



Academic Routs of Affirmative Action Students: A Case Study in Light of Equity, Race and Participatory Parity

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the trajectories of students of affirmative action policies in a Federal University, and seeks to analyze the reasons for different academic routes. The methodology is based on the case study analysis, using student survey applied to three groups: evaded, retained and graduated. The results are debated considering the concepts of Rawls, equity, Guimarães, race, and Fraser, participatory parity. Material and social variables contribute to explain the different trajectories. The lack of time to study is pointed out as decisive by students with difficulties in their courses. Family support and work are critical to academic success. Gender and race are influential variables in academic success and failure

KEYWORDS

Higher education. Affirmative action. Students.

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Percursos Acadêmicos de Estudantes Cotistas: Um Estudo de Caso a Luz da Equidade, Raça e Paridade Participativa.

RESUMO

O trabalho investiga trajetórias de estudantes cotistas em uma Universidade Federal e busca analisar as razões para diferentes percursos acadêmicos. A metodologia do estudo é a análise de caso, com o uso de survey com três grupos de estudantes: evadidos, retidos e graduados. Os resultados são debatidos a luz dos conceitos de equidade de Rawls, de raça de Guimarães e de paridade participativa de Fraser. Variáveis materiais e sociais concorrem para explicar os diferentes percursos. A falta de tempo para estudar é apontada como decisiva por estudantes com dificuldades em seus percursos. O apoio familiar e o trabalho são determinantes para o êxito acadêmico. Gênero e raça são variáveis influentes no que tange ao sucesso e ao fracasso acadêmico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação superior. Sistema de cotas. Estudantes.

Trayectorias Académicas de Estudiantes Cotistas: Un Estudio de Caso a la Luz de la Equidad, la Raza y la Paridad Participative.

RESUMEN

El trabajo investiga trayectorias de estudiantes cotistas en una Universidad Federal y busca analizar las razones para diferentes recorridos académicos. La metodología del estudio es el análisis de caso, con el uso de survey con tres grupos de estudiantes: evadidos, retenidos y graduados. Los resultados son debatidos a la luz de los conceptos de equidad de Rawls, de raza de Guimarães y de paridad participativa de Fraser. Variables materiales y sociales concurren para explicar los diferentes recorridos. La falta de tiempo para estudiar es apuntada como decisiva por estudiantes con dificultades en sus recorridos. El apoyo familiar y el trabajo son determinantes para el éxito académico. Género y raza son variables influyentes en lo que se refiere al éxito y al fracaso académico.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Enseñanza superior. Política de ingresos. Estudiante

Introduction

Higher education has been occupying a privileged place in the governmental agenda of educational policies in recent decades. International bodies have reiterated the need to strengthen and expand it, as it is a key factor in the social, economic and cultural development of nations. The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, 1998) confirmed such efforts that were ratified and refined at the Second Conference (UNESCO, 2009).

Brazil's challenges in this area are great: the adjusted net attendance rate for higher education in the country is 23.2%¹. The belatedly constituted national higher education system still carries a significant legacy of elliptization. Until the last decade, public universities have concentrated in the capitals and a few other large cities, with few places and restrictive selection processes. This conformation maintained the limited opportunities of public higher education, mostly for elites and some middle-class fractions. In this scenario, the exclusion of certain social groups from academic spaces prevented the development of organic relations of the university institution with vulnerable and discriminated social segments. Thus, the student profile that hegemonized throughout the history of the Brazilian public university was that with full dedication to studies and family assistance in their subsistence (CAREGNATO *et al.*, 2018).

With the articulation of social movements, which demanded greater equality in ethnic-racial representation in higher education and more equitable mechanisms of access, the historical demands for democratization of university access gained strength in the early 21st century. In the political field, previous experiences of affirmative action in the USA, India and South Africa contributed and the deepening of the redemocratization process based on the legal guarantees of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. At the same time, in the symbolic dimension, contributed the rise of certain theoretical currents in the field of social thinking such as multiculturalism (HALL, 2009) and the victory of the sociological interpretation that the black population accumulates economic and educational disadvantages (GUIMARÃES, 1999; 2002; 2014). This context had, as one of its results, the establishment of quotas or reservation of places in public universities. They have become a symbol of the democratization of university access, within the spectrum of affirmative action provided for in the legal framework of the Federal Constitution.

Inclusion through access, however, has not been directly converted into success in higher education. Students entering through affirmative actions find an institution that is not structured to include their socioeconomic and cultural profile. The material and pedagogical conditions of these students are different from those idealized in the university education

¹ Adjusted net attendance rate: proportion of people of a certain age group attending school at the appropriate level of education for that age group, in relation to the total number of people of the same age group (IBGE, 2017).

program, impacting on trajectories that often lead to dropout - the abandonment of the started course - or to retention - the permanence in the course beyond the advised grade.

This situation prompts to understand the trajectories of quota students, both successful and those who have difficulties to stay resulting in dropout or retention. This article presents the results of a study conducted with quota holders from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul / UFRGS to understand the main factors that explain the different academic paths of students with the same socioeconomic and ethnic-racial characteristics.

The text is divided into four parts beyond the introduction. The following is a reflection on affirmative actions and their theories. The second part presents the objectives and methodology of the study, explaining the research sample and the applied questionnaire. The third part presents the results of the research on the different trajectories of quota students and the reasons for dropout, retention and diploma. Finally, an analysis of academic success and failure and its explanatory dimensions is made.

Affirmative Actions and Their Theories

Affirmative actions have been the focus of broad debate from different theoretical perspectives, and the number of empirical case studies has been increasing in recent years (NEVES, 2013, 2014; NEVES, ANHAIA, 2014; HERINGER, 2015a, 2015b; BARBOSA, 2014; SAMPAIO, 2014; GRISA, 2010, 2015; LOPES, 2017).

Quotas at universities are defended and criticized by numerous discursive regimes such as communitarianism (TAYLOR, 2000), egalitarian liberalism (DWORKIN, 2005) and multiculturalism (HALL, 2009). Given the existing options, we join the perspective that they meet redistributive and recognition demands (FRASER, 2006; 2007). The moral and political justification for affirmative action goes through these two dimensions.

From the standpoint adopted here, at least three theoretical categories support the debate on university quotas: race (GUIMARÃES, 1999; 2002), equity (RAWLS, 1981; 2000; 2002) and participatory parity (FRASER, 2007).

Although there is scientific consensus that biologically there are no differences between races in the human species, but historically and socially there are clear distinctions. The debate about the use of the race concept extends to the sociological educational field (GRISA, 2010). Its use was chosen because it is understood that race represents the real notion on which racism stands. As pointed out by Guimarães (1999, p. 27):

My opinion, however, is that it becomes very difficult to imagine a way to fight against imputation or discrimination without giving it social reality. If not for “race”, to what do we attribute the discriminations that only become intelligible by the idea of “race”? Attributing them to an underlying reality that is not verbally articulated, or to more general and abstract ways of justifying structures of domination?

The idea of race, therefore, refers to the ideological field of analysis (historical construction). It is a concept that seeks to understand the “subjective aspects that guide intentional social actions” (GUIMARÃES, 1999, p. 31). This social meaning of the concept race refers to the influence of physical type (skin color, hair type) on people's perception; such a physical type has historically been linked to negative values, and the Brazilian black still feels the consequences of this.

The content of such a category must constantly develop a scientific apparatus to reorganize the concept of race:

This concept should at the same time: 1) recognize the real and effective weight of the idea of race in Brazilian society, in terms of legitimizing inequalities of treatment and opportunities; 2) reaffirm the fictional character of such a construction in physical and biological terms; and 3) identify the racial content of Brazilian “social classes” (GUIMARÃES, 2002, p. 56).

Thinking race through the political and social prism, is an exercise that at the same time claims that there are no biological differences between black, white, “pardo”², Asian-Brazilian people, contrary to nineteenth-century scientific theories and early bleaching policies of the twentieth century claimed. And, on the other hand, it elucidates the idea that there is a cultural, political and social construction, which we are calling race, which is the basic criterion for the exercise of violent power, both symbolic and concrete, including by the state.

Therefore, “race” is a conditioning component in deciding which social group will be left out of prestigious social relations and, most importantly, will have denied its right to the basic conditions of existence. The discriminated subject who has his rights subtracted by society, the State, but who, at the same time, suffers violence from this, is the bearer of naked life according to Agamben (2002). And naked life has race. In Brazil and the world, in general, a significant portion of the black population is alienated from decent work and the legally existing universe of human rights.

Regarding the concept of equity, we start from John Rawls's Theory of Justice as Equity (1981). According to the author, justice must, through social institutions, ensure that no arbitrary distinctions occur between people in the attribution of basic rights and duties in society. It would be crucial to develop rules that would provide a stable balance between competing claims of interests and the distribution of income and wealth.

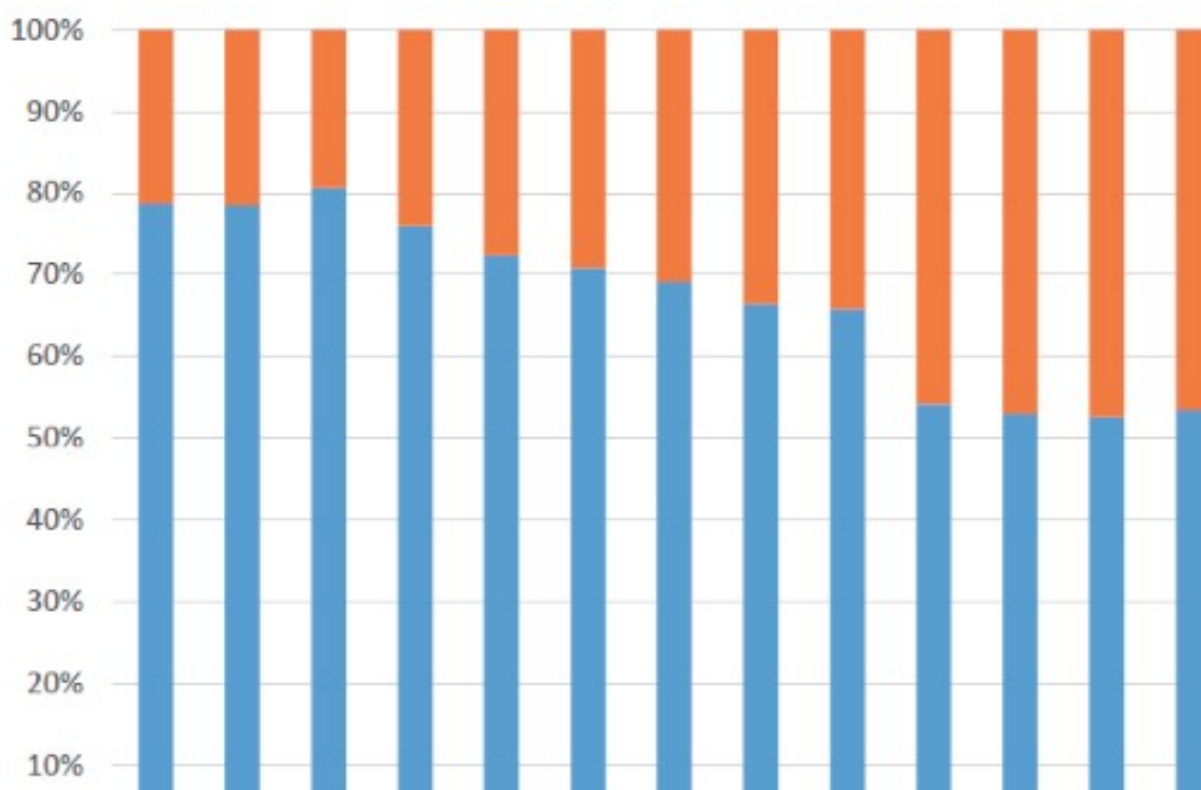
For Rawls (1981), equity would not be synonymous with formal equality. It would be a public action or policy that corrects a certain "egalitarian or universal law" when it does not fully achieve its objectives. The author thus stresses that justice is not always equality and must be conceived as equity, that is, a society only reaches levels of justice when everyone has the same opportunities and social benefits are distributed evenly in the social fabric.

² “Pardo” in Portuguese corresponds to a brownish color

Based on this reasoning, it can be said that the mitigation of social injustices will occur through the adoption of policies that promote the equalization of opportunities. These are mechanisms that guarantee the excluded or underprivileged access to fundamental rights and spaces for the enjoyment of life in society. Affirmative actions, especially quotas, would fit this perspective of seeking justice through the criterion of equity.

By taking the income parameter and looking at the profile of freshman students in the case of UFRGS, affirmative actions, from 2008, increased the access of the low-income population (with income below 1.5 minimum wages) to higher education, promoting a greater degree of equity in the occupation of vacancies, as shown in the picture below.

Figure 1. Bound students (enrolled in undergraduate courses) per year, with an income above or below 1.5 minimum wages per capita.



Source: Adapted by the authors from UFRGS (2016)

The correlation between the conceptual principle of equity and the challenges present in Brazilian higher education is made by McCowan (2007). The author defines that a condition of equitable justice should ensure that everyone has access to higher education, without unfair reasons preventing people from entering this educational stage. McCowan (2007) states that the Brazilian situation, despite the expansion of vacancies and inclusion policies in the last decade, does not constitute an equity scenario. The country is far from mass higher education (TROW, 2005), that is, with at least 30% of 18-24 years old in higher education.

In a similar line of reasoning that elaborates the concept of equity, Fraser (2007) develops, within the conception of justice, the common norm of participatory parity to reflect on the dialectic redistribution / recognition. To conceive of these two concepts separately would be to strictly link redistribution with material and economic aspects and recognition with cultural and identity issues. However, the purpose here is to amalgamate them. Fraser (2007) argues that recognition has to be linked to the notion of justice and analyzed as a matter of social status, rather than the model of cultural identity that prioritizes claims of exclusivity over claims of overcoming unjust subordinations. Thus, subjective and individual issues would make room for collective demands for transformations of institutional cultures, which breaks the recognition model linked to identity. Fraser prioritizes no longer elements of the psychic structure of individuals, but rather social interaction and institutions.

Claims for recognition as well as for redistribution must meet the aspirations of putting social groups on parity to participate in social life, whether culturally or economically. Both objective and subjective conditions are necessary for participatory parity.

An innovation of this proposal comes when Fraser wonders if all claims for recognition and redistribution are fair. Should all be met by communities and societies? According to the author, the notion of participatory parity should serve as an evaluation criterion for these questions. Holders of recognition claims, for example, need to justify their demands, prove that they are necessary and that without them they are prevented from participating on an equal basis with others. “Only those claims that promote parity of participation are morally justified” (FRASER, 2007, p. 122).

The criticism of Honneth (2003) is made when Fraser shifts the recognition of the issue of self-realization or self-esteem and treats it as a demand for justice. This attributes recognition to the moral character of building collective political codes and no longer leaves it tied to an individual ethical notion of the fulfillment of personality longings.

Therefore, participatory parity provides for “deinstitutionalizing patterns of cultural valuation that prevent parity from participation and replacing them with standards that promote it” (FRASER, 2007, p. 109). When the notion of justice is broadened so that recognition and redistribution coexist, it is assumed that the axes of social injustice are both cultural and socioeconomic.

In Brazil, quotas have also been interpreted as assimilationist policies (FEREZ JÚNIOR; CAMPOS, 2014). This assessment refers to the first empirical results obtained by the adoption of quotas. Diplomation, the entry into the world of work, the changes in research themes at universities, strengthening the organization and political representation of the black population and the appreciation of Afro-Brazilian aesthetics and culture are phenomena that can be considered first results. Such phenomena appear at different degrees of development in each region of the country and educational institution.

Objectives and Methodology of the Study

Considering the need for empirical research on the theme of affirmative actions and their impacts, the study aimed to investigate the trajectories (BOURDIEU, 1989; 1996a; 1996b) of students entering the Affirmative Actions Program in order to understand the reasons for the different academic pathways. We took as case study the quota holders of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul / UFRGS.

At the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS)³, the quotas were adopted in 2007, by decision of the University Council and were effective in the 2008 entrance exam. Initially, 30% of the university undergraduate places in the college entrance examination were reserved for students who had attended at least half of elementary school and all high school in public schools. Of these, half were reserved for self-declared black candidates. Currently, the University follows the provisions of Federal Law 12.711 / 2012, reserving half of the places of the entrance exam for public school graduates and, of these, half for self-declared black, pardo and indigenous.

The research fits in with the parameters of the qualitative research (FLICK, 2009) and was developed with students who entered for the reservation of vacancies at UFRGS, in the initial, intermediate and graduated stages. Every social trajectory must be understood as a unique way of traversing the social space, where the dispositions of the habitus are manifested and the series of positions successively occupied by the same agent or group of agents in successive spaces is reconstituted (BOURDIEU, 1996a).

The concept of trajectory encompasses the objectification of the relations between agents and forces present in the field. This phenomenon results in something different from traditional biographies. Trajectory can be conceived as a crossing of chronologically nonlinear factors that have in the social origin and in the social relations constituted founding elements.

Montagner (2007, p. 257), thinking about the meaning of collective trajectories for sociological research says that:

To pursue a trajectory means to follow the historical unfolding of concrete social groups in a social space defined by these same groups in their battle for defining boundaries and legitimacy within the field in which they operate.

To operationalize the research, online questionnaires (via the Google Docs tool) were applied to students who entered by reserving quotas with different academic backgrounds (evaded, retained and graduates). It was constituted a non-probabilistic sample, whose size among the different academic paths is distributed as follows: 70 (seventy) evaded students,

³ UFRGS had about 33,000 undergraduate students in classroom courses in 2016, and about 16,000 Graduate students (UFRGS, 2017). In 2015, with a continuous IGC of 4.35, it was considered the best Federal University in the country.

106 (one hundred and six) retained students, 147 (one hundred and forty-seven) graduate students. The empirical research sought to contemplate the principles of triangulation and saturation (BAUER, 2008). Qualitative questions that offered alternative answers also contained the "other" option. In this, the student could write and explain his situation. In questions with multiple alternatives, the student was allowed to select how many options were appropriate for his case.

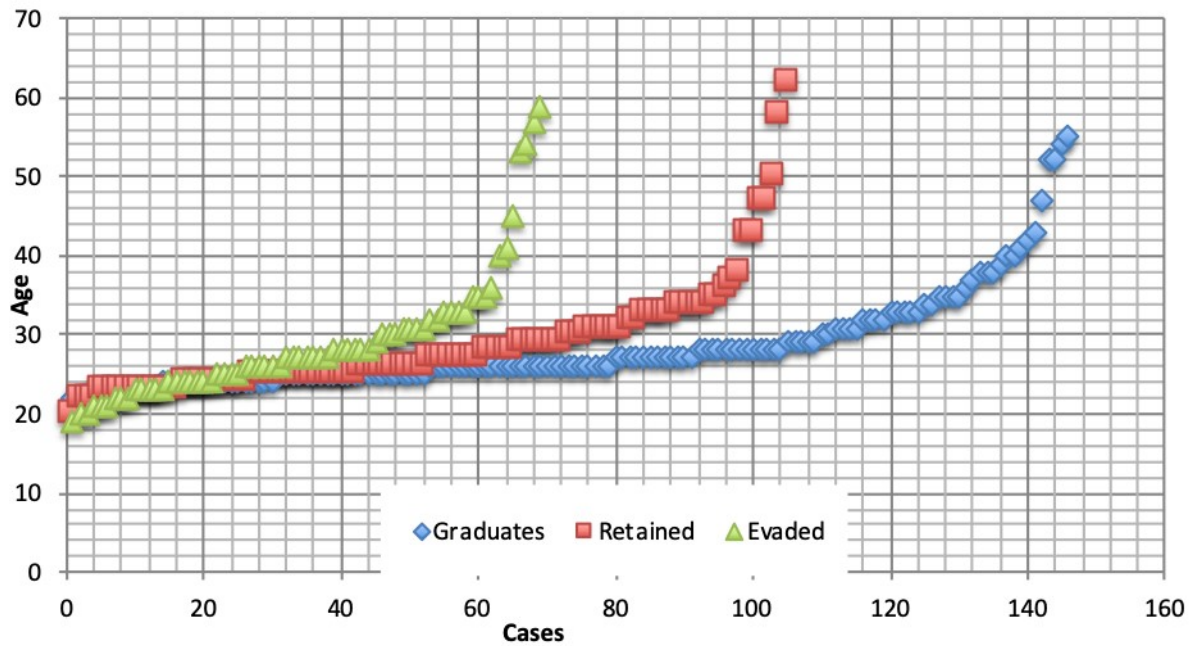
The three questionnaires contained three blocks, the first consisting of questions that sought student profile information, such as gender, age, course, race and others. The second block dealt with questions about high school and university entrance fees, and the third block dealt with the reasons for their academic status and their relationship with the university. Subsequently, after statistical analysis using the SPSS software, the questions were grouped into seven explanatory dimensions: gender, race, generational, support and family structure, work and income, basic education and support structure of the institution.

Trajectories of Quota Students: Reasons for Dropout, Retention and Diploma.

In this part of the article we present the general data of the sample of students surveyed, the main aspects of the answers to the questionnaire by academic path and some analysis about the collected data. We seek to detail the answers given by the students in each specific group so that the reader captures the similarities and differences between the appreciation of students who have followed different academic backgrounds.

The following is a profile of the quota holders participating of the survey. The age, gender and race of the research participants, are presented in the following figures.

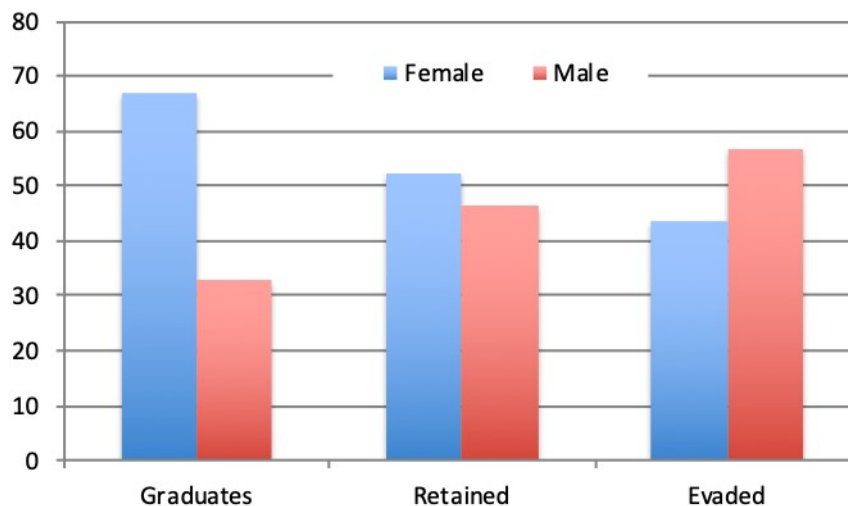
Figure 2. Ages of the survey respondents according to the group.



Source: Authors' elaboration.

Regarding age, the majority of evaded and retained quota holders were up to 25 years old. Among the graduates most were between 26 and 30 years old.

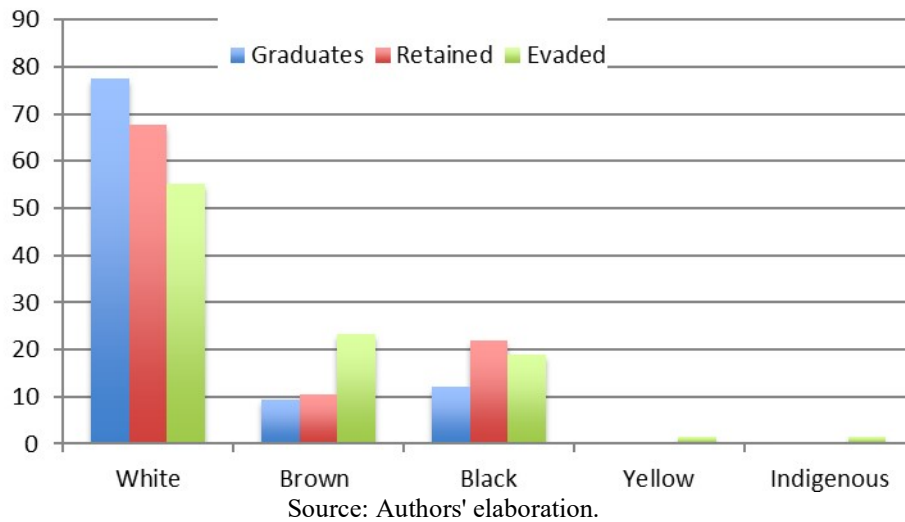
Figure 3. Gender of the respondents according to the group.



Source: Authors' elaboration.

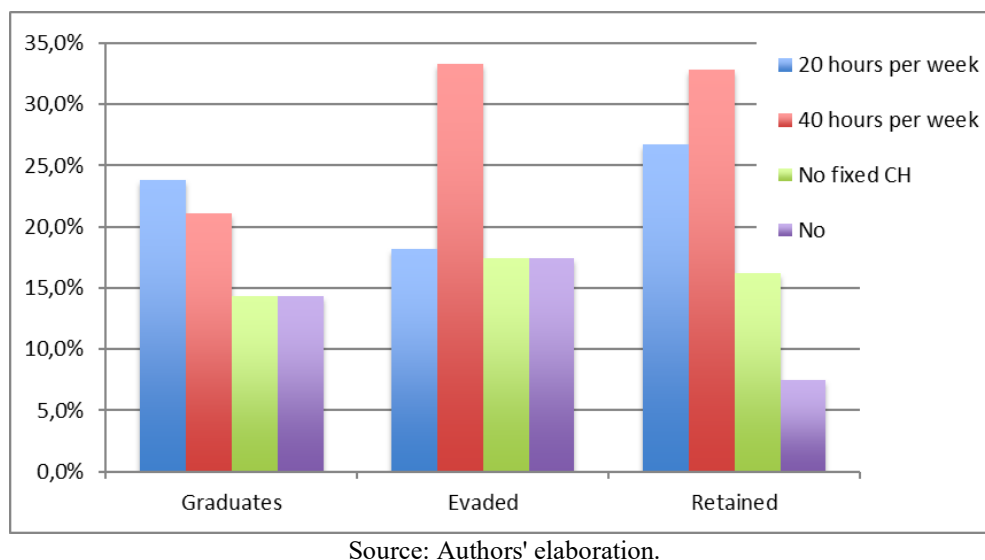
Regarding gender, it is interesting to note that only among the elapsed quota respondents, most respondents were male (55%). Among the retained quota holders was a small female majority (52%). And among the graduated quota respondents there was a significant majority of women (68%).

Figure 4. Race of the respondents according to the group.



Regarding the race of the respondents, among the different academic backgrounds, the white race predominated, which indicated that they were social quota holders. Regarding the working reality of students while attending their courses, we have the comparison between graduates, retained and evaded expressed in the figure below.

Figure 5. Work and study of quota students at UFRGS.



Note: Questionnaire Question: “Did you work during the course?” Of the applied questionnaires.

As can be seen in Figure 5, most of the dropout respondents worked while taking their courses, which confirms the constant correlation expressed in the literature (LIMA; ZAGO, 2016), between the difficulty of reconciling study and work and dropout. Most graduate students also worked, however, unlike the scenario found between the evaded and the detained, 40-hour weekly and even 20-hour occupations are not so hegemonic.

The option “others” was marked by 26% (38 students) of the graduated respondents. In the written explanations, a significant number (19 students) were identified as having university-related scholarship and paid internships, while others pointed out that they worked for 30 hours a week or reported that they had sporadic activities during a certain period of the course.

The number of students who say they worked without a fixed workload during the course represents the same proportion of those who said they had not worked, both constituting 14.4% of the sample of graduates. We identified some peculiarities in the occupations of these students, such as greater involvement with activities related to the course and the academy, thus, greater integration with university practice; more flexibility in outside work activities and lower proportional workload when compared to the other two groups.

Among retained students, most work 40 hours per week and a significant contingent work for 20 hours. The 17% of the students in this group who checked the “others” option did so to specify that they had some type of scholarship, were in internship or worked 30 hours per week.

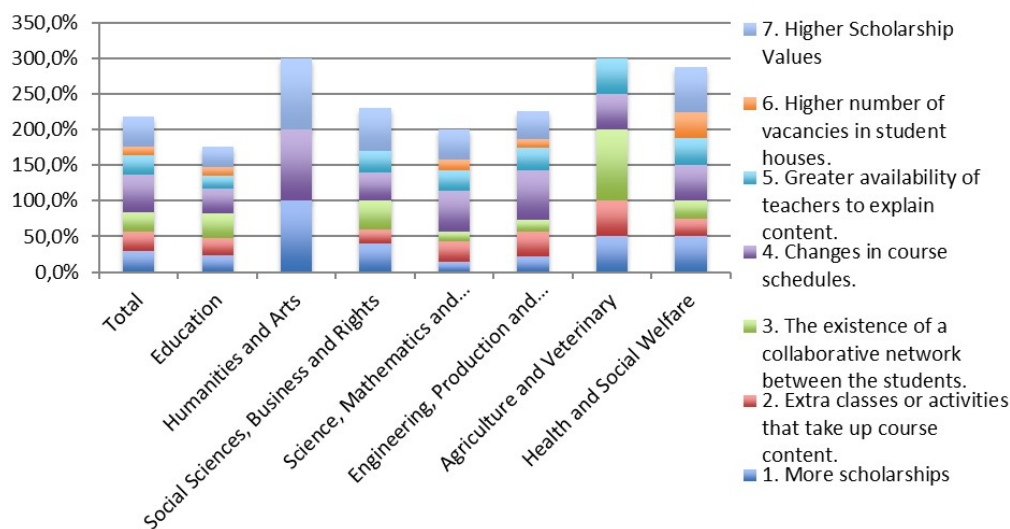
Specifically, about the dropout group, considering the semester in which the student left their course, this usually occurs in the first three semesters for most students. It is evident that dropout is a characteristic phenomenon of beginning of course. It is in the first semesters that, historically, most abandonment is registered. When asked about the main factors that made them drop out of the course, 42% of students marked the “lack of time for academic activity and studies” option, and the same percentage marked the “disappointment with the course” option. These were the options most highlighted by students, followed by “financial issues” and “lack of reception by colleagues and teachers”, which were marked by 37.7% and 33.3%, respectively.

When asked if they found any support structure at UFRGS to meet their specific demands, almost half of the students evaded (49.3%) said no. We also had 29% who said they had contact with some instance of the university but did not have full access to what they needed. Only 21.7% said they had their specific demands met by some institution body. We asked a similar question to the retained students. Regarding their relationship with UFRGS instances, an evaluation of discontent is noted. Most (48.6%) point out that although the instances exist, they did not guarantee the fulfillment of the demands brought by the students and there is still the group (20%) who said that they had not found any institutional space to meet their specific questions.

When asked which actions of the institution could have prevented dropout, most students pointed out two alternatives in particular: “change in the time of the course subjects” (52.2%); “higher values of scholarships” (42%). This question had seven (7) alternatives, besides the ones mentioned above, others such as “more scholarships”, “extra classes or activities”, “the existence of a collaboration network between students” and “greater

availability of teachers” were pointed out by an average of 28% of students. Below is the distribution of this question by area of knowledge among the evaded.

Figure 6. Structure and actions of the institution that could have prevented dropout, according to students evaded by area.



Source: Authors' elaboration.

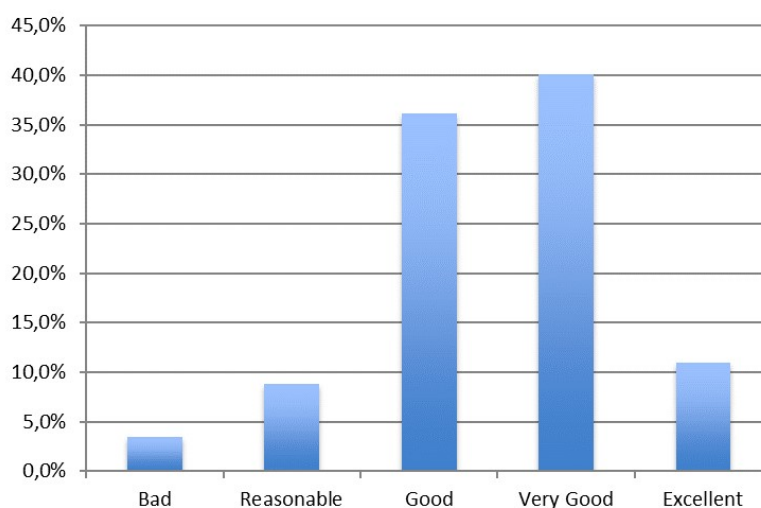
The option “others” for this question was marked by 19 students (27.5%), psychological support added to the questions of reception of teachers and the institution were highlighted by six (6) students, three (3) also pointed out that if the internal transfer process had been simplified and facilitated, they could have remained, and one comment drew attention, stating that “greater preparation of the UFRGS to deal with transsexuals” could have prevented the student's evasion. This account can be seen as symbolic in that it puts in check the university's institutional limitation in placing itself at the forefront in protecting the stigmatized and discriminated transgender public in society.

We asked the detainees what actions the institution could have avoided their retention. As already explained, students could mark as many options as they wish, as well as mark the alternative “others” to write about their case. As seen in the sample of dropout students, among the retained students, the variable that was marked by a significant majority (57.1%) was “changes in class schedules”, followed by “higher values of scholarships” with 49.5% of indications. “Extra classes or activities that return to content” and “greater availability of teachers to explain content” were options marked by about 30% of respondents. We also asked those withheld about what are the main factors that make them late in their courses, the most marked answer was “lack of time for academic activities and studies” with 57.1%, followed by “financial issues” and “difficulties with course content”, marked by 42.9% and 34.3% of the students, respectively. The option “others” was the one marked by 36%, the students explained several reasons for retention, highlighting the difficulty of reconciling training and work, schedule of subjects and travel / exchanges.

Regarding the evaluation of the curriculum of the course that they began to do, the evaded students had the option to qualify it from 1 to 6, with grade 1 being bad and grade 6 being excellent. Most students (33%) scored grade 4 and, second, grade 5 (20%). This is a median assessment of the curriculum, indicating that it did not address these students' expectations and aspirations and that, from their perspective, the curriculum would merit adjustments or revisions.

Regarding retained students, the appreciation of the curriculum is very similar to those who drop out, with grade 4. However, among graduates there is a more positive evaluation of the curriculum of their course, as can be seen in the figure below. Another factor to draw attention is that no one in this group evaluates the curriculum as bad (grade 1), while among the other groups, at least 2 students do. It is also possible to note that the attribution of grade 3 (three) is below 10%, lower than the rate presented by this grade in evaded (15.9%) and retained (21.9%).

Figure 7. Course Evaluation according to graduate students.



Source: Graduated quota holder questionnaires. Preparation of the authors.

When asked if material aspects were more determinant of dropout than subjective ones, surprisingly, most students said no. 52% of those evaded said that the lack of reception, pedagogical and psychological support were more determinant. On the other hand, 47% indicated that the lack of time and financial resources was a condition for dropping out. This data makes us infer that the consecrated combination of material and pedagogical / psychological factors in the phenomenon of dropout proceeds, however, it brings us the warning that perhaps we underestimate the subjective elements of welcoming, relationship, treatment and didactic preparation of teachers when we analyze the evasion.

Differently from the evaded students, when asked if the material aspects were more decisive than the subjective ones, the retained students answered positively in the majority (43.7%). Those who understood that the subjective aspects of reception, pedagogical and psychological support are more determinant for their condition, totaled 33.3%.

Evaded students were asked if they intended to return to university, and many (46.4%) ticked the "others" option to explain their situation in writing. Many of these, 32 students, have already returned to higher education and are attending other courses, others intend to do so when they “find time”. The number of respondents who answered “yes” to the question was 43.5% and those who said “no” intend to return to university account for 10.1%. When asked if they intend to complete their degree, 87.6% of retained students say yes, only 4.8% say no, while 7.6% explain their specific conditions and difficulties to graduate.

There were 146 respondents among the graduated quota holders. When asked what were the main factors that contributed to the completion of the course, a significant contingent of graduate students (71.9%) marked the option “family support”, this variable stands out as the most remembered by quota students who completed their courses. “Good reception from teachers and colleagues” and “institutional support from UFRGS” were the alternatives that came in second place, with 31.5% of marks.

Among those who marked the option “others” (22.6%), the most recurring comments are those that emphasize willpower and the personal effort to graduate. Such assertions match what Martins (2016, p. 12) found in interviews with quota holders about the elements considered crucial for the entrance into prestigious courses at UFSC, says the author:

The factors considered to be decisive for entering the most demanding courses focus on student responsibility issues, such as self-effort, which reproduces the discourse of a society based on meritocratic principles, attributing the opportunities solely to the efforts made by each individual.

In addition, two of these students who explain the reasons for their academic successes indicate the flexible schedule of the subjects they have found as a crucial factor for diploma. Another student points to “participation in student and racial collectives” as a key element in staying and completing the course, and one of them also highlighted the role of his advisor.

In the question of whether the quality of training received in high school was fundamental to their graduation, most students (66.4%) answered no, admitted that they had to study hard on their own. Those who said yes, that “high school had prepared very well for university” were 25.3%. We still had 8.2% who checked the “other” option and explained that high school training helped partially but not enough. This high rate of students who consider their high school fragile corroborates the findings in the interviews with UFSC quota holders by Martins (2016).

The last question on the questionnaire was “how can the actions of the institution be improved? “. There were four options to mark on this question, students could point out how many they thought applied. The options were: 1. student assistance (scholarships, benefits and housing); 2. in pedagogical and psychological assistance; 3. in welcoming diversity and 4. in academic support. The option that most students pointed out (60.3%) was 4, followed by 1 and 2 with about 55% each. This shows that, despite having managed to graduate, this

contingent of quota graduates is aware that academic follow-up, student, pedagogical and psychological assistance are actions that need to be intensified and qualified.

Academic Success and Failure and its Explanatory Dimensions

The results show, in different ways, the coexistence material and social variables in the academic success or failure of students. Between evaded and withheld, economic constraints are decisive. These are working students who do not have their main occupation in college. For this group, even if the supply of scholarships was equivalent to the demand, its value wouldn't be enough in order to enable them to support themselves or encourage them to abandon their current work activities, a reality also identified in other studies (MARTINS, 2016).

The division of the subject between the work and study environment, which occupies a peripheral place in their routine, can lead to a lower identification with the course, discouraging permanence. These results corroborate the findings of Velloso and Cardoso (2012) who analyzed the case of the University of Brasília (UnB). This dynamic is reinforced by the rigidity of the disciplines' offer, which reaffirm the distance between the university's functioning and the student's needs.

The table below summarizes the relationship between the variable “academic success” and the different dimensions surveyed by academic background group. Then comments are made on each dimension of analysis.

Table 1. Summary of the relationship between academic success and material, social and student profile, according to each group.

	Graduates	Retained	Evaded
Genre	+	*	-
Race	+	-	-
Generational	+	+	-
Support and family structure	+	*	*
Work and income	+	-	-
Institution support structure	+	-	-

Caption: (+) positive relationship between the variable (academic success) and its dimension, according to the selected group, (-) negative relationship between the variable (academic success) and its dimension, according to the selected group. (*) non-significant relationship between the variable (academic success) and its dimension, according to the selected group.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

There is a clear relationship between the gender dimension and the groups analyzed, with women being the most successful in all ethnic-racial groups. Among graduates the percentage reaches 67% of the total, falling to 43% among the evaded.

Regarding the “race” dimension, the relationship between academic success and white students is clear, reaching 77% of total white students among graduates, and only 12% of blacks. In relation to the evaded, the first percentage drops to 55%, while that of blacks and

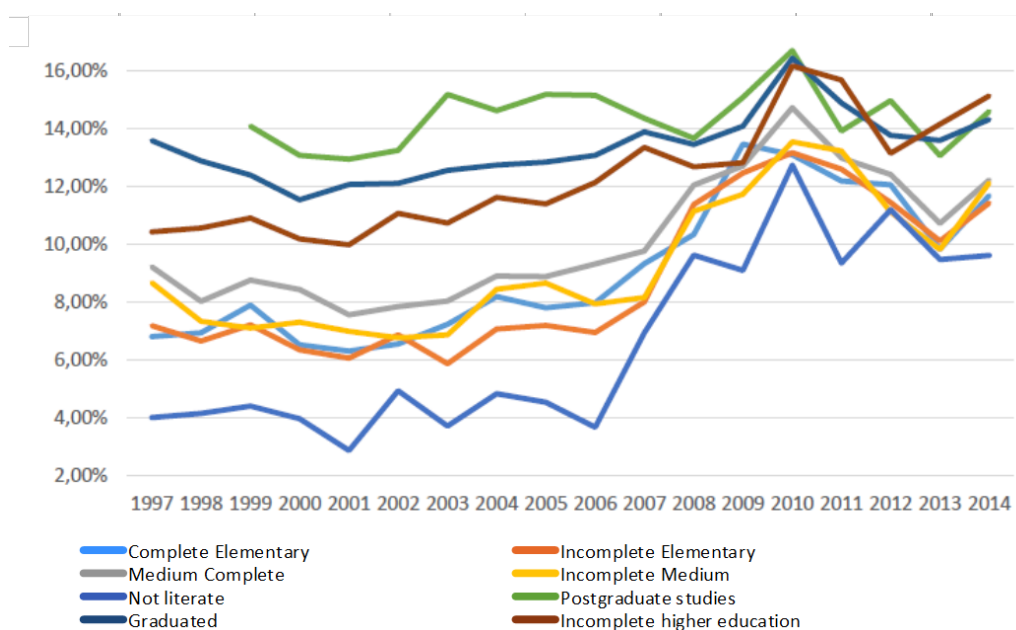
pardos added up to 42%, being the only group with indigenous students. It should also be noted that, among pardos and blacks, women are the most successful.

As for the “generational” dimension, there is a positive relationship between success and younger students. 50% of them are up to 24 years old, and 76% up to 30 years old, and the average age of graduates and retained is 28 years. Among the evaded, this number rises to 34 years of age, presenting the highest percentage of older men, pardo and black.

The dimension “support and family structure” is pointed out as the main factor associated with academic success by graduate students. Although there is no significant relationship between marital status and academic success, it should be pointed out that the largest number of single people are among the students withheld, 10% higher than the others, while the highest percentage of married people is among the evaded.

Graduated quota holders highlight family support as decisive. In contrast to the responses of the other groups, this support can be read by two vectors. Firstly, as the incentive to identify with the occupation of university students, recognition dynamics in the group of immediate belonging, valorization of symbolic investment (BOURDIEU, 1989) and time. Secondly, this family support can be understood as the financial support that enables subsistence during the studies, allowing these students to have exclusive dedication to academic activities. This allows such students to engage in fellowship jobs without having to resort to jobs outside the university to support themselves. With this, they not only enjoy more time for study but also develop their work in an environment of academic socialization, where they acquire the university habitus (BOURDIEU, 1996b) more easily. This second support appears as fundamental in other research (MARTINS, 2016).

Considering parents' education, an indicator of family cultural capital, it was identified (UFRGS, 2016) that the impact of affirmative actions is significant to ensure the entry of a larger contingent of students whose parents have low educational background.

Figure 8. Linking rate (enrolled) by parent's schooling, by year.

Source: UFRGS (2016).

This data allows us to infer that, from the point of view of admission, the vacancy reserve policy has contributed to the promotion of equity (RAWLS, 1981), as it corrects distortions of a universal policy represented by the free competition entrance exam were in force. However, it remains to be seen in the medium and long term, how this family profile of new entrants will be able to secure the support and support highlighted as important by those who have attained diploma.

It is clear the difference between students with regard to the percentage that works more than 40 hours per week, being 50% higher among the retained and evaded. Also, the lack of time, as well as financial issues are pointed out among the main reasons for dropout, and retention, being the dimension "work and income" highly related to academic success and failure.

The dimension "support structure of the institution" has great relevance for all groups analyzed. Institutional support and welcoming of teachers and peers were a relevant factor for graduates. For 33% of the evaded, the lack of reception, and for 42%, disappointment with the course are important factors. Of these, 49% say they have not received any student assistance. Regarding the determinant factor of dropout, 52% indicate as cause the lack of reception and psychological and pedagogical support; and 48% lack of financial resources and time. The class schedules are, for example, determinant for the dropout of 52% of students.

Also, in this dimension, the most recent report of the UFRGS Affirmative Action Coordination (UFRGS, 2016) shows that the phenomenon of retention among quota students

cannot be related solely to failures in subjects. The retention is also due to the fact that the number of enrollments in academic activities by quota holders is lower than the overall average. This means that by taking fewer credits, some students take longer to graduate and do not follow most of the class they have joined. When stratified this data, the course variable becomes determinant for retention and dropout data.

Final Considerations

We present in the article the results of research carried out with UFRGS quota students from different academic backgrounds. We observed that in the dropout category there was a higher participation of men than women and most left the university in the first three semesters of the course. Among the reasons given for dropping out, they highlighted the lack of time for study and the disappointment with the course. Significant portion indicated that the change of the schedule of the subjects could have avoided the abandonment.

Among retained students 57% reported lack of time for academic activities as a reason for retention, the same proportion of those who pointed to changing course schedules as a measure that could have prevented retention. The vast majority of retained students work, and half said that if their scholarship values were higher, their academic achievement could be better.

The group of graduates registered far more women than men, as well as whites than blacks. This group mostly pointed to family support as the main variable to complete the course. 66.4% stated that public high school did not prepare them for university and that individual study was a constant necessity. They pointed academic support and student assistance as policies to be improved at UFRGS. Many took scholarships during graduation.

Thus, the results seem to show that an academic policy aimed at ensuring the academic success of quota students cannot do without some factors. One of them is the flexibility of the curriculum offer. It would involve other temporalities in terms of advised grading and semester workload, number of compulsory subjects, and variety in class schedules. Another factor is the scholarship policy, considering both the number of vacancies offered, the remuneration practiced, and the activities developed. Dealing with these criteria means addressing the issues of democratizing opportunities and positions in academia, the social affirmation of college student careers and livelihoods, and the acquisition of university habitus.

Although there is an advance in the presence of new audiences, which represents some democratization of the university and the guarantee of greater participatory parity (FRASER, 2007), it also raises a structural question: what measures can the university take to meet these students if confirmed the tendency that less educated parents will find it difficult to offer “family support” to students? Conceiving this support from the standpoint of both symbolic investment and material aid, both discussed above.

Finally, it is necessary to lead with identity, identification and belonging issues, so that students can recognize themselves and that they are part of university curricula, understood in their broad sense. Recognition dynamics (FRASER, 2006; 2007) presuppose this resizing of curricula and pedagogical practices. The results collected show that support for permanence and progress in studies should be the result of strategic planning that takes into account both material and symbolic variables.

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