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The Perception of Quota Students on the Curriculum of Courses at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul with Highest Density Between Vacancies and Enrolles

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ABSTRACT

The article is part of the discussions on affirmative actions in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). With the universe of study at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), the objective is to analyze how the quota student perceives the curriculum of the courses with the highest density between vacancies and enrolles students. In the study, the curriculum is understood as an element historically constructed as an institutional mechanism for social reproduction. On the other hand, the perception of quota students is related to their *habitus*, which consists of economic, social and cultural variables. The case study is used as a methodological approach. Through in-depth interviews, 5 students from the most densely attended courses at UFRGS were interviewed. Three reasons guided the analysis of curriculum perception: the density of the curriculum, its composition and assessment. For mixing a work routine and studies due to the socioeconomic situation, the interviewed quota holders perceive the curriculum as dense. Educational variables, on the other hand, influence assessments, which generate difficulties, especially at the beginning of the course. Finally, the curriculum composition is the result of a selection, which excludes some experiences of the quota public. Although these reasons lead to the identification of reproduction mechanisms, through the participation of the quota public, there are conflicts that allow the possibility of institutional change.

KEYWORDS

Quotas. Curriculum. Quotas students.

A Percepção dos Estudantes Cotistas Sobre os Currículos dos Cursos da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul com Maior Densidade Entre Vagas e Inscritos

RESUMO

O artigo se inscreve nas discussões sobre as ações afirmativas nas Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES). Tendo como universo de estudo a Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), o objetivo é analisar de que modo o estudante cotista percebe o currículo dos cursos com maior densidade entre vagas e inscritos. No estudo, entende-se o currículo como um elemento construído historicamente como um mecanismo institucional de reprodução social. Por outro lado, a percepção dos estudantes cotistas está relacionada ao seu *habitus*, que é constituído por variáveis econômicas, sociais e culturais. Utiliza-se o estudo de caso como abordagem metodológica. Mediante entrevistas aprofundadas, entrevistaram-se 5 estudantes dos cursos com maior densidade da UFRGS. Três razões nortearam a análise sobre a percepção curricular: a densidade do currículo, a composição deste e a avaliação. Por mesclarem uma rotina de trabalho e estudos devido à situação socioeconômica, os cotistas entrevistados percebem o currículo como denso. As variáveis educacionais, por outra via, influenciam as avaliações, que geram dificuldades, principalmente, no início do curso. Por fim, a composição curricular é resultado de uma seleção, que exclui algumas vivências do público cotista. Embora essas razões levem à identificação de mecanismos de reprodução, por meio do ingresso do público cotista, há conflitos que permitem a possibilidade de mudança institucional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Ações afirmativas. Currículo. Cotistas.

La Percepción de los Estudiantes Becado em los Currículos de los Cursos de la Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul com Mayor Densidade entre Vacantes y Alumnos Matriculados

RESUMEN

El presente artículo se incorpora en las discusiones sobre acciones afirmativas en Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES). Teniendo cómo universo de estudio la Universidade Federal de Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), el objetivo es analizar cómo el estudiante becado percibe el currículo de los cursos con mayor densidad entre vacantes y alumnos matriculados. En el estudio, el currículo se entiende como un elemento históricamente construido como mecanismo institucional de reproducción social. Por otro lado, la percepción de los estudiantes becados está relacionada a su *habitus*, que consta de variables económicas, sociales y culturales. Es utilizado el estudio de casos como abordaje metodológico. A través de entrevistas en profundidad, se entrevistó a 5 estudiantes de los cursos más concurridos de la UFRGS. Tres razones guiaron el análisis de la percepción curricular: la densidad del currículo, su composición y evaluación. Por la combinación entre una rutina de trabajo y estudios debido a la situación socioeconómica, los becados entrevistados perciben el currículo como denso. Las variables educativas, por otra parte, influyen en las evaluaciones, lo que genera dificultades, especialmente al inicio del curso. Finalmente, la composición curricular es el resultado de una selección, que excluye algunas experiencias del público de becas. Si bien estas razones llevan a la identificación de mecanismos de reproducción, a través de la participación del público becado, existen conflictos, que permiten la posibilidad de un cambio institucional.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Acciones afirmativas. Currículo. Becados.

1 Introduction

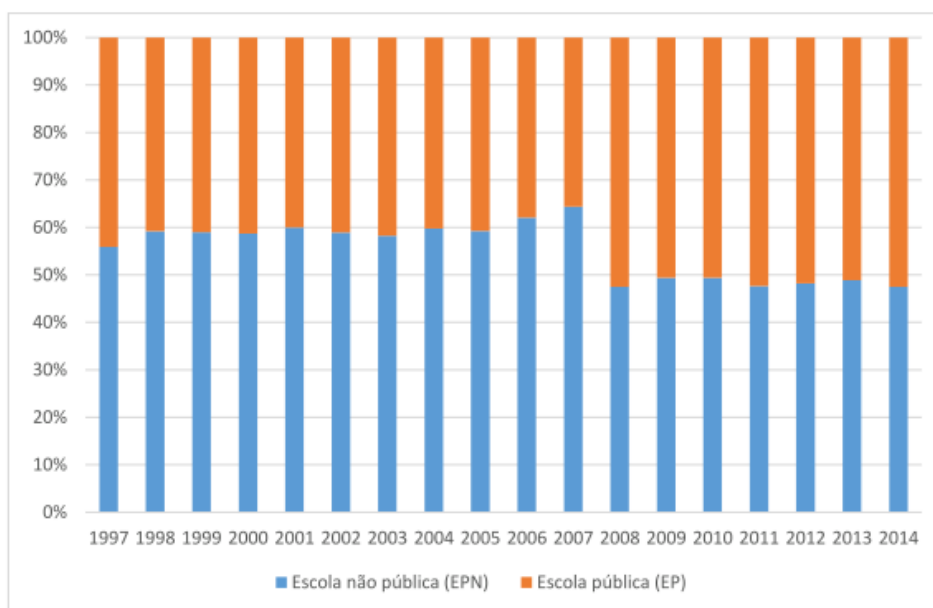
The present article is derived from the studies initiated by the dissertation *The Plural Quoted Student: from Social Position to Insertion in the University Environment* (SILVA, 2019), which is part of the discussions on affirmative action in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The objective of the article is to verify how quota holders perceive the curricula of the courses at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) with the highest density between applicants and vacancies. Among these courses are medicine, day psychology, night psychology, physiotherapy, and veterinary medicine. Based on a case study, 5 in-depth interviews were undertaken with students who are enrolled in medicine, daytime psychology, and veterinary medicine.

The importance of the theme emerges from a context of reconfiguration of higher education. Policies such as affirmative action, the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI), the Higher Education Student Financing Fund (FIES) and the University for All Program (PROUNI) have contributed, according to the literature (MORCHE, NEVES, 2015; NEVES, RAIZER, FACHINETTO, 2007; FLORES, 2017; SCHLESENER, PEREIRA, 2016), to encourage the demand for higher education, which directly impacted the public entering the HEIs.

At UFRGS, more specifically with regard to affirmative action, there is a growing diversification from the entry of students self-declared black, low-income, public-school graduates, indigenous and people with disabilities (PCD). The data from the 2016 report of the Affirmative Action Coordination (CAF¹) of the institution demonstrate this change of scenario.

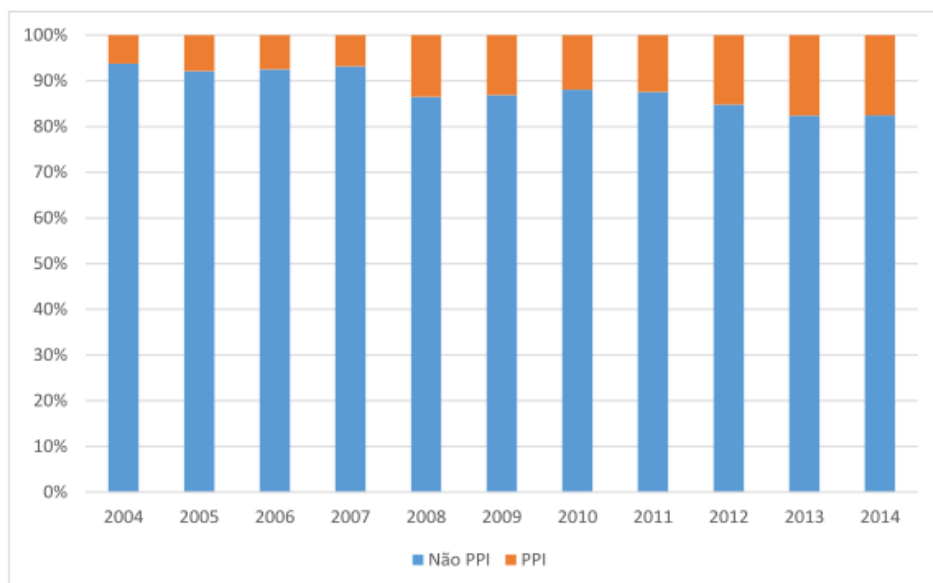
¹ Report available at <https://www.ufrgs.br/acoefirmativas/category/acoefirmativas-2/>. There is a more recent report from 2019 available, however, the research is part of a derivative study by Silva (2019) on affirmative action at UFRGS. Thus, the interviews were conducted between 2018 and 2019 in the period when the 2016 report was the most updated.

Graph 1. Type of egress of students at UFRGS

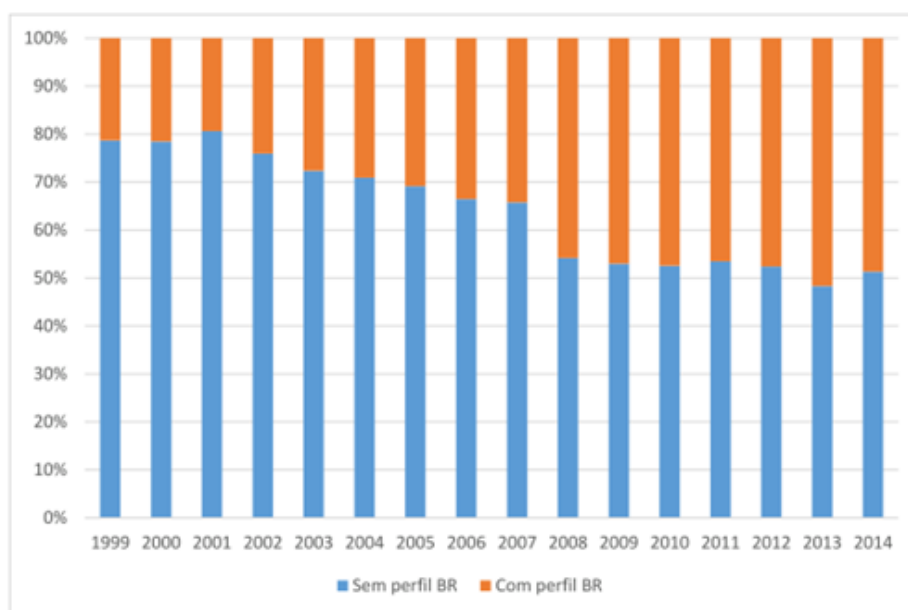


Source: CAF Annual Report, 2016

Graph 2. Students at UFRGS by self-declaration (black, brown, and indigenous - PPI)



Source: CAF Annual Report, 2016

Graph 3. Students at UFRGS with low-income profile (BR)

Source: CAF Annual Report, 2016

According to the CAF report, the largest number of students from private schools was 2,046 in 1998, while students from public schools totaled 1,409. The data change over time, especially after the implementation of affirmative action. In 2014, for example, there were 2,603 entering students who studied in private school and 2,881 entering students who came from public school. This scenario is also replicated in the other access modalities. Regarding the access of students with low income, the CAF estimates that there was an increase of 10 to 15 percentage points in the gross rate of students enrolled through this modality. As for self-declared enrollment, the changes have been more subtle. In 2004, there were 4,044 non-self-declared IPP entering students and 269 self-declared students. In 2014, there were 4,496 non-self-declared students and 956 self-declared students.

With the change in the profile of students linked to the university, a new problem arises. The quota policy contributes to guarantee access to the university; however, it is necessary to analyze the entry of the quota holder in the university environment. This insertion process becomes a fruitful object of analysis because, historically, a university environment was structured that, according to data from the CAF, was mostly white, from a public coming from private school and with a low-income profile. In this study, we denote this historically situated public as an elitist public, since access to higher education was restricted, in majority terms, to a specific student profile.

For this article, it is understood that the curricula of university courses are historically designed for this elitist audience. This bias comes from the concept of curriculum, which is defined as a portion of culture, which is the result of a selection of content and practices that, because they are considered relevant in a historical moment, become schooling (VEIGANETO, 2002). It should be noted that the selection of these portions leads to the exclusion of other elements and other cultures (DA SILVA, 2016).

On one side there is the curriculum, which is historically determined. On the other, there is a new public, which gained access to the university through the affirmative action policy. These new students have a habitus, which can be defined as a principle that generates durable dispositions, which, inculcated from an objective condition, tend to produce practices that reproduce the condition that generated them (BOURDIEU, 2007a). In other words, experience from a specific social position engenders perception and appreciation schemes that guide the action of individuals. Therefore, the habitus comes from the original class position of the individual, that is, the way of perceiving social reality is relationally situated with the material, cultural and symbolic conditions of the subjects.

Therefore, the portions of culture established through the university curriculum are selected with an elitist focus. However, with the advent of affirmative action, new cultures are entering the university environment. This new public has a habitus, which relates its perception and appreciation scheme to its material, cultural, and symbolic conditions. Based on this relationship between a historically situated curriculum and the habitus of the new students, the following question is raised: how do the quota holders of UFRGS perceive the curriculum of their course?

The first section is theoretical and aims to contextualize the curriculum theory. Although he does not reference the term curriculum in his works, Pierre Bourdieu contributes to these studies by theorizing about how school institutions influence the social reproduction of classes. Finally, the section develops the concept of habitus in order to situate it as a means of curriculum perception. The second part develops the methodological path of the study. After that, the context of the agenda and implementation of affirmative action in Brazil and in the UFRGS is referenced. Entering the empirical field, there is a section that develops a contextualization of the interviewees, which includes the family, family income and school trajectory until entering the university. Next, the article presents the students' perception about the curriculum of their courses. Finally, a concluding section is undertaken.

2 Curriculum and habitus: selection and reproduction

The curriculum approach used in this article aims to understand how, at different times, the curriculum is defined (SILVA, 2016). The guiding question, therefore, comes from the understanding of what is considered important to be inserted as part of the curricula. This approach dialogues with the concept used by Alfredo Veiga Neto, who defines the curriculum as a portion of culture, which is the result of a selection of contents and practices that, because they are considered relevant in a historical moment, become schooling (VEIGA-NETO, 2002).

Therefore, it is understood that the curriculum is a selection, and this presupposes, in another way, exclusions. When undertaking a curriculum that forms the subjects, other types of formation are excluded. Thus, these selections are understood through a perspective of power (LOPES, 2014), whose consequence is to share a sense of what is right when selecting what should be taught. Lopes (2014), also asserts that the selection presupposes forms of sharing of times and spaces. In other words, what should be taught needs to be ordered in a

time and a space, which presupposes a matrix to be followed within a certain timecard. Finally, this selection needs to be evaluated (LOPES, 2014), which relates the curriculum to evaluation.

Given the first premise that the curriculum is a selection and that this presupposes exclusions, it is possible to develop what curriculum studies (SILVA, 2016) categorize as critical studies. These constitute a critique of schooling against the republican idea that school would be an instrument of egalitarian socialization, which presupposes the curriculum composition as a technical and neutral choice. For this article, we will use the critical look within curriculum studies based on Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron's studies. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1992) what is taught in schools helps in the mechanisms of social reproduction. This understanding is based on the premise that school institutions reproduce the cultural codes of the dominant classes (BOURDIEU, PASSERON, 1992). The children of the dominant class possess a series of capitals² that are valued by the school institution, which conditions them to have greater chances of success in the educational path (BOURDIEU, 2007b). The idea of reproduction comes from the fact that children from popular classes do not have a command of these codes valued by school institutions, since the selection of what is privileged in school excludes the capitals of popular classes. Therefore, the chance of success is greater for the children of the dominant class, and children from popular classes have a greater probability of school failure.

What legitimizes this selection of dominant codes is the fact that school institutions consider themselves neutral, however, they are not, because they impose a system of arbitrary codes that reproduce the codes of the dominant culture (BOURDIEU, PASSERON, 1992). In other words, school institutions have a political function, since they legitimize a previously constructed order by selecting what should be taught.

This legitimation process happens by imposing the act of inculcation of symbolic violence (BOURDIEU, PASSERON, 1992). This has the function of legitimizing discourses, categories, decisions, practices, and even institutions (BOURDIEU, 2008), and legitimacy is given by the ignorance of the violence that created it. The ignorance concerns the concealment of the power relations that underlie the symbolic violence (TERRAY, 2005). With this, school success and failure are legitimized, because the closer the student is to the dominant code, the greater the chance of success in the school environment.

² Bourdieu uses the notion of capital as a variable that indicates the level of inequality concerning the distribution of social space. Capital, for the author, is not restricted to economic capital, but refers to a list of elements valued within the social spectrum. According to the author (1998), there are four forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Still according to the author (BOURDIEU, 2011), the cultural capital has three states: the objectified, the incorporated, and the institutionalized. The objectified capital refers to the possession of material objects, such as paintings, books, etc. The incorporated cultural capital is the mechanism that translates a specific way of acting and behaving. Finally, the institutionalized cultural capital refers to the institutionally sanctioned capital, such as, for example, titles and diplomas

These instruments of reproduction are not only institutional, but also personal, because the objective conditions influence the subjective possibilities. In other words, the social position, which is situated by a class division, guides the subject's possibilities. Thus, the perception and appreciation of what is possible or not is intertwined with the sociocultural conditions of the subjects (BOURDIEU, 2008). To analyze this phenomenon, Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus*.

For the author, *habitus* is a principle that generates durable dispositions, which, inculcated from an objective condition, tend to produce practices that reproduce the condition that generated them (BOURDIEU, 2007a). In other words, the experience from a specific social position engenders perception and appreciation schemes that guide the action of subjects (BOURDIEU, 2008). What is possible is perceived from a specific social position. A practical example is the distinction between the musical tastes of the popular class and the dominant class. While the former tends to listen to popular music, the latter is more likely to listen to classical music, since, since it is considered high culture, this taste tends to be considered a distinctive code of the dominant class. Therefore, only one class has the appreciation schemes to incorporate the dominant code. According to the author, the *habitus* functions as:

Principles generating distinctive and distinctive practices - what the worker eats, and especially his way of eating, the sport he practices and his way of practicing it, his political opinions, and his way of expressing them differ systematically from the consumption or corresponding activities of the industrial entrepreneur; but they are also classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division of different tastes. They establish the differences between what is good and bad, between good and evil, between what is distinctive and vulgar etc. (BOURDIEU, 2008, p.22).

Thus, the *habitus* is a principle that guides the social categories of perception and appreciation about possibilities. In this sense, the positions express different ways of perceiving society. The possible choices, then, are given through an objective condition, and it is through them that the social position is reinforced. I choose what is possible because of my position, and this reinforces it. The perception of the social world, then, comes from an encounter between the objective position and the subjective vision:

The perception of the social world is the product of a double social structuring: on the <<objective>> side, it is socially structured because the authorities attached to agents or institutions do not offer themselves to perception independently, but in very unequal probability combinations (and just as there are more probabilities that feathered animals are the ones with wings than furred animals, so there are more probabilities that museum visitors are the ones with strong cultural capital than the ones devoid of it); on the <<subjective>> side, it is structured because the schemes of perception and appreciation likely to be used at the moment under consideration, and especially those that are sedimented in language, are the product of previous symbolic struggles and express, in a more or less transformed form, the state of symbolic power relations. (BOURDIEU, 1998, p. 139 and 140).

Besides, perceiving what possibly makes the subject naturalize his social condition. If the individual perceives an environment as not aimed at him -such as a museum or a university-, he will soon tacitly accept the order mediated by the objective condition, that is, he will accept as natural the access or non-access to the place. According to the author:

The sense of position as a sense of what one can or cannot <<allow oneself>> implies a tacit acceptance of the position, a sense of the limits (<<this is not for us>>) or, what is the same thing, a sense of the distances, to mark and to sustain, to respect and to have respected - and this, no doubt, all the more firmly the more rigorous is the imposition of the principle of reality (BOURDIEU, 1998, p. 141).

Therefore, for this article, it is understood that the university is arranged as a school institution that historically exercised mechanisms of social reproduction due to the elitist public that had access to the institution. Such premise dialogues with the literature on the relationship between higher education institutions and the implementation of affirmative action (ANHAIA, 2013; BARROS, 2009; CARRIERI, ESPÍNDOLA, 2012; NEVES, 2013; NEVES, ANHAIA, 2014; KERN, 2011; MARTINS, 2014; SILVA, 2019). However, with the advent of affirmative action, a new public enters. This one has a distinct habitus when compared to the elitist public that had access to HEIs. If the curriculum was a selection of culture in order to contemplate the public that had chances of entering higher education, we must now understand how the quota holders perceive, based on their habitus, the curricula of their courses. However, before undertaking this analysis, it is necessary to situate the context of the implementation of affirmative action.

3 Context of the Agenda and the Implementation of Affirmative Action

In the reopening of democracy, the 1988 Constitution was a landmark in terms of the enactment of basic rights. It is in the Magna Carta that access to education became a right. In it, the universalization of education became a guiding principle. In basic education, for example, the Constitution states that access to education is a citizen's subjective right (BRASIL, 1998). Thus, there was an increase in the possibility of social participation through this constitutional framework, creating mechanisms that enabled a more democratic access to education.

However, legislation cannot be restricted to discursive terms since legal frameworks must be established in practice. When the subject is education, the access gap becomes a problem to implement citizens' prerogatives. Longitudinal data indicate such an obstacle. Research by the Institute for Applied Economic³ Research affirms that, in the year 2000, the gross rate of people over 25 with less than 4 years of schooling⁴ reached 25.2% for the white population. As for the black population, the inequality was more discrepant, since it reached a gross rate of 43.5% of self-declared black people.

³ Institute for Applied Economic Research. Ipeadata: available at <www.ipeadata.gov.br>. Consulted in Dec 2020.

⁴ People over 25 and with less than 4 years of education comprise the functional illiterate category.

This educational inequality was the core of the discussions about affirmative action, which is defined as a set of policies that aim to protect and increase the opportunities of discriminated groups (OLIVEN, 2007). Thus, the discourse that aimed to ensure more inclusion in access to education also sought equality in the entry of groups that, historically, had no access to higher education. Therefore, affirmative action gradually gained space in the Brazilian public agenda.

It is possible to highlight three movements that reinforced the formation of the affirmative action policy agenda: initiatives from the field of power, the demands of social movements, and the influence of international agendas. Here, agenda is understood in the sense attributed by Capella and Brazil (2022), that is, as the set of issues on which the government and people connected to it focus their attention at a given moment. In consonance, affirmative action may be considered a public policy instrument in the sense attributed by Lima et al (2021), who consider instruments as identifiable methods by which collective action is structured to deal with a public problem. Or still, according to the authors, they are devices that guide behavior toward certain goals. In this way, they constitute the rules of the game, institutions that align public action. In a behavioral perspective, the instruments are the incentives or disincentives created in the design to ensure that the target groups act according to the policy objectives (LIMA ET AL. 2021).

In the field of power, an important step was the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government (1994-2002) admitting that Brazil is a racist country (NEVES, 2014), demystifying the idea of racial equality. The international agenda also fostered the racial debate in Brazil. At the III World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which took place in Durban in 2001, Brazil positioned itself in favor of public policies that sought to end discrimination against certain social groups (OLIVEN, 2007).

Furthermore, there is the contribution of social movements, which fostered discussions in the public sphere. According to Santos (2007), the black movement played a fundamental role in the struggle to democratize access to higher education, since part of its demands were institutionalized by means of public policies. Although the discussion about quotas initially encompassed the ethno-racial issue, it gradually began to encompass socioeconomic questions.

The institutionalization of affirmative action can be divided into two phases. The first concerns isolated initiatives that were formulated by state and municipal laws and by the higher education institutions' boards of directors. These initiatives were adopted in the following way: through social and racial quotas, racial quotas, social quotas and/or by adding bonuses in the vestibular note⁵ (MORCHE, NEVES, 2010).

⁵ It is worth pointing out that the social criteria refer to income, public school graduation and/or being handicapped. The racial criteria, on the other hand, are related to ethno-racial self-declaration. Finally, the bonus of the vestibular score aims to add a bonus to the final vestibular score.

The second phase can be delimited in 2012, when affirmative action, during the government of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), became law. That year, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) approved the constitutionality of affirmative action. Through Law No. 12,711 (BRASIL, 2012), it is mandatory that 50% of vacancies in federal universities and institutes⁶ be reserved for students who completed their entire basic education in public schools, dividing these 50% of vacancies among people with incomes of up to 1.5 minimum wages per month (25%) and income equal to or higher than 1.5 minimum wages per month (25%). The reserve by self-declaration, in turn, is based on the population percentage of the region where the HEI is located. This reserve covers income below, equal to, or above 1.5 minimum wages. For the disabled, there is a reserve of 5% of the vacancies.

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⁶ The law stated that, by 2016, a minimum of 50% of the vacancy offer should be reached for affirmative actions.

region where the HEI is located. This reserve covers income below, equal to, or above 1.5 minimum wages. For the disabled, there is a reserve of 5% of the vacancies.

3.1 The Process of Implementing Affirmative Action at UFRGS

The implementation of affirmative action, as noted above, is the result of a context that aimed to guarantee access to higher education, which would mitigate some inequalities related to educational aspects. Despite being inserted in this context, there are singularities concerning UFRGS, and this section aims to contextualize the implementation and current situation of affirmative action in this HEI.

The first step towards the implementation of affirmative action at UFRGS was taken in 2006, when the then rector, Prof. José Carlos Ferraz Hennemann, published Ordinance No. 3,222. Later, the proposal would be forwarded to the University Council (CONSUN), which would have the function of approving or disapproving it.

Before political debates that involved representatives, interlocutors and leaders of social movements, student activists, administrative technicians, and teachers (BUENO, 2015), the approval only occurred in 2007⁷, when the CONSUN approved the proposal through Decision No. 134/2007. This, according to its Article 1, established the affirmative action program at UFRGS, having as target audience of the vacancy's reservation students from public schools and self-declared black students who were graduates of public schools. The objectives of the Decision, according to its Article 2, were

- I - Expanding the access in all undergraduate courses and technical courses offered by UFRGS for candidates egressing from the Public System of Basic and High School and for self-declared black candidates egressing from the Public System of Basic and High School, through qualification in the Vestibular Competition and in the selective processes of technical courses;
- II - Promoting ethno-racial and social diversity in the university environment;
- III - Supporting students, teachers, and administrative technicians to promote, in the different areas of university life, education on ethnic-racial relations;
- IV- Develop actions aiming at supporting the permanence in the University of the students referred to in Art. 1 by means of maintenance and orientation conditions for their adequate development and pedagogical improvement.

The distribution of vacancies for students from public schools and self-declared black students who were graduates of public schools followed the following distribution: 30% of the vacancies were destined for students from public schools, and 15% of these were directed to access by ethnic-racial criteria (GRISA, 2009). According to Bueno (2015), all candidates for the reserved places should go through the institutional rite of entry, that is, it was necessary to take the vestibular. This means that each candidate needed to be within the cut-off score of the chosen course. In addition, the candidate would compete for the vacancies of the universal access, and if the score was not enough, he or she would start competing from the vacancy reserve. It is worth mentioning that a vacancy reserve was also established for

⁷ Despite being from 2007, the vestibular only started to adopt the affirmative action program in 2008.

indigenous people. In all, 10 vacancies were available. The courses that would fill these vacancies were chosen by indigenous leaders.

Decision No. 134/2007 was valid for 5 years. In 2012, the conclusive evaluation of the program would be discussed. From this process, the affirmative action program could be renewed at the institutional level. In August 2012, the CONSUN approved the Decision that regulated the renewal of the affirmative action program at UFRGS (ANHAIA, 2019). However, due to the approval of the Quotas Law at the federal level, CONSUN needed to make changes in the Decision, since it should be adequate to the law.

Thus, Decision No. 268/2012 was instituted, which regulates the second quota cycle (BUENO, 2015). The Decision came into force in the year 2013 and will be valid until 2022. Unlike the previous Decision, there is a progressive increase in the reservation of vacancies. According to the 2016 report of the Affirmative Action Program Monitoring Coordination (CAF), in compliance with the Quotas Law, the UFRGS, in 2013 and 2014, offered 30% of its vacancies for affirmative action. In 2015 the rate increased to 40% and, as of 2016, the vacancy reserve was 50% of the total vacancies offered.

There is also a change regarding the modalities of admission. In the previous decision, it was established the cut-off by school origin and self-declaration. In the 2012 program, in addition to these two criteria, income was added. Thus, according to Art. 17 of Decision No. 268/2012, UFRGS has the following access modalities within the affirmative action program:

- a) Egresses from public high school with monthly gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 national minimum wage per capita.
- b) Egresses of public high school with monthly gross family income equal to or less than 1.5 national minimum wage per capita, with self-declaration record (black, brown, or indigenous).
- c) Egress of public-school graduates with a monthly income equal to or higher than 1.5 minimum national per capita wages
- d) Egress of public high school with monthly income equal to or higher than 1.5 national minimum wage per capita with self-declaration record (black, brown, or indigenous).

It can be seen that the main criterion established is school origin, considering that, in order to apply for the reserved seats, the student must have attended high school in public schools. Two points should also be highlighted: the first concerns the insertion, in 2017, of a criterion focused on disability. In this sense, a reserve of 5% of the total vacancies was included for this modality. The second point is that, following the model of the 2007 decision, 10 vacancies are reserved for indigenous people.

As we have seen, there are significant differences between the two decisions. The first reserved 30% of the total vacancies, and the categories included the school origin and ethnic/racial criteria. The second, besides reaching 50% of the total vacancies, adopts income, self-declaration, and school origin criteria. Table 3 summarizes the differences between the decisions.

Table 1. Comparison between the 2007 and 2012 Decisions

Decision No. 134/2007 CONSUN/UFRGS	Decision No. 268/2012 CONSUN/UFRGS
Term: from 2008 to 2012	Term: from 2013 to 2022
<p>Criterion - school origin, and to this is submitted the racial one.</p> <p>-30% of the vacancies are destined to quota holders. Of these, 15% are for public school graduates, and 15% for public school graduates who are self-declared blacks.</p> <p>-10 additional vacancies, in a specific selection process, for indigenous candidates.</p>	<p>Criterion - school origin, and to this criterion are submitted questions of income (lower or higher than 1.5 minimum wage per capita) and race.</p> <p>-50%, to be implemented gradually, of the vacancies for students who have studied entirely in public schools, and this percentage is distributed in 4 categories:</p> <p>a) with monthly gross family income equal to or higher than 1.5 minimum wage per capita</p> <p>b) with monthly gross family income equal to or higher than 1.5 minimum wages per capita, with a record of ethnic-racial self-declaration</p> <p>c) with a monthly gross family income of less than 1.5 minimum wages per capita</p> <p>d) with a monthly gross family income of less than 1.5 minimum wages per capita, with a record of ethnic-racial self-declaration</p>

Source: Bueno (2015)

4 Methodological Procedure

For the article, a case study was proposed. The case study is indicated when the object of study is analyzed from the context where it occurs (YIN, 2010), i.e., not separating the phenomenon from the social context. In an experimental study, for example, a certain phenomenon is isolated from its context to establish which variables determine it. The goal of this article is not to isolate the phenomenon, since an extensive list of variables - such as income, social class, teachers, workload, subjects, classmates, etc. - can influence the way the student perceives the curriculum of his or her course.

Thus, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul is taken as a case study. The choice for this institution was due to UFRGS' experience with the quota policy. Instituted in 2007, the quota policy at UFRGS is prior to the law that makes the reservation of vacancies mandatory nationwide. For this reason, the institution has a broader experience with the policy in longitudinal terms, which can be reflected in terms of the curriculum.

The choice of courses was based on their density, which is established by the ratio between the number of places offered and the number of applicants. It is understood that the most sought-after courses are those that have greater social prestige, because they become a means of social reproduction. Contemporarily, there is the phenomenon of reconversion of

economic capital into cultural capital (BOURDIEU, 2007). Instead of directly transferring material wealth⁸, cultural capital is invested, and this makes education an important means aimed at the reproduction and transformation of the hierarchical social position of the classes. However, in a context of universalization of education, there is an intensification of competition for diplomas (BOURDIEU, 2007), and this makes the most competed courses those that have the highest rarity of the diploma, which makes them a niche of reconversion for social reproduction.

At UFRGS, according to data from this HEI, medicine, daytime psychology, nighttime psychology, physiotherapy, and veterinary medicine are, respectively, the courses with the highest density⁹. Therefore, the sample was delimited from 5 quota holders entering the courses of daytime psychology, medicine, and veterinary medicine. Of these, three are daytime psychology students, one is a medical student, and one is a veterinary student. It should be noted that the length of the course and the current semester of the quota holders are diversified, as well as the gender and racial-ethnic clippings. This diversified composition aimed to reinforce the qualitative aspect in order to work with different clippings.

In order to collect the data, we used the in-depth interview technique based on a semi-structured script. The conception of in-depth interview used in this study comes from Bernard Lahire's studies. In sociological portraits (LAHIRE, 2004), the author selects a few individuals in order to analyze their social trajectories from their social nuances. In this way, it is possible to verify the points at which intersections of actors and institutions constitute the habitus of individuals. In other words, in order to analyze the present, it is necessary to regress qualitatively to the trajectory of the individual in order to verify his or her social and cultural formation.

Thus, the choice for this technique aimed the search for intensity in the answers (DUARTE, 2015), because it is understood that the perception about the curriculum permeates a significant number of variables, which comes from the social position of the individual until his entry into higher education. Thus, the interview script aimed to cover the following empirical dimensions: social position, high school, preparation for entering higher education, insertion in higher education, sociocultural experiences in the university environment, social relationships in higher education and perception of the undergraduate curriculum. These dimensions aim at the interpretation of the individual's trajectory, since the article discusses that the perception of the curriculum is related to the habitus. Thus, a

⁸ This phenomenon is analyzed in *The Distinction* (2007). The automatic transfer of patrimony, contemporarily, does not guarantee reproduction in longitudinal terms, because future gains are uncertain. Thus, strategies turn to the education system. According to the author: the reconversion of economic capital into school capital is one of the strategies that allow the business bourgeoisie to maintain the position of a part of its heirs, allowing them to take in advance a part of the benefits of industrial and commercial enterprises in the form of salary, a much more concealed - and undoubtedly safer - mode of appropriation than income (BOURDIEU, 2007b: p. 157)

⁹ In the 2020 vestibular, medicine had 6279 applicants for 98 places, daytime psychology 833 applicants for 28 places, nighttime psychology had 520 applicants for 21 places, physical therapy had 491 applicants for 21 places, and veterinary medicine had 1075 applicants for 67 places.

thematic analysis was undertaken to verify the experience of each quota-holder within these empirical dimensions.

5 From Social Position to Entry Into Higher Education: a Contextualization of the Interviewees

Due to the understanding of this work that perception is a means of manifestation of the habitus, it is understood that it is necessary to contextualize the social origin of the interviewees. The five interviewees entered through the income and public-school clipping, comprising family salaries below 1.5 minimum wages. In a racial/ethnic clipping, 4 of the 5 interviewees are self-declared black, while, from a gender perspective, 1 of the 5 interviewees is a woman. Table 2 presents these characteristics.

Table 2. Socioeconomic characteristics of the interviewees

Fictitious name	Family income	Self-declaration	Gender	Course
Marcelo	Below 1.5 minimum wage	Negro	Male	Medicine
Volnei	Below 1.5 minimum wage	Negro	Male	Day Psychology
Jorge	Below 1.5 minimum wage	Negro	Male	Day Psychology
Álvaro	Below 1.5 minimum wage	Negro	Male	Veterinary Medicine
Maria	Below 1.5 minimum wage	White	female	Day Psychology

Source: elaborated by the author

In terms of family composition, there is diversification. Maria is the daughter of divorced parents. While the mother is a servant in a school, the father had a small business, however, during the student's entry into university, it went bankrupt and had to close. The father has a college education and the mother a high school education. Marcelo is the son of workers. His mother is of Japanese descent and was a worker in Japan. His father is black and is also a worker. Currently they live in Brazil. Both have not completed high school. Volnei lived in Uruguay with his mother, but she passed away. After the fatality, he came to live in Brazil with his father. He works in construction and does not have a high school education. Jorge has no father, as he died when he was young. His mother does not work and has completed elementary school. Álvaro's mother is a housekeeper, and his father is a janitor. Both have completed elementary school.

During the interviews, it was observed that the family influenced in a positive and negative way the students' school trajectory. For Álvaro, for example, education was a way to transcend his parents' profession, because they did not want their son to have a job similar to

the ones they had. There are also the cases of Maria and Marcelo, in which the parents always supported their children to study. On the other hand, there are the cases of Volnei and Jorge. While for the latter, his mother thought that higher education was not necessary, because it was for rich people, the former had a family environment that valued work, and study was labeled as fun and leisure.

Regarding schooling, Jorge, Volnei and Álvaro finished their basic education in state public schools. Both pointed out problems related to lack of investment, such as insufficient teachers, precarious structure, and the inexistence of an environment that would stimulate studies. These obstacles were circumvented, according to the interviewees, by the figure of some teachers, who, besides being an example, encouraged the students to follow their studies. Marcelo, on the other hand, had only completed elementary school, because when he was a teenager, he lived in Japan and worked as a laborer. He only finished high school after returning to Brazil through the Youth and Adult Education Program (EJA). Maria studied at the application school of the UFRGS. Differently from the other interviewees, the student mentions that the structure of the school is different, with activities that complement the class shift, tutoring, and with the participation of several teachers, who usually come from the compulsory internships at UFRGS.

Due to the lack of structure during basic education, some students report that they had to attend pre-vestibular courses in order to enter higher education. This was the case of Marcelo, who participated in a popular pre-vestibular course and, after a year in it, got a scholarship in a private one. Volnei also participated in a popular pre-vestibular course to cover gaps left during high school, just like Jorge. To enter higher education, Álvaro did not need to take a pre-vestibular course, as did Maria. Álvaro took the vestibular several times before entering veterinary medicine, and even entered other courses before. To study, he used materials on the internet. Maria, on the other hand, according to her reports, prepared herself for the entrance to higher education at the application school, which, during the third year of high school, applied reinforcements aimed at the vestibular of the UFRGS.

It was found that there are consonances between the profiles of the interviewees. Regarding the ethnic-racial composition, only Maria declared herself white, while the 4 male students declared themselves black. The 5 interviewees reported that their family income is below 1.5 minimum wages. The majority of the students' parents have completed high school and elementary school. Maria's father is the only one with a complete college education. The level of education is reflected in the students' parents' occupations, which vary between laborers, general services assistants, housekeepers, and shopkeepers. Marcelo concluded his basic education in a public school in the EJA modality, while the others concluded theirs in a public high school. Of these, three reported structural problems in their schools, while Maria, who studied in the college of application of the UFRGS, says that her school had an excellent structure, which led her not to need preparatory courses for the vestibular. Álvaro also didn't take a pre-vestibular course, while the others emphasize the importance of this for the preparation for the selection exam.

6 Quoted Students' Perception of Course Curricula

Before going into the analysis of the perception of quota students about the curriculum, it should be noted that it is related to their habitus. This statement means that, as developed in the previous section, the social position of origin influences the students' perception schemes. Therefore, there is a significant weight on family income, schooling, and self-declaration of the quota holders. It was found that most of them are black, come from low-income families, have parents with low schooling levels, and come from a public school system that had structural problems.

The first point of connection between social origin and the perception of the curriculum is its density. According to the reports, there is a great curriculum density, which is reflected in the number of hours of the subjects and the theoretical load¹⁰. Thus, all the interviewed students affirm that there is a lot of volume to be diluted, thus fostering an environment that demands a lot from quota holders. All this constitutes a context of great pressure on the student.

The workload is extremely hard, very demanding. There are many chairs that shouldn't exist, that should be reformulated, and they aren't. This generates a certain anguish. This generates a certain anguish. You see colleagues in a bad way because of the curriculum. I am halfway through the course, but not in the course load. A lot of bad things are still ahead of me. There is pressure, and to a certain extent we need it, because we are dealing with people. But calm down, not so much. The same pressure is also required from any other course student. Total dedication is very demanding (Marcelo).

(the curriculum) is very heavy, dense with hours. To be in the day course, you need to have, practically, exclusive dedication. The workload is heavy. We have many subjects that we don't need. It is also hard to do the internship with the subjects. The negative aspect of the course is the workload. You have a very heavy reading load and end up not having time to dedicate to it (Maria).

The problem does not lie in the requirement itself, but in the relationship between density and social origin, since social status imposes certain obstacles to studies, such as, for example, the financial issue. This statement is due to the exclusive dedication to studies, which, for many, is not possible due to the family income. As verified, the per capita income of the students is below 1.5 minimum wage, which generates the need to mix the workload of studies with the workload in order to stay in the university. Consequently, there is an increase in the quota student's overload, which makes him/her perceive the curriculum as dense.

But nowadays I'm doing too much, I'm overloaded. And there is still this feeling of insecurity, that I have to do odd jobs to make money. But I read the texts at home, I read in college. Now I bought notebooks to write down the activities. To write down things from class or what I read. I try to organize myself this way to study, but I still have difficulties because of the time because of my work schedule (Volnei).

But it is kind of unfair, for a person who takes a course in the health area or in the science area, to have a full day of classes. It is a very heavy atmosphere, and it ends up becoming even boring to continue studying when you need to work. I think that the curriculum structure, in this case, could be more structured to perhaps focus on one shift and have some subjects, not every day, on the opposite shift (Álvaro).

¹⁰ This article does not intend to discuss the workload and curricular density of the courses, but to focus on the perception of the quota students about these issues.

Income is structural and influences the other spheres, such as housing. UFRGS' headquarters is located in Porto Alegre, and not all quota-eligible students have family members in this city, since many come from other locations. Of the 5 quota holders interviewed, 2 had no family in the city, and one of them was from another state. Besides, there is one case of a quota student who, despite having family in the city, is in dispute with his family and does not live with them, which generates the lack of a support network. Besides needing and maintaining housing, this student has to pay for the household expenses. For the cases mentioned, it is necessary to have a place to live, however, some do not have a house that allows them to organize their study time, and this influences, consequently, the perception of curricular density.

You know, it is difficult to live there in the student's house, I share a room, there are 400 people inside, many heads, each one with their own world view, with different systematizations, some think they don't need to study, others want to study. This ends up bothering you. Many times, I don't have the time my colleagues have to study, because I am in a situation where I can't do that (Marcelo).

According to Lopes (2014), in order to meet the curriculum objectives about what to teach, there is the need to institute an evaluation mechanism. At this point there is the second connection between the perception of curriculum and social origin, because the schooling of parents and quota holders is a key point for understanding the evaluation processes of higher education. The point of conjunction between the narratives is the fact that all the quota holders had many difficulties in the initial semesters of the course, and even had to take remedial classes. From a family perspective added to the basic schooling trajectory of the quota holders, it is possible to infer that the parents' low schooling and the structural obstacles related to basic education¹¹ schools meant that there was no incorporation of cultural capitals that are valued in higher education, which led students to have difficulties in the assessment processes.

In the first semester I had eight recuperations, but I managed to pass. But it was very exhausting. I know that in that first semester I did a lot of damage to my health, and maybe I don't notice. I took a lot of medicine, I took a lot of energy, a lot of coffee. I didn't sleep, I just stayed awake. I had one or two tests a day, I had to deal with everything (Marcelo).

And the pressure is very heavy, even when it comes to grades. Like, the average is 7. It is exhausting to beat the average. In department meetings I tell us to take it easy. We want to form good professionals and not ruin this person's health. How contradictory it is to have a sick health professional. Like, one sick person treating another. We have a curriculum that, in parts, contributes to this (Marcelo).

In addition to curriculum density and assessment, another meeting point between perception about curriculum and social position is curriculum composition. As developed, the curriculum can be defined as a portion of culture. Its composition is the result of a selection, and this, in turn, presupposes exclusions. Since it is, historically, a predominantly white environment, aimed at a public of high income and private school graduates, the university curriculum was not built in a way to embrace the diverse cultures. The public that entered with the advent of affirmative action perceives this selection. Even the interviewees affirm that the contribution of the quota holders and their cultures are excluded from the educational processes.

¹¹ The data on the trajectory of schooling in basic education were developed in section 5 of this article.

People from the periphery have a life baggage that is not in books, which is not considered, and can contribute a lot. I work at the clinic hospital, I help as a student, and most of the patients come from this socioeconomic condition, they go through difficulties. You have to understand their life, it is part of empathy. If you can put yourself in this person's place, you will be able to provide better care, you will understand them. You don't understand the person only as a sick person because it is easy, if you are sick, you give the medicine and go away, but if you put yourself in the person's place and try to analyze, this is much more important. And the quotas bring this, which we didn't have before in the university. It makes this interaction possible. I create conflicts that I didn't have before (Marcelo).

According to the report, despite the exclusion of other worldviews, the admission of quota holders allowed the creation of spaces of tension, because the interaction between the institution and the quota holder students allows room for change. The opening of the university to a new public opened the possibility of creating tension, something that contributes to the construction of a more plural institution. And conflict, according to Michael Apple in *Ideology and Curriculum* (APPLE, 2016), results in mechanisms of resistance against reproduction in school institutions.

But from the people coming in, I think the people coming in are intending for change to happen. People have started coming in with other knowledge and speaking from other places. This is causing the professors and the university to rethink. But this is very much for the demands, to show that there are several types of students in relation to the profile that existed before (Jorge).

For not being a public that historically entered the university, it was found that the perception of the curriculum of university courses made students view a selection of culture that was not aimed at them, and this is due to the habitus, which generates perception schemes about the world from the social position of origin. However, as the quota-holding public enters, the conflict increases, which makes change possible. Instead of the habitus conditioning the student not to perceive the university as an environment geared toward the public with a quota, which is transposed in curricular terms, it is a link of resistance between social origin and institutional tension. Social position, then, is a bridge for change.

7 Final Considerations

The article discussed the perception of the curricula of the courses at UFRGS with greater density between demand and supply. It is understood that, especially in these courses, the university historically embraced an elitist public, since few had the privilege of accessing this institution. With the advent of affirmative action, a diversified public has entered. This is made up of students who come from public schools, low-income students, self-declared black and indigenous students. This public has a habitus, which is the result of the social position it occupies in a system stratified by social classes. Perception, then, results from this habitus, while the curriculum is historically situated to form an elite.

It was found that the formulation of the habitus comes from variables intrinsic to the subjects' social position. In the empirical field, all interviewees reported that the family's per capita income was less than 1.5 minimum wages. The parents, in turn, had few years of

education, often not completing high school. As for the schooling of the quota holders, one student concluded basic education in the EJA modality. Of the remaining 4 who completed their basic education in high schools, 3 reported problems related to the structure of the educational institutions. Finally, 3 students had to take pre-vestibular courses in order to enter UFRGS.

These conditions, therefore, influenced the perception about the curriculum of the courses, and there are three points that reinforce this argument. The first is curriculum density. The low family income conditions the students to mix a routine of studies and work, and this generates wear and tear. On the other hand, there is housing. Since it is impossible to live with their parents or because they do not have financial support from them, the quota holder student must subject himself to housing that, sometimes, does not help him organize his studies. Therefore, the curriculum is perceived as dense. The second point is the evaluation, which is instituted in order to verify the progress of the curricular objectives. Thus, it is possible to infer that schooling - both of parents and students - influences the way the evaluation processes are perceived. The initial difficulty with evaluations is due, to a certain extent, to the structural obstacles of basic education and the parents' few years of study, which reflect in the non-incorporation of capitals valued in the university environment. Finally, the third point concerns the curricular selection, which, being a portion of culture, excludes certain cultures and experiences, and this is perceived by the quota holder students.

Although the quota holders state that the curriculum excludes experiences and cultures, perceiving it as dense and having, especially at the beginning of the course, difficulties with the evaluation processes, there are reports that reinforce the aspect of change. This occurs due to the entrance of a new public, which stresses the university environment. As there is conflict, there is a gradual institutional change. The habitus, therefore, causes the perceptual aspect to be permeated by exclusions in curricular terms. However, instead of perceiving the university environment as not geared toward quota holders, the quota holder student glimpses, upon entering the university, a possibility of structural change, which is anchored in the experience and social position of this student. Regarding the implementation of the quota policy, it is important that political actors in decision-making positions consider the specificities of the target audience in order to design more effective instruments to achieve the policy's objective.

The article is restricted to the curricular perception; however, based on the conclusions it is possible to outline some challenges for the field of higher education studies. First of all, there is a need to investigate the empirical reality through an actionist bias. In what ways are agendas about institutional changes put into practice by social movements inside higher education institutions? In a second step, it is necessary to analyze institutional change. How have the organizational structures of higher education institutions been organized after the advent of affirmative action? In other words, how are the demands of quota holders met in terms of institutional organization? On the one hand, there is a vast field to be explored by

studies on social movements. On the other, there are empirical possibilities that can be analyzed in light of theories about public administration and institutions.

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