

# Equality through unequal measures?

A study on how young inhabitants of Morro do Macaco perceive and experience the quota system at the university.



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A study on how young inhabitants of Morro do Macaco perceive and experience the quota system at the university.

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## **Abstract**

Education is being seen as a fundamental human right. Yet, in the unequal Brazilian society many poor citizens don't have access to quality basic education. The lack of quality basic education leads to less prospects in finding a quality job, less chance of entering higher education and diminishes the possibilities for further development in general. Therefore education is being seen as the key out of poverty and social exclusion. In order to create more equality and to give more citizens the opportunity to enter higher education the Brazilian government has decided to implement affirmative action on public universities. Public universities have to reserve a percentage of their posts (quotas) for students from disadvantaged groups. This thesis answers the question if the beneficiaries see the quota system as measure that reduces social exclusion within higher education and if and to what extend this affirmative action policy is a valid measure to reduce inequality and lift people out of poverty? This question is answered by young inhabitants of Morro do Macaco, since they are being seen as a disadvantaged group in society and therefore are relevant for the quota system. They state that the quota system does give them the opportunity to enter university, yet, the quota system will not be the answer on the long run. The answer is the improvement of the bad quality public basic education. This is according to my informants the core of the problem of poverty and exclusion.

## Glossary

<i>Baile funk:</i>	Dance street parties in <i>comunidades</i>
<i>Boca de fumo:</i>	Drugs selling point
<i>Carioca:</i>	Inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro
<i>Cotista:</i>	Quota student
<i>Comunidade:</i>	Favela or Brazilian 'slum'
<i>Cursinho:</i>	Short course
<i>Cursinho pre- vestibular:</i>	A short course that prepares for the university entrance exam
<i>Educação para afrodescendentes e carentes (Educafro):</i>	Education for African descendents and the poor
<i>Pardo:</i>	Brown (skincolor)
<i>Quilombo:</i>	Brazilian hinterland settlement of escaped slaves. The <i>Quilombo</i> is being seen as a form of active slave resistance.
<i>Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ):</i>	State university of Rio de Janeiro
<i>Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ):</i>	Federal university of Rio de Janeiro
<i>Universidade do Brasilia (UNB):</i>	University of Brasilia
<i>Vestibular:</i>	Entrance exam

## Preface

In my perspective Rio de Janeiro is life through a magnifying glass. A city of contrasts. Where laughter and pain go hand in hand. Where poverty is seen next to extreme richness. Where the beautiful beaches are situated next to ugly buildings. Where people celebrate life in the night and get up the next morning to work hard in order to get a better life. Rio de Janeiro covers all aspects of life; good and bad. Unfortunately the media often only covers the negative aspects of this city and therefore the city has a reputation for being a dangerous and violent place. Yet, this is just one side of the city and during my stay of three months I haven't experienced any dangerous situation. The *cariocas* (inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro) have received me so warm and friendly. The city and its inhabitants will always have a special place in my heart.

My research in Rio de Janeiro would not have been the same without the help and support of so many people. First, the persons I need to thank most are all my informants. Without you my research would not have been possible. First, I want to thank all the students that helped me from *pre-vestibular* Viva Vila Isabel. Second, Roberto; your information about how you experience being a quota student was so useful: thank you! Third, I would like to thank all the persons from institutions like Educafro and the UERJ for receiving and helping me with so much kindness. Last, I want to thank two persons specifically: Andre and Caninde. Andre; without your help my research would have been completely different. Many thanks for introducing me to quota students, for showing me around at the UERJ and for all the pleasant and informative conversations we had. Caninde: '*meu heroi*' (my hero). I do not have enough space to write what I'm thankful for: so just thank you for everything. You are really my hero; an example to your children and the society. I will never forget you.

Further I would like to thank the girls with whom I've shared a house in Botafogo; without you my stay would have been halve as pleasant. Thanks to my friends in Holland for all your support! Of course, I need to thank my supervisor Kees Koonings for all the feedback which took my research and thesis to a higher level. Thank you for your positive and kind spirit!

Last, but not least I want to thank my mother and brother. You are the two most important persons in my life. I'm the luckiest girl in the world for having you as my mother and brother.

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## Introduction

Caninde looks, with his glasses and braces, just like a regular university student. Yet, appearances can be deceiving, since Caninde is a quota student living in the *comunidade*<sup>1</sup> Morro do Macaco. He grew up in a violent and poor environment, always dreaming of pursuing a university education. For a long time he was not able to study, since he would not be able to support himself or his children financially. Four years ago, when he was 33, he got a part-time flexible job. This job gave him the opportunity to pursue his dream and apply at the university. When he announced to his parents (with whom he lives after the break up with his ex) that he wanted to study he did not get much support. According to his parents he needed to support himself, his children and his family financially and therefore studying would not be a good idea. Despite all those obstacles Caninde decided to go to the university after all and applied for a (social) quota. Due to the quota system he managed to pass the university entrance exam the third time. At the university he did have to get used to higher education, since he did not have the right pre-education. These days Caninde is an almost graduated law student and his family is very proud of him. Caninde hopes that in the future he can use his education to change things in his life and in his *comunidade*.

I've started my introduction with the example of Caninde for two reasons. First, since he was my most important informant and therefore will be mentioned many times in my thesis. Second, since his example covers many important aspects of my thesis. One very important aspect is that Caninde is a quota student at the university. Since 2001 state public universities started to reserve a percentage of their posts (quotas) for students from disadvantage groups. The university I focus on is the UERJ (*Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* or State University of Rio de Janeiro), which reserves 20% of their post for black and *pardo* students (racial quota), 20% for students from public schools (social quota and 5% indigenous and disabled students. The quota system and affirmative action policies in general are often the centre of debate and criticism. However, the voice of the target group of affirmative action policies is often missing in this debate. In my opinion one can only truly understand and create an opinion of affirmative action policies, here the quota system, if one listens to the voices of the target group themselves. Therefore, my thesis lets the silent voices speak. The voices in my thesis are the voices of young inhabitants of a *comunidade*. As the example of Caninde already has shown, I use the case study of Morro do Macaco; a *comunidade* in the north zone of Rio de Janeiro. This is a relevant research group for the quota system, since inhabitants of *comunidades* in general belong to

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<sup>1</sup> I have decided to use the term *comunidade* instead of *favela*. A lot of authors do use the term *favela*, yet during my research I noticed that the word *favela* has a negative connotation. Therefore I use the term which is also being used by the inhabitants.

disadvantaged groups in Brazilian society. *Comunidades* and their inhabitants can be seen as symbols of poverty and social exclusion (Perlman, 2010). For generations the inhabitants suffer from the lack of quality education, quality healthcare, proper housing and so on. Yet, fortunately since the administration of Lula, there is some progress being seen in Brazil. The minimum wage has increased and millions of people were lifted from poverty into the middle class. There has been a significant progress towards a welfare state (Moreis & Saad- Filho 2011, 31-39) Despite these developments Brazil still is one of the most unequal countries in the world (Moreis & Saad- Filho 2011). This inequality is still being seen in the educational system. The primary and secondary public education available to the poor is of very bad quality. Private education in Brazil is of very good quality, yet remains unaffordable to the poor. Caninde also attended a public school and according to him this is not a good preparation for university. The bad quality primary education can be seen as an obstacle to attain higher education. So, despite the many changes in Brazil, the primary educational system has not been improved. Yet, affirmative action policies, here the quota system, can be seen as a development or change in Brazil to attack social exclusion within higher education.

Affirmative action policies are often implemented in the area of education, since education is often being seen as a path out of poverty and social exclusion according to researchers and policy makers (Perlman, 2010: 229; Melo, 2002: 365). A very important outcome of my research is that my informants also see education as an major factor in poverty alleviation. Therefore, the goal of my research is to provide an insight in if my informants see the quota system as a measure that reduces social exclusion within higher education and if this affirmative action policy is a valid measure to reduce inequality and lift people out of poverty? To answer this question it is important to understand if my informants perceive the quota system as an opportunity to enter university and if they experience the quota system as a inclusive measure. This resulted in the following research question; *How do young inhabitants of a comunidade perceive and experience the quota system on higher education in Rio de Janeiro?* A short preview to the answer is that despite the new measures to include the marginalized, the young inhabitants of the *comunidade* are very critical and keep on addressing that the real measure to attack exclusion and poverty is not implemented yet. They do acknowledge the new developments, but state: *'now it's better, but not the best.'*<sup>2</sup> My thesis will explain why.

### **Research group and methodology**

To answer my research question I have conducted field research in Rio de Janeiro from February until May 2011. In order to get a full understanding of how inhabitants of a *comunidade* in Rio de Janeiro

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<sup>2</sup> Statement of Caninde, 23-03-2011. It represents the opinion of many of my informants.

perceive and experience the quota system I have divided my research population in two groups. The first group, including Caninde, are inhabitants of a *comunidade* already attaining higher education as quota students. This group answers part of my research question namely how they *experience* the quota system. Further, they partly answer the question how my research group *perceives* the quota system. Partly because logically inhabitants of a *comunidade* are not all attending university. To get a broader perspective of how my research group *perceives* the quota system, my second group are inhabitants not yet attending university (yet, with the desire to study). Conducting my research with those two groups has given me a broader understanding of how my research group perceives the quota system.

Conducting field work is a very flexible activity and things do not always turn out as planned. This was also the case during my fieldwork. I started my fieldwork in the *comunidade* Santa Marta, where I wanted to find informants not yet at university. Yet, the location of my research changed after I was introduced to Caninde (as written in the introduction, a resident of Morro do Macaco). Caninde became my key informant and helped me enormously with my research. An example was that Caninde used to be a coordinator of *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel* (a short course that prepares for the entrance exam for a public university). He took me there and introduced me to the students. This *pre-vestibular* became the most important place to find students that have the desire to attain higher education. Further, Caninde also introduced me to quota students at the UERJ (*Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* or State University of Rio de Janeiro). (The UERJ was the first and long time the only university in Rio de Janeiro to apply the quota system.) All the informants that Caninde introduced me to were from Morro do Macaco. My research thus became a case study of Morro do Macaco.

Yet, besides the help of Caninde there were more factors related to my choice of Morro do Macaco instead of Santa Marta. Santa Marta can be seen as an unique *comunidade*, since it was the first to be pacified. This made Santa Marta a hype and it's now overloaded with social projects and tourists. Morro do Macaco is just recently pacified and I have not come across any social project or tourist. The living conditions in Morro do Macaco are also of a lower quality than Santa Marta. The problems of poverty and social exclusion are therefore still more visible in Morro do Macaco. Further, the location of Morro do Macaco is also very interesting since it is closely located to the UERJ. The location and the issue of poverty and exclusion made Morro do Macaco a more interesting location for my research.

In my thesis I do not focus on Santa Marta, however I did use some general information I have gained during my research in Santa Marta in this thesis. An example is the visit to a public and private school close to Santa Marta, as will be described in chapter two. I do not regret my start in Santa Marta, since it gave me a broader insight of *comunidades* in Rio de Janeiro in general. Further I have also spoken to other informants like Andre, a non quota student from Leblon and persons from a

black movement and the UERJ. Therefore, my thesis is indeed based on a case- study of Morro do Macaco, but it also contains some more general aspects that exceed the boundaries of Morro do Macaco.

Shortly, I want to add that *comunidades* are often being seen as dangerous places to conduct research. Yet, I need to state that both of the *comunidades* in which I did my research were pacified. As I will show in chapter 1 and 2 the pacification has a great impact on life in the *comunidades*; for me it meant that I could conduct my research safely in these areas.

During my research I have used various qualitative research methods. However, informal conversations and interviews were most important in my research. The semi- structured interviews I mainly used during formal interviews with persons from various institutions like a public school, the university and a black movement, but also during my visits to *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*. Further, I have also had a lot of informal conversations with my informants, like Caninde and Andre. Caninde had provided me with so much information during our walks through Morro do Macaco and the UERJ. The conversations with Andre, a non quota student from Leblon, provided me with information about how a non- quota student experiences the quota system, how the various students interact at university and gave me insight into class difference. In daily life I have also had informal conversations about the quota system with various inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro. This way I could get a view of the general opinion regarding the quota system.

Lastly, I have also used the method of (participant) observation at various situations. First, I have visited Morro do Macaco multiple times. Here I could observe among others in what kind of conditions the inhabitants live and I was able to connect my observations to the concepts of social exclusion and poverty. Second, I have visited secondary schools and *cursinho pre- vestibulares*. Here I have observed the conditions of the building, the atmosphere, the interaction of the students, what is being discussed during a class and so on. Lastly, I have observed Caninde at the UERJ interacting with other students. Those various methodologies, at various places and with various people have provided me with in depth information in order to answer my research question.

### **Relevance of my theoretical approach**

Social exclusion and poverty are the main concepts in this thesis, because affirmative action policies in the area of education have the intention to beat social exclusion and poverty, especially in the medium and long run. As stated before and as will be stated many times in my thesis: policy makers and social scientists see education as a path out of poverty and social exclusion (Perlman, 2010: 229; Melo, 2002: 365). I will explain the theoretical relevance of education for social exclusion and poverty alleviation. Education is linked to economic, social and human aspects necessary for development and is therefore considered a basic human right (Khan and Williams, 2006: 2). It is necessary for economic

development, since education in the industrialized world is the base for employment and good earnings (Cireno- Fernandes, 2004). Yet, poverty and development are not only related to economic factors. Poverty is defined by Sen (1992, in Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997: 416) as a lack of capabilities or choices in life. The dimensions of poverty cover different aspects of human capabilities: economic, human (health, education), political, socio- cultural (dignity, status) and protective (risk, insecurity). The lack of these capabilities or opportunities can be seen as a form of dehumanization and oppression that makes it impossible to fulfill ones potential (Perlman, 2010: 323). If a person has access to education this obviously influences the human capabilities positively. Yet, education can also influence other aspects of poverty like dignity and status, since education in the industrialized world is a marker for status. This shows that education has the potential to attack various aspects of poverty. Education is therefore often an important item in development programs, especially primary education. Despite the fact that primary education is still being seen as an important factor in the reduction of poverty, there has been a slight change in the recognition of the importance of higher education. For a long time higher education was being seen a luxury good in developing countries. The new view is that, far from being a luxury, higher education is essential in poverty alleviation. Higher education provides expertise to all sectors of society and therefore must be part of a poverty reduction strategy. The report by 'United Nations Millennium Project Task Force' states: *'there is no way that the world can succeed in the eradication of poverty if the developing world is not part of knowledge creation'* (cited in Khan and Williams, 2006: 2).

Social exclusion is a concept related to poverty. It reflects the process that leads to poverty, inequality and marginalization (Gaticúa, 2001:13). Social exclusion can be described as the exclusion of a certain group from different institutions like education and health provision. Important is that the exclusion is not only based on economic means, but also on the characteristics of a social group. If a social group is being excluded from education this can create poverty and the other way around. Affirmative action policies are implemented to attack social exclusion in the area of education and then thus decrease poverty, especially in the medium and long term.

The goal of affirmative action policies is to include underrepresented groups (or socially excluded groups) in certain areas, here higher education. Special or positive measures are permitted to improve the position of disadvantage groups. (McHarg & Nicolson, 2006: 1,2) Democracy is also a factor in the decision to implement social or affirmative action policies. A democracy is a form of government by the people, where the people can participate (direct or indirect) in the political system. Citizens in a democratic society should have equal rights (social, civil and political) and privileges. Central problems of Latin American democracy are poverty and inequality, since this doesn't allow individuals to express themselves as citizens with full rights. (PNUD, 2004: 28) Therefore the

implementation of affirmative action policies can contribute to the democratization of a state. Yet, it also works the other way around. In a democracy citizens can express their desires like more equality. The state can also implement affirmative action as a responds to society and in that way affirmative action policies are also a part of a democracy.

Education is an important area to implement social policies, since a more educated population will improve democracy. When the overall level of education increases it will result in more economic development and more political pluralism. (Almeida, 2008) A democracy will improve with a spread of knowledge and participation across the class structure as a whole. Social class refers to categories of population characterized by different levels of access to power and life chances (Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 42) Social class gives an understanding of power relations and conflict among social groups; the way in which the elite deliberately tries to preserve the social order in defense of their privileges and in which the other groups try to subvert it in order to improve their faith (Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 43). Obviously the poor and excluded belong to the lower class and lack access to quality education and chances in life. Affirmative action policies tries to change this. Therefore those policies are often criticized by the elites, since this would endanger their privileged position. More knowledge available to the various classes, will lead to more political pluralism. More political pluralism can mean that the established class can lose part of their power.

The educational system in itself is already a marker of power relations in society. Often only the higher class has access to quality education. This is not only related to their material wealth. Bourdieu (1977: xix) explains this with his concept of cultural capital. Cultural capital shows that the lack of education is not only the lack of economic resources, but also has to do with family environment. In the middle and higher classes, the parents have quality education, educated language is being used, the children are expected to perform better at school and at home the parents watch educational programs on the TV. Cultural capital is passed on from generation to generation (Durham 2005:12). 'Excluded' and 'poor' often have little cultural capital, since their parents had unequal access to education. When a person from a disadvantage group will attain education, one can break the circle by giving their children cultural capital. Further, this person can experience class mobility, socially and financially. This shows that the relationship between class, poverty and social exclusion is more complex and does not only relate to economical factors.

In the chapters of my thesis I will use parts of this theoretical approach as the basis for analyzing my research data.

### **Structure of the thesis**

My thesis gives an insight on how the inhabitants of Morro do Macaco perceive and experience the

quota system at the UERJ. The first chapter examines the *comunidade* Morro do Macaco and shows why this group is relevant for my research. It starts with the location of Morro do Macaco and places Morro do Macaco in a wider context of *comunidades* in general. Second, it describes how my informants define their life in Morro do Macaco and how they related their life in Macaco to social exclusion and poverty. This chapter relates the theoretical concepts of social exclusion and poverty to my empirical findings. Lastly it will discuss how the inhabitants experience the new implemented pacification. In my opinion it is important to mention the pacification since it has a impact on the lives of the inhabitants and is related to exclusion and poverty (security). Therefore, I lastly describe the connection between exclusion/ poverty and pacification in this chapter.

The second chapter is devoted to education. First, it will explain why and how education can be the key out of poverty and exclusion according to my informants. It will relate this to the theory that connects education to poverty alleviation. Second, this chapter will give an insight in which obstacles the inhabitants experience in order to attain education. One example of an obstacle is the lack of cultural capital. This chapter will discuss the theoretical concept of cultural capital and it will explain in what manner the lack of cultural capital influences educational attainment. Third, pacification is being seen as the base for further development and can create a condition to study. Therefore, this chapter will also discuss if the inhabitants indeed feel that pacification creates a opportunity or new space in order to study. Lastly, it will describe how the university students from Morro do Macaco experience higher education. How do they perform? How is that performance related to the lack of cultural capital? How do they interact with other students?

The third and last chapter discusses the quota system. It will answer the important question of how the inhabitants perceive and experience the quota system in order to understand if the quota system is indeed a bridge between the *comunidade* and higher education. Before turning to the experience of my informants this chapter gives general information about affirmative action and the quota system at the UERJ. Then this chapter will turn to how my informants got familiar with the quota system and their opinion on quota system. Lastly, it will describe how my informants already at university experience being a quota student. This chapter gives an answer to whether my informants see affirmative action policies as the measure to beat social exclusion within higher education and if this policy has the potential to attack poverty. Lastly, in my conclusion I will answer my central research question by analyzing and the relating the empirical and theoretical data of the three chapters.

## 1. Morro do Macaco:

### A case- study of poverty and social exclusion

Before visiting Morro do Macaco I met Caninde a couple of times at the UERJ. Once I was observing Caninde on the seventh floor (the department of law studies) interacting with other students. He was sitting with the students at a table, discussing and laughing. From the way the other students at the table were dressed it was obvious that those students belonged to the upper class. Looking at the students interacting, one could never tell that these students had so different backgrounds. Caninde fitted just right in. When I visited Morro do Macaco for the first time, I experienced this different background. One could state that a *comunidade* is a striking contrast with the university. However, when I saw Caninde walking in Morro do Macaco with his daughter, seeing him interact with his family members and sitting at the couch of his house, it was obvious that the two different places (university and *comunidade*) are not opposites or separated, but interrelated and intertwined. Just as he fits at the university, he fits in the *comunidade*. The place where he comes home to after a long day at university. *'I have lived in Morro do Macaco all of my life, it's the centre of my universe, the place where I was born, my neighborhood, my house.'*<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter, I will set the scene for understanding who the inhabitants of Morro do Macaco are and why this group is relevant for the quota system. I will do this by analyzing their experience of poverty and social exclusion (stigmatization) and relating this to the theory of those concepts. Further I will examine their experience on the pacification. The pacification was during my research recently implemented, which means that the inhabitants should experience a change towards security. This is important for understanding the context of my research, but also since security is being seen as a condition for development. So, do the inhabitants indeed see the pacification as a positive factor and as the base for development? Yet, this chapter will start with the location of Morro do Macaco and places Morro do Macaco is a wider context of *comunidades* in general.

#### Location of Morro do Macaco

Located in Zona Norte, Morro do Macaco lies on a hillside overlooking Vila Isabel and the Tijuca forest. Standing at the top of the hill the views are impressive (see also appendix 1; picture 1). The green hills on the other side, the top of the Sugarloaf mountain, the Maracanã football stadion, but also the many other *comunidades*. Standing on the other side of the hill- top, one can see the *comunidade* Complexo do Alemão and even more further away Vila Cruzeiro. Standing there makes you realize

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<sup>3</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

what a huge city Rio is and the great amount of *comunidades* present in Rio de Janeiro. Daflon & Schmidt argue in O Globo (2011) that there is some dispute about the number of *comunidades* present in Rio de Janeiro; some people argue that there are about 600 *comunidades* while others argue that there are more than 1000 *comunidades*. Yet, I do not want to discuss the exact numbers, I just want to show that there are indeed many *comunidades* present in Rio de Janeiro. Further, it also makes you realize that *comunidades* are situated in various parts of the city. Those various locations are according to Perlman (2010, 30-37) one of the reasons that a *comunidade* is not just another word for slum. A characteristic for a slum is that it is located on a distant location from mainstream society. *Comunidades* are located everywhere in Rio de Janeiro, even in the city centre. Although Morro do Macaco is not located in the city centre, it is also not far from mainstream society (see also appendix 2: map). When I asked the inhabitants to mention a positive factor about Morro do Macaco they mostly mentioned the location. According to Michele<sup>4</sup>, a 23 year old inhabitant, Morro do Macaco is close to Vila Isabel, which has everything, supermarkets, clubs and the university (UERJ). Since it is relatively close to the UERJ, one does not have to pay travel costs to get to the university. This could make the option to study more attractive. The closeness of the university is important to mention, since this is an unique characteristic of Morro do Macaco. It could stimulate more people to go to university; which could be different in *comunidades* on a more distant location from an university.

To conclude, physically the inhabitants do not feel that they live far from mainstream society, which shows that a *comunidade* is not the same as a slum. However, location does play a role in poverty. What slums and *comunidades* do have in common is that they are located on land undesirable to others. (Baker, 2008: 9) Morro do Macaco is located on a steep hillside. When climbing the stairs of Morro do Macaco one sees a huge difference between the houses at the base of the mountain and the ones at the top. Although the houses at the base of the mountain are also in poor conditions (small brick stone houses), the houses at the top of the hill are even in worse conditions. It feels like you walked from an urban area to a rural one. Pigs and chickens running everywhere. Malnourished horses are standing on the steep hillsides. Shacks of manure with bugs flying around. This shows that location does also play a role in poverty, also within the *comunidade*. As Klasen (1998) states location can be an factor in poverty and exclusion, due to among others the difficult socio- economic circumstances the inhabitants experience and stigmatization. The next sections will describe how the inhabitants experience poverty and stigmatization.

### **Experience of poverty**

*'A poor person does not have basic needs, like good health care and education.....oh and of course a poor*

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<sup>4</sup> Interview Michele (student at *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 28-03-2011

*person is also economically poor*'.<sup>5</sup>

This explanation of what poverty means to Roberto, a 30 year old inhabitant, is interesting. First, because it reflects what most of my informants wanted to let me know; they experience poverty in Morro do Macaco as the lack of possibilities to live a normal life. He explains that *comunidades* are areas where there are no quality services provided. Further, it shows the definition and experience of poverty from the perspectives of the poor. Just as Narayan et al (2000), I argue that if we really want to beat poverty, one should know what the poor themselves need and what they consider to be poverty. The inhabitants of a Morro do Macaco need social services like education. This is also a very important statement in order to understand if affirmative action in the area of education have the potential to beat poverty. This will be described in chapter three, yet, to understand the opinion of my informants if the quota system can attack poverty, one first has to understand how they define poverty. Roberto's explanation is also interesting because it fits the poverty definition of Sen (1992, in Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997:416) as the lack of capabilities or choices in life. The OECD (2001) speaks about capabilities when defining poverty. The dimensions of poverty cover different capabilities: economic, human (health, education), political, socio- cultural (dignity, status) and protective (risk, insecurity). The human capabilities are most mentioned by my informants. Yet, they are connected to other capabilities as the socio- cultural one, since education can lead to status. Therefore, the capabilities are interrelated. I will also give special attention to the insecurity, or protective capability, due to the implementation of the *Unidade Policia Pacificadora* (Pacification Police Unit or UPP). Since there is a lot to write about this subject, I have devoted the last section on this subject.

Besides the lack of education and health care, the inhabitants mention other factors that are related to poverty. First, in the type of housing and the lack of services like electricity and water and second in whether or not social networks are important. The inhabitants of slums often have minimal access to government services such as electricity, running water and health care. (Sanabria, 2007: 25) Yet as already stated a *comunidade* is not the same as a slum. *Comunidades* mostly do have water, sewage and electricity (Perlman, 1976:13) It's interesting that Perlman used the word '*most*'. In Morro do Macaco, the word '*most*' is very applicable, since a lot of people still suffer from the lack of water and electricity from time to time. Roberto, states; '*there is no quality of life, the state has abandoned his neighborhood, there are no social services and water and electricity is sometimes lacking*'.<sup>6</sup> He describes the bad living conditions as a part of poverty and he holds the state responsible for this. The state is mostly being seen as primary agent for development and development initiatives. But it can also be an obstacle to development. (Thomas & Allen, 2000: 215) According to Roberto the state is not present in his neighborhood and therefore the inhabitants live in poverty. On the other hand, Clarice, 22 year old

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<sup>5</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>6</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

inhabitant, does not only have criticism on the government, but also on the inhabitants themselves: *'they do nothing to change and to improve their life.'*<sup>7</sup> In other words, she does not only see the government as an actor in development, but also the inhabitants themselves. The inhabitants do not use their agency to improve the situation (here she refers to getting a university degree and so on). I would like to argue however that on another level the inhabitants do use agency to improve their live. Social networks can be seen as a part of human agency. Almost all of my respondents said that they like living in Morro the Macaco because of the persons. *'The persons here are so warm and always help each other out.'*<sup>8</sup> Authors like Sennet (1970) have written about the relationship between social network and urban poverty. Material scarcities lead to contacts with others in the same situation and sharing. *'Such sharing and face to face interaction lead to a feeling of community, of being related and bound together in some way'* (Sennet, 1970, 48) Those social networks become critical for survival. (Narayan, 2000: 221) Thus, on one hand, these social networks are a part of human agency because sharing can help to assure a sense of economic security. On the other hand I would like to argue that it is also a way of subverting superiority of the dominant groups. I will explain this further in the next section.

Social class refers to categories of population characterized by different levels of access to power and life chances (Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 42) One factor that determines class in Rio de Janeiro, are the neighborhoods. Caninde uses the example of Barra de Tijuca (a upper class neighborhood that mainly consist of many gated communities in Rio de Janeiro) to make his point.

*'I used to want to move to another neighborhood, but not anymore. In places like Barra de Tijuca, the people are cold and horrible. In Macaco there is more warmth, more human, the persons share their things.'*<sup>9</sup>

The word 'more' is very important here, since it is a comparison with the upper class neighborhoods. The upper class is economically and politically dominant, but when it comes to the social networks within the neighborhood, the inhabitants can feel superior to these groups.

Social contacts are important and close, yet, at the same time social contacts are also fragmented and disrupted. Poverty is also often related to disrupted family households. The weight of social, political and economic dislocations can lead to pressure in households and therefore many family households fall apart. (Narayan, 2000: 219) Children often grow up in single parents households. Caninde is also no longer together with the mother of his children. After he broke up with her, he moved back to live with his parents. His two children still live with their mother, in a house on the corner next to him.<sup>10</sup> Social networks and poverty thus have different sides. On one hand, relationships are warm and helpful, on the other hand, relationship are also fragile and lead to disrupted household.

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<sup>7</sup> Interview Clarice (student at pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel), 01-04-2011

<sup>8</sup> Statement of Caninde (27-03-2011) that represents the opinion of many of my informants.

<sup>9</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

<sup>10</sup> Informal conversation Caninde, 07-04-2011

To conclude, there can be stated that poverty is related to many factors in live. Further, this section has set the scene for understanding the context of poverty in Morro do Macaco.

### **Experience of stigmatization**

Stigmatization is an aspect of social exclusion. This section will give an understanding of how inhabitants of Morro do Macaco experience stigmatization and thus exclusion.

Social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty (Gactitúa, 2001: 13) It tries to explain the mechanism leading to poverty that is not derived from a lack of income. So, individuals or groups are not only excluded based on economic means, but on the characteristics of a social group.

Stigmatization plays a important role in exclusion. Stigma separates individuals or groups from one another based on a judgment that this group is “inferior than”. Stigma leads to a negative stereotype of a certain group, to prejudice, discrimination and excludes the group. (Pescolido, et al, 2008:431).

As described earlier in Brazil place of residence is a marker of a social group. In Rio de Janeiro *comunidades* are locations of stigmatization and therefore can be seen as symbols of social exclusion. These stigmatization can be expressed in the negative effect on people’s access to jobs. The stigma of living in a *comunidade* is attributed to unemployment and inequality (Baker, 2008:9)

The inhabitants of Morro do Macaco also state that stigmatization is part of living in a *comunidade*. Interesting was that they related stigmatization to the lack of education. According to them, a lot of companies does not hire people from the *comunidade*, since they hold the prejudice that inhabitants of a *comunidade* are not educated and therefore not qualified<sup>11</sup>. Roberto adds to this: *‘Unfortunately this is true most of the time, and that’s why the prejudice keeps existing.’*<sup>12</sup> My informants feel stigmatized in this area, since they are educated or willing to study.

Beside the stigmatization based on education, some of the inhabitants also named stigmatization based on skin color. Clarice, a dark skinned girl, made it clear that discrimination in Brazil is based on color lines.

*‘The black people only get low paid jobs, you almost never see them in high positions. The white people just don’t want to lose their position and therefore keep the black people in the lower positions.’*<sup>13</sup>

This example shows that class and race in Brazil are interrelated. Portes and Hoffman (2002:43) explain that social class gives an understanding of power relations and conflicts among social groups: the way in which elite groups deliberately try to preserve social order in defense of their privileges and in which other groups try to subvert it in order to improve their fate. In the example of Clarice she

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<sup>11</sup> Interview Jacqueline (student at *pre-vestibular Curso Invest*), 15-03-2011, interview Caninde, 23-03-2011, interview Gustavo (student at the *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 24-03

<sup>12</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>13</sup> Interview Clarice (student at *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 01-04-2011

explains that the white elite tries to oppress the black lower class in defense of their privileges. Further, a much higher percentage of Rio's black population lives in *comunidades* than the white population (Perlman, 2010: 170) This shows that place of residence is not the only mechanism of exclusion in Brazil. Being black in Brazil means most of the time that this person has less access to opportunities for upward mobility than a white person. Evidence has shown that Brazilian society is divided along color lines. In Brazil race (or color in Brazilian terminology) is a criterion for distinction and exclusion. (Carvalho, (2006) in Johnson, 2008) For a long time racial exclusion was not recognized in Brazil. Racism was not recognized by the juridical system and denied by the official discourse on nationality. The racial democracy idea was the reason for this. These days the racial democracy idea is challenged and Brazil is recognizing racism and discrimination. (Caldwell, 2007; Hasenbalg & do Valle Silva 1999) One factor related to the racial democracy idea was that black and white color lines were not so segregated in Brazil as in for example the United States or South- Africa. (Winant, 1999; Twine, 2000) Race construction in Brazil were and still are more complicated. Yes, *most* people in the elite class are white, but certainly not all. This also is the same way in the *comunidades*, a lot of people are dark skinned, but certainly not all. People of all skin colors do live in *comunidade*. According to Roberto, the society also hold the prejudice that black people are poor and live in *comunidades*. This is another example of stigmatization based on skin color. Yet, it shows more, it shows the relationship of stigmatization based on skin color *and* place of residence. The society has the prejudice that the three terms 'black', 'poor' and '*comunidade*' are synonyms. A interesting remark here is that most of my informants often also use the terms as synonyms, even when speaking about themselves.

Important to mention here is that racial identity of color in Brazil is fluid, relational and socially determined (Hasenbalg & do Valle Silva, 1999). In Brazil, one can say that money whitens, the higher on the social ladder, the whiter one becomes (even when it's phenotype tells otherwise). This also works the other way around; the less money, the more 'black' one becomes, even if the skin color tells otherwise. This shows the complexity of Brazil's racial constructions. This complexity is also being seen in the next example given by Roberto:

*'When I just started studying at the UERJ, I once felt very discriminated. I entered the class, the teacher looked at me and said: the UERJ is starting to get colored. I was so offended, just because I came in the class, she made such a remark. In my neighborhood Morro do Macaco, I'm not black or colored, but white, since most of the people there are more black than me. Now, I'm suddenly black, because most of the people in UERJ are white.'*<sup>14</sup>

This is a very interesting example for many reasons. First, the teacher used the word colored and not black. Roberto interpreted this as synonym to black. He was offended by this, which implies that he

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<sup>14</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

considers black as a negative term. I conclude this, since he made the comparison with his neighborhood, where is considered white and he is not offended by this. He felt that suddenly he came from a positive position (white) to a more negative position (black). This confirms the previous statement that Brazilian society is divided along color lines. Whereby a much higher percentage of Rio's black population lives in *comunidades* (since almost all of his neighbors are black) than the white population and the elite is predominantly white (since most of his co- students are white). Yet, this already shows the complexity. First, that not all people from the *comunidade* are per se black. Looking at Roberto's phenotype, I would state that he is not black, nor white, but somewhere in between. Second, it shows that race is fluid in Brazil. Sanabria (2007:113) calls this racial passing, a process whereby an individual is able to move from one position on the racial ladder to another.

Despite the complexity of Brazil racial construction, I can conclude that there is stigmatization based on skin color, since Brazilian society has the prejudice that being black is related to many negative factors. This can make it for a black person difficult to climb the social ladder. Yet, I want to state that this prejudice or color hierarchy is not only practiced by the elite, but by all levels of society and thus also by the inhabitants of Morro do Macaco.

### **UPP; a project for inclusion?**

When I was standing at the top of Morro do Macaco, enjoying the view and talking to Caninde, he told that just a few months ago, nobody could go to this, for me impressive place, since it was too dangerous. The cross at the top of the hill is a reminder of why most inhabitants considered this a dangerous place (see also appendix 1; picture 2). It was the territory of the drugs gang and they placed the cross here, since they were religious and hoped that the cross would protect them. These days, there is a shack not far from the cross where two UPP policemen are located. Another place that shows marks of confrontations between the drug gang and the police are the stairs to Caninde's house. The stairs are full of bullet holes. Next to the stairs on the square there used to be a drug selling point (*boca de fumo*). This point was located between the house of Caninde and the house where his children live and it was the only way to get to his house or his children's. Now, the square is no longer occupied by the drug gang, but by children who are playing soccer. There is also a UPP policeman standing there and talking to the inhabitants.<sup>15</sup>

*Comunidades* were, and in most cases still are, the places where drugs gangs dominate. Poverty ( the absence of a stable family life, poor economical circumstances and the lack of quality alternatives as school and so on) and social exclusion, make joining a drugs gang a interesting alternative for mostly young men. (Leeds, 2007: 27) Drugs gangs control the *comunidade* by their involvement in social services and by implementing their own 'rule of law'. If a resident does not obey the orders of a gang

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<sup>15</sup> Observations and informal conversations on various visits to Morro do Macaco with Caninde.

member he or she can be killed. Violence and crime characterize daily life in *comunidades* in Rio de Janeiro. (Gay, 2005; Melo, 2002; Leeds, 2007).

*'This street used to be the place of 'baile funk' (parties in comunidades often organized by drug members, now prohibited in UPP comunidades), but I never went here. It's not that I did not like the music, but I didn't want to have any trouble. If you see a nice girl during a 'baile' and you want to talk or dance with her, you never know if a gang member also likes this girl. If you have contact with a girl that 'belongs' to a gang member, you can get shot and even killed.'*<sup>16</sup>

This is an example of how drugs gangs are involved in different activities (here a party) in the *comunidade* and how they provide their own 'rule of law' (by establishing which girl one can or cannot date). This 'rule of law' is practiced by using violence, that influences the life of inhabitants.

Arias (2006) argues that drug gangs are so powerful due to a clientelistic system. Due to the involvement of corrupt politicians, traffickers can play a political role in the *comunidade* and provide some aid to the poor. This shows that the state is not completely absent in the *comunidade*, it is present due to corruption and agreements with the drug gangs. Ending of state corruption would therefore be part of the solution. The other solution would be to provide social services. The provision of social services by the state will make drug gangs less important, since the residents do not have to depend on the drug gangs anymore. For this reason the state implemented a different solution since 2008 in Rio de Janeiro: the UPP. The UPP (*Unidade Policia Pacificadora*) is a program to recover the territories (*comunidades*) occupied by drug gangs. They realize this by invading the *comunidade* to expel the drug gangs and placing a UPP police unit and cameras in the neighborhood. The goal is to bring peace to the *comunidades*. Of course there are many *comunidades* in Rio de Janeiro, the question is if the government can pacify all those *comunidades*. Until now there are just a few of the many *comunidades* pacified; about 17 of the hundreds of *comunidades* in Rio de Janeiro (Blog da Pacificação<sup>17</sup>, June 2011) The city is divided between *comunidades* with and without UPP<sup>18</sup>. Morro do Macaco is one of those *comunidades* with UPP. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> *comunidade* to be pacified and the UPP was implemented here on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2010.

In literature, insecurity is a dimension of poverty. The OECD (2001) speaks about capabilities when defining poverty. One of these dimensions of poverty that covers aspects of human capabilities is the protective or security capability. One could state that since the implementation of the UPP, there has been a change in this dimension of poverty.

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<sup>16</sup> Informal conversation Caninde, 09-04-2011

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.blogdapacificacao.com.br/>

<sup>18</sup> Lecture Viva Rio, (*Inclusão social e a nova geração: Criando oportunidades para uma juventude em risco*(Social inclusion and the new generation: creating opportunities for a youth at risk)) 23-02-2011

Viva Rio<sup>19</sup> states that UPP is part of the inclusion of *comunidades*. Peace is the first base to beat poverty and to make room for inclusion and development. After UPP there can be programs implemented for education and so on. Those programs can now be implemented without the involvement of the drug gangs. The insecurity and violence were obstacles to live a normal life. It was for example too dangerous to go back home from school if there was a drug war. The relationship between education and the UPP will be further described in the second chapter. Here I will describe how the inhabitants experience the UPP in general and if according to them this includes them in the city and if this is a tool to beat poverty in the *comunidade*.

Caninde states:

*'Before the UPP the taxis were too afraid to drive in Morro do Macaco, since the UPP I saw suddenly taxis driving in the neighborhood, suddenly people were riding on bicycles and children were playing outside.'*<sup>20</sup>

This statement of Caninde shows that security has improved in his neighborhood and he is positive about this fact. Most of my informant have the same opinion. Michele adds:

*'Now I can walk safely on the streets of my neighborhood, first I was too afraid to go out; I felt like a prisoner in my own neighborhood.'*<sup>21</sup>

It shows that before the UPP, the drugs gang did indeed provide a lot of insecurity in the lives of the inhabitants. During one of my visits to Morro do Macaco, Caninde and Roberto had a conversation about their childhood. They have been friends since they were very young and they were thinking about the friends they had back then. They had to conclude sadly that they were the only ones still alive, the others joined the drug gang and where murdered during shoot outs. This is a clear and sad example of how Caninde and his friend had grown up; in an violent environment. They are pleased with the fact that this situation has changed. Viva Rio states that security will make room for development. Do the inhabitants feel the same? *'The police is a little bit better than the drugs gangs; It's better but not the best; The UPP is not the answer.'*<sup>22</sup> These are just a few examples of what the inhabitants wanted to make clear. Yes, security has improved and, yes, this does improve the situation in Macaco, but does it make room for development; the inhabitants are more critical than Viva Rio.

First, I need to state that the UPP has just been implemented for six months in Morro do Macaco. It is still relatively new and I still have not come across any social project or development initiative. With or without social projects, the inhabitants state strongly that the UPP will not provide the

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<sup>19</sup> Lecture Viva Rio, (*Inclusão social e a nova geração: Criando oportunidades para uma juventude em risco* (Social inclusion and the new generation: creating opportunities for a youth at risk)) 23-02-2011

<sup>20</sup> Informal conversation Caninde, 21-04-2011

<sup>21</sup> Interview Michele (student at *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 28-03-2011

<sup>22</sup> Interview Roberto, 07-04-2011, Interview Gustavo, 24-03-2011, Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

development that they really need. The government need to take other measures. This directly relates to the previous part about if and how they experience poverty and social exclusion in Morro do Macaco. *'What we need are better living conditions, better social infrastructure, quality education and more opportunities.'*<sup>23</sup> Those factors will include them in the city and not the UPP. The lack of those conditions is also one of the motives for youngsters to enter a drugs gang. The core of the problem is thus still not dissolved. The government should look at social services like public schools. The next chapter will give e more detailed description about the educational system in Brazil. Further, the inhabitants are also very critical about the UPP project itself and who the UPP project really serves. Roberto states: *'UPP is not a project to improve the comunidade, but to improve the city. They only choose the comunidades that are interesting for the world cup.'*<sup>24</sup>

To conclude, the UPP makes them feel more safe, but therefore not more integrated in the city. When talking about stigmatization, one can come to the same conclusion. As, stated before, the inhabitants feel stigmatized by society and employers, since they hold the prejudice that inhabitants of *comunidades* are poorly educated. Nobody stated to feel stigmatized because of the violence in their *comunidade*. Which is an interesting factor since *comunidade* are often perceived and stigmatized as no-go areas by the 'rest' of society due to the violence and crime (Koonings, & Kruijt, 2007: 4). A logical theory would be that, now with the UPP this kind of stigmatization would also become less. This could contribute to a decrease of social exclusion. Interesting is that nobody of my informants related their experience of stigmatization to violence. This does not mean however that they do not experience this type of stigmatization. This only implies that in the context of my research they consider other kind of stigmatization as more significant and they really want to make clear that the lack of resources available to them has to change. In other words, this group considers the provision of resources (like quality education and healthcare) as a more valid solution to attack poverty and exclusion, than the UPP.

### **Final words**

This chapter has provided an insight in my research location and population. I have defined what a *comunidade* is in general and specified the unique characteristics of Morro do Macaco. One which is the relatively close location to the UERJ. Further, by analyzing their experience of poverty and exclusion, I have shown that this research population is relevant for my research. The most important aspect in their definition of poverty is that they define poverty as the lack of basic needs as education. The fact that they relate poverty to education is important to understand the outcomes of my research. The next chapters will elaborate this more broadly. Further, my informants also relate social exclusion/

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<sup>23</sup> Interview, Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>24</sup> Interview, Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

stigmatization to education. They feel stigmatized and labeled as 'non- educated', due to their place of residence. Besides the stigmatization based on their place of residence, some of my informants also mentioned stigmatization based on skin color. Although my research focuses more on place of residence, skin color/ race also plays a role in this thesis, since the two are often related. Race is also important in my research, since the UERJ also implemented racial quotas, as will be described in the third chapter. Further, this chapter has described the recently implemented UPP, among other since it is a unique characteristic of Morro do Macaco and it gives an understanding in what kind of conditions the inhabitants live. I have given an insight on if the inhabitants feel that the UPP is an condition for development and inclusion. The most important conclusion here is that the inhabitants are satisfied with the new security, but remain critical, since what they need in order to attack exclusion and create conditions for development is quality public education and other quality opportunities.

Due to the described factors above Caninde has a different background from the other upper class students, as described in the introduction. It's important to understand how this background influence educational attainment, what education means for those young inhabitants, and how then do they experience higher education. I will turn to these issues in the next chapter.

## 2. Education

### The key out of poverty and social exclusion?

*De onde vem? De onde vem?*

Where does it come from? Where does it come from?

*A grandeza, a pobreza? A nobreza, a beleza?*

The greatness, the poverty? The nobility, the beauty?

*A nobreza da cidade? Vem da luta dia a dia;*

The nobility of the city? It comes from the daily struggle;

*De onde vem sua pobreza? Está na desigualdade*

Where does her poverty come from? It's in the inequality

*A grandeza da cidade é tentar se reinventar*

The greatness of the city is that she is trying to reinvent herself

*Pouco a pouca, ponta a ponta ela vai se rebelar*

Little by little, she will rebel

*É o Quilombo mais moderno que não para de lutar*

It's the modern Quilombo that does not stop the struggle

*Contra a perversidade a cidade há de gritar*

Against the perversity of the city you have to shout

*Os meninos e as meninas irão então se levantar*

The boys and the girls will rise

*Em posse da consciência que é possível melhorar*

In possession of the consciousness that it's possible to improve

*Os meninos e as meninas irão então se educar*

The boys and the girls will be educated

*Com seus livros, seus cadernos transformar esse lugar*

With their books, their notebooks we will transform this place

*Os meninos e as meninas irão então se rebelar*

The boys and the girls will rebel

*Com seus livros, seus cadernos transformar esse lugar*

With their books, their notebooks we will transform this place<sup>25</sup>

'What we really need is quality education and other opportunities for the youth.' This important conclusion of the previous chapter implies among others that the inhabitants see education as a important tool to move out of poverty and exclusion. In this chapter I will first explain in what ways higher education can be a path out of poverty according to my informants. I will explain this by describing their various motives to attain higher education. Interesting is that their motives are all related to their will to break with their excluded and poor position. The poem already describes one motive: education gives them the power to contribute to a more equal society. Second, I will explain which obstacles and opportunities they experience in order to attain higher education. The unequal educational system can be seen as an obstacle for inhabitants and therefore I also mention the educational system in Brazil. The obstacles the youth experiences are also important in understanding why the quota system was implemented at the UERJ. Third, the recently implemented UPP is often being seen as a condition for further development like access to education. Do my informants feel that this is an opportunity or condition in order to attain higher education? If so, which influence does the UPP have on educational attainment according to my informants? Fourth, I explain how the lack of cultural capital can also be seen as an obstacle to study. Lastly, I will describe how they experience higher education and how they experience contact with students from other classes.

### **Motives to attain higher education**

Higher education has grown in importance in poverty alleviation programs. For a long time only primary education was seen as the most important item in developing programs. Nowadays more developing organizations recognize that higher education is not just a luxury good in developing, but necessary in order to beat poverty. (Khan and Williams, 2006: 2) This idea is definitely being shared by my informants. As I mentioned before, the most important motive for my informants for attaining higher education is to break with their excluded position. This section will explain among others the various ways of how education can be a key out of poverty.

Education is in the industrialized world the base for occupational placement and higher earnings. (Cireno Fernandes, 2004) My informants also have motives like these higher earnings to study. This

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<sup>25</sup> Poem; *A grandeza e A pobreza*, by poet Ronaldo Mendes da Lima. Ronaldo is a afro- Brazilian poet, writer, aviation technician, English and Portuguese teacher and musician. He grow up in Realengo, a lower class neighborhood in the west zone, but is currently living in Laranjeiras, a middle class neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro. He studied English literature at the UERJ (the quota system was not implemented yet). His own experience in life and this contact with different classes and areas in society made him realize that the lack of education keeps people in their disadvantaged position. Ronaldo feels that's impossible to finish poverty without education, since education leads to awareness and opportunities. His own experiences and ideas were the base for this poem. Informal conversation, 11-04-2011

will economically be a way out of poverty. It's interesting to see that all of my informants related their motive to study to poverty alleviation. Due to the fact that they describe poverty as a multidimensional concept, they have various motives to study. Mariz et al. (2006: 328) also explains that inhabitants of a *comunidade* do not only have economical reasons to study. The inhabitants also want to increase their knowledge or have ideological/ social motives to help their community through education. For most of my informants the economical reasons are intertwined with their desire to increase their knowledge or with ideological and social motives.

*'I just want a better life for me and my children. What is a better life for me..? Well, first not to be negative on my bank account..ha ha. Second, I would like to have a job at the public ministry. Then I could change a lot of things for the comunidades and specifically for my own comunidade. When I would work there I would invest in social security's like crèches and education. Now, the government keeps money in their own pocket; they do nothing to change the situation in the 'comunidade.'*<sup>26</sup>

This statement of Caninde shows that he does have a economical reason to study. Education would provide him a job and a income. Education would therefore beat poverty on a economical level. Yet, this economical reason is intertwined with the ideological reason. Education will give him the possibility to give something back to his *comunidade* by investing in social services. Those social services like education can help more people out of poverty. This relationship between poverty and education is also being seen in the example of Roberto<sup>27</sup> and Ana Carolina<sup>28</sup>. Both want to work as a teacher in a public school. Their own education will give them the opportunity to educate others and through quality education give the others more opportunities in life.

Educafro, *Educação para afrodescendentes e carentes*, (Education for African descendents and the poor) is a black movement which focuses on the inclusion of black and the poor in education. The organization has played a role in the implementation of the quota system. Rita de Cassia, the coordinator of Educafro, also sees education as the solution to beat poverty. She also feels that education is more important for ideological reason than for economic ones. Rita explains:

*'I entered university with the help of Educafro. When I graduated I decided to participate in the movement. For me education was not just to get a job, but to help others. Now, that I'm educated I can participate in a social movement, this way I can help excluded people and help to change society. All educated people can do this.'*

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<sup>26</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

<sup>27</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>28</sup> Interview Ana Carolina (student at *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 31-03-2011

I asked Rita de Cassia: *So, education is the solution to beat poverty, discrimination and social exclusion?\_She look at me with big eyes like I asked her a very stupid question..What do you think? ....There is no other way..*<sup>29</sup>

This section has shown that my informants have various motives to attain higher education. Those motives are directly related to the various ways higher education can be a key out of poverty and exclusion. They see higher education as a crucial factor in improving their lives. Estefany, a 17 year old inhabitant, adds: *'without education we are nothing.*'<sup>30</sup>

### **Resources and opportunities for attaining higher education**

As stated earlier, the inhabitants of a *comunidade* can be seen as a excluded group and therefore have less access to different resources. The lack of these resources can be seen as obstacle to study. This section will describe the various obstacles, but also gives an insight in how they are creating opportunities in order to be able to attain higher education.

The lack of quality basic education is being seen as one of the biggest obstacles. The educational system in Brazil is an unequal one and a marker of overall exclusion. (Gay, 2005: 112; Carvalho 2006 in Johnson, 2008) The system is divided in expensive good quality private schools and free public schools that lack quality education. Most public schools lack quality teachers and basic resources such as libraries and computers and are in state of physical despair. (Gay, 2005: 112) During my stay in Rio de Janeiro I have visited a private and a public school in the neighborhood of Botafogo. The physical difference between the two schools was huge. When I went to the private school I wondered if I would ever pass the security guards to enter the school. After passing the first gate with the first security guard, I needed to go to the next security guard. This security guard sent me to a reception with again two other security guards. After getting my visitors pas, I needed to go back to the second security guard which finally gave me access to the school. The school looked well maintained with a lot of facilities like a gym. The public school I've visited looked completely different. There was not even one security guard present; the school terrain was freely accessible. On the terrain there were buildings that can be described as shacks. The classrooms were located in these buildings. This comparison shows that there is a huge physical difference between the two schools. The bad outlook of the public school does imply that the government does not invest much in public education.

Brazilian elites avoid the public schools, but the poor have little choice (Reiter, 2009: 346) The graduates of a public school have less prospects of a quality job or in a starting a university education (Reiter, 2009: 349). All my informants are graduates from a public school. Although some students are reasonable satisfied with their public school, they all state that the public education is not a good

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<sup>29</sup> Interview Rita de Cassia (Educafro), 02-03-2011

<sup>30</sup> Interview Estefany (student at pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel), 28-03-2011

preparation for university. *'I lack knowledge to attain university. The teachers were often not present or too tired to give quality classes.'*<sup>31</sup> If public education would improve the graduates would have an equal opportunity on the labor market and in starting a university degree. This unequal educational system was also one of the reasons for the UERJ to implement the quota system

To enter a public university one has to pass the *vestibular* (entrance exam). If a person doesn't have the right pre- education like a private school, one can prepare for the exam by attaining a *cursinho pre-vestibular* (a short course which prepares for the exam). This are often private courses and therefore very expensive; unaffordable for the inhabitants of a *comunidade*. Therefore, this could be seen as another obstacle for my informants. Fortunately there are many community *cursinho pre- vestibulares* in Rio de Janeiro. This are *pre- vestibulares* which are completely organized by volunteers, which are often university students. The students at the *pre- vestibular* just have to pay a small amount (between 15 and 25 reais a month) for the study material. My informants participate(d) in the *cursinho Viva Vila Isabel pre- vestibular* at the base of Morro do Macaco. Roberto is one of the volunteers at *Viva Vila Isabel*. Before he entered university he was a student at the *pre- vestibular* and now the is already six years coordinator of this *pre- vestibular*. This is another example of how they use education to break with their excluded and poor position. *Viva Vila Isabel* educated Roberto and gave him the possibility to enter higher education. This higher education gives Roberto the possibility to educated people at the *pre- vestibular*, so that they again can break with their excluded position. *Viva Vila Isabel pre- vestibular* was founded in 2000. This community *pre- vestibular* is just one of many; another example is *Curso Invest* in the city centre, which exist for 25 years. This implies that those community *pre- vestibulares* are successful in Rio de Janeiro. It is positive that for so many years many volunteers are active and want to invest so much time and energy in educating the disadvantaged groups. That's why I state that those community *pre- vestibulares* express and enhance human agency. It expresses human agency because the volunteers are not waiting before the state is going to provide better quality education, but they take measures in their own hands. It enhances human agency, because the volunteers give their students agency though education. Although it is a great initiative, the community *pre- vestibular* still cannot be compared with the private ones. In contrast to the community *pre- vestibulares*, the private ones have professional teachers that are paid and educated to give classes. Therefore, the students from the community *pre- vestibulares* still do not have the same opportunities as the students from the private ones.

In contrast to primary education and *pre- vestibulares*, public universities are free and have good quality. Although the university is free of tuition, my informants state that studying at university is too expensive. *'The costs are a real obstacle to study. You have to pay for books, but also for dinner and lunch.'*

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<sup>31</sup> Interview Gustavo (student at *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 24-03-2011

*It is really hard.*<sup>32</sup> To help with those expenses the UERJ offers 'bolsas' (scholarships) of 300 reais monthly for all the quota students. According to Roberto and Luiza<sup>33</sup>, a 26 year old biology quota student, the 300 reais a month offered by the UERJ are not enough to cover the expenses.

*'Most poor students worked before entering university, because they needed to support their children or help other family members. When you go to university, you cannot work anymore. How can you live with just 300 reais a month? That's not possible. During my study I wrote papers (and did other homework) for other students for some extra money.'*<sup>34</sup>

There are multiple obstacles the inhabitants experience. The obstacles are often related to material deprivation. First, a 'poor' person is not able to afford a private school or a regular *pre-vestibular*. Second, the public university is free, but there are other costs like literature that make studying expensive. Third, it is not only the costs of studying that one has to worry about. When studying, a person does not make money to provide for him- herself or for his family. Therefore I state that material deprivation is an important obstacle to study.

The next section will describe the recently implemented UPP. Insecurity was often being seen as a obstacle to study. The UPP has changed the security situation in Morro do Macaco which leads to the question if the UPP can thus be a condition to study.

### **UPP: a condition to study?**

*'I think that people have more freedom now. The students don't have to worry anymore if they can come home safely; if there is peace or war. Now everything is quite.'*<sup>35</sup>

The previous chapter already stated that the violence and crime of the drugs gangs affect daily life in a *comunidade*. Education is one of the factors that is influenced by drug gangs. Public school in or around *comunidades* therefore have even more problems (than the previous described poor quality education), since they are unable to keep drugs out. An example is that drugs gangs order schools to close their doors for the respect of a recently deceased gang member. Further, the teachers are often afraid for the drugs gang and resign. (Gay, 2005; Leeds, 2007) . Second, as the statement of Rita de Cassia at the beginning of this section already implies, insecurity is another factor that can influence educational attainment, since the students can be too afraid to walk the streets at night. Another example is provided by Clarice:

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<sup>32</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>33</sup> Interview Luiza (quota biology student UERJ), 15-04-2011

<sup>34</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>35</sup> Interview Rita de Cassia (Educafro), 02-03-2011

*'When I came home late, I was always afraid to walk home. Once there was even a drug member pointing a gun to my head, asking what I was doing here at this time. After this I've always asked my boyfriend to pick me up at the beginning of the neighborhood'.<sup>36</sup>*

Classes at university can end late in the evening and as Clarice states coming home late can be dangerous. The insecurity could influence the decision not to go out at night and therefore also not to go to the university. This could match the statement of ViVa Rio, as described in the previous chapter in the section about the UPP, that peace would be the basis for further development. Therefore, one might suspect that after UPP educational attainment will increase. Interesting was that at all the educational facilities I visited the number of students has not increased since UPP. Patricia Anido Noronha adds:

*'At this moment there is no expansion of students from comunidades with UPP. I think that it will take a while before the impact of UPP will show.'<sup>37</sup>*

Most of my students explain this by stating that the UPP does influence security, but not their will to study. The only difference is that people can walk home safely after going to class. Of course most of the students see the security as a positive development, but again they really told me that UPP is not the solution, but the improvement of public schools. The students did already study or would also go to study without the UPP. The only exception is Michele:

*Before the UPP I was too afraid to go to the pre- vestibular. I'm a real scared- cat. I live on the other side of the hill and to go to the pre- vestibular I had to pass the square. The square used to be the 'boca de fumo'. Now, with the UPP, I dare to walk there and I can finally go to the pre- vestibular. Something that I have wanted for many years.'<sup>38</sup>*

This shows that the UPP can influence educational attainment. Maybe not for the majority, but it has the potential to make an important difference. Michele does not disagree with the statement that the UPP doesn't influence the will to study; she also wanted to study, but wanting is not the same as having the possibility to study. In her case the violence of the drug gangs stood in the way of her possibility to study.

Another interesting example of how the UPP could influence educational attainment is given by Jacqueline:

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<sup>36</sup> Interview Clarice (student at *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 01-04-2011

<sup>37</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ) 30-03-2011

<sup>38</sup> Interview Michele (student at the *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 28-03-2011

*'The children in a UPP comunidade do not grow up in an environment with drug members. They do not have the example of drug members anymore, no example of guns, power and money. Now that joining a gang is not so attractive anymore, school can be a more attractive option.'*<sup>39</sup>

This shows that my informant feels that the absence of drug gangs creates an environment where more children will be motivated to go to study. In this perspective the UPP could influence the choice to study of the next generation.

This section has shown that security and the UPP can be a condition to study. Yet, security is just a small part of the solution according to my informants. As stated many times earlier, public schools should also improve; security should be next to this improvement. This way multiple factors (lack of protective and human capabilities) of poverty will be attacked.

### **Cultural capital as a resource to attain higher education**

Another factor that is related to poverty in Brazil is the lack of cultural capital. Cultural capital is a concept coined by Pierre Bourdieu (1977). Bourdieu (1977: xix) states that the lack of education is not only the lack of economic resources, but also has to do with family environment. The upper class class has the money to afford higher education, but also to pass cultural capital to their offspring. This will make sure that their offspring will also be successful. (Kim, 2009: 297) Cultural capital can be divided in three basic types; 'institutional' capital, which is the possession of a diploma from higher education; 'learned' capital, which is knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation like knowledge of languages or other cultural areas and 'materialized' capital, which is the possession of objects with cultural value. (Zarycki, 2007: 42) These cultural areas can be literature activities, paintings/exhibits, classic music concerts or opera performances, plays, dance performances, movies, other types of music concerts, or entertainment shows. (Kim & Kim, 2009 :297) When visiting a theater in Rio de Janeiro, one can quickly see that this is a area of the upper class. By going to these cultural activities the upper class can distinguish themselves from the lower classes.

The young inhabitants of Morro do Macaco lack cultural capital. First, since, with one exception, the parents of the students I spoke with did not attain higher education. The parent do therefore not function as an example when it comes to higher education. This directly related to that there is no educational language being used at home, no literature present in the household and so on. Further, parents do sometime even function as a true obstacle to study, since some parents do not stimulate the children to go to study. Roberto states;

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<sup>39</sup> Interview Jacqueline (student at *pre- vestibular Curso Invest*), 15-03-2011

*'When somebody decides to go to study, there is often a lot of conflict in the family. My mother told me that I was crazy. She told me that I needed to work, studying is crazy. Now, I'm almost finished and my mother is proud of me.'*<sup>40</sup>

This shows that in the beginning some inhabitants of a *comunidade* lack a supportive family life. Instead of studying children are pressured to contribute to the family income (Leeds, 2007: 26). Further, my informants did not come from an environment where parents take the children to cultural activities. Patricia Anida Noronha<sup>41</sup>, working at the department of admission of the UERJ, feels that cultural knowledge is also important for the development of an individual. This is why the UERJ also offers cultural activities. First, they look for promotions in theaters, so they can take the students there. Second, there is also a theater present in the UERJ, where students can participate in a performance or visit a show. Here the UERJ functions as a generator of cultural capital, instead of the family environment.

In this section I wanted to show that the relationship between class, poverty and social exclusion is complex and does not only relate to economical factors. In the next section I will describe among others how the lack of cultural capital influences their university experience.

### **Experience of higher education**

Looking at the previous sections, it is not very surprising that higher education is still predominantly a white upper class domain. Yet, my informants want to or are already studying at the university, especially at the UERJ (due to the location), there were always students from *comunidades*. As a prelude to the next chapter, the number of students from *comunidades* has increased, since the quota system. I already mention this here, since my informants already studying at UERJ are *all* quota students ('*cotista*' in Portuguese). Since those students have a more difficult background and therefore less prepared for higher education (in comparison with the upper class), one might suspect that those students perform less or that there will be a high dropout rate. This is exactly what the criticism about the quota system emphasizes.

*'Before the quota system was put in place, there was a lot of debate. One of the criticisms was that the quota student will abandon university. This turned out not to be the case. There are more non-quota students who leave university. For quota students this is mostly their only opportunity in life, non-quota students have more*

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<sup>40</sup> Interview, Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>41</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department; admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

*opportunities. Quota students do take longer to finish university; some of them with extra support provided by the university.*<sup>42</sup>

As stated before my informants find education an important factor in life. Therefore they work hard to be able to study. They had to overcome the bad quality public education, sometimes the lack of parental support and so on. Which implies that they really want to be at university and do indeed see this as an opportunity in life. When looked at it from this perspective, it is also logical that there isn't a high drop-out rate. Since they did not have the right preparation for higher education, it is not strange that they do take longer to finish university. My informants have also stated that they needed to get used to the education at university.

*'When I first came to university, the literature was big shock. Things that a persons have never seen. But I got used to it.'*<sup>43</sup>

*'In the beginning I was not as good as the other students, since I had not the same background as them. But university is great. I've learned so many new things, a better way to think, a better way to speak.'*<sup>44</sup>

Those statements from Roberto and Caninde show that they were not familiar with the literature or the language used before entering university. As stated before, language is also part of cultural capital. This also implies that my informants did not have much cultural capital before entering university. The lack of cultural capital influences their performance at university in the beginning. When used to everything they perform better and they state to have learned many new things like a better way to speak. Which is also a example of how the UERJ, or university in general, generates cultural capital. The UERJ is also the place where students from different backgrounds meet. How do the students deal with the contact with different classes? I will explain this by using the example of student workshops. If a workshops at the UERJ exists of students from different backgrounds, they always meet at the university. The university can therefore be seen as neutral place. Andre, non- quota law student living in Leblon, stated that students don't meet at their houses or neighborhoods when the group is divers.

*'Visiting a comunidade would make me feel uncomfortable, since I'm afraid that the people there would judge me and that it won't be safe for me to go there.'*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

<sup>43</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>44</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

<sup>45</sup> Informal conversation Andre (non- quota law student UERJ), 13-04-2011

Roberto on the other hand states:

*'I would not prefer to go to a upper class neighborhood. I would only go to if I would really have to. The people in Leblon are so different; there would be a clash of ideas. The upper class defends other things than the lower class, there is another way of looking at the world.'*<sup>46</sup>

Neighborhoods are places of distinction. This distinction is experienced by all classes. It is not only the higher class that does not want to enter a *comunidade* out of fear and so on, but also the lower class doesn't want to visit a upper class neighborhood. Implicitly Roberto here also states that he is afraid of being discriminated in a upper class neighborhood. When staying at university the different backgrounds will not be that obvious and would not take the students out of their comfort zone. Yet, of course, also at the university the students do experience the difference.

*'A friend, maybe even my best friend at university, is the wealthiest student of the class. His father is the boss of a multinational. He is my best friend, but we have different views on things in life like the quota system. When we have a discussion about our different views, I mostly leave the discussion, because we will never understand each other.'*<sup>47</sup>

Concluding, the students of various classes try to find ways, like avoiding to visit other neighborhoods and avoiding discussions, to work with each other and to not let the different backgrounds get in the way. University is the place where the boundaries between the classes are being broken.

### **Final words**

*'With our books, our notebooks we will transform this place.'* Higher Education for my informants is *the* tool to beat poverty and it has the power to transform society to a more equal and democratic one. This is important for understanding if my informant see the quota system as a measure that can beat exclusion and attack poverty. This will be described in the next chapter.

Due to the disadvantaged position my informants experience various obstacles in order to attain higher education. The obstacles as described in this chapter are also important to understand why the quota system is being implemented. As the next chapter will describe, the quota system has helped most of my informants to enter university. Despite their disadvantaged background there is not a higher drop-out rate among the quota students in comparison to the non-quota students. This came

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<sup>46</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>47</sup> Interview, Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

as a surprise to many critics. Yet, looking at my informants; they have already overcome many obstacles to go to study and they see higher education as the key to move out of poverty. Looking at this, it is not really surprising that the drop-out rate is not as high as the drop- out rate for non- quota students. The next chapter will give a detailed inside on the quota system and mainly on how my informants experience this quota system.

### 3. The quota system

#### The measure to attack inequality?

*'I'm against the quota system. It's copied from the United States. This is ridiculous, since Brazil is not the United States. The US has segregation; In Brazil there is no such thing. This quota system will only provoke racism. Slavery was abolished many years ago.'*<sup>48</sup>

*'I'm against the quota system. It is not the solution, since the public schools have bad quality education. The solution is to improve education, better teachers and so on.'*<sup>49</sup>

*'I'm very much against the quota system. It gives people the opportunity to enter university, but they are not prepared for university. That's why a lot of those quota students abandon university.'*<sup>50</sup>

Affirmative action policies have always been the centre of criticism and debate. This is also the case for the quota system in Brazil. During informal conversations I had in Rio de Janeiro, I noticed that many inhabitants were very much against the quota system. The previous statements are examples of those criticisms. Yet, those criticism and the ones in the media are not from the target group themselves, but from the outside. As an anthropologist I find it important to hear the opinion of the target group themselves. Only then we can get a better understanding if affirmative action, here the quota system, can be an effective measure to include a disadvantage group and to beat poverty on the medium and long run.

In this chapter I will start with some background information about affirmative action policies and the quota system in general. Further, the chapter gives an insight in the various quotas at the UERJ. Then, I will let the voices of my informants be heard by describing how they got familiar with the quota system, what their opinion is of the quotas and how they experience being a quota student. Throughout the chapter I will also describe the various criticisms. This chapter will therefore give a deeper understanding of the quota system and therefore also affirmative action policies in general.

#### **Affirmative action and the quota system**

Affirmative action refers to policies to include underrepresented groups in for example employment or education. Special or positive measures are permitted to improve the position of disadvantaged groups. This way the disadvantage group can compete on equal terms with more privileged

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<sup>48</sup> Informal conversation upper class inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro, 15-02-2011

<sup>49</sup> Informal conversation non- quota student, 10-02-2011

<sup>50</sup> Interview Director 'Escola Mexico', 24-02-2011

candidates. (McHarg & Nicolson, 2006: 1,2) The goal of affirmative action is to overcome past and present discrimination (Horne, 1992: 1,2). The concept 'affirmative action' came into existence in the United States. President Kennedy's Executive order 10925, issued in 1965, prohibited discrimination because of race, creed, color or sex. The main provision of the order was: '*The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.*' (Raza et al, 1999: 12, 13) In other words affirmative action are implemented to create a more equal society. As became clear before, affirmative action policies are often implemented in the area of education, since education is an important factor in poverty alleviation and since a more educated population will improve democracy (Khan and Williams, 2006; Almeida, 2008).

Since 2001 affirmative action policies have been implemented on public universities in Brazil. In the beginning the quota system was mainly focused on racial issues. The racial democracy idea was challenged by the action of black movements. Those movements, like Educafro, played a role in implementing the quota system. Yet, there were more factors involved. First, Brazil participated successfully in the World conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001. The media attention and the international pressure influenced the decision to introduce the quotas. Second, racism was recognized as an important problem in Brazil. (Neves, 2010; Cicalo 2008; Carvalho, 2006) The result was that the implementation of affirmative action policies began in 2001, with law 3,708 of the state of Rio de Janeiro which instituted a reserve of 40% of the posts at the state public universities for black and *pardos* (Neves, 2010: 17)

To make matters more clear; public universities are divided between state and federal universities. Only state universities have to implement the quota system, federal universities can decide if they want to use the quota system or not according to the University Autonomy principle (Cicalo, 2008: 263) However, many federal universities have also implemented the quota system. In 2010, 65 of 95 Brazil's public universities uses a form of affirmative action policies (Telles, 2010, 147)

Currently the quota system is not only focused on racial issues, since there are different models of affirmative action policies: racial quotas, social quotas (for example for students from public schools) and a model in which a bonus is added (to the entrance examination) (Neves, 2010: 18). Telles (2010: 145) states that most of the quotas are now class based (social quotas), since universities expect that many afro- descendants will benefit from these quotas, since the predominance of afro- descendants in the lower rung of the Brazilian class structure. Racial and social quotas are relevant for my target group. First, because most of the inhabitants of Macaco, or from *comunidades* in general, lack quality

public education. Second, since a large percentage of the inhabitants is colored. The UERJ now applies both of the quotas. In the next section I will describe the quota system at the UERJ.

### **Quota system at the UERJ**

The UERJ was the first and long time the only university in Rio de Janeiro to implement the quota system. Since September 2010 the UFRJ (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro or federal university of Rio de Janeiro) also implemented the quota system. The UFRJ reserves 20 % of their posts for students from public schools. Yet, my research focuses on the UERJ, since the UERJ is already longer active in implementing affirmative action policies and since all my informants study at the UERJ or intent to.

The UERJ reserves 45 % of its places, for all courses, for disadvantaged groups. They reserve 20% percent for black or colored students (racial quota), 20% for students from public schools (social quota, but mostly described as public quota), and 5 % for disabled and indigenous students. As stated before my research focuses on the quotas for black students and students from public schools, since those quotas are relevant for my target group. There is one general criterion that applies for all the quota students: an income criterion. The income cannot exceed 960 reais per person in a household. (See also appendix: Quota system at the UERJ) The UERJ has decided to implement this criterion, since they only want to attract disadvantage groups. One example is that there are also some public schools with good quality education, so those students do not automatically belong to a disadvantaged group. The UERJ thus defines disadvantaged groups as a group that suffers from social exclusion and material deprivation.

There is one major important difference between quota- students and non- quota students; quota students can have a lower grade on the *vestibular* than the regular students to pass. An example is that regular students have to get 69 points to pass the law *vestibular*, while quota students can pass with 34 points. Those grades or points do depend on the course. The university implemented this lower grade for quota students to make the university a more attractive option for disadvantage groups in society. Patricia Anida Noronha of the admission department of UERJ, explained:

*'You can compare a disadvantage group and educational attainment with a pyramid. The bottom is filled with students at the primary school, the middle is filled with students at secondary school and the top and the smallest part is filled with students on the university. So, the higher the level of education, the less students from disadvantages groups. Most of the poor people go to work after primary school, since they need money for*

*themselves or to help their family out. So, this quota system is there to make university a more attractive option. More attractive than going to work after primary education.*<sup>51</sup>

The UERJ recognizes that poverty and exclusion are obstacles in order to attain higher education and they hope that the quota system can minimize these obstacles. The university has the intention to make the access for the disadvantaged groups easier.

Further the UERJ recognized that most inhabitants of a *comunidade* are part of a disadvantage group, yet they don't apply the criterion of residence (from a *comunidade* or not), since this group already fits in the other quota criteria. Patricia Anida Noronha does state: *'It's important to attract people from the comunidade, since education is an instrument to transform. When educated people return to their comunidade, they can change reality.'*<sup>52</sup> This is a very important statement, not only because it shows that the university also wants to attract people from the *comunidade*, but mainly because it states that education has the power to transform society. I can relate this directly to the previous chapter, where I stated that according to my informants education is the key out of poverty and can transform society into a more equal one. It's important to know that the university has the same point of view, since this allows us to understand the implementation of the quota system even better.

A following question is then if the number of students from disadvantaged groups has indeed increased. According to Patricia Anida Noronha<sup>53</sup> the number of students from my target group, students from the *comunidade*, has increased. However, she does add, the UERJ always have been the university for the poor and students from the *comunidade*. This has to do with the location; it is next to a subway station and surrounded by *comunidades* as Morro do Macaco. Yet, there has been an expansion of students from the *comunidade*, especially with the courses like law, medicine and engineering, since those studies were first too difficult to enter. The quota system gave those student the opportunity to enter those studies with difficult *vestibulares*.

I asked Patricia Anida Noronha if she thinks the quota system has been a success:

*'At the UERJ, yes. The number of students has increased and there is not a high drop- out rate. Yet, I do feel that the quota system should be just a temporary solution. The problem is not the university, but the public education. That's the core of the problem. But if the public education does not change, the quota system will always exist.'*<sup>54</sup>

Thus, she feels that the quota system is just a temporary solution in order to deal with the existing social exclusion. Yet, this part has now mainly discussed the background information and the opinion

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<sup>51</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

<sup>52</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha, (Department admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

<sup>53</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha, (Department admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

<sup>54</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ), 30-03-2011

of the UERJ on the quota system. As stated earlier, the opinion of the inhabitants is most important in my research. Therefore, the next part of the chapter will be about the experience of the inhabitants of Morro do Macaco.

### **Familiarity with the quota system**

In order for the quota system to be successful the system has to be, preferably positively, known to the target group. This section will describe how my informants got familiar with the quota system.

Almost all my informants stated that they got familiar with the quota system in part through the (mostly negative) attention in the media, but mainly through the *cursinho pre-vestibular*. Interesting is that the secondary school, the public education, did not inform the students about the quota system. Rita de Cassia from Educafro also has told me something about this:

*'We try to hang leaflets about the quota system and our cursinho pre-vestibular at public schools. Unfortunately they never hang longer than just one day, since the directors of the public schools remove them instantly. Those directors remove the leaflets, since they are against the quota system. I have an opinion of why they are against the quotas. Their children go to private schools. If their children want to apply for the UERJ, they now have less chance to enter the university, since 50 percent of the post are now for quota students.'*<sup>55</sup>

Here, I do not wish to argue if Rita de Cassia is right about the reason why the directors are against the quota system, yet I want to show that she has encountered many directors of public school that do not support the system. I have also asked the director of the public school 'Escola Mexico' in Botafogo about her opinion on the quota system.

*'There are no special classes being given about the quota system. I never talk to my teachers about the quota system. A teacher is free to talk to the students about the quota system, but I don't really know if they do or not. I think it depends on how the teacher stands in the debate around the quota system. How I stand in the debate around the quota system? Well, I'm very much against the quota system. I think it gives people the opportunity to enter university, but they are not prepared for the university. This is why a lot of people abandon university.'*<sup>56</sup>

Her example thus partly matches the experience of Rita de Cassia, since this director was indeed against the quota system. I've also used the director's example at the beginning of this chapter, since it represents a common criticism: quota students are not prepared for university and therefore there will be a high drop-out rate among those students. Her reason for being against the quota system is also interesting since she did not relate her idea of those students not to be prepared for university to the

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<sup>55</sup> Interview Rita de Cassia (Educafro), 02-03-2011

<sup>56</sup> Interview Director 'Escola Mexico', 24-02-2011

quality of public education. Again, I do not wish to discuss if this is her real reason for being against the quota system, I wanted to show an example of a public school that does indeed not promote the quota system. The director uses this criticism in order not to stimulate her students to attain higher education. This shows that most students do not get informed about the quota system at a public school. This also counts for my informants, none of them got informed at their public school.

According to Michele<sup>57</sup> a lot of persons from the *comunidade* have never heard about the quota system. This also applies to the parents of the students. My informants have no idea what their parents think of the quota system or if their parents even know about the existence of the quotas. In other words, they are not being stimulated by their family environment to apply for the quota system. Interesting is that the parents that do stimulate their children to attain higher education also aren't informed about the quotas. Stephany states: *'My parents just want me to study. They don't care how I enter. The most important thing is that I will study.'*<sup>58</sup> Thus, before entering the *pre-vestibular* most students are not informed about the system. However, all three *pre-vestibulares* I have visited did talk with their students about the quotas. Roberto states: *'My teacher on the pre-vestibular told me that the quota system is a possibility to enter university, it's easier'*<sup>59</sup>. It is not surprising that the *cursinho pre-vestibular* informs the students about the quotas, since the *cursinho* is often organized by university students.

Concluding, there can be stated that there are no campaigns that promote the quota system. The quota system is only promoted by local organizations as Educafro and community *cursinhos pre-vestibulares*. The *cursinho* is mostly the place where the students first think about if they would like to apply for the quota or not. Important to state here is, that students attaining a *cursinho pre-vestibular* already wanted to enter university. The decision to enter university is therefore not influenced by the quota system. This is interesting since the quota system has the intention to make the university a more attractive option for persons from a disadvantaged group. I will come back to this point below. The next section will describe what opinion my informant have about the quota system and if they feel it's an opportunity to enter university.

### **Opinion of the quota system**

*'We would prefer not to have some special measures to enter university, we just want equality. The right pre-education, so that we would have the same chances to go to university'*<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Interview Michele (student at *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 28-03-2011

<sup>58</sup> Interview Stephany (student at *pre-vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 11-04-2011

<sup>59</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>60</sup> Concluding statement of most of my informants

Although the opinion of my informants differs a lot, there is one point where everybody agrees on; the public education is what really needs to change. If this would change, everybody would have an equal opportunity to enter higher education and the quota system would be unnecessary. The improvement of public education is a common thread in my research. According to my informants the improvement of public education is an important measure in attacking poverty. This is not only a statement from my informants, but also from the UERJ and other critics. Some are therefore against the quota system, since that would not attack the real problem. Others are therefore pro- quota system, since the bad public education gives them a disadvantaged position in entering university. Yet, this should be a temporary solution.

A very interesting observation was that when I asked my informants about their opinion of the quota system, most mentioned the public education or social quotas. Racial quotas were less frequently mentioned by my informants. When I spoke to outsiders and asked them about their opinion they all mentioned the racial quota and why they are against it. So, there is a huge difference in what the outsiders mention about the quota system and what my informants state. My informants who did mention the racial quota, were either pro- racial quota, since they experience racial discrimination themselves or are contra- racial quota, since they feel that the racial and social quota should be one quota. I will describe the racial quota more broadly in the next section.

A lot of my informants also had a more general criticism about the quota system. Some of the students at the *pre- vestibular* think that the quota system separates people. Gustavo states: '*I think the quota system divides people between good and bad students.*'<sup>61</sup> The quota students would then be the bad students, since they did not have the right pre- education. He is afraid that he will feel discriminated and stigmatized at the university. Interesting is that none of them has asked this to one of the quota students already at university. (Whether those students indeed feel stigmatized will be described in the last section.) Their opinion must therefore be influenced by the media. The media mainly speaks about the negative sides of the quota system and one point of view is, as already stated before, that non qualified students will be selected above qualified students. Being labeled as a non- qualified student would reinforce prejudice and the quota students will feel stigmatized. This is thus related to the general criticism that affirmative action could reinforce prejudice and lowers the self esteem under the recipients of affirmative action (Horne, 1992: 15). This is the reason why some of my informants think of not applying for the quota system; they want to be equal to the 'regular' students. So they feel that the measure to include is excluding. Yet, on the other hand they do recognize that they maybe do

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<sup>61</sup> Interview Gustavo (student *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 24-03-2011

not have a choice, since they are not equal. Gustavo argues: *'wanting to enter university is not the same as being able to'*<sup>62</sup>. The next section will describe why.

### **The quota system: an opportunity to enter university?**

The most important mechanism in the quota system, is that students can have a lower grade at the *vestibular* to become eligible. My informants state that this is the reason why entering university is easier now. Therefore most of my informants feel that the quota system is an opportunity to enter university, even if they do not totally support the quota system. Yet, there was one more reason mentioned why the quota system could be an opportunity to enter university, as explained by Clarice;

*'I think it's an opportunity for me to enter university, since there is a lot of racism in Brazil. I think that if I would get the same note on the vestibular as a white or even (a little bit) more white than me, she will be admitted before me.'*<sup>63</sup>

Clarice is a dark skinned girl who experiences racial discrimination in Rio de Janeiro. Therefore she feels that she has a disadvantaged position in Brazilian society. In the first chapter I've already written about race and class constructions in Brazil. As I have stated race is also a mechanism of exclusion in Brazil; being black in Brazil means most of the time that this person has less access to opportunities for upward mobility than a white person (Carvalho in Johnson, 2008). This is exactly what Clarice experiences. She feels that the quota system would attack this racial inequality and give black people the opportunity to enter university. This example also shows that she experiences a color hierarchy. She states that even a bit whiter girl will be admitted before her. So, the blackest person is at the bottom of the color hierarchy.

Interesting is that most of my informants are mainly preoccupied with the lack of quality education. The lack of quality education is being seen a important factor in their experience of poverty and unequal chances in society. Just a few have also mentioned the racial discrimination as the main cause of their unequal chances. Yet, this does not mean that the majority does not experience this, yet they just feel that it is the public education what first needs to improve. Further, I do need to state that there is a greater stigma on racial quotas than on the social ones. Therefore, the inhabitants may speak easier about the social quotas.

The criticism around the quota system is mainly concerned with the racial one (Cicalo, 2008: 264). The racial democracy idea denied racism and racial inequality, the racial quota system does just the opposite. Therefore it was not a big surprise that the racial quota were the centre of debate. The racial quotas would change Brazilian identity, since society always saw itself as a mixed race. Now it would

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<sup>62</sup> Interview Gustavo (student *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 24-03-2011

<sup>63</sup> Interview Clarice (student at *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 01-04-2011

be divided between 'black' on one side and 'white' on the other side. (Nascimento & Campo de Sousa, 2008: 130) The blacks will now be seen as a separate race, which would then foster more racism (Cicalo, 2008: 265) This is also exactly what the first criticism at the beginning of this chapter states. During an informal conversation with a upper class European descendant inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro, he stated that:

*'I'm against the quota system. It's copied from the United States. This is ridiculous, since Brazil is not the United States. The US has segregation; In Brazil there is no such thing. This quota will only provoke racism. Slavery was abolished many years ago.'*<sup>64</sup>

His statement shows that he still believes in the racial democracy idea. The social quota he could understand, yet the racial ones not. As stated before, my dark skinned informants do of course not agree with this view, since they do in fact experience a lot of racial discrimination. Yet, racial constructions in Brazil are not the same as the United States, since there is not a dual division between black and white (Winant, 1999; Twine, 2000). First, as mentioned before Brazil has a color hierarchy, with various 'races' (based on phenotype and skin color). And secondly racial identity is fluid and socially determined (Hasenbalg & do Valle Silva 1999). Therefore, another criticism was that it would be hard to define who is black and who is not. So who can apply for the quota and who not? Many universities like the UERJ has solved this problem by implementing racial quotas on self- declaration. This way, they don't have to make this decision. According to Patricia Anida Noronho<sup>65</sup> this works fine, since there is a lot of social control. Yet, some of my informants did find this strange, since now a white person can also declare themselves black and apply for a quota. A famous example of a university that used another method was the UNB (*Universidade do Brasilia* or University of Brasilia). The UNB used until 2007 a committee that determined by photo's who was black or not (Neves, 2010: 17). They became the source of a media spotlight, when one pair of a twin could apply for a racial quota and while the twin brother could not. This committee received attention when VEJA magazine highlighted that case (Telles, 2010: 149). The various ways in which the quota systems are implemented are examples of how Brazil tries to deal with racial discrimination and their complex racial constructions.

Clarice further explains why the elite is against the (racial) quotas:

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<sup>64</sup> Informal conversation upper class inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro, 15-02-2011

<sup>65</sup> Interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ) 30-03-2011

*'The white elite is against the quota system, since they are afraid for the black people. If the poor black people will be educated, the elite will lose power. The quotas will make sure that there will be more diversity at the elite.'*<sup>66</sup>

Clarice's statement is an example of class and power relations. The elite class is most of the time opposed to the affirmative action plan, while they profit from the division of the classes. (Horne, 1992:8) Her statement further implies that she feels that education can be the way out of poverty and a disadvantaged position, since education will make sure that there will be more diversity at the elite.

When I look at my informants I can't state that the quota system attracts more people from disadvantaged groups to university. All of my informants (social or racial quota students (or to be)) already wanted to study and heard about the quota system at the *pre- vestibular*. But as Gustavo explains: *'wanting is not the same as being able to'*<sup>67</sup>. My informants lack the right- pre- education, so the chance that they will pass the *vestibular* increases with the quota system. When looking at the quota students, this is most of the time true. Jonatham<sup>68</sup> and Luiza<sup>69</sup> wouldn't have passed the *vestibular* without the quota system, since they did not have enough points. Caninde<sup>70</sup> did not even pass the quota law *vestibular* the first and second time. This has also to do with the fact that the *vestibular* for courses like law is even more difficult. Normally a lot of students from public schools would not have passed the *vestibular*. As Patricia Anida Noronha of the UERJ has stated, the number of students from the *comunidade* has increased due to the quota system, especially on these difficult courses. On the other hand, Roberto, also a quota student, did eventually not need the quota system, since he had enough points to also pass the 'regular' *vestibular*. *'For me the quota system was not necessary in order to enter university, but I know that for a lot of people the quota system is very important, since the vestibular is too difficult.'*<sup>71</sup>

Concluding I can state that the quota system does not influence the decision to study, yet, it does influence the possibility to pass the *vestibular* and therefore to study. In that way, the quota is indeed a opportunity to enter university. Caninde states: *'it's now less difficult to enter university, not easy but less difficult.'*<sup>72</sup> Thus, there is more diversity at the UERJ since the quota system.

### **Experiences of quota students at the UERJ**

As stated before some students at the *pre- vestibular* are against the quota system since they feel that the quota system would divide students. They are afraid of being stigmatized at the university. This

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<sup>66</sup> Interview Clarice (student *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 01-04-2011

<sup>67</sup> Interview Gustavo (student *pre- vestibular Viva Vila Isabel*), 24-03-2011

<sup>68</sup> Interview Jonatham (quota law student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>69</sup> Interview Luiza (quota biology student), 15-04-2011

<sup>70</sup> Informal conversation Caninde, 19-04-2011

<sup>71</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

<sup>72</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

section will review if the quota students themselves feel stigmatized and how they experience students life as a *cotista*. The students I've spoken to at UERJ were all social quota students.

To be stigmatized, one first has to know who are quota students and who are not. According to my informants it is indeed known. Roberto, states that information about who passes the *vestibular* as a quota students is freely accessible on the internet. Interesting is that most people are indeed curious to know who are and are not quota students, so they do check this list. Further, Andre<sup>73</sup>, states that he knows who is a quota students and who is not. He thinks that quota students look differently and act in a different manner. They dress differently and use a different language. This is interesting, since the first question that arises is; different from whom? And different in the sense of not 'regular'? This clearly shows the division in classes. Just a cultural capital, or maybe even part of cultural capital, dress and language are factors that determine ones class and distinguish one from the others. Andre is a upper class student from Leblon. So the students from a lower class are the 'others' and therefore different. His statement implies that students from a lower class (who talk and dress differently), are quota students. In that way there is already a certain stigmatization. Yet, I must also state that he is very pro- quota system and has many friends that are quota students. Caninde is one of his friends. But at first Andre was very much against the quota system:

*'Before I went to the UERJ I was really against the quota system. There are places reserved for students that are not qualified for university. When I met the quota students I realized this was a ignorant idea. Those students simply did not have the right pre- education, but this does not mean that they are not qualified to study at university.'*<sup>74</sup>

As stated before this is a very common criticism against affirmative action policies. When Andre met the quota students, he changed his opinion.

Caninde and Andre both state that students don't really speak about if they are *cotista* or not. This is because they are indeed afraid to be discriminated and segregated. Caninde states: *'equality at the university has stopped, that's why some regular students are opposed to the quota system and exclude the quota students.'*<sup>75</sup> Caninde himself does not feel discriminated or stigmatized at university, but this does not mean that it doesn't exist. The example of Roberto explains:

*'In the beginning the classes are very separated, with quota students on one side and non quota students on the other side. It are not only the regular students that treat us differently. The teachers as well, of course they do not admit this, but they do. An example of this is that during the formation of project groups, the teacher puts*

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<sup>73</sup> Informal conversation Andre ( non- quota law student UERJ), 13-04-2011

<sup>74</sup> Informal conversation Andre ( non- quota law student UERJ), 13-04-2011

<sup>75</sup> Interview Caninde, 23-03-2011

*the quota students together. The teacher does this because they feel that the quota students have a lower level of knowledge. This also counts for the regular students, who do not want to work with the quota students for the same reason. After a while, when it becomes clear that the quota students only had a easier vestibular, but not a easier study, the division ends.<sup>76</sup>*

This example shows that the criticism that the quota system would stigmatize students and separates them is partly true. It happens mostly in the beginning, but after a while when people get to know each other, talk to each other more understanding comes with this. To conclude, quota students are indeed afraid to be stigmatized and in the beginning they indeed can experience a division. Yet, over years this division and stigmatization ends most of the time. Further, the students I have spoken to, did not suffer much from stigmatization and it did not influence their results. The relatively low drop-out rate also suggest that the supposable stigmatization does not influence results or studying greatly.

### **Final words**

The goal of this chapter was to give an insight on how the target group, here inhabitants of Morro do Macaco, experiences and perceives the quota system. In my opinion this is important, since then we can get a better understanding if and how affirmative action policies can attack inequality.

The opinion of my informants of the quota system differs. Some are pro- quota others are not. Yet, they do all state that the quota system offers them a greater opportunity to enter university. Without the quota system many think that they wouldn't be able to pass the *vestibular*. This is a very important conclusion, since it shows that the quota system can indeed make sure that there will be more students from disadvantage groups at university. Not because the quota system influences the will to study, but because it can influence the chance to pass the *vestibular*. So, do they then feel that the quota system has the potential to combat social exclusion on higher education and to combat poverty on the medium and long run?

First, I would like to state that the quota system is inclusive and at the same time exclusive. Inclusive because it gives people the opportunity to enter university. Yet, exclusive because it does separates groups and students can feel excluded by the co- students and teacher. This does change during the study and students become more equal. Further, after graduation they will all have the same diploma, which should make sure that they have equal opportunities on the job market and in life. In my thesis I do not discuss if this is the case, since that is not the goal of my research. My informants feel that education is the key out of poverty and the quota system gives them a greater chance to be educated. Since education is such an important factor, the quota system does then indeed have the possibility to attack poverty. Of course many feel that this should be just a temporary solution, since other factors in

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<sup>76</sup> Interview Roberto (quota geography student UERJ), 07-04-2011

society should also change.

Lastly, I would like to note, that there is so much criticism on the quota system. Yet, I do have to state that the target group themselves also does not want to have any special measures like the quota system. The only thing that they want is be equal and to have the same opportunities. It is not that most of them feel that the quota system is an easy way out. Some of my informants even are thinking of trying to pass the *vestibular* without the quota system, since they want to be equal. Yet, on the other hand they realize that sometimes unequal measures are necessary in order to be more equal.

## Conclusion

My thesis has given a voice to the beneficiaries of affirmative action policies. This voice is often missing in the public debate and criticism around affirmative action policies. As my thesis has described, these policies are put in place to improve the position of disadvantaged and excluded groups. In Brazil affirmative action on higher education is implemented since 2001. The university UERJ in Rio de Janeiro was one of the first to implement affirmative action. Currently they reserve 20 % of their post for black and 'pardo' students (racial quota), 20 % for students from public schools (social quota) and 5 % for disabled and indigenous students (racial/ social quota). To get a full understanding if this quota system, as a measure of affirmative action, has the potential to improve the position of disadvantaged and excluded groups one has to hear the opinion of the stakeholders themselves. Therefore my thesis has explored if my informants see the quota system as a measure that reduces social exclusion within higher education and if this affirmative action policy is a valid measure to reduce inequality and lift people out of poverty? To provide this insight I have conducted a case study of Morro do Macaco and of the quota system used by the UERJ. The central question that I have answered in this thesis was therefore: *How do young inhabitants of Morro do Macaco perceive and experience the quota system on the UERJ in Rio de Janeiro?*

Affirmative action policies are often implemented in the area of education, since a more educated population will improve democracy (Almeida, 2008) and more importantly since policy makers see education as an important factor in poverty alleviation (Perlman, 2010, Melo, 2002). In the modern world education can be seen as the base for employment earnings and also influence other factors like dignity and status (Cireno- Fernandes, 2004). Important in my research is that my informants also see education as the tool out of poverty and social exclusion. The first chapter of my thesis has explained why *comunidades* can be seen as symbols of exclusion and poverty and therefore why this group is relevant for affirmative action policies, here the quota system. The case study of Morro do Macaco has shown how the inhabitants experience poverty and social exclusion. An important conclusion was that they relate poverty and social exclusion in their lives to the lack of quality public education. They experience poverty as the lack of basic needs and opportunities in life like the lack of quality living condition, the lack of health care and most importantly the lack of quality education. Their definition of poverty resembles the definition of Sen (1992, in Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997: 416) as a lack of opportunities or capabilities in life. A factor related to poverty according to Sen (1992) is insecurity. This is an important factor in Morro do Macaco, since the security situation has changed since the implementation of the UPP. My informants are pleased with the new security and admit that this improves their living conditions, yet, they do also state here that the UPP will not beat poverty completely; what they really need is the improvement of quality education. Further, they also relate

the lack of education to their experience of social exclusion. As stated in the first chapter social exclusion is the exclusion of a social group from various institutions and resources like health care, employment and education. Important is that the exclusion is not only based on material deprivation, but also on the characteristics of the social group. (Gacitúa, 2001: 13) Stigmatization plays an important role here. My informants do feel stigmatized due to their place of residence. Interesting is that they relate the stigmatization to the lack of education. My informants feel that employers hold the prejudice that inhabitants from *comunidades* are not educated, and therefore do not hire them. The lack of education is of course not the only factor their experience of poverty and social exclusion, yet it does play a very important role. They experience the lack of education as an important obstacle for further development.

The second chapter has explained that due to their excluded position they experience a lot of economic and social obstacles in order to attain higher education. The lack of economic resources influences their inability to afford higher education. Further, socially they are often not stimulated by their family surroundings. As my thesis has demonstrated, this is related to the lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997). The UERJ is familiar with those obstacles and those obstacles are important in the implementation of the quota system. The UERJ hopes to minimize the obstacles by lowering the grade to pass the *vestibular*. They hope that this lower grade will stimulate more persons of disadvantaged groups to attain higher education. This way the UERJ wants to include underrepresented groups at their university and this is the goal of affirmative action policies in general (McHarg & Nicolson, 2006: 1,2).

The third chapter has answered the question how my informants perceive and experience the quota system at the UERJ. Looking at the lower grade on the *vestibular* my informants perceive the quota system as an opportunity to enter university, since a lot of students would not have passed the *vestibular* without the quota system. Yet, very important to state here is that all my informants already wanted to study at university. Therefore I can state that the quota system does not influence the will to study or stimulate more persons to study. The quota system does not minimize obstacles like the lack of parental support. So that part of the goal of the quota system is not reached at the UERJ.

Despite the fact that most of my informants see the quota system as an opportunity to enter, this does not imply that they really support the quota system. Some of them feel that the quota system just separates people. This directly answers the question if the quota system includes people into higher education. As stated before, on one hand it does, but on the other hand it can also be exclusive. The quota students do sometimes indeed feel stigmatized by teachers and co-students for being 'less capable' students. This exclusion does slowly disappear during the studies and the students become more equal. So, in the long run one can state that the quota system does indeed include persons from

disadvantaged groups at the university. The fact that most students are afraid of being stigmatized as quota students and therefore even consider trying to enter university without the quota system, shows that the students want to be appreciated on the basis of their merit. Most of them do however realize that in order to become equal, one sometimes have to take an unequal route. I want to mention this in my conclusion, since most of the criticism of the quota system is so negative. Some critics state that the quota students do not deserve places, since they would not be qualified, while others state that the quota system is unnecessary, since there would be no racism in Brazil. This implies that the quota system would be an unfair measure according to the critics. Yet, I want to show that the quota system for my informants is not a easy way out and many of them would also not prefer to have those special measures. They really just want to enjoy equal opportunities. This brings me to the final conclusion. To what extent do beneficiaries feel that the quota system/ affirmative action policy is a valid policy to reduce inequality and lift people out of poverty? Education is according to my informants the key out of poverty and exclusion and therefore they feel that the quota system is a path out of poverty and exclusion to the extent that the policies help them to enter university. Yet, the most important conclusion is that all my informants state that the quota system is not the answer. What they really need is the improvement of the bad quality public education accessible to them. This is according to my informants the core of the problem of poverty and exclusion. The quota system is implemented to deal with this problem and can contribute to a more equal society. Yet, it will not be the answer in the long run according to my informants.

My research has been based on the fact if my informants *feel* that the quota system has the possibly to attack social exclusion and poverty. It does not answer the question if the system really combats this in the long run. For further research I would suggest following graduated quota students from disadvantage groups to see in what manner their live has changed and if they have really lifted themselves out of poverty.

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## Appendix 1

### Photo 's at the top of Morro do Macaco



Figure 1: View from the top of Morro do Macaco. Picture taken on 09- 04-2011



Figure 2: Cross at the top of Morro do Macaco. F.l.t.r. son of Caninde, Caninde, me and my brother. Picture taken on 23-04-2011

## Appendix 2

### Map with location of Morro do Macaco



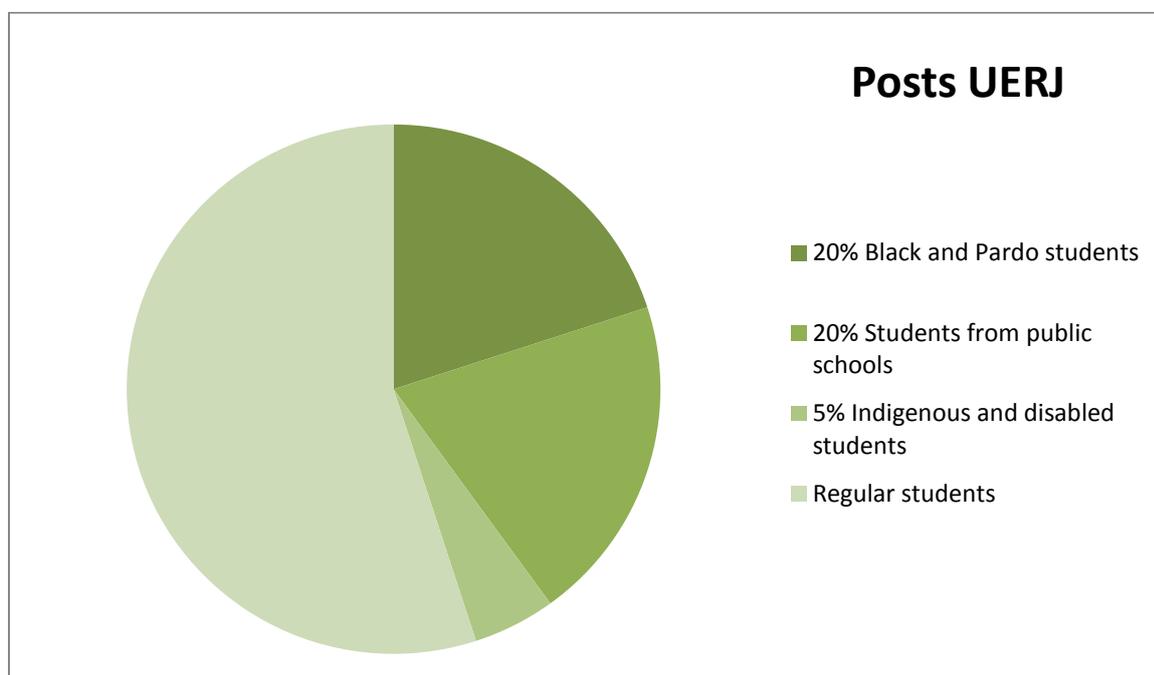
Red circle shows the location of Morro do Macaco

Map retrieved at: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/south-america/brazil/rio-de-janeiro/>

**Appendix 3**  
**The quota system at the UERJ**

<b>Quotas UERJ</b>			
<i>Racial Quotas</i>		<i>Social Quotas</i>	
Black and 'Pardo' students	Indigenous students	Students from Public schools	Disabled students
Income criteria (960 reais per person in a household)			

Source: interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ) 30-03-2011



Source: interview Patricia Anida Noronha (department: admission UERJ) 30-03-2011