

## The Introduction of a University Entrance Framework (Quota System) into State Universities in Brazil

SUZUKI Shigeru Suzuki

The social activism of blacks, Indigenous Peoples, women, homosexuals and other minorities played a significant role in the democratization process of Brazil beginning in the late 1970s. The result of this activism is reflected in the 1988 constitution. In this presentation I will consider the various policies designed to enhance the status and expand the rights of blacks which have been introduced by both the federal state of Brazil and local governments – especially the debate over the introduction of a university entrance framework (quota system) to state universities. I will use this to examine the “boundaries of tolerance and intolerance” in Brazilian society that became apparent with the introduction of this system. Taken together, I would like to point out the influence that globalization has had on activism for minority rights.

The debate caused by the introduction of a university entrance framework for blacks in state universities was underscored by the contradictary logic of the “multiracial nation” which had, until then, been seen as clear evidence of Brazilian society’s general sense of “tolerance”. The system materialized as a result of the strong demands of black activism and, can be said to have been a kind of objection to the way in which integration had been carried out in Brazil to date. While the dominant view was that the social integration of blacks had been already achieved in Brazilian society through high levels of “racial mixing”, this objection was being made due to the fact that this integration had taken place in a manner which both preserved and reinforced unequal racial hierarchies.

Surely the logic of the “multiracial nation” – Brazil’s version of the color-blind argument – that was also seen in the violent response to this system shows just how much of a matter of course this view has been taken for granted in Brazilian society. At the same time, there is a danger of essentializing a culture which bases itself in a sense of belonging and pride on the part of radical black activism which often seems to be trying to create a new color-line.