to dictate the rules and regulations, and tried to co-opt the local leaders. However, people realized the government's goals and decided to resist. The *favelados* took back the neighborhood associations and maintained them under their control. This was possible, due to the teaching of Paulo Freire, who not only taught blacks to read but also raised their consciousness about their underprivileged place in society.[91]

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[89] Eakin, 1997: 212.
[90] Levine, 1999: 115.
[91] Benjamin, Medea and Maisa Mendonça, *Benedita da Silva* (Okland: Food and Development, 1997): 41, 44-45.

In 1961, the Federal Education Council was established. This Council was responsible to oversee all levels of education, to approve the statutes and by-laws of colleges and universities, to implement the curriculum guidelines for college degree programs. This period marked the expansion of higher education in Brazil. In 1961, for example, twenty-two federally financed public institutions, six Roman Catholic, and one independent nonsectarian institution were established.[92]

The "Economic Miracle" of 1969-73 put Brazil's growth rate among the world's highest. However, for most Brazilians, this meant the deterioration of their living conditions. They faced poverty, hunger, and slums; and disease increased enormously. The benefits from the Economic Miracle were distributed very unequally. Half of the work force was left outside the formal labor market. Workers were left with reduced earnings and were ineligible for the corporate system of health care, vacations, and pensions created during the Getúlio Vargas' regime.

In the following chapter, I will turn to affirmative action for Afro-Brazilians in higher education. I examine the factors that led the Brazilian government to pass affirmative action laws such as the black movements and feminist movement, in addition to the Third World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001. Because of affirmative action policies, Afro-Brazilians received more opportunities and became better equipped to participate in the process of democratization. Racial democracy was replaced by affirmative action programs in higher education and in civil employment in both state and federal institutions.

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[92] Haussman and Haar, 1978: 38.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL FORCES CONTRIBUTING

TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

Introduction

Afro-Brazilians' citizenship is characterized by racial and economic inequality. Historically, these inequalities emerged in Brazil's colonial period and were maintained to a large degree during imperial and republican rule. Economic and racial inequality thrived during Brazil's military dictatorship and is still a major problem in Brazilian society under democracy. However, in the1970s and 1980s, black movements and feminist movements challanged Brazil's racial democracy myth, which is based on race and class politics, by reaffirming black identity. In 1974, blacks in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil asserted their identity by founding the separatist Ilê Aiyê Carnaval School to protest against their exclusion from previous Carnaval. These Ilê Aiyê actions demonstrated that cultural mobilization had political implications.[93]

This chapter examines black movements and feminist movements' demands to better access to education, work, and health opportunities, and paved the way for the Brazilian government's shift from racial democracy to affirmative action policy. Subsequently, Brazil had to address questions of race, equality, and democracy when its government tried asserting its liberal credentials to the world community. Therefore, to better understand Brazil's affirmative action policy in higher education, I turn to factors that contributed to the enactment of this policy: Afro-Brazilian activism, social science

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[93] Antonio Risério, *Carnaval Ijexá: Notas Sobre Afoxés e Blocos do Novo Carnaval Afrobaiano*. Salvador: Corrupio, 1981.

research, and international events.

BLACK MOVEMENTS -

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Black Front

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Afro-Brazilians mobilized for better

living conditions. They founded a number of organizations including the black press.

They aimed to fight racism and racial discrimination and "to overcome the exclusion of

blacks from the labor market, the educational system, political activity, and civil society."

They saw in education the means to participate fully in the mainstream society and to

attain full citizenship.[94]

In fact, the Brazilian Black Front, the largest foundation at the time, founded its

own school and helped expand education by providing night school courses. The black

press provided two roles, one for education and the other for protest. "These newspapers

first seek to bring men of color together, give a sense of solidarity, set them on a path,

and teach them to fight against the inferiority complex."[95] The lack of self-esteem rested

on the whitening ideology.

The black press development took two distinctive phases. The first took place in

1914 during World War I and saw implementation of a national policy to provide

Brazilians free public primary education. The second phase occurred in 1923, with the

founding of the newspaper *O Clarim* (*The Bugle*). Later titled *O Clarim d'Alvorada* (*The

Bugle of the Dawn*), the newspaper "reminded readers of the black ancestors' resistance

and called on the community to organize and continue to fight." Several periodicals with

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[94] Elisa Larkin Nascimento in *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil*. 2007: 122-123.
[95] Roger Bastide, quoted in Elisa Larkin Nascimento in *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil*. 2007: 123.

similar themes appeared, including *O Progresso* (1931), *Promissão* (1932), and *Cultura Social e Esportiva* (1934), and *Voz da Raça* (1936)[96].

The Black Front had affiliates in the states of Bahia, Pernambuco, Sergipe, Maranhao, Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo, Minas Gerais, and Rio Grande do Sul, all of which demanded rights to education and citizenship. They also founded a school for children in their own headquarters with teachers appointed by the government, and they also offered literacy courses for adults provided by members of the Black Front movement who taught for free, in addition to professional courses to train individuals as barbers and seamstresses to name a few.

Although the black movements spent decades addressing the underprivileged position of Afro-Brazilians, some scholars posit that these movements first sought assimilation into the white society.[97] However, in *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender*, the author posits, "the black movements of the period 1914 to 1970 express continuity and coherence in building the foundations of the contemporary struggles and victories of the Afro-Brazilian movement." They had always demanded an identity and citizenship, and they believed access to all levels of the educational system eventually would prepare them to obtain their citizenship rights, despite the fact that Brazil insisted in portraying the Afro-Brazilian's movements as insignificant.[98]

However, in 1937 President Vargas adjourned Congress and established a dictatorship. The newly founded Black Front party was banned from any political activity, and therefore was unable to put the race question on the political agenda. By contrast, Vargas succeeded by placing the extremists on the right in opposition to those

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[96] Nascimento, 2007: 127- 128 and Ahyas Siss, 2003: 41-44.
[97] George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and White* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1991), 188.
[98] Nascimento, 2007: 230-232.

on the left, who were disappointed with liberalism. Many Brazilians supported his new government, which he called *Estado Novo* (New State). While Vargas was autocratic and banished the Black Front and all other parties, he also passed legislation to protect Brazilian workers from immigrant competition in employment. This measure allowed male and female blacks to enter the "growing industrial labor force for the first time and be preferred for government employment."[99] However, underrepresentation of blacks in private sector employment persisted.

Ten Black Experimental Theater (TEN) Movement

Although the authoritarian regime impeded open demonstrations, blacks had to come up with creative ways to organize. Some of them met in dancing clubs or gathered in the *terreiro* communities to practice Afro-Brazilian religious practices. Others continued to advocate for work and education for blacks. In 1941, José do Patrocínio paved the way to establishing the Afro-Brazilian Movement for Education and culture, an association that lasted until the 1950s. This movement helped black women to protest against advertisements seeking only white people as domestic servants.[100] The ads always mentioned "good appearance" which was understood as a euphemism for European descent.

Among the movements and the media, The Black Experimental Theater (TEN) funded by Abdias do Nascimento in 1944 asserted a black identity, which went against the national theme of racial democracy. TEN sought to create a positive meaning to blackness based on the historical and cultural heritage of Africa and away from the Eurocentric standards. TEN also acknowledged all "people and diverse cultures with

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[99] Edward E. Telles in *Race in Another America*, 2004: 37.
[100] Nascimento, 2007:138.

their unique qualities." Their mission was to liberate Afro-Brazilian from positions

assigned for them in recreation, Carnival, and folklore. However, TEN realized that the

only way to succeed would be through education.[101]

The Brazilian government offered education to domestic and public servants and

to people residing in favelas who had no formal occupations. TEN enabled them to read

and act, but also eventually changed their marginalized social place in society. Literacy

also allowed them to vote, contrary to illiterates who had to wait for the 1988

Constitution. In general, TEN provided Afro-descendants survival skills for the labor

market and for Brazilian society as a whole.[102]

Black Women's Movements

The 1980s marked the beginning of democracy and black organized movements'

influence in the political stage. Although historically Afro-Brazilian women

participated in many of the other black movements across Brazil, such as Salvador,

Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, as Sao Paulo, their male counterparts held the

leadership positions in most of the organizations. While Afro-Brazilian women held

membership either in the black movement or in the feminist movement, neither

movement organization addressed the questions of race and gender that mattered to

them. Even though black women tried to engage the race and gender debate during the

mid-1970s, neither the Brazilian women's movement nor the black movement seemed

to understand their needs. By 1985, they decided to found their own movement, which

led to establishment of several black women's collective groups in Brazil.[103]

The black women's movement focused on reproductive health and sexual,

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[101] Nascimento, 2007: 171.
[102] Nascimento, 2007: 172-173.
[103] Kia Lilly Caldwell, *Negras in Brasil*, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1971): 157.

forced sterilization, racial, and domestic violence. The black women's movements promoted the Afro-Brazilian culture and identity; in addition to focusing on self-esteem by providing workshops on braiding hair and African dance.[104]

In 1988, The First National Encounter of the Black Woman took place to address race and the experiences of black women, topics omitted from the Ninth Feminist Encounter (1987). Their participation took place at the same time of the centennial of abolition and the draw up of the 1988 new Constitution. [105]

Another important event was the North and Northeast Black movement and Black Women's movement in Recife, Pernambuco. They opposed the ideology of Gilberto Freyre, the author of *Master and Slaves* and the racial democracy ideology. The title of the conference was "Negro and Education." The agenda addressed "the colonization of the black intellectual students."[106] In other words, they advocated for including Afro-Brazilian history in the curriculum and in textbooks, to represent the realities of their existence during the colonial, imperial, and republican periods.

As the black movements and feminist movements strove to address the Afro-descendants' racial and economic inequality, they succeeded in 1995 with the *Marcha Zumbi dos Palmares Contra o Racismo e Pela Cidadania e a Vida* (The March of Zumbi of Palmares Against Racism and for Citizenship and Life) in Brazil's capital city of Brasilia. This demonstration pressured the government to enact legislation addressing racial inequalities and to implement public measures to open access to all education, higher education included. The Afro-Brazilian demonstration had thirty

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[104] Ibid., 158-159.
[105] Ibid., 160.
[106] Sales Augusto dos Santos, *Movimentos Negros, Educacao e Acoes Afirmativas*, (Dissertation at the University of Brasilia, 2007): 162-3.

thousand participants and the leaders were able to meet with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. They gave the president *Programa de Superação do Racismo e da Desigualdade Racial* (Program to Combat Racial Inequality and Racism) document. They also advocated for self-representation along "color" lines in all government documents, promotion of equal opportunity in the labor market for all and for Afro-Brazilian women in particular. This measure would allow Afro-Brazilian women to attain education and enter the job market.[107]

The new Constitution declared mandatory education as a 'subjective' right of every person. It also argued that the state should provide free basic and higher public education, that all universities must be autonomous, and that research, teaching and work are inseparable. After many years, Congress and interest groups debated a new Education Law, which was finally approved it in 1996. This law provided freedom and flexibility for the educational institutions at all levels to set up course programs and manage their affairs.[108]

Between 1995 and 1998, Afro-Brazilians presented twenty-five bills against racism while in the past decades of the 1950s and 1979 only twelve bills were presented with the same theme. These bills were the work of the black and feminist movements, and first founder Abdias do Nascimento (Rio de Janeiro), Senator Paulo Paim (Rio Grande do Sul), ex-senator Benedita da Silva (Rio de Janeiro), and congress representative Luiz Alberto (Bahia). It is worth noting that eleven of the bills presented were about education and a quota system for Afro-descendants.

The following year, the President Cardoso, under pressure from black and

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[107] Sales Augusto dos Santos, 2007: 164-166.
[108] Schwartzman, Simon. "The Challenges of Education." (2003): 20-23.

feminist movements, established the Group of Inter Ministry for the Valorization of Black Population (GTI) and the Labor Group to Eliminate Discrimination in the Workplace (GTEDEO). These organizations were the result of an allegation of discrimination in the workplace made by the non-governmental organization Center of Studies of Unequal Relation in the Workplace (CEER).

However, Afro-Brazilian men and women have yet to benefit from any of these changes in the workplace. In present-day Brazil, they still make less money than do their white counterparts. Afro-descendant women in Brazil make the least amount of money for their labor. They also tend to be the last employees hired and the first fired.[109] Despite Afro-descendant women's underrepresentation in the labor market, they have been pivotal to the debate of racial inequality in the state's bureaucracy, ministries, institutions, and higher education. Subsequently, there were demands on the state to implement measures to remedy these racial and social inequalities.[110]

In 1996, there was an important conference, the "Multiculturalismo e racismo: o papel da ação afirmativa nos Estados Democráticos Contemporâneos" (Multiculturalism and Racism: The Contemporary Democratic States and the Role of Affirmative Action held at the University of Brasilia) (UnB). It was the first time that a Brazilian President (Fernando Henrique Cardoso) publicly acknowledged racism and openly discussed ways to implement anti-discrimination policies and affirmative action programs. This was certainly a victory for the black and feminist movements, both of which had advocated legislation to benefit the black population in education for many decades.

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[109] Edward E. Telles 2007 and Lowell 1999.
[110] Sales Augusto dos Santos, 2007: 174

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, the debate over the need for and the validity or implementation of affirmative action started in the last decades of the twententh century.[111] Initiated by black and feminist movements and scholars, the debate expanded in the mass media (print, radio, and television journalism) as well as various governmental levels (federal, state, and municipal) during the 1990s. Pressed by civil society, Brazil's government actively discussed initiatives to implement affirmative action in this period. [112]

At the 2001 World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, the Brazilian government presented a report written by black activists and states' representatives. The document advocated for some type of affirmative action to extend access to higher education to black students. The report also stated that other forms of affirmative action already existed in the country, such as the 1943 Consolidation of the Labor Law passed during the Vargas era. This law set a quota of two-thirds for Brazilian workers in private business because of the mass migration of Europeans. Furthermore, a 1990 law established a twenty percent quota for handicapped persons in civil service occupations and a 1997 law set a twenty-five percent quota for women candidates as the state and federal representatives.[113] At the end of 2001, the Brazilian government announced implementation of affirmative action policy at all levels of state agencies.

Although the focus of this chapter is on higher education, it is important to note that low quality schools, higher repetitions, and higher dropout rates characterize primary

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[111] Hanchard 1994, Winant 1994, and Andrews 1991 agree that protest against the Centennial Celebration of Abolition in 1988 was the highest point of the black movement's advocacy of national identity and challenges to the myth of racial democracy. Public demonstrations in all regions of Brazil questioned the legitimacy of the Golden Law of May 13, 1888, and racial inequality (power, resources, and social prestige) blacks and whites became a national debate for the first time in Brazil's history.

[112] Telles, 2004. Htun, 2004. Martins et al., 2004.

[113] Htun, 2004: 68.

and secondary public education in Brazil. For these reasons, middle and upper class

Brazilians usually enroll their children in private primary and secondary schools.

Therefore, "high initial income inequality led to low levels of investment in human

capital, particularly among the poor, which exacerbated income inequality." [114]

The education of Brazil's lower classes was "a project postponed until quite

recently."[115] However, scholars note that this delay in the Brazilian educational public

system is not due to policy implementation, but instead reflects inadequate funding for

public education by politicians and officials who reserve subsidies for private interests.

Thus, the problem of Brazil's primary and secondary public educational systems resides

in deeply rooted conflicts between competing interests in Brazilian society. This

situation results in public schools being ill equipped, understaffed, and attended largely

by underprivileged poor and black students. For instance, public universities provide

tuition-free higher education for students who graduate from private schools.

By contrast, students from private schools benefit from public subsidies twice,

first by attending subsidized primary and secondary private schools and second by not

paying tuition for higher education.[116] In *Opportunity Forgone: Education in Brazil* the

authors states:

> Public subsidies to private schools take several forms. Private schools are exempt
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> from the payment of both income tax and the wage tax targeted for support of

[114] Nancy Birdsall and R.H. Sabot, in *Opportunity Foregone: Education in Brazil*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank; Distributed by the John Hopkins University Press, 1996: 11.

[115] *National Report on Education*. 48th Sessions of the International Conference on Education. Geneva – Switzerland. November 25th to 28th 2009 (downloaded from www.mec.gov.br).

[116] For more on education in Brazil, see David N. Plank, Jose Amaral Sobrinho, and Antonio, Carlos R. Xavier, "Why Brazil Lags Behind in Educational Development" in *Opportunity Foregone: Education in Brazil*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank. Distributed by the John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

primary education. These private institutions participate in a variety of agreements with federal, state and local governments in which public authorities 'purchase' schools. Students may receive scholarship for private school tuition from a variety of public sources at both state and federal levels, some of which are distributed through the offices of elected officials, including members of the National Congress. Under the policy known as the Sistema de Manutenção do Ensino (SME), firms may withhold payment of the wage tax in order to maintain their own schools or to reimburse the educational expenditures of employees or their dependents. They may also route their contributions to private schools through the Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (FNDE) in order to provide tuition scholarships for the children of their employes. [117]

Thus, underprivileged students from public schools have to attend low quality public schools and pay for higher education. Furthermore, according to the authors "an estimated 23 percent of all public educational expenditure is allocated to higher education institutions, though these enroll only 2 percent of the students in the public education system." Subsidies for the private education of middle and upper class students in Brazil should expand and improve education for underrepresented students who truly need public assistance. [118]

After Brazil returned to democracy, the university, an elite institution, faced challenges to provide access for society's racially underprivileged and poor populations. Brazil's higher educational institutions appeared in the early nineteenth century.

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[117] David N. Plank, Jose Amaral Sobrinho, and Antonio, Carlos R. Xavier, "Why Brazil Lags Behind in Educational Development" in *Opportunity Foregone: Education in Brazil.* Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank. Distributed by the John Hopkins University Press, 1996: 124-5.
[118] Ibid., 127.

According to Cunha (2000), implementation of public universities came late to Brazil compared to other Latin American countries. The Portuguese, for example, did not invest in higher education prior to the surrender of Brazil's royal family during the Napoleonic war in 1808 because they feared an uprising of Brazil's educated populace. Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were the first southern states to construct publicly funded educational institutions, as Schwartzman (2004) notes: "Until 1889, only 24 higher education schools existed; between 1889 and 1918, fifty-six new, mostly private, higher education schools were established." Due to the limited number of universities, elite Brazilian children acquired their educations in Europe, mostly in Portugal and France "[T]he federal universities that exist[ed] today in all state capitals are natural passage points for the local elites."[119] This situation created the perception that higher education is only for the rich. [120]

Currently, one of Brazil's challenges in higher education is racial representation in enrollment, which fails to reflect the overall Brazilian population. Petruccelli (2004) finds that only 5.8 million of the 85 million persons over 25 years old completed undergraduate degrees. The racial representation is as follows: 83% are white students, while black, mulatto, Asian, and indigenous represent 17% of the remaining students. Blacks represent just 2.5 percent of the university student population.

In addition to racial underrepresentation in higher education, Afro-Brazilians also face economic inequality. Telles' analysis of income inequality illustrates the unequal distribution of resources among whites, browns (multiracial), and blacks within Brazilian

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[119] David N. Plank, Jose Amaral Sobrinho, and Antonio, Carlos R. Xavier, "Why Brazil Lags Behind in Educational Development" in *Opportunity Foregone: Education in Brazil*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank. Distributed by the John Hopkins University Press, 1996: 3.
[120] Schwartzman, 2004. For more on the many challenges for higher education in Brazil.

society. He notes, "the top 10% of Brazilians earn incomes worth 52% of the total income of all Brazilians."[121] Along with the unequal racial distribution of wealth, Telles also states, "whites are about five times as likely as non-whites to be in the top income bracket in Brazil."[122] Brown and black people represent only a small portion of Brazil's middle and upper classes. At the bottom of Brazilian society, 52% of non-whites and 29% of whites are at the lowest levels of income distribution. These findings illustrate an underclass represented by black, brown, and white Brazilians, with the majority being black and brown. Blacks are less educated than whites are, they earn less, they die earlier, and they tend to live in shantytowns.[123]

In Brazil, public universities are tuition-free and recognized for their academic prestige and credibility. The admission process takes place through an entrance exam named *vestibular*. Middle and upper class students usually attend private primary and secondary schools and then take the vestibular to attend tuition-free public universities. Students from lower classes, most of whom are not white, attend public schools that are inferior in quality to private schools. These students are not well prepared for the Brazilian entrance exam, *vestibular*. Many of them fail the entrance exam *vestibular* and must pay high tuition to attend the private colleges or universities. Even though the colleges are free and in theory are open to all people, the school system and the entrance exam *vestibular* prevent non-whites from attending colleges.

Education is highly correlated to income in Brazil and higher education is the key to middle-class status. Education is known as the best way to gain opportunities for

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[121] Telles, 2004: 109.
[122] Ibid., 110.
[123] Benjamin and Mendonça, 1997: 128.

social and economic mobility.[124] Even though Afro-descendants represented 49 percent

of the population in 2009, they are still underrepresented in the country's political,

economic processes, and, as well as, the mass media. Furthermore, Afro-Brazilians are a

poorly trained work force because they do not have access to education. As revealed by

the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (1996-1997), only 3.2 percent of

African descendants attend a university, compared with 14.3 percent of whites. [125] The

rate of African descendant workers involved in the informal economy was higher than the

rate for whites throughout the 1990s. Thus, the right to work with dignity and under

equal conditions in Brazil is far from reality for Afro-Brazilian women. They are still far

behind most other social groups, including their male counterparts. Current policies to

make higher education more accessible have potential to reduce educational disparities

and decrease inequality in Brazilian society.

From Racial Democracy to Affirmative Action Policy

The mid-1980s marked the beginning of democracy; organized black movements

and feminist movements influenced the political process. Along with the Third World

Conference on Racism in Durban (2001), the black movement pressured the government

to pass affirmative action measures. As a result, Afro-Brazilians received more

opportunities and could actively participate in the process of democratization.

Racial democracy was replaced by implementation of affirmative action policy in

higher education and by civil employment in Brazil's state and federal institutions. In the

political arena, the democratization process brought a new set of demands and new forms

of participation. To establish legitimacy for the new democratic regime the government

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[124] Telles, 2004:124 and Hanchard, 1994: 62.

[125] Brazilians Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 1996-1997.

had to integrate those who lacked social rights.

Furthermore, President Cardoso decided to address the issue of racial democracy. Previously, racial democracy rested on the fear of racial upheaval and based on the race theories developed in both Europe and United States. The Brazilian elite had an inferiority complex with Europe and the United States and always wanted to be on equal terms with the great nations. However, Brazil's mixed race populations presented a problem. Due to its greater racial blending, there was no way to segregate the races as the United States had done. As a substitute, the Brazilians came up with their own theories of *branqueamento* or "whitening."[126] To further their plans, the government and the intellectual Brazilians promoted European immigration in combination with lower reproduction rates of the black population hoping to dilute in a short period what would eliminate the racial dilemma and make Brazil a nation equal to Europe.

However, the recent implementation of the affirmative action policies brought the public opinion to the forefront about race discrimination. Those in favor of affirmative action usually endorse quotas; the opponents to quotas criticize any form of affirmative action. Nevertheless, Heringer (2001) suggests quotas are only one among the several affirmative action measures contemplated by official government commissions in the mid-1990s and actually implemented by municipal governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around Brazil. She adds that the full basket of policies includes social programs targeting black neighborhoods; job training programs, preparatory courses for university entrance exams, and support for black-owned businesses.[127]

The effects of racial democracy relate to the core of contemporary academic and

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[126] Telles, 2004: 28.
[127] Rosana Heringer, "Mapeamento das Ações e Discursos de Combate as Desigualdades Raciais no Brasil," *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 23 (2001): 1-43.

public policy discussions regarding racism and antiracism in Brazil. Various discussions suggest that racial democracy is a myth, that the majority of the Brazilian population acknowledges the discrimination of Afro-Brazilians and the need to address inequality by implementing an affirmative action policy. Furthermore, Bailey (2004) indicates that education is a stronger factor relating to racial inequality in Brazil. He adds that class-based identification is important because of the extreme social class inequalities.

In addition, Bailey, Winant, Omi, and Telles reveal how racial democracy has affected race relations in Brazil, first by the belief of a united society made through miscegenation of Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous with the result of miscegenation in Brazilian society. Second, by eliminating the concept of race, Brazil failed to help the subordinated class along color lines but attributed inequality to class, enabling the upper class to justify their status and undermine any social movement based on race. Bailey claims the success of antiracism strategies will depend on "the ability of legislators and activists not to reduce the identities of Brazilians to one primary (racial) essence." [128] Similarly, Telles (2004) puts forward the significance of higher education in preserving the race and class hierarchies that are present in Brazil, and how the public measures, namely race and class affirmative action quotas, to counteract these hierarchies.

The affirmative action debate consists of two sets of arguments. The first, addresses racial inequality, mobility and redistribution along racial lines, and race-based political action. The second relates to the "meaning of race, the nature of racial identity."[129] On the one hand, there are scholars who argue against affirmative action. As Htun demonstrates, "quotas lead to reverse discrimination, insult blacks by presuming

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[128] Bailey, 2004: 744.
[129] Winant, 1992: 191.

that they cannot compete on their own merits, and fail to address the causes of black exclusion, which are social, not racial."[130] There are also fears that affirmative action policies based on United States race relations and history may cause the same racial divisions in Brazil. For instance, in the article "The Cunning of Imperialist Reason," Bourdieu and Wacquant claim that this debate can be a sign of "ethnocentric intrusion"[131] practiced by American philanthropic foundations and scholars. However, on the positive side of the argument, during 1997 and 2000, under the leadership of sociologist and race relation expert Edward Telles, the Ford Foundation endorsed affirmative action in Brazil and helped Afro-descendant movements. Ford Foundation also helped Afro-Brazilians establish links with anti-discrimination organizations in other countries, including the United States, and provided a "network of black attorneys, academic research on race discrimination and policy remedies, and leadership training for black politicians."[132]

In Brazil, affirmative action policy extends to various social sectors, especially women and disabled persons who enter civil services and higher education through quota systems. Furthermore, quota system benefitting women and disabled persons have generated little or no debate compared to quota systems for Afro-Brazilians.

Brazilian government studies revealed that inequalities in areas of education, occupation, housing and income reflected a racial problem.[133] Therefore, taking measures to eliminate racial inequality in Brazilian education was of the utmost

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[130] Htun, 2004: 6.
[131] Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999: 44.
[132] Mala Htun, " 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review,* 39 (2004): 77.
[133] The federal government, through the Institute of Statistics and Geography (IBGE), the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), and more specifically starting in 2000, the IPEA, released studies showcasing the extent and stability of racial inequalities in Brazil (see especially the CD-ROM released in December 2002, Desigualdade racial: indicadores socioeconomicos-Brasil, 1991-2001, available at www.ipea.gov.br).

importance. The first measure involved the numbers of quotas established in institutions of higher education but did not address the *needs* of Afro-descendants due to racial and socioeconomic inequality.

Brazil has the second largest population of Afro-descendants in the world, second only to Nigeria. In 2008, according to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) Brazil's population was approximately 190 million; Afro-Brazilians represented 96 million and whites 90 million. As shown in Table 1, the white Brazilian population was the minority in 1890; however, this change was due to subsidized European immigration in the nineteenth century. By the 1930s, whites had surpassed Afro-Brazilians by 19.5 percent.[134] Before the mid-twentieth century, European interests and incentives to migrate to Brazil had declined. [135]

After the 1980s, the Brazilian population's color and racial identification stayed stable for black and white Brazilians; however, numbers in the brown category increased. During the 1990s, whites represented 55 percent of Brazil's population while Afro-Brazilians accounted for 45 percent of the population.[136]

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[134] For more on European immigration see Andrews, 1992.

[135] For information on changes in population and color/race demographics see Nelson do Valle Silva, "Aspectos Demograficos dos Grupos Raciais. *Estudos Afro-Asiaticos, Rio de Janeiro, 23* (1992): 7-15, and Simon Schwartzman, "Fora de Foco: Diversidade e Identidades Etnicas no Brasil." *Novos Estudos Cebrap,* 55 (1999): 83-96. This was also the time that "racial democracy" became a national ideology.

[136] Both Hasenbalg and Silva (1999) argue that since blacks and brown suffer race/economic discrimination, these categories should merge to become Afro-Descendant Brazilian.

Table 1: Historical Brazilian Population Distribution

Color and Years (%)												
Years												
Color	1890	1940	1950	1960	1980	1992	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Black	14.6	14.6	11.0	8.7	5.9	5.4	5.1	4.9	6.0	5.2	5.7	5.4
Brown	41.4	21.2	26.5	29.5	38.5	40.1	40.1	40.1	38.2	39.9	39.5	39.9
White	44.0	63.5	61.7	61.0	54.8	54.0	54.2	54.4	55.2	54.4	54.0	54.0
Indigenous	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Yellow*	-	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5

Source: Censos Demográficos e Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 e 1999. Taken from *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90.* Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada (Ipea), 2001: 5. Table 1.
*Note: * The Asian population up to the 1980s was categorized as 'other.'[137]*

To determine which ethnic groups were represented among the affirmative action programs, I employed the categories, which is based on self-identification, and is used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which is the government institution in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census. These categories include white (Euro-Brazilian), black, brown (mixed-race, Afro-Brazilian), yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and indigenous (native-Brazilian).[138] To keep with the IBGE racial classification and the black and black feminist movements, I employ Afro-Brazilian or Afro-descendant category, which combines both black and brown population through out of my study.

The following tables analyze the racial characteristics of the Brazilian population

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[137] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90.* Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: 4-5. Downloaded from http://ipea.gov.br. in September 14, 2009.
[138] Brazilian race classification is based on a color continuum and self-identifification: black is associated with the negative and white with positive. The gradient depends on how close to black or white one is. For more on race and color classification see Telles 2004, Sheriff 2001, and Hasenbalg 1999.

by looking at region, age, and gender. These three variables, especially during the year 1999, will highlight the disadvantages Afro-Brazilians faced in comparison to Euro-Brazilian access to and opportunities for distribution of resources and privileges in Brazilian society. First, looking at the racial representation in each region, the large racial concentration is as follows: self-declared whites and brown individuals are concentrated in the southeast, while brown Brazilians are the majority in the northeast and whites are the majority in the south. Therefore, 28 percent of whites are found in Brazil's southeastern region, 19 percent of browns are in the Northeast, 13 percent of whites are in the south, and 12 percent of browns are in the southeast region. This represents 70 percent of the entire Brazilian population, as shown in Table 2.[139]

Table 2: 1999 Brazil's Regional Population Distributions by Color

	Regions (%)				
Color	Central West	Northeast	North	Southeast	South
Black	0.25	1.63	0.12	2.94	0.46
Brown	3.48	18.66	3.45	12.42	1.93
White	3.25	8.60	1.42	27.98	12.78
Yellow	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.33	0.07
Indigenous	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.03
Total	7.04	28.93	5.04	43.70	15.27

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1999. Taken from Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90. Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: 5. Table 2.

The Brazilian racial population composition reveals regional differences. Each region provides a group based on racial, majority, and minority representation. Whites

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[139] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil,* 2001: 5.

are concentrated in the developed southern and southeastern regions; the majority of browns live in the underdeveloped northern and northeastern regions. In Table 2, the south represents 15.3 percent of the country's population and in this region alone, whites represent 83 percent of the population. The southeastern region is the most populated with 43 percent of the population and the racial distribution is 64 percent white and 34 percent black. The northern and northeast region populations are mostly black. For instance, the northeast has 28.9 of the country population while the north has only 5 percent of the country population. In 1999, blacks made up about 70 percent of the population in these regions. In the Central-West region, the racial distribution is closed to the country racial distribution with blacks at 53 percent and whites at 46 percent.[140] Thus, the tables reveal that the majority of whites are concentrated in the most developed, southeast and south regions of Brazil, while brown and black are the majority and are concentrated in the underdeveloped northeast and north regions of Brazil.

In 1999, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios--National Household Sample Survey--(PNAD) report revealed that approximately 34 percent of the Brazilian family population had incomes below poverty rates, and 14 percent of the population was classified as indigent (see definition below).[141] The questions that follow address the racial face of poverty in Brazil and ask whether poverty is represented equally among the racial groups of 53 million poor and 22 million indigent. In 1999, according to Table 4 blacks represented 45 percent of the Brazilian population. However, they also represented 64 percent of the poor and 69 percent of indigents. By contrast, whites

[140] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil,* 2001: 6.
[141] The poverty line is defined by the cost of living and includes costs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation, while the indigent indicator represents the cost of food an individual can afford, according to Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil*, 2001: 9.

represented 54 percent of the total population and only 36 percent of the poor and 31

percent of indigents. Thus, the racial distribution of poverty among the 53 million

Brazilians in 1999 was as follows: 19 million of whites, 30.1 million browns, and 3.6

blacks. Among indigents, 6.8 were white, 13.6 brown, and 1.5 black. This study

revealed the high level of poverty in Brazil and pointed out that blacks were

overrepresented among the poor. Henriques (2001) notes that poverty in the black

community was not a new phenomenon but rather a long and stable reality, particularly

during the nineties. In the early 1990s, blacks represented 40 percent of the poor and

represented 34 percent after 1995. Moreover, poverty among blacks has been always

higher than that of whites, and they represent 63 percent of the poor Brazilian population

during the last decade of the twentieth century. [142]

Table 3: 1999 - Brazilian Population Distribution by Poverty and Region

Color	Central West	Northeast	North	Southeast	South
Percentage	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Black	0.4	3.2	0.2	2.3	0.7
Brown	4.6	35.4	7.1	9.1	2.5
White	2.6	11.9	2.1	8.8	8.7

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1999. Taken from *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90.* Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: 11. Table 8.

The northeastern region has the highest indices of poverty. In 1999, this region

represented 50.6 percent of the poor population in the country: in other words, 26.8

million poor Brazilians live in the northeast. In Table 3, the poverty of the northeast was

35 percent, distributed among 18.6 million browns, while whites represented 12 percent

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[142] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil*, 2001: 9-10.

of these residents. By contrast, the southeast had 20.2 percent of the poor population in the country, 9.1 percent of browns, and 8.8 percent of whites. Thus, the rest of the poor population is represented equally in the following regions: the south with 12 percent, the north with 9.5 percent, and the central-west with 7.7 percent

Table 4: 1999 – Brazilian Population Distribution by Poverty and Color (%)

	White	Black*
Indigent Population	30.73	68.85
Poor Population	35.95	63.63
Population Total	54.02	45.33

0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1999. Taken from Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90. Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: 7.

*Note: * The black population is composed of brown and blacks, according to government institutions in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census (Brazilians Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE).*

In Table 5, race/color, age, and gender are analyzed to measure poverty. The effect of age and race combined revealed that both black and brown males and females of between 0 to 14 years of age are overrepresented in poverty; their poverty rate is more than 60 percent, while whites were less affected by poverty. Thus, the table shows blacks and brown disadvantages in race, gender, and age along with their overrepresentation in

poverty and indigent indicators. [143]

Table 5: 1999 –
Brazil's Incidence of Poverty and Indigent by Color, Age, and Gender

	Proportion of Poverty						Proportion of Indigent					
Men	White		Brown		Black		White		Brown		Black	
Age	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
00 – 06	36.8	(20)	66.1	(2)	62.5	(4)	14.7	(20)	35.5	(1)*	30.9	(5)
07 – 14	32.2	(24)	61.8	(5)	60.6	(7)	12.5	(24)	31.4	(4)	29.7	(7)
15 – 24	21.0	(31)	45.5	(11)	41.7	(13)	6.8	(27)	18.6	(11)	16.7	(17)
25 – 40	19.4	(32)	41.5	(14)	35.9	(19)	6.8	(28)	18.2	(12)	13.5	(21)
41 – 59	16.1	(33)	39.1	(16)	33.8	(22)	5.6	(31)	17.1	(15)	14.7	(19)
60 – up	9.9	(35)	24.6	(25)	23.2	(26)	1.7	(35)	6.0	(30)	6.3	(29)
Women	White		Brown		Black		White		Brown		Black	
Age	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
00 – 06	38.4	(17)	64.7	(3)	66.1	(1)*	17.0	(16)	34.5	(2)	34.1	(3)
07 – 14	33.5	(23)	61.0	(6)	60.2	(8)	13.2	(23)	30.7	(6)	29.4	(8)
15 – 24	22.2	(27)	48.3	(9)	46.9	(10)	7.5	(26)	20.5	(9)	18.0	(13)
25 – 40	21.4	(30)	44.7	(12)	41.3	(15)	7.6	(25)	20.1	(10)	17.5	(14)
41 – 59	14.5	(34)	38.3	(18)	33.9	(21)	4.5	(34)	15.6	(18)	13.2	(22)
60 – up	8.4	(36)	21.9	(28)	21.5	(29)	1.2	(36)	4.7	(32)	4.2	(33)

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1999. Taken from Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90. Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: Table 10.
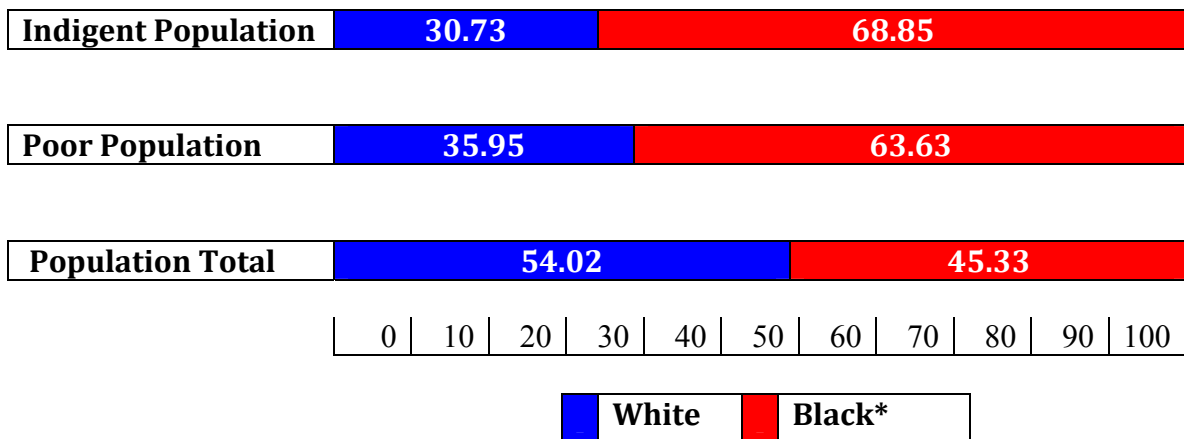
Note: *The numbers in parentheses show the relative group position, taking into consideration the descending poverty rate (indigence). Entre parênteses encontra-se a posição relativa do grupo, respeitada uma ordenação decrescente de pobreza [indigência].

In Table 6, which covers the period between 1992 and 1999, education improved for youths, both blacks and whites. However, when analyzed separately during the entire period, blacks still lagged behind whites. For instance, blacks outnumbered whites in illiteracy rates and school attendance. In 1999, 8 percent of blacks between 15 and 25

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[143] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil:* 2001: 15.

years old were still illiterate, while white illiteracy was at 3 percent; furthermore, 5 percent of blacks between 7 and 13 years of age did not attend school and whites represented 2 percent in the same age group. The results of secondary education were alarming for both black and whites. Among whites between 18 and 23 years old, only 37 percent completed their secondary education, while 84 percent of blacks of the same age did not.

Although racial differences were small in higher education, they remained troublesome. Henriques (2001) states:

"Em 1999, 89% dos jovens brancos entre 18 e 25 anos nao haviam ingressado na universidade. Os jovens negros por sua vez, praticamente nao dispõem do direito ao ensino superior, na medida em que 98% deles não ingressaram na universidade." [144]

In 1999, 89 percent of whites between the ages of 18 and 25 were not enrolled in higher education. By contrast, blacks of the same age group had not yet attained the right to enter institutions of higher education and 98 percent of them did not enter universities. [145]

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[144] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil,* 2001: 31.
[145] Translation by the author.

Table 6:
Educational Characteristics of Youth Population Based on Color (Year and %)

Brazil	1992	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Illiterate People 15 – 25 years old	8.8	8.3	7.3	6.6	6.5	5.5	5.0
People 7 – 13 years old – not attending school	12.0	10.1	8.7	7.7	6.1	4.6	3.6
People 14 – 17 years old – not attending school	35.8	33.3	29.3	26.5	23.2	20.1	18.3
People 18 – 25 years old – not attending school	79.1	77.0	75.0	73.6	72.7	70.1	68.4
People 8 – 14 years old – still not completed 1st grade – elementary school	22.4	21.3	19.1	17.7	16.4	13.8	11.2
People 11 – 17 years old - still not completed 4th grade – elementary school	41.9	40.9	37.1	34.7	33.1	31.0	27.4
People 15 – 21 years old - still not completed 8th grade – middle school	70.2	68.9	66.2	63.0	61.6	57.3	53.4
People 18 – 23 years old - still not completed high school	83.6	83.0	81.1	79.5	78.0	75.7	73.2
People 18 – 25 years old - still not enrolled in higher education	95.0	94.8	94.1	94.1	93.8	93.2	92.9
White	**1992**	**1993**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
People 15 – 25 years old - illiterate	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.6
People 7 – 13 years old – not attending school	7.6	6.5	5.4	4.8	3.8	2.9	2.4
People 14 – 17 years old – not attending school	31.0	29.2	25.3	22.6	19.0	17.1	15.6
People 18 – 25 years old – not attending school	76.6	75.0	72.9	71.1	70.5	67.7	66.7
People 8 – 14 years old – still not completed 1st grade – elementary school	13.1	12.5	11.0	10.8	9.3	8.4	7.2
People 11 – 17 years old - still not completed 4th grade – elementary school	29.3	27.8	24.8	23.0	20.8	19.9	17.1
People 15 – 21 years old - still not completed 8th grade – middle school	59.9	58.4	55.0	51.7	49.3	45.3	40.9
People 18 – 23 years old - still not completed high school	77.2	76.1	73.5	71.6	69.2	66.6	63.1
People 18 – 25 years old - still not enrolled in higher education	92.0	91.7	90.8	90.6	90.1	89.2	88.8
Afro-descendant*	**1992**	**1993**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
Illiterate People 15 – 25 years old	13.4	12.8	11.3	10.3	10.1	8.6	7.6
People 7 – 13 years old – not attending school	16.4	13.7	11.8	10.7	8.3	6.2	4.8
People 14 – 17 years old – not attending school	40.6	37.5	33.4	30.7	27.3	23.3	21.0
People 18 – 25 years old – not attending school	81.2	79.4	77.6	76.6	75.3	72.9	70.4
People 8 – 14 years old – still not completed 1st grade – elementary school	31.6	30.0	27.2	24.7	23.3	19.1	15.2
People 11 – 17 years old - still not completed 4th grade – elementary	54.3	53.8	49.5	46.8	45.2	41.9	37.5

school							
People 15 – 21 years old - still not completed 8th grade – middle school	81.2	80.0	78.1	75.6	74.5	70.1	66.5
People 18 – 23 years old - still not completed high school	90.9	90.8	89.8	88.6	87.7	86.2	84.4
People 18 – 25 years old - still not enrolled in higher education	98.5	98.5	98.1	98.2	98.1	98.0	97.7

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1999. Taken from *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90.* Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA) 2001: Table # 13.

*Note: * The black population is composed of brown and blacks, according to the government institution in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census (Brazilians Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE).*

From 1992 to 1999, there was improvement in accessing education for adults 25 years and older as shown in Table 7. The illiteracy rates for blacks decreased. However, whites attended 2.3 years more school than blacks, as noted previously. Illiteracy rates are higher for blacks: 19.8 percent as compared to whites, who had rates of 8.3 percent in 1999 for students aged 15 years. Henriques (2001) posits that adults with fewer than four years of education were classified as follows: 26.4 percent of whites and 46.9 percent of blacks. Thus, half of Brazil's black population had fewer than four years of education. [146]

Table 7:
Educational Characteristics of Adult Population Based on Color by (%)

Brazil	1992	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
People 25 years or older – with less than 4 years of study	42.1	40.7	39.1	37.5	37.0	35.8	35.0
People 25 years or older – with less Than 8 years of study	71.4	70.7	69.3	67.3	66.9	65.5	64.8
People 25 years or older – with more than 11 years of study	7.7	7.8	8.2	8.4	8.7	8.9	9.0
Median of the years of people 25 years or older	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7
Number of people illiterate 15 years or older	17.2	16.4	15.6	14.7	14.7	13.8	13.3
White	**1992**	**1993**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**

[146] Ricardo Henriques, *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil,* 2001: 28-31.

People 25 years or older – with less than 4 years of study	32.5	31.4	29.9	29.1	28.0	27.0	26.4
People 25 years or older – with less Than 8 years of study	64.3	64.0	62.3	60.8	59.5	58.1	57.4
People 25 years or older – with more than 11 years of study	11.1	11.2	11.7	11.8	12.5	12.8	12.9
Median of the years of people 25 years or older	5.9	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.6
Number of people illiterate 15 years or older	10.6	10.1	9.5	9.4	9.0	8.4	8.3
Afro-descendant	**1992**	**1993**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
People 25 years or older – with less than 4 years of study	55.5	53.9	52.2	49.8	49.7	48.2	46.9
People 25 years or older – with less Than 8 years of study	81.6	80.5	79.4	77.2	77.4	76.1	75.3
People 25 years or older – with more than 11 years of study	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.3
Median of the years of people 25 years or older	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.4
Number of people illiterate 15 years or older	25.7	24.8	23.5	21.8	22.2	20.8	19.8

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) de 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. Taken from *Desigualdade Racial no Brasil: Evolução das Condições de Vida na Década de 90.* Data adapted from Ricardo Henriques, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), 2001: Table # 14.

In conclusion, this chapter highlights the social, political, and ideological forces contributing to affirmative action policy in higher education in Brazil. The historical involvement of Afro-Brazilians in the closing decades of the twentieth century, with help from non-governmental organizations, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's initiatives, and collaboration among national and international scholars, and, most important, the dismantling of racial democracy and the World Conference Against Racism, helped Brazil change its policy to inclusiveness. Thus, Afro-Brazilians, after a long and hard road, attained the right to education through their citizenship in Brazilian society.

Chapter Four presents a case study of female student participants and non-

participants in affirmative action in higher education to illustrate their views and provide

a parallel explanation to the national debate over affirmative action.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY: OPINIONS OF STUDENTS IN

A STATE UNIVERSITY IN SOUTHERN BAHIA, BRAZIL

Everyone knows--and if they don't, they know now--that this an issue [affirmative

action policy] I am very involved in, because I spent several years of my life at the

beginning of my career as sociologist studying blacks and racial discrimination

among the poorest sectors of the country--also to portray a Brazilian reality that

elites ignored in those days...[Brazilians] lived wrapped in the illusion that this

was perfect racial democracy when it wasn't, when even today it isn't. [147]

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 2001.

Using qualitative interviews with female students from a university in Bahia,

Brazil, helped me answer the following questions: Should Brazilian policymakers add

gender to affirmative action policies in higher education? Will the affirmative action

programs be sufficient means to enable black women to achieve middle class status?

What type of assistance is available to women enrolled at universities? What types of

degrees are these women seeking? Are there programs that would help women enter the

labor market? Have affirmative action programs helped these women improve their

socio-economic status?

In this chapter, I present the perspectives of female students on the issues of

affirmative action programs and the effectiveness in creating educational opportunities

and reducing social, racial, and economic inequalities among Afro-descendant women at

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[147] President Cardoso declared his support for affirmative action in this speech. Fernando Henrique Cardoso. "Discurso do Presidente da República, Fernando Henrique Cardoso na Cerimônia de entrega do Prêmio Nacional de Direitos Humanos--Palácio do Plananalto," 19 December 2001, quoted in Mala Htun, "From Racial Democracy" to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 39 (2004): 79. Italic emphasized by the author.

a state university in southern Bahia. My study provides a space for Afro-Brazilian women in Bahia to voice their experiences as they strive to undo their underprivileged status in society.

Methodology

Starting May 21, 2010 and ending July 2, 2010, I conducted research in Brazil. In Sao Paulo, I visited the women's library at the Carlos Chagas Foundation, where I gathered archival data about black women. During the month of June, I stayed in Bahia, a state in Brazil's northeast region where Afro-descendants represent eighty percent of the population. I travelled to Salvador, the capital of Bahia, to visit the Centro de Estudos Afro-Oriental (CEAO) and the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatíística (IBGE) at the end of June 2010. At IBGE, I collected data from the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD) and Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA). Prior to my departure, I submitted my research project and methodology to the University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee for review and was granted permission to conduct research in Brazil. I started this qualitative study with standardized open-ended and close-ended questions.   I recruited participants through referral sampling. Participants were selected based on their status as those covered by and those not covered by affirmative action policy. The sample included students from varied socio-economic class and racial backgrounds to facilitate useful comparisons and to solicit differing views on affirmative action policy.

I acknowledge that being a woman and Afro-Brazilian did not spare me the feeling of being an outsider. University staff members and the more privileged students had a general wariness when I mentioned I had come from a United States institution.

On the positive side, because I am from Bahia and native Portuguese speaker, the interviews allowed the participants to engage in informal conversation with me. The informal conversation led to the more formal research questions. As with most research investigations, difficulties translated into new opportunities.

Collecting Data

The state university of Bahia first approved the affirmative action program in 2006 and implemented it in 2008 after seeing results in two other universities (one federal and one state) in the state of Bahia. In Brazil, public institutions of higher education are more prestigious compared to private higher education establishments. The high status of public universities is due to low ratios of students to professors and to the limited numbers of academic spaces available for each major. Admission to public universities is also based on *vestibular*, a highly competitive entrance exam. Currently, the university offers 33 undergraduates and 38 graduate fields of study.

The quota system implemented at the state university in southern Bahia had two criteria, racial identification (see definition below)[148] and social class, for students who attended their last four years of primary schooling and finished their secondary schooling in public institutions. Of a total 1310 places, fifty percent were reserved for assignment according to these criteria: seventy-five percent for students who self-identified as blacks and twenty-five percent for students of lower social classes. This affirmative action policy has been in effect for ten years and there are annual evaluations, with a projected

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[148] The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) is the government institution in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census. IBGE employs these racial categories: white (Euro-Brazilian), black, brown (mixed-race), yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and indigenous (native-Brazilian). In keeping with the IBGE racial classification and the black movement and feminist movement, I employ Afro-Brazilian or Afro-descendant category, which combines both black and brown population, throughout my study.

2016 assessment to define the criteria and decide whether the policy will continue or expire.

Through qualitative research, I interviewed thirty-nine students. I conducted the semi-structured interviews with two groups: one group covered by affirmative action policy and one group did not. The open-ended format of my interview questions allowed students to respond in their own words and to express their ideas on affirmative action program candidly. The interviews were conducted in the Portuguese language, recorded with a digital voice recorder, and transcribed. My research activities took place in typical university settings: classrooms, dorms, and the cafeteria.

Interviews lasted thirty minutes to one hour. Each interview started with the participant signing the consent form and giving me permission to interview them. This was followed by recording the participant's name, age, marital status, degree and year in college, racial identification,[149] occupation, previous education (private or public); how the participant entered the university *vestibular* (with or without affirmative action program), how the participant self-identified (racial or social class), and finally, I solicited participants' views, both positive and negative, about affirmative action.[150]

The racial background of the students was an important sampling criterion. Female participants were asked to self-identify by race.[151] The sample included eight white students, 13 black students, 15 brown students, one indigenous student, one yellow

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[149] The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) is the government institution in charge of gathering and developing data for the population census. IBGE employs these racial categories: white (Euro-Brazilian), black, brown (mixed-race), yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and indigenous (native-Brazilian). In keeping with the IBGE racial classification and the black movement and feminist movement, I employ Afro-Brazilian or Afro-descendant category, which combines both black and brown population, throughout my study.

[150] See Appendix C.

[151] As it is customary in Brazil. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) – black, brown (mixed-race), white, yellow (Asian-Brazilian), and indigenous (native Brazilian).

student, one student who identified as both black and white. In other words, the study

includes 39 students (see Table 1).

Table 1: Female Student Participants at State University - Racial Classification

White	Black	Brown	Indigenous	Yellow	Other
8	13	15	1	1	1

Table 2 illustrates the ages of female student participants. For white students, the

youngest was age 18 and the oldest was age 26. For blacks, the oldest participant was age

39 and the youngest was age 19. Brown student participants were between the ages of 18

and 29 years. The Asian (yellow) student was 28 years old and the indigenous student

was 44 years old. The black group and the yellow group had the oldest students, ages 39

and 44 years respectively. White students and brown students were the youngest, both 18

years old. Table 2 displays an extensive breakdown of these numbers.

Table 2: Female Student Participants' Age

# White	# Black	# Brown	# Indigenous	# Yellow
2 - 18 years	3 – 19 years	1 – 18 years	1 – 44 years	1 – 28 years
1 - 19 years	1 – 21 years	1 – 19 years		
1 - 20 years	2 – 23 years	1 – 20 years		
1 - 22 years	3 – 24 years	2 – 21 years		
1 - 23 years	1 – 25 years	5 – 22 years		
2 - 24 years	1 – 29 years	1 – 23 years		
1 - 26 years	1 – 30 years	1 – 24 years		
	1 – 39 years	2 – 25 years		
		1 – 29 years		
Total Students: 9	Total Students: 13	Total Students: 15	Total Students: 1	Total Students: 1

Table 3 reveals the marital status of female students. While whites made up one-

half of the married group compared to brown, indigenous, and yellow individuals, there

were no married black individuals. Blacks and browns had the highest number of single people, with fourteen single students in each group.

Table 3: Marital Status of Participants

			Female Student Participant	
White	Black	Brown	Indigenous	Yellow
6 – Single	14 – Single	14 – Single	1 - Married	1 - Married
2 - Married		1 - Married		

The sample also represents social class backgrounds of students. Although occupation is not the only indicator of socioeconomic class, it is an essential criterion. All participants were asked whether they worked in a formal or informal labor market. The occupational situation reveals the benefits and security they had in their jobs, based on the racial backgrounds and the needs of students to work while attending school. Although the total number of white participants was nine, just five of them worked, with three in formal jobs and two in informal jobs. Blacks represented thirteen of the students interviewed; of these thirteen, nine held jobs, with six in formal and three in informal occupations. Browns represented fifteen participants; of these fifteen, nine held jobs, five in formal and four in informal occupations. Neither the indigenous student nor the yellow student was involved in the job market (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Occupation of Participant

White	Black	Brown	Indigenous	Yellow
3 - formal	6 – formal	5 – formal	n/a	n/a
2 - informal	3 – informal	4 – informal		1 – informal
Total Students: 5	Total Students: 9	Total Students: 9		Total Students: 1

Table 5 documents the areas of study and racial background for each participant. In terms of majors, the sample includes students from business, chemistry, geography, law, literature, mathematics, physics, and nursing. Literature as a major was represented among all participants. Chemistry had the equal participation among black, brown, and white students, as did mathematics. In law, browns were overrepresented with six participants, while blacks were underrepresented with one participant, and whites had half of black participants. Blacks and browns were represented equally in nursing school. Compared with whites, blacks were concentrated in less prestigious majors such as geography and literature. Table 5 lists the racial backgrounds and the majors of participants.

Table 5: Major / Field of Study of Participants

White	Black	Brown	Indigenous	Yellow
1 -Chemistry	1- Chemistry	1 - Business	1 – Literature	1 – Literature
1 -Geography	4- Geography	1- Chemistry		
3 – Law	1 – Law	6 - Law		
1 – Literature	4 - Literature	3 - Literature		
2 - Mathematics	2 - Mathematics	2 - Mathematics		
1 – Physics	1 – Nursing	1 – Nursing		
		1 – Physics		
Total Students: 9	Total Students: 13	Total Students: 15	Total Students: 1	Total Students: 1

Table 6 shows where the sample's students attained primary and secondary education. As mentioned previously, public schools in Brazil are for the underprivileged, specifically black Brazilians and the poor, while private schools are for middle and upper-class whites and yellow Brazilians. The sample shows that 28 students attended public high schools and 11 students attended private schools. Blacks are overrepresented

(twelve students), followed by eight brown students, six white students, one indigenous student, and one yellow student. Whites are also overrepresented in public schools as compared to their presence in private schools. By contrast, browns are represented almost equally in both public and private schools, while only one black student graduated from a private high school. For further data, see Table 6.

Table 6: Previous Education of Student Participants

Student Racial Identification	Public High School	Private High School
White	6	3
Black	12	1
Brown	8	7
Indigenous	1	
Asian	1	
Total	28	11

Table 7 highlights the criterion of female student covered by affirmative action program through the quota system. At the university, where I conducted the study, the criterion for students to enter university was race or social class. There were six black students who self-identified as Afro-descendant and one black student who entered the program by classifying as poor. By contrast, the total of white participants was nine, and six came from public high school while three attended private high school. However, of the six students who attended public high school, two were classified as poor and were able to attend university due to the quota system that reserved twenty-five percent of the

places for lower social class. Brown students also benefitted from the social class

criterion to attain higher education. Thus, both Tables 6 and 7 show the benefits of the

quota system entrance to university for black, white, and brown students graduating from

public high schools.

Table 7: Number of Female Student Participants in the Quota System

	Quota System Criterion	
Public School	Race Identification	Social Class
White		2
Black	6	1
Brown		3
Indian	-0-	-0-
Asian	-0-	-0-
Total	6	6

Table 8 shows the racial backgrounds of students who attended public high

schools. White students were equally represented in the university by entering through

the quota system and without the quota system. Black students benefitted the most from

the quota system (seven of the students) while five black students entered without the

quota the system. Five brown students entered without the quota system and three with

it. Both indigenous and yellow entered without the quota program. Table 8 displays

participants from public schools and the quota system criterion to attend the university.

Table 8: Student Participants
Graduating from Public School With and Without the Quota System

Student Racial Identification	Without the Quota System	With Quota System
White	3	2
Black	5	7
Brown	5	3
Indigenous	1	
Yellow	1	
Total	15	12

Perspectives on Affirmative Action: Narratives of Female Students

The following narratives enable me to analyze affirmative action in higher education in contemporary Brazil. Using Brazilian women's personal narratives as a basis for discussion, I explore how affirmative action policies are contributing to closing the racial and socioeconomic gap of Afro-descendant women in southern Bahia, Brazil. Although women students are the focal point, this analysis situates them within a broader national debate over affirmative action in higher education by providing views of women students from all racial backgrounds.

Although most students agreed that affirmative action provided opportunities to disadvantaged students, there was a consensus among lower and middle to upper class students regarding the quality of Brazil's public schools and the need to help underrepresented blacks and poor whites. As noted by a white student who is in the quota system:

This affirmative action is a way to help students who were denied the resources of

private education. The university is finding a way to extend access to those resources. However, it is important to note that this measure is palliative because reforms should be made to the base. Investments in public school are needed. Brazil's government needs to reform public education to help students succeed.[152]

This narrative highlights the deficiency of Brazil's primary and secondary public schools in providing a good quality education to lower class students. The narrator relates private education to higher education, reinforcing a point that scholars make: higher education is for middle and upper class students.[153] Students are also aware that the quota program is a temporary measure. Even though all black students participating in the quota system agreed that affirmative action policy enables them to attain higher education, the only black student who attends private high school stated the following:

I am in favor of the quota system for students from public schools. However, I do not agree [with racial quotas] racial prejudice means we should have quotas for blacks. It is also necessary to think that most blacks attend public school, therefore they will benefit from it because blacks were subjugated through history. In conclusion, blacks should benefit from quotas because they are from public schools and not because of their racial identity.[154]

The views of the black student from the private school seem to express the ideology of racial democracy, which acknowledges racial difference "through history" yet does not want to take extra structural steps to narrow the gaps of social inequality for blacks of the lower classes.

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[152] Interview by the author, June 10, 2010.
[153] Schwartzman 2004.
[154] Interview by the author, June 16, 2010.

Responses by brown students alternated between positive and negative views. One quota participant stated:

"I am against because there is no academic support for the student to excel or to catch up with students who were better prepared."[155]

In this narrative, the student highlights the inability of the university to provide ways for them to improve the rudimentary knowledge they received from public education. Along the same lines, however, a brown law student argued:

"Affirmative action is a discriminatory process that has historical roots. The public schools' inability to prepare students led the government to come up with this palliative measure."[156]

The students who attended private high school see the racial criterion as discriminatory. This view was unique for both blacks and browns students from middle and upper classes. In other words, since they belong to middle and upper classes they enjoy the same privileges as whites do and do not need to identify as black to benefit from the quota system. [157]

By contrast, blacks and browns from different social backgrounds made statements similar to this one:

"I am satisfied with affirmative action because I have been trying for four consecutive years and right after affirmative action I was able to enter university.[158]

This statement is from a nursing school student. Another student from a private

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[155] Interview by author, June 10, 2010.
[156] Interview by author, June 16, 2010.
[157] For more on whitening see, Telles, 2004. Oliveira, 2003. Sheriff, 2001. Hasenbalg, 1999.
[158] Interview by author, June 14, 2010.

high school noted:

> *Affirmative action is a complicated issue; I think this is the way the government wants to address inequalities. However, this needs to have a set date to end. Although some say that affirmative action policy is inadequate because it lowers the quality of higher education, it is important to note that public school students would not have a chance to enter universities. Some argue that basic schools need to improve. That is true; however, it could take thirty years, what about the students of today?*[159]

This narrative is from a law student that attended private high school. The student emphasizes the affirmative action debate about the quality of public schools and agrees with the claim that affirmative action lowers the quality of higher education. However, the same student pointed to the need to include all students to higher education in contemporary Brazil.

Another brown law student added:

> *I am in favor of affirmative action. However, I believe it needs to be a palliative measure for the short term. What is really needed is improvement in basic education. I realize we cannot debate this while the vast majority of the population is excluded. Thus, I favor the quota system because I see today that the university should not favor a dominant minority that have access to private schooling and better educational opportunities, which do not reflect the reality of the majority of the Brazilian population.*[160]

A white literature student in the quota system stated:

[159] Interview by author, June 16, 2010.
[160] Interview by author, June 16, 2010.

The affirmative action implemented at this institution is valid because we started
to see majors, which were not strictly for whites but also for the middle and upper
classes. Thus, the affirmative action diversified elitist field of study, such as law,
medicine, and engineering, which are offered during the day. The students from
lower social classes are usually enrolled in those majors that are offered in the
evening. These majors are not perceived as prestigious as the majors offered
during the day. Furthermore, the entry process is rigorous. Students coming from
public schools take the same entry exam, vestibular. However, the selection is
only among public high school students. They are not competing with students
who went to private high school, went overseas for an education, or have studied
English. For instance, in the field of medicine students are only allowed to take
English as a foreign language. As the president mentions, this a temporary
measure.[161]

This student highlights general benefits of the affirmative action. First, the policy
provides students of all racial and social backgrounds increased access to the most
prestigious professional schools in fields such as law, medicine, and engineering.
Second, she acknowledges that the entrance exam is difficult but adds that the quota
system allows students from public schools to compete among themselves rather than
with private schools students. Last, she explains that the affirmative action policy is a
temporary measure and cites the president.

Another brown law student participating in the quota system mentioned:

I think affirmative action is a valid measure, but should be implemented for a

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[161] Interview by author, June 17, 2010.

short time and not as the only measure. The government also needs to improve

education in all segments, basic, middle, and high. It is also important to have

affirmative action [racial quota system] because blacks, who are the majority of

public school students, would not otherwise have the chance to attend

universities. However, the government needs to provide subsidies to help blacks

financially because it is not easy to stay at the university. The government also

needs to expand universities because in a region like ours, which provides just

fifty places for a law degree, this is not enough for the population.[162]

A black chemistry student who entered through the quota system added:

I am satisfied with affirmative action because I was able to enter the university.

Also because of the fact that I am competing with students from public schools as

opposed to private schools. I felt we were at the same level and so the competition

is fair. Not to mention that an [primary and secondary] education at private

schools is much better than public school education.[163]

A black student attending higher education classes through the quota system

said:

"I am satisfied with affirmative action because it expands access to attain higher

education for larger numbers of students coming from public schools."[164]

This is also the view of a geography student. Another black student in the

program stated*:*

"I am satisfied with affirmative action program because it facilitates my entrance

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[162] Interview by author, June 9, 2010.
[163] Interview by author, June 9, 2010.
[164] Interview by author, June 10, 2010.

into the university. Otherwise, I would have to compete with students who had

better educational opportunities. Coming from public school, I won't be able to

compete at the same level.''[165]

Furthermore, all participants in the quota system mentioned the need to provide

academic help so students can undo the effects of the rudimentary education they

received in the public primary and secondary education system. A white student enrolled

in chemistry noted:

In truth, this scholarship does not reserve a specific number of places for

students. There is no information about the scholarship, you can specify whether

you are indigenous or quilombola *[descendant runaway of slaves] this is an*

option, and then you specifically inform whether you are coming from public or

private school. There are just four students from public school in Chemistry, and

then you start to see some distortions.[166]

This student stresses affirmative action's deficiency in informing students how to

classify their racial or social class identities for participating in the program and points to

the fact that in chemistry, the numbers of students from participating public schools are

very low. She also highlights the difficulties of the faculty, the lack of academic help,

and access to library material, and the financial hardships that students face, including no

access to Internet. She asserted:

"Professors are not prepared to help students from public schools. No support

programs to help students succeed in areas where they are lagging exist. Library

materials are not available to all students. Poor students do not have Internet

access. Students face financial problems."[167]

In these narratives, students presented views that aligned mostly with the Brazilian national debate over affirmative action and other issues such as the need to improve primary and secondary public education, access to higher education for students who have graduated from public schools, the need for academic support, and most importantly, the need for financial help. Students covered and not covered by affirmative agreed that racial and socioeconomic inequality exist and agreed on the need for taking corrective measures. However, these students disagreed about criteria for implementing these measures.

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[167] Interview by author, June 9, 2010.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

When I first heard that Brazil had implemented an Affirmative Action policy, I wondered if a quota system would positively influence primary and secondary education in Brazil. As I began to examine Affirmative Action as part of my scholarly work, I could not ignore how Afro-descendants and poor Brazilians, relegated to primary and secondary public schools, must typically enter the workforce or institutes of higher education with an academic deficit. I wondered if Affirmative Action would bring national attention to Brazil's public schools that lack the necessary resources to prepare students to compete with more privileged students who attend private schools. How would Affirmative Action improve the chances for upward mobility of Afro-descendants?

For centuries, Afro-descendants have advocated for a better public educational system in Brazil that would improve their access to higher education and consequently improve their living conditions. However, as shown in previous chapters, the quality of primary and secondary public education for Afro-descendants in particular and for Brazil's lower classes in general has not been a priority for the Brazilian government. Based on fieldwork and statistical data, my research findings lead to the conclusion that affirmative action policies in Brazilian higher education debunk not only racial democracy but also the belief that Brazil's public education system is able to provide quality education to the Brazilian masses.

While Brazil's leaders reaffirm its democratic regime, social movements by blacks and by feminists, the work of national and international scholars, and non-

governmental organizations (NGO's) from around the world have assisted Brazilian

Afro-descendant women in bringing their underprivileged status based on racial and

socioeconomic inequalities to the forefront. Consequently, the recently implemented

affirmative action policies concerned with access to higher education for Afro-Brazilians

seek to undo the drastic educational norms that separate Brazilians socially and ethnically

and keep them from attaining their full citizenship rights.

The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire provides a framework for examining how

student participants in this study assessed the impact of affirmative action and quotas.

Female participants and non-participants of affirmative action programs were aware of

the underprivileged place of Afro-Brazilian. As Freire states:

> "Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in
>
> the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to
>
> respond to that challenge." [168]

> Furthermore, he adds:

> "A deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that
>
> situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation."[169]

> The awareness among student participants is compatible with Freirean pedagogy.

These students were conscious of their racial and social standpoints in Brazilian society.

Omi and Winant's sociological racial formation theory helps illustrate how

student participants in this study referred to Brazil's colonial period and its history of

slavery to situate Afro-descendant inequalities. According to Winant:

> Racial formation theory seems particularly well suited to deal with the

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[168] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1970, 2008): 81.
[169] Ibid., 85.

complexities of Brazilian dynamics [...] In this account race is both a constituent of the individual psyche and of relationships among individuals, and an irreducible component of collective identities and social structures. Once it is recognized that race is not a 'natural' attribute but a socially and historically constructed one, it becomes possible to analyze the processes by which racial meanings are decided, and racial identities assigned, in a given society.[170]

Some black student and some white student participants in my research did not favor the racial quotas for black Brazilians by asserting that the social class quota was sufficient to remedy social disadvantages Afro-Brazilians face. However, a majority of black student and a minority of white student participants identified the racial quota as the only means by which they could enter Brazil's universities. Subsequently, affirmative action in higher education fosters greater inclusion of blacks and lower class whites in educational institutions.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the perspectives of women students on determining how the implementation of affirmative action helps Afro-descendant women. Personal interviews with female students helped me answer the following questions:

(1) Should the gender category be added to the affirmative action policy in Brazilian higher education?

I first thought of this question in regard to the Brazilian Laws 9.100/1995 and 9.504/1997, which allocated a twenty percent and thirty percent quota, respectively, would be reserved for female candidacies in municipal elections and in political parties or coalitions for state and federal appointments. However, my findings suggest there is

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[170] Howard Winant, "Rethinking Race in Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 (1992): 183.

almost equal representation of women and men at the university where I conducted

research. Female students at this state university represented 43.7 percent, while male

students represented 44.8 percent.[171]

 (2) Will the affirmative action programs be sufficient to enable black women in

Brazil to acquire middle class status?

Based on students' responses in order for the affirmative action policy to be

effective, financial help needed to be given to students, not only to enable them to study

but also to survive. Most of the contemplated affirmative action participants resided off-

campus, which affected their transportation and food costs, not to mention their school

supplies. Therefore, students need financial aid to succeed in school and finish their

degrees so that they are prepared to enter the labor market.

Furthermore, my findings indicate the need for regional assessment of affirmative

action programs. Each region in Brazil is unique and poses different issues and

problems. Therefore, evaluation and assessment of affirmative action programs must

consider each region separately. For example, in the state of Bahia, where Afro-

descendants are the majority (but not represented among the middle and upper classes),

there is a need for measures such as scholarships and financial aid. [172]

(3) What type of assistance is available to women enrolled at universities and

what types of degrees are they seeking?

Students receive no academic help to succeed academically. In fact, some

participants noted,

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[171] Elis C. Fiamengue, Wagner D. Jose and Carlos J.A. Pereira, *A UESC em Preto & Branco (The UESC in Black and White)* (Brasilia: MEC / SECAD, 2007), 21. The authors noted that the remaining percentage did not indentify in either category.
[172] Telles, 2004: 267.

"Professors are not prepared to help students from public schools, and library materials are not available to all students."[173]

My findings show that most interviewees who majored in the humanities had attended public high schools in Brazil. Most interviewees in the professional fields such as law and nursing graduated from private high schools.

Furthermore, my findings support the large body of literature on underrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians in prestigious majors such as law and nursing. As Fiamengue, José, and Pereira (2007) have indicated, white students are overrepresented, with 26.1 percent in medicine and 27.8 in law, while black students were underrepresented in medicine by 12 percent and in law by 10 percent, in southern Bahia. [174]

(4) Are there programs to help women enter the labor market? Have affirmative action programs helped women improve their socio-economic status?

There is neither academic help nor programs within Brazil's business community to prepare students for the labor market. Some chemistry students specifically mentioned that they wanted access to companies where they could gain hands-on experience. Interviewees who graduated from public high schools and private high schools agreed that affirmative action provided opportunities to less advantaged students. Most importantly, these interviewees agreed that the quality of the primary and secondary public education in Brazil needs to improve.

My research shows that many lower and upper class Brazilians enrolled at universities are aware of racial and socio-economic inequalities and that they support

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[173] Interview by author, June 10, 2010.
[174] Fiamengue, Joséé and Pereira, UESC, 22, 38-39.

academic measures that would enable students from lower social classes to enter more prestigious professional fields. Along with affirmative action, financial support could help greater numbers of disadvantaged students enter the more specialized fields.

The majority of Brazilian women who had attended public schools before going to college worked during the day and attended university classes at night. This flexibility allowed women of lower social strata to attend college. However, night classes are usually concentrated in the less prestigious majors, where Afro-Brazilians are overrepresented. Most of these women made less than the minimum salary in Brazil, which is equivalent to $250 per month. The ages of the women in their group varied, from eighteen to forty-four.

Limitations of the Research

This research is limited due to my brief time spent in the field and because of the World Cup tournament, which was a distraction to potential interviewees even though Brazil did not host the games. Each time Brazil played in a World Cup match, this affected student availability for interviews. Moreover, the academic calendar did not reflect the actual schedule of the college, which closed during local holidays. More time in the field would have allowed me to recruit students enrolled in majors that are more prestigious, which would have diversified my sample.

Findings and Directions for Future Research

Affirmative action policies in higher education are known primarily as efforts to increase socioeconomic and racial diversity on college campuses throughout Brazil. My study's findings reveal that such affirmative action policies make attending college more likely for Afro-Brazilians and lower social class students. Without these policies, it

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would be nearly impossible for such students to attain higher education, enter the public and private sector workplaces, and participate in politics.

However, affirmative action programs in higher education need to consider financial and academic measures that would help *retain* students so that they would be more likely to finish their degrees. Changes that need more consideration are scholarships for living expenses, academic materials, library access, and help with assignments in disciplines where students have the most difficulties. Brazilian universities should invest in collaborative research with primary and secondary public schools to disseminate knowledge about higher education among first generation students whose families did not attend colleges or universities. These efforts could engage more people and find better solutions to the problem of limited educational opportunities at all levels of learning. Finally, the state should inform Brazil's population through the media, especially radio and television, of programs to increase access to education, particularly affirmative action quotas and scholarships. In Brazil, Afro-descendants and people of the lower classes lack access to newspapers and government websites. Expanded communication should focus on programs that are available for assisting Brazil's lower social class students.

Significance of the study

My thesis makes a significant contribution to the scholarship because it focuses on issues related to Afro-descendant women in southern Bahia, who are not adequately represented in the literature on education. Moreover, the existing literature mainly focuses on socio-economic and racial inequality in urban areas including Salvador, which is the capital of Bahia, but neglects Bahia's equally important rural areas. Furthermore,

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the personal interview method allowed women from southern Bahia to voice their own perspectives on affirmative action in higher education. The interviews provided windows into the experiences of Afro-descendant women who seek to overcome socio-economic inequalities in Brazil. These interviews--the women's contributions--enabled me to examine effectiveness of affirmative action programs and determine to what extent they remedy racial and socio-economic inequalities.

Affirmative action programs in higher education are among several avenues through which black women can gain access to a better education and a higher socio-economic status in Brazilian society. By exploring the reality and perspectives of Afro-descendant women, who are the majority in Brazil but not represented within Brazil's political, economic, and media processes, my analysis seeks to determine how affirmative action programs could eventually enable Afro-descendant women to enter these spheres of power. Their voices reflect the advantages and disadvantages of the current affirmative action programs.

Gilberto Freyre, a sociologist, offered hope for a nation struggling to enter the world stage as united and progressive with the idea of racial democracy. This idea has been an impediment for Afro-Brazilians to attain equality in Brazilian society because it has failed to address the history and the enslavement of Africans in Brazil, and the way that history thas shaped the country's attitudes grounded in exploitation and dehumanization of Afro-descendant individuals. By contrast, Paulo Freire, an educator, believed that everyone including the poor and marginalized Brazilians could be empowered through education. His pedagogy was based on consciousness raising, learning the past history, and building a future that all Brazilians are represented equally,

and thereby moving Brazil a step closer to the reality of a racial democracy.

Affirmative action in higher education is still at its early stages. However, it has brought two significant changes in Brazilian society. One major change is that the discussion of race in Brazil is no longer a taboo. The other major change is that the inequality between the public and private education is publically recognized and measures are taken to remedy this situation. Thus, both factors will help improve the lives of all citizens living in a 21st century multicultural Brazil.

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English Version

Dear Mr./s,

My name is Mara Aubel and I am a MA student at the Center of Latin American Studies, Kansas University (KU) in Lawrence, USA.

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about the different pathways that female students take to attend university in southern Bahia, Brazil.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the position of women in southern Bahian society by identifying students from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds. Specifically, I want to know what programs helped students learn about the entrance process, why students choose specific majors, and what are their aspirations for the workplace.

You were identified either by your professor or by peers through the consent form and, as a student who may be interested in participating in this study.

Participation is entirely voluntary and there is absolutely no consequence for refusing to participate. If you agree to participate in this study, I will interview you at your convenience, and also this will be strictly confidential. The interview will take approximately one to two hours, and will be conducted in Portuguese. Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old.

Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it, you may ask my faculty supervisor, Elizabeth Kuznesof at the Center of Latin American Studies or me. Also, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Office at (785) 864-7429 or email mdenning@ku.edu.

Interview questions will focus on your educational history, educational expectations, process for entering the university, and your aspirations for entering the labor market.

If you are interested, please contact me through e-mail by replying to this message at maubel@ku.edu, or call me at (73) 3613 4768.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Mara Aubel

M.A. Student
Center of Latin American Studies
University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

Portuguese Version

Prezado Senhor/a,

Meu nome é Mara Aubel, e sou estudante de mestrado no Centro de Estudos Latino Americanos, na universidade de Kansas (KU), EUA.

Gostaria de solicitar a sua participação numa pesquisa sobre os diferentes acessos que as estudantes de gênero feminino tomaram para atender a universidade no sul da Bahia, Brasil.

A finalidade desta pesquisa e identificar qual e a situação socioeconômico e racial da mulher na sociedade sul - baiana. Especificamente, quais foram os programas pelo qual a estudante se informou para entrar na universidade, por que escolheram suas carreiras especificas e quais são as suas aspirações para o campo de trabalho.

Você foi identificado por seus professores ou colegas como um estudante que possa estar interessado em participar neste estudo.

Sua participação será inteiramente voluntaria e não haverá absolutamente nenhuma conseqüência se resolver não participar. Caso aceite participar, eu o entrevistarei de acordo com a sua disponibilidade e a entrevista será confidencial. A entrevista levara aproximadamente de uma a duas horas, e será conduzida em português. Participante desta entrevista indica seu interesse em participar neste estudo e que são maiores de 18 anos.

 Se você tiver alguma pergunta relacionada a este projeto ou a sua participação, queira por gentileza entrar em contato com a supervisora Elizabeth Kuznesof no Centro de Estudos Latino-Americanos ou comigo. Se tiver perguntas sobre os seus direitos como participante nesta pesquisa queira por gentileza entrar em contato com a Comissão Ética no telefone (785) 864-7429 ou pelo e-mail mdenning@ku.edu.

As questões da entrevista estarão focalizadas sobre sua história educacional, expectativas educacionais, processo para entrar na universidade, e suas aspirações para o campo de trabalho.

Conto com a sua participação, qualquer dúvida por gentileza me contatar por telefone (73) 3613 4768 ou via e-mail, maubel@ku.edu.

Atenciosamente,

English Version

Hello Mr./s….???

My name is Mara Aubel and I am a MA student at the Center of Latin American Studies, Kansas University (KU) in Lawrence, Kansas, USA.
I am requesting your participation in a research study about the different pathways that female students take to attend the State University of Santa Cruz in southern Bahia, Brazil.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the position of women in southern Bahian society by identifying students from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds. Specifically, I want to know what programs helped students learn about the entrance process, why students choose specific majors, and what are their aspirations for the workplace.

You were identified either by your professor or by peers through the consent form and, as a student who may be interested in participating in this study.

Participation is entirely voluntary and there is absolutely no consequence for refusing to participate. If you agree to participate in this study, I will interview you at your convenience, and also this will be strictly confidential. The interview will take approximately one to two hours, and will be conducted in Portuguese. Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old.

Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it, you may ask my faculty supervisor, Elizabeth Kuznesof at the Center of Latin American Studies or me. Also, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Office at (785) 864-7429 or email mdenning@ku.edu.

Interview questions will focus on your educational history, educational expectations, process for entering the university, and your aspirations for entering the labor market.

Would you like to participate?

Yes…
When and where can we schedule a time to meet for the interview?
Thank you for your time, and I look forward to meeting you.

No…

Thank you for your time.

Mara Aubel
M.A. Student
Center of Latin American Studies
University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

Portuguese Version

Alô,

Meu nome é Mara Aubel, e sou estudante de mestrado no Centro de Estudos Latino Americanos, na universidade de Kansas (KU), EUA.

Gostaria de solicitar a sua participação numa pesquisa sobre os diferentes acessos que as estudantes de gênero feminino tomaram para atender a universidade no sul da Bahia, Brasil.

A finalidade desta pesquisa e identificar qual e a situação socioeconômico e racial da mulher na sociedade sul - baiana. Especificamente, quais foram os programa pelo qual a estudante se informou para entrar na universidade, por que escolheram suas carreiras especificas e quais são as suas aspirações para o campo de trabalho.

Você foi identificado por seus professores ou colegas como um estudante que possa estar interessado em participar neste estudo.

Sua participação será inteiramente voluntaria e não haverá absolutamente nenhuma conseqüência se resolver não participar. Caso aceite participar, eu o entrevistarei de acordo com a sua disponibilidade e a entrevista será confidencial. A entrevista levará aproximadamente de uma a duas horas, e será conduzida em português. Participante desta entrevista indica seu interesse em participar neste estudo e que são maiores de 18 anos.

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As questões da entrevista estarão focalizadas sobre sua história educacional, expectativas educacionais, processo para entrar na universidade, e suas aspirações para o campo de trabalho.

Conto com a sua participação, qualquer dúvida por gentileza me contatar por telefone (73) 3613 4768 ou via e-mail, maubel@ku.edu.

Pode participar?

Sim...
Qual e o melhor horário e lugar onde possamos nos encontrar?

Não...
Muito obrigada pelo seu tempo.

Appendix C
Afro-descendant Women and Affirmative Action in Brazil
Interview Protocol

1. Personal Information
   - What is your full name?
   - What is your age?
   - What is your marital status?
   - What is your major?
   - Is this your first semester at State University?
   - How do you classify yourself racially?
        • How do you classify yourself according to the IBGE classifications?
          (IBGE classifications: white, black, Asian, brown, indigenous)
   - Did you enter through the quota system or are you on a scholarship?
        • Which quota classification? For blacks? Public school? Disabled?
          Indigenous?

2. Home environment
   - How was studying supported in your family?
   - Did you have newspaper subscriptions? Magazine subscriptions? How many?
   - Did you have access to a computer? In your home? If not, where?

3. Work
   - Do you work?
     • Formal or informal?
     • What type of work do you do?

4. Educational background
   - Where did you go to primary school and middle school? Which one/s? Where?
     Public? Private?
   - Where did you go to high school? Which one/s? Where? Public? Private?
     • Were you on a scholarship?

5. Motivational factors

   - Why did you want to pursue higher education?
     • Did it have to do with another person? Parents,
       family, friends, teachers, school, mentor? Better income? Something
       different? School performance?
   - Who or what was most influential in your decision to apply?
   - What were your main supporters? Family? Community? Friends? Church?
     School?

- For Quota and Scholarship students: how were quotas or scholarships influential in deciding to apply to university?
  • Would you have tried with or without it?
  • Did it make it seem like university was possible?

6. State University
   - Are you in a night or day program? Why did you choose this?
   - Why did you choose this university? Location? Reputation? Cost? Major?
   - Why did you choose your major? Interest? Reputation? Future income? Lower competition?
   - What do you think about the university registration process? What was it like? Was it easy? Challenging? Why?

7. Admission process
   - What do you think about the process for entering the university?
     • Do you think the admission process should be different? How?

Portuguese Version

1. Informação pessoal
   - Qual é o seu nome?
   - Qual é a sua idade?
   - Qual é o seu estado civil?
   - Qual é o seu curso?
   - Este é o seu primeiro semestre na universidade?
   - Como você se classifica racialmente?
     • Como você é classificado pelo o IBGE? Classificação do IBGE: branca, preta , amarela, parda, indígena?
   - Você entrou através de cotas ou bolsas?
     • Qual é seu tipo de cota ou bolsa? Para preta? Para estudantes da rede publica? Deficientes? Ou indígena?

2. Ambiente familiar
   - Como a sua família apoiou você na escola?
   - Você tem/tinha assinatura de jornal? Revistas? Quantas?
   - Você tem/tinha acesso a computador na sua casa? Se não, onde?

3. Trabalho
   - Você trabalha? Já trabalhou?
     • Formal ou informal?
     • Que tipo de trabalho?

4. Ambiente escolar

- Onde você estudou o ensino fundamental? Escola pública ou particular?
- Onde você estudou o ensino médio? Escola pública ou particular?
  - Você tinha bolsa?

5. Fatores motivacionais
   - Quando você pensou pela primeira vez em fazer faculdade?
     - Teve a ver com uma outra pessoa? Pais? Família?
       Amigos? Professores? Orientador?
     - Um salário bom? Uma vida diferente? Desempenho escolar?
   - Quem ou o que te influenciou na decisão para entra na universidade?
   - Quais foram os seus principais incentivadores? Família? Comunidade?
     Amigos? Igreja? Escola? Etc.?
   - Para cotistas e bolsistas
     - Como as cotas e bolsas influenciaram a sua decisão para se inscrever na
       universidade?
     - Você teria tentado de qualquer maneira? As cotas e bolsas fizerem parecer
       possível a entrada na universidade?

6. Universidade Estadual
   - Qual é o seu turno? Por que você escolheu este turno?
   - Por que você escolheu esta universidade? Localização? Reputação? Custo?
     Curso?
   - Por que você escolheu este curso? Interesse? Reputação? Salário futuro? Menos
     concorrência?

9. Processo de admissão
   - O que você acha do processo de admissão na UESC? Como foi? Foi fácil?
     Trabalhoso? Por que?
     - O que você acha que pode ser feito para acabar com estes obstáculos para
       os futuros estudantes?