

Policies to promote racial equality and programs for textbook free distribution¹

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze the complex relationship between policies intended to promote racial equality and programs aimed at free distribution of textbooks. The study is based on a critical educational perspective that analyzes textbooks and the literature for the children and the young as *curriculum artifacts*. We discuss the articulation between black social movements and government apparatuses and their possible relation with changes in the calls for bids set forth by the *National Textbook Program*. Such calls for bids utilize prescriptions of generic and negative character, but they also contain specific propositional formulations, which require that textbooks have to promote the appreciation of the several ethnic/racial segments existing in the Brazilian society. We discuss the results of research on the relations between black and white people in textbooks used in subjects such as Portuguese, history, geography and science. Results are considered preliminary and point more to permanence than to change in the discourses of textbooks which establish a hierarchy between whites and blacks; and changes are more remarkable in science textbooks. We also analyze the results of drawings and interviews about the recollection of images of black people appearing in textbooks by black students in 5th through the 7th grade. Black students are aware of the racist discourses contained in textbooks and they cause embarrassment and malaise, that is, such contents serve as a sort of institutional racism present in the schools and may have a share in the worse academic achievement that affect black students in education. Since the changes in the textbooks are subtle, black students vehemently claimed for significant changes.

Keywords

Racial relations – Textbooks – Educational policies – Whiteness.

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Políticas de promoção de igualdade racial e programas de distribuição de livros didáticos^I

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Resumo

Neste artigo, analisamos a complexa relação entre políticas de promoção de igualdade racial e programas de distribuição de livros didáticos. O estudo ancora-se numa perspectiva crítica de educação que analisa livros didáticos e a literatura infanto-juvenil como artefatos de currículo. Discutimos a articulação entre movimentos sociais negros e aparelhos estatais e sua possível relação com mudanças nos editais do Programa Nacional do Livro Didático. Tais editais mantêm prescrições de caráter genérico e negativo, mas também contêm formulações propositivas e específicas, afirmando que os livros devem promover a valorização dos diferentes segmentos étnico-raciais da sociedade brasileira. Discutimos resultados de pesquisas sobre relações entre negros e brancos em livros didáticos de língua portuguesa, história, geografia e ciências. Os resultados são considerados preliminares e apontam mais para a permanência do que para mudanças nos discursos dos livros que hierarquizam brancos e negros, sendo mais notáveis as mudanças em livros de ciências. Analisamos, ainda, resultados de desenhos e entrevistas sobre a rememoração de imagens do negro em livros didáticos por estudantes negros de 5ª a 7ª série. Os discursos racistas constantes nos livros didáticos são percebidos pelos estudantes e causam constrangimento e mal-estar, ou seja, atuam como uma das formas de racismo institucional presentes nas escolas e podem ter parcela de participação nos resultados piores que o alunado negro sofre no ensino. Uma vez que as mudanças nos livros são tênues, os alunos negros clamaram por mudanças expressivas com veemência.

Palavras-chave

Relações raciais – Livros didáticos – Políticas educacionais – Branquidade.

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First words

[...] *white is everywhere.*

In this paper, we analyze the complex relationship between policies that promote racial equality and programs aimed at the free distribution of textbooks. The study is based on a critical perspective of education which understands textbooks and the literature for children and the young as *curriculum artifacts* (APPLE, 1995) which, both in its contents and in its process of production and distribution, are intertwined with power relations and may have a role in reproducing and producing social inequalities of race, gender, class and age. Our goal is to analyze textbooks which are issued by programs under specific public policies that purchase and distribute such books or, in this case, produce and distribute books based on the perspective of racial relations, especially, the relations between black and white male and female people¹ in Brazil.

This paper focuses on the permanence and change in the discourses of textbooks distributed by the *National Textbook Program* (PNLD). The criticism of racist discourses found in Brazilian textbooks has been in the agenda of researchers (LEITE, 1950) and activists of the black social movement for several decades. Since its origins, in the Brazilian Black Front, the black movement has prioritized the school as a tool for emancipation (PINTO, 1987). The representation of blacks in textbooks was an explicit concern when the Unified Black Movement (MNU) was formed in 1979, and one of its major claims was change in the school education, in order to extirpate from the textbooks, from the curricula and from the teaching practices the stereotypes and prejudices against black people (GUIMARÃES, 2002). The celebrations of the centennial anniversary of the Abolition [of slavery] and the participation of social movements for the elaboration of a new Constitution (1988) have

1- From now on, a word is used in masculine form should be understood as including both genders.

triggered a series of other initiatives such as projects, seminars, meetings, publications. Representing forms of articulating the social movements with the Public Authorities, and aimed at the education, seminars were held *Educação e discriminação dos negros* [Education and discrimination of black people (MELO; COELHO, 1988)], in the State of Minas Gerais, and *Livro didático: discriminação em questão* [Textbook: discrimination at issue (JUREMA, 1989)], in the city of Recife.

When PNLD was reorganized in the 1980's, the aim was to improve the quality of the textbooks purchased (starting with the physical quality), non-disposable books should be utilized and banks of textbooks should be organized in the schools. For such, it was necessary to reduce the interference of great publishing houses in the program. When the contraposition to businesses started, the government called on the social movements that criticized the textbooks. In 1987, protocols were signed between the Foundation of Student Assistance (FAE) and the leadership representative of the women's and the black movement. The protocol of intentions signed with representatives of the black movement² (MELO; COELHO, 1988) included five sets of actions: interchange with African countries; "advertisement of the real image of black people" (p. 12); co-edition of didactic works; technical cooperation with the Department of Education in every Brazilian state; organizing events and debates about the textbook.

The assessment of textbooks in 1993 (BRAZIL, 1994) marks the beginning of a new process. To a certain extent, this assessment is related with the articulation with the social movements. In textbooks, issues like racism and sexism are quoted several times, and

2- Protocol with FAE was signed by: Center of Afro-Brazilian Cultural and Commercial Integration; the National Afro-Brazilian Institute; the Institute of Research on Black Cultures; the Afro-Brazilian Study Center; the Unified Black Movement; the Group of Black Union and Consciousness; the Council of Black Entities of Bahia; the Work Group for Afro-Brazilian Affairs in the Department of Education of São Paulo; the Afro-Brazilian Culture Commission in the Department of Culture of the City of do Rio de Janeiro.

the criteria utilized to assess the textbooks demonstrate a clear concern with forms of explicit and implicit discrimination. At the same time, the assessment marks the passage to a new phase, in which the social movements no longer participate in the events associated with PNLD. The outcome of the assessment pointed out a great deal of problems in the textbooks. The strategy was disclosing to the press the portions of the assessment that contained gross conceptual mistakes as a way to reduce the respectability of the great publishing houses which are vendors to the government. Using this strategy was fruitful because then the publishing houses accepted the *Definition of criteria for assessment of textbooks* (BRAZIL, 1994). The alliance with the black and the women's movements was no longer important. Since then the events had now mainly representations of publishers and authors. One observes, when analyzing the documents related to PNLD, that the women's and black movements are no longer quoted.

The black movements continued to worry with the issue of racial discrimination in the textbooks. In 1995, an intense mobilization of the black movement took place for the *Zumbi March against Racism, for Citizenship and for Life*. As a way to appreciate black in society, the document sent to the Presidency of the Republic included, among its claims associated with the education sector, changes in the textbooks and the inclusion of contents in Afro-Brazilian history and culture.

In 1996, the *National Human Rights Program* (PNDH I) came to light; it proposed "to stimulate that textbooks shall emphasize the history and the fights of the black people in the construction of our country, by eliminating stereotypes and discriminations" (BRAZIL, 1996). Six years later, PNDH II was launched and expanded the goals in the field of civil and political rights. In the portion addressing the guarantee of the right to equality, we find two clauses that mention textbooks. In relation to *Afro-descendants*, the proposition was "to

support the revision of textbooks so that the history and contributions of Afro-descendants is redeemed in its role of instituting the national identity" (BRAZIL, 2002).

The criticism and the overcome of racial discriminations in textbooks were a concern in the *Report by the National Committee for the preparation of the Brazilian participation in the 3rd World Conference of United Nations Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Associated Intolerance* (BRAZIL, 2001), in the topics related to indigenous and black people, but they were not addressed by the other groups (gypsies, homosexuals, the disabled, migrants and Jewish community) included in the report. In the case of the *black community*, the measure proposed was the "revision of contents of textbooks with the purpose of eliminating the propagation of stereotypes" (p. 26).

The 3rd World Conference of the United Nations against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Associated Intolerance approved an action plan which:

Exhorts UNESCO to support the Member States in preparing didactic materials and other teaching instruments, with the aim of fostering teaching, training and educational activities associated with the human rights and the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and associated intolerance. (apud SILVA Jr., 2002, p. 9)

Therefore, the revision of textbooks remained in the agenda.

In the definition of policies by the PNLD, since 1994, the social movements – especially the black movement – were disregarded. At the same time, the PNLD policies became the place of stratagem which subsidizes the (conservative) discourse about the absence of inequalities. In the meantime, the black movement conquered more room for action onto other points of the state apparatus. In the case of the production of textbooks, there is a feeling that the social movements play a role that is inferior to those

of other segments of interest in PNLD. On the other hand, some elbow room was conquered by the black movement in state apparatuses and the ordinances approved may be the source of some interference in the PNLD policies and in *National Program of School Libraries* (PNBE), especially in the changes seen in the call for bids set forth by the former.

The calls for bids issued by the national programs for textbook distribution

I think it more beautiful to see the children happy, father, mother, aunt, grandmother, grandfather, cousins.

In relation to the policies aimed at distributing textbooks enforced by the Ministry of Education, we have analyzed the *National Textbook Programa* (PNLD) and the *National Program of School Libraries* (PNBE). Since the 1990s, PNLD and PNBE have started the purchase of textbooks by setting forth calls for bids. We have followed the changes in such calls for bids and in the textbook guides throughout the 2000s, in order to review in which extent such changes have incorporated the criticism provided by research and by the social movements and which opened a dialogue with the policies intended to promote racial equality as managed or proposed by the Ministry.

Research from the early 2000s demonstrate how the generic criterion of exclusion that was utilized in the call for bids was little effective or useless (SILVA, 2005), due to the fact that the forms of racist discourse found in the textbooks are, generally, implicit.

The 2007 call for bids (published in 2004 and encompassing the initial grades of the high-school teaching – 1st through 4th grade, at the time) brought novelties in terms of principles and criteria for the assessment of textbooks for the 1st through the 4th grade in PNLD 2007 (attachment IX to the call for bids). The following PLND call for bids, of 2008 (published in 2006, aimed at the final grades of

secondary school), maintained the same text as in attachment IX. Diversity is mentioned several times in it. The text assumes as principles of teaching the “freedom to learn, to teach, to research and disclose the culture, thought, art and knowledge”; the “pluralism of pedagogical ideas and conceptions”; the “respect for liberty and the value of tolerance”; the “guarantee of quality standards”; the “appreciation of extra-school experience”; and the “link between school education, work and social practices”.

In relation to promoting ethnic/racial equality, several ordinances utilize the word *tolerance* as a way of proposing conviviality. However, this term implicitly states that there is a standard of humanity that must simply *tolerate* the conviviality with the *other*, that is, it establishes what is non-hegemonic as the other, by affirming the difference as a deviation. We agree with the criticism expressed by Silva (2002) that such term is stigmatizing and that tolerance is coherent with a hierarchical perspective. In order to establish a relationship of reciprocity, what is needed is respect for difference.

Looking back the text in attachment IX of the 2007 call for bids, when dealing with elimination, the call for bids set forth three criteria, taking the third element as the compliance with legal precepts and explicitly quoting

the Federal Constitution, the Child and Teenager Statute, the National Education Guidelines and Grounds Act, Act No. 10.639/2003, National Guidelines for the Fundamental Schooling, Resolutions and Opinions issued by the National Education Council, especially, Opinion CEB No. 15/2000, of 04/07/2000, Opinion CNE/CP nº. 003/2004, of 10/03/2004 and Resolution No. 1, of 17 June, 2004. (BRAZIL, 2006, p. 30)

In the excerpt above, the call for bids emphasizes the ordinances related to ethnic/racial equality, as besides mentioning the *National Education Guidelines and Grounds Act* (LDB), it textually quotes Act No. 10.639/03

(BRAZIL, 2003), which modified article 26 of LDB; Resolution No. 01/04 of CNE (BRAZIL, 2004a), which institutes the national curricular guidelines for the education of the ethnic/racial relations and for the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African history and culture; and, also, Opinion CNE/CP No. 03/04. A question should be asked here: to what extent can the call for bids induce publishing houses and assessors to get to know and comply with the conditions and criteria established by these ordinances? Later on, in the 2011 call for bids (published in 2008 and intended for the 5th to the 9th grade), inducing the enforcement of ordinances is even more emphatic, as it now becomes a specific sub-item to be met.

Turning back to the 2007 call for bids (and the 2008 call, too), after addressing ethical precepts for citizenship, the text discusses criteria required to qualify the selected collections and for the “construction of a citizen society”, by saying:

Regarding the construction of a citizen society, it is expected that the textbook will:

- 1) promote a positive image of women, considering their participation in different jobs and professions and in places of power, thus reinforcing their visibility;
- 2) address themes such as gender and non-violence against women, with the aim of building a non-sexist, fair and equalitarian society;
- 3) promote a positive image of afro-descendants and descendants of Brazilian indigenous ethnic groups, considering their participation in different jobs and professions and places of power;
- 4) promote in a positive way the Afro-Brazilian culture and that of Brazilian indigenous peoples, giving visibility to their values, traditions, organizations and social/scientific knowledge;
- 5) address the theme of ethnic/racial relations, prejudice, racial discrimination

and associated violence, in order to achieve a anti-racist, fair and equalitarian society. (BRAZIL, 2006, p. 32)

The 2008 PNLD call for bids had an inductive role quite explicit with the statements contained in the legislation transcribed above. If a publish house or an assessor has not had the patience to refer to the legislation mentioned, however, the call for bids expresses in this part the requirement that textbooks must “promote in a positive way” the diversity of gender and ethnic/racial, by quoting textually the “image of Afro-descendants”, by indicating the promotion by means of participation of indigenous groups and Afro-descendants in different professional fields, and by also mentioning the dissemination of contents about the Afro-Brazilian cultures, about the indigenous peoples and about the “theme of ethnic/racial relations”. That is, the call for bids included, in its reading, aspects pointed out by the criticism of activists and scholars.

In the 2011 PNLD call, such indications were displaced to the beginning of the text which now became the attachment X, which presents the general principles with greater details:

As an integral part of their pedagogical proposals, collections must effectively contribute to the construction of citizenship. In this perspective, didactic works must represent the society they participate in, by seeking to:

- promote a positive image of women, considering their participation in different jobs, professions and places of power;
- address themes such as gender and non-violence against women, with the aim of building a non-sexist, fair and equalitarian society, including themes associated with the fight against homophobia;
- promote the image of women through the text, the pictures and activities in the collections, reinforcing their visibility;

- promote education and culture in human rights, ensuring the right of children and adolescents;
- encourage pedagogical actions aimed at the respect for and appreciation of diversity, the concepts of sustainability and active citizenship, supporting democratic pedagogical practices and the exercise of respect and tolerance;
- promote a positive image of afro-descendants and descendants of Brazilian indigenous ethnic groups, considering their participation in different jobs and professions and places of power;
- promote in a positive way the Afro-Brazilian culture and that of Brazilian indigenous peoples, giving visibility to their values, traditions, organizations and social/scientific knowledge, considering their rights and participation in different historical processes which are landmarks in the construction of Brazil, and appreciating the cultural differences in our multicultural society;
- address the theme of ethnic/racial relations, prejudice, racial discrimination and associated violence, in order to achieve a anti-racist, fair and equalitarian society. (BRAZIL, 2008, p. 36)

In the 2011 call for bids, therefore, the emphasis on criteria of appreciation of diversity is stressed, due to both the importance granted to them in the narration of the attachment to such call and the details in the items, added with the requirement of education on human rights. We point out a contradiction in the return to using the concept *tolerance* in this part, with greater recurrence in the 2011 call.

The 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012 PNBE call for bids are very heterogeneous due to changes in the collections to be purchased in the different years. However, in regard of ethnic/racial diversity, one observes an alternation between absence and presence of a generic statement about the necessary

absence of prejudices. For example, the 2008 call says that texts must be ethically adequate and avoid prejudices, moralism and stereotypes, in a formula that was repeated in the following years. As we contended before, this type of formulation has an impact that is restricted or null since it does not consider the forms, generally implicit, through which the discourses of *racism a la Brazilian mode* operate, and they do not provide subsidies to assessors so that they have little impact onto the assessments.

In the case of textbooks, the prescriptions abandoned its generic and negative character and became propositional and specific, by affirming that the textbooks should promote the appreciation of the several ethnic/racial segments of the Brazilian society. Such formula was not complied with in the PNBE calls for bids. In this case, the calls did not include the prescriptions associated with the policies for the promotion of racial equality, silencing about such policies and not including the propositions generated in different spheres of the federal government and in the Ministry of Education, especially the Office of the Secretary of Ongoing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI). Beyond the calls for bids, the organization of collections took into consideration the policies of diversity, since each collection of twenty textbooks to be distributed to the schools always included at least one textbook with appreciation of indigenous people and one with appreciation of Afro people. Besides its limited outreach in regard of the hierarchies between whites and blacks (VENÂNCIO, 2009; OLIVEIRA, 2011), the definitions of such strategies are not explicit in the documents that subsidize these policies. Its analyses remain restricted because there is no access to other sorts of source about the definition of such textbooks in the collections (perhaps interviews policy decision-makers, from SECAD and PNBE).

In relation to the textbooks, however, one observes a constant update in the calls for bids, which went from the generic criteria

of elimination to a *positive* wording, which induces to the appreciation via the promotion of diversity, encompasses the legal norms and makes explicit to the program's stakeholders (assessors and producers of books, publishers, text editors, graphic designers, illustrators, authors, copydesk persons etc.) explicit criteria for the appreciation of minority ethnic/racial groups. The assumption we have considered, based on the analyses of such calls for bids, is that very common forms of racial hierarchy – such as absence or under-representation of black characters, absence or under-representation in appreciated social situations – would be minored in the textbooks after the requirements were set forth in the call for bids. Let's take a look at what the research reveals.

Research on the relations between whites and blacks in textbooks

It is so sad to see.

When drawing the scenario of Brazilian research concerned in analyzing the ethnic/racial relations in textbooks, we find a process that becomes different along the decades. Research efforts began in the 1950s, in the wake of *Project Unesco* (LEITE, 1950; BAZZANELLA, 1957; HOLLANDA, 1957); in the following decades, no study is found until the time of political opening [during the military rule] in the 1980s (PINTO, 1981; SILVA, 1987), when the theme is again among research and publications, even though in minority presence. The following decade, we observe a swinging movement, with scarce works on the relations between whites and blacks and, at the same time, a more expressive number of works associated with Indians in the textbooks. Upon the turn of the century, however, one sees that is not only the studies of relations between whites and blacks in textbooks that is resumed, but also a gradual and continuous increase in research and publication. The major part of such research is in post-graduate courses, in the prevailing form of dissertations and a few

theses. Many times, we find testimony of authors about what led them to the interest in the object and, generally, researchers reveal that their experience as a student and the discriminating forms they perceived in the textbooks was the reason for the investigation.

In the synthesis of this paper, we will focus more recent research addressing the textbooks distributed by PNLD, since our interest is compare side by side the outcome of such research with the changes in the call for bids we are discussing here. That is, we attempt to verify if the research are aware of the changes occurring after the guidelines for the appreciation of the black population began to be enforced in the 2007 PNLD calls for bids.

A synthesis of the outcome of several research studies of racial relations in textbooks published in Portuguese (BARROS, 2001; SILVA, 2005; TEIXEIRA, 2006; WATTHIER, 2008; FREITAS, 2009; ORLANDO et al., 2008; LIMA, 2010; COSTA, 2004; SILVA, 2010; JÚNIA, 2010; PACÍFICO, 2011) indicates that: studies are unanimous to demonstrate forms of racial hierarchy and depreciation of black people in the discourses; they are aware of change and permanence in the representations of racial relations. As a general rule, such changes do not imply the absence of inequality, but the concomitant presence of improvements in certain aspects and in different forms of discrimination. Especially common are the under-representation of black characters, always accompanied by the presence of whites as natural representatives of mankind; the *silence* about the racial inequalities, as well as about cultural particularities and contributions by the black populations; the stereotypes and subordinate positions as peculiar and natural to black people.

The stigmatization that adversely affects black women in a peculiar manner – treated as objects and with hyper-sexuality discursively constructed as *natural*, in addition to be portrayed, generally, in passive positions without any possibility of action – was criticized by Pacifico (2011). In the case of

studies of textbooks in Portuguese, one more often observes analyses of textbooks for the last years of high-school (WATTHIER, 2008; FREITAS, 2009; ORLANDO et al., 2008; LIMA, 2010; SILVA, 2010; PACÍFICO, 2011), which seldom occurred in the previous decades.

We have a special interest, in compliance with the hypothesis we have raised, in the study conducted by Júnia (2010), because of how she chose her sample. Working with textbooks in Portuguese for the early grades of high-school, she selected for analysis the three collections which in 2007 received the maximum grade in the assessment of “contribution to a plural and democratic ethics”, a criterion that “deals with the concern with the ethnic representation in texts and images” (p. 22). The outcome, however, was of little auspice. On one hand, the review of teacher’s manuals allowed us to grasp the concern of textbooks in developing subjects associated with the ethical education of students. On the other hand, the stereotypes and other forms of racial hierarchy were common place in the discourses of the textbooks, with the “persistence of a discourse which represents the black person tied to the colonial past of slavery” (p. 147). Black children are represented repeatedly in subordinate positions, in great poverty, in a place of inequality, of suffering and with no accessibility to the socially produced wealth. White children are represented by images associated with education, leisure, and practices of citizenship, and discursively presented as the representatives of human kind (normative whiteness). In the Portuguese language field, however, we have only one study which analyzed textbooks purchased by PNLD after the 2007 call for bids, and the outcome point to a direction contrary to the likely inducing role assigned to the call for bids in terms of appreciation of the black population.

Regarding the history textbooks, studies also found more permanence than change. In special, the tendency of representing the black population exclusively as consisting originally of slaves is maintained, a trend that has been

constant over the years (OLIVEIRA, 2000; OLIVA, 2003; SILVA FILHO, 2005; CARVALHO, 2006; TEIXEIRA, 2006; OLIVEIRA, 2010), and is often presented in order to provide an impression of *eternity* to the “slaved” status as inherent to the black population, which serves to reify the subordination of black people. Discourses insist on associating the words black and slave, disregarding all the several and complex forms of participation of the black population in the Brazilian society. In addition, studies revealed that the texts and images found in the history textbooks analyzed contribute to the reinforce the stereotypes of black people and the lack of contents to educate about the ethnic/racial relations, and they also silence about contents associated with the African continent, since there is a total privilege in the narratives with information about the European peoples, highlighting their costumes and their cultures (SILVA FILHO, 2005; SOUZA, 2010; OLIVEIRA, 2010). Carvalho (2006) compared two textbooks published in 1996 and 2002 and noticed more permanence than changes in the approach to the relations between whites and blacks.

The only study we found in history textbooks distributed by PNLD after 2007 also pointed very restricted results. Analyzing textbooks for the 7th and 8th grade, chosen by schools in the State of Paraná in PNLD 2008, Souza (2010) discovered, in addition to the permanence of the representation as slaves, the black characters were seen and treated as things. In the 7th grade textbook, when talking about the colonial period, the slaved person appears connected to the colonial system as a part of machinery: passive as a slave and slaughtered by the system. In the textbooks, the images reproduce dramatic scenes: corporal punishments, escapes and tortures. In the three collections selected, 120 images were shown representing the black social segment; most portrayed slavery scenes and punishments, and only 17 images depicted positive aspects of the black people, as political leaders, activists in social movements, sport persons and artists.

In geography, Ratts et al. (2007) analyzed textbooks with the purpose of observing how contents associated with black people and Africa are represented by means of images (pictures). The authors found that the works present few references and mentions about the black population, almost always depicted by means of stereotypes – images of wild, rural and poor places of Africa.

Analyzing the illustrations from a sample of geography textbooks recommended by PNLD 2010 for the 2nd grade, Santos (2012) also observed more permanence than change. Inequalities were evident in certain axes: in the case of textbooks intended to teach introductory scientific knowledge, few black characters were shown as builders of science, unlike the white characters; at the same time, blacks were the characters appearing in the settlement of extremely poor areas. Discrimination was more intense in relation to black women. The under-representation of black characters in comparison with the participation of the black population was kept. Yet the presence of stereotyped black bodies, seen in studies on advertisement and publicity, was not remarkable. Black characters were excluded from certain spaces associated with power and social standing. One observed the association of black people and the African continent with poverty and lower social standings – as well as the research by Ratts et al. (2007) – and it concluded that Africa was not present in the scientific/technological discourse. On the other hand, more frequent were the images of black characters with healthy Family ties, and the black person was not represented as a slave, nor the Brazilian blacks were depicted in folklore manner.

In science, Soares and Bordini (2009) analyzed four collections distributed by PNLD 2007 for the early grades and found the prevalence of the white man over the white woman and over the black people, through spaces of scientific knowledge and power reserved to heterosexual white men, while the

black characters were inserted in situations of social disadvantage or as a highlight in sports.

In another study, illustrations in science textbooks for the 7th grade (8th year) were reviewed in PNLD 2008 through 2011 (MATHIAS, 2011). The analysis found a series of images that appreciate black characters and which are different from the images identified in other studies; in particular, it is a novelty to find the use of images in which the black characters appear as representatives of the human kind, thus breaking the *normative whiteness* criticized in the mentioned studies. For example, in images depicting specific themes related to the human body, a black human body was utilized. There was also use of images with black characters in Family settings, as doctors and scientists, which operates with the meaning of building social spaces where there is not a hierarchy between blacks and whites. On the other hand, together with the under-representation – just 20 percent of black characters in the illustrations –, other forms of hierarchy between whites and blacks continue to be present in the discourses of textbooks. Among the nine science textbooks in PNLD 2008 and 2011 that were reviewed, most represent the ethnic group according to the color of skin, and in the activities assigned one generally finds illustrations of the white ethnic group, both for women and for children, babies and men. Even in images that appreciate black phenotype aspects, some stereotypes are maintained, showing black characters in social places they are *destined* to. In other cases, as school activity or levels of kinship, the black characters are proportionally more related to the study and to family ties than the whites, and this indicates an appreciation of the black characters as very different from what was found in other studies.

The conclusion achieved by this research, that there was more change than permanence, may be related to the new formulations appearing in the call for bids, that is, we find indications that the inducing role of the calls has caused change in the discourses. On the other hand,

the outcome of other studies is contradictory in relation to these, as they present more permanence of hierarchies between whites and blacks than ruptures. One may consider different impacts of the calls for bids in the various school subjects covered by PNLD and in the several mediators: structure of the areas of knowledge, teams of assessors, specificities of the assessment processes, structure of the assessment forms, specific for each area. In addition, in fields where representations are well settled, change may require more time than the few years of modifications in the calls for bids so far.

The studies generally are limited to analyzing the written or iconographic discourses contained in the textbooks. We will highlight, as follows, the results of a study seeking to capture the viewpoint of black students about the representation of their social group in history and Portuguese textbooks.

Study on the recollection of black people's representation in textbooks

*I am black, I am proud of my group,
I like to be black.*

In a public state school located in the city of Pontal do Paraná, data were collected from students in the 5th through the 7th grade. The composition of color/race of the classes was approximately 75% of white students and 25% of black students, with sporadic presence indigenous students. Initially, students were asked to individually make a drawing answering the question: what is the image of black people in the textbook that is most outstanding in your memory? The same procedure was adopted with five classes of 5th grade, four classes of 6th grade^a and three classes of 7th grade (approximately 25 students per class). Drawings from white children were separated from those of black children. Next, it was announced to the same classes that black children who wished to do so were invited to participate in interviews about the theme – image of black people in textbooks

–, and they should go to a room especially reserved for such in the school, at specific times. Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 students aged between 11 and 15 years who identify themselves as black and who willingly attended the room appointed for the interviews. The effort had the purpose of capturing the viewpoint of black students in relation to images they have access to through the textbooks and the drawing they had made. The work was performed in the beginning of the school year and the students did not have any previous preparation or contents associated with education for the ethnic/racial relations at that ongoing school year.

In the representations arising from the drawings and the interviews, the perception of students was unanimous that textbooks bring stereotyped images of black people. Out of 15 drawings, 12 contained images connected with slavery, and 11 of those images depicted a black character being punished in a stake and one of them illustrated a black person in chains. Such images do not present the contribution of the black people to art and are far away from an economic, philosophical, aesthetical, and political contribution to the Brazilian society. Thus, the images produced by the students are limited to a distant time, to the past of slavery, which took place from the beginning of the Brazilian colonization until virtually the end of the 2nd Reign. At not time the students' images reported the black people as active member of the current Brazilian society.

Figure 1



Fonte: material da pesquisa.

We selected the image shown in Figure 1 as an example of what the students expressed, because of the dramatic intensity conveyed by such image. A black person hanging in the stake and receiving blows from a whip was the most frequent structure found in the drawings. Another remarkable trait is the blood spots in the bodies of those being whipped. It was also common that drawings assigned black phenotypic traits (dark skin, frizzled hair) to the character (always a man) who whipped the other person. The drawings contain specificities but, at the same time, they reveal marks that are associated with the image of *Punitions Publiques*, by Rugendas: in the center, a naked man tied to the stake, beside another black man raising his right arm, whip in his hand and expressing the movement of a lash; many people are around the stake watching the scene, among them a white man with a top hat who seems to give instructions to a white soldier standing in a snap hook; on the other side, a black man is helped by another, as if he had been whipped. This image was reproduced exhaustively in textbooks and other learning materials, so that alluding to it is generally enough to associate it with a great deal of us, *Brazilians*. This would be the most well finished example of what Oliveira (2000) calls *canonic images*, images that are reproduced to accompany historical events and which become canons in the orientation about such events, acting to define the very processes (more than simply *illustrate* them).

In figure 1, specifically, at another stake, there a person hanging (another drawing that also presented such image); there is also another person lying on the floor, with a great amount of blood in the head and feet; between the two stakes, there is a woman holding a child on her lap and another child is clung to her leg. The title given by the student – *Punishment in family* – increases the dramatic intensity of the scene, since the woman and the children watch the extreme suffering of the husband/father and they witness the death of those being punished.

We interpret these images as being the students' perceptions of the ways their social groups is represented in textbooks and they convey a significant load of symbolic violence, which is also expressed in their testimonies.

I have already seen many images of black people in the textbook, the blacks are always being beaten, they are always suffering. It is so sad to see. (RC, 11 years old, 6th grader)

I have already seen many images of black people in textbooks. Blacks had frizzled hair, and their eyes were very black. The blacks I saw were in a ship, they were in chains, I saw them, men, women and slaves... I did not like to the black people as slaves, I felt something bad... I think it is nice to see happy children, father, mother, aunt, grandmother, grandfather, cousins. I never saw black children playing in the textbooks, just slavery. (AN, 11 years old, 6th grade)

In textbooks, I have already seen black people, slaves, they were being beaten up. It is sad to see those images, them being whipped, I don't like to see them suffering so much. I see no image that is good, I would like to see images blacks and whites playing together, everybody getting along [...]. I remember the picture of a man tied up, his pants down, being beaten in a stake. This was an image that you could see in textbooks over and over. Why do they always show the same thing, someone totally dominated? It was never different. It was a frozen portrait. (AM, 12 years old, 6th grade)

I am black, I am proud of my group, I like to be black. I have already seen blacks as slaves. I felt sorry when I saw it. I would like to see images of them not being crushed down. In comic books, I never so a black super hero, I think it's important so that we can see ourselves in the story, and compare. (AR, 13 years old, 5th grade)

The images I remember of black people in the textbook is slavery. I have seen several images of blacks being maltreated, black children out of school. I don't like to see the images of black children working, or black people being slaved. I would like to see images of black people working in their own harvest. I don't like to see blacks being beaten up, being maltreated. I would like to see black children playing, not being called names because they are black. I would like to see other images, but this is so hard, because the whites are the ones who own the land. (AC, 13 years old, 5th grade)

The image I saw of blacks in the textbooks is the slave black person. I think it should be an image where the black is more considered, more respected, in a more positive position in relation to the people. Very few times I saw a positive image of black people in the textbook, all the images show the black person on the side. (RC, 13 years old, 7th grade)

I have already seen black people in textbooks. I saw the image of slaves, just slavery, I don't like to see blacks as slaves, I would to see, in the textbooks, images of black they way they are today, everybody living together, no slavery, nobody being beaten up. (PS, 14 years old, 5th grade)

I have already seen many images of blacks being maltreated, blacks as slaves. It is very bad to see the images of slavery, makes one sad, it is an affliction to see. (FC, 14 years old, 7th grade)

I have already seen a black man tied up, being beaten, slaved. It makes me sad to see these images of a black person as a slave, I would like to see black people going for a stroll, playing, working in decent jobs. (DC, 15 years old, 7th grade)

We chose to reproduce an excessive list of recurring testimonies by the students with the purpose of making their discourses visible (since they scarcely appear in studies about this theme) and provide the reader how such discourses were emphatic: slavery is a highlight, or even better, it cannot be avoided when the students think about the forms their social group is represented in textbooks; they perceive such images as violent against themselves; they relate such forms to discriminatory situations they constantly have to face; and they claim for changes in the textbooks.

Figure 2



Fonte: material da pesquisa.

In figure 2, a girl made a drawing of herself crying *tears of blood* upon recalling the images of black people in textbooks. In the interview where the drawing was the subject of the dialogue, she presented arguments that were coincidental with those mentioned above, and said that the only image she found in the textbooks was of slaved black people. Then, she added:

I feel awful when I see images of black people working in underemployment or being slaved, they never appear as bankers, doctors, lawyers, they are always in a lower standing, they never belong to the upper

class [...]. I think the amount of images of white people is much higher, whites are everywhere. In children's books, I've never seen a black character. I think there should be blacks [...]. I consider myself pretty despite the prejudice of some classmates, sometimes. I have already felt embarrassed due to classmates who quarreled and called nigger, and they said I was nobody close to them dees. I think this leaves a trauma inside of you. (LB, 13 years old, 7th grade)

The *tears of blood* in the drawing may be related to personal experiences of discrimination the interviewee reports. Beyond the personal experience, the analysis by the student reveals she has an acute perception of the relations between whites and blacks in the textbooks. The malaise feelings she tells us about are related to slavery and other places of subordination that she perceives as *reserved* to black people. In addition, she criticizes what we called *normative whiteness*: white people "are everywhere". This perception of discrimination in the discourses of textbooks reveals itself in the accounts of other students and reinforces the results analyzed by Costa (2004), which pointed a more acute perception of students about the discrimination existing in the discourses of textbooks than the perception teachers seem to have about it.

Final words

I would like to see images of black people working in their own harvest.

In this paper, we raised a series of questions which remain unanswered by our research. The main question refers to the impact of changes in the guidelines set forth in the PLND calls for bids regarding the contents of textbooks. On one hand, we observe changes that are very fragile in textbooks of Portuguese language (distributed in 2007), of history (distributed in 2008) and geography (distributed in 2010). There are few studies in this direction

and such results must be considered as the early outcome, but even so they indicate that the impact of the calls for bids, besides the fact that it is not direct, may occur in the long run, that is, studies with more recent samples may provide adequate answers about the extent of changes and mediation process that make them difficult. On the other hand, a study with science textbooks (distributed in 2008 and 2011) points to greater novelties in the discourses (although they still have the presence of old forms of hierarchy, starting with the under-representation of black people), with discursive forms which appreciate black characters and which present them in the roles of scientists, illustrating other socially valued standings and appearing as representatives of the human kind, in discourses which communicate that *being black is OK*.

Changes in the symbolic level do not develop immediately and directly and we cannot disregard the fact that, in other discursive means – for example, in the media discourses –, changes are little and the hierarchy between whites and blacks is deep-rooted in the Brazilian public discourse. Resistance to changes, associated with new ordinances set forth by the educational policies, is expected, therefore.

Another aspect intertwined in this discussion is the black students' point-of-view. We took the answers of respondents to our research as guiding points in this paper, with the aim of highlighting the perspective of such social actors. For several reasons, including methodological hindrances, the lack of interest of experienced researchers and difficulties in getting funds, the voice of students is scarcely present in the analyses of the textbook programs; it's a group of interest with limited participation in the discussions. In the data we have presented here, there is a matter that can be related to the increase in the number of dissertations dealing with the relations between whites and blacks in textbooks, as more black students reach the master's level. The racist

discourses contained in textbooks are perceived by students and cause embarrassment and malaise, that is, they serve as one of the forms of institutional racism we observe in the schools and may have a share in explaining why black students get lower grades in education. New studies of this impact onto the black students may help us achieve a better understanding of various facets of the phenomenon.

While such results are processed, our task is to monitor what is perceived as change and permanence in the educational policies. Once the changes in the books are subtle and fragile, black students claim for changes vehemently. Therefore, while this does not happen, we take action, as:

*I would like to see other images, but it is hard to see them,
because the whites are the owners of the land.*

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