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Giovana Romano Sanchez

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**The Thesis Committee for Giovana Romano Sanchez  
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

**A Litany of White Men: The Brazilian Textbook Industry and the  
Reproduction of Old Canons**

**APPROVED BY  
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

**Supervisor:**

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Sonia Roncador

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Christen Smith

**A Litany of White Men: The Brazilian Textbook Industry and the  
Reproduction of Old Canons**

by

**Giovana Romano Sanchez, B.A.**

**Thesis**

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## Abstract

# **A Litany of White Men: The Brazilian Textbook Industry and the Reproduction of Old Canons**

Giovana Romano Sanchez, M.A.

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Supervisor: Sonia Roncador

This work investigates the structural motives for the reproduction of a traditional white and male narrative in Brazilian history textbooks. To understand the resistance to change, this study combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies, analyzing both the content of a popular high school history collection and looking at textbook's contexts of production, evaluation and use in class. First, a content analysis with an intersectional approach applied to all three volumes of *História, Sociedade e Cidadania* reveals the extent to which the main protagonists in the narrative are white, male, and in positions of power—and to which women, especially indigenous, black and Asian women, are underrepresented. The second part of the project leaves the book to investigate the structures of production, evaluation and uses of textbooks in Brazil, drawing from official documents and semi-structured interviews with a school teacher, textbook editors and a federal evaluator. This work argues that, even though in the last decade the black and indigenous movements were guaranteed legal rights towards representation in the curricula, a combination of four factors—the market, the state, the existing systems of oppression and the ways books are

used in class—contribute to the maintenance of a canonical version of history in Brazilian textbooks.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	x
Introduction.....	1
Argument and methodology.....	3
Significance .....	6
Positioning the work in the field.....	13
Organization .....	22
Chapter One: Education as a right and the right to representation .....	24
From Education for a Few to Textbooks for All.....	26
Universal Distribution and Federal Evaluation .....	31
The Right to Representation .....	38
Chapter Two: Men, white and powerful: the narrative of <i>História, Sociedade e Cidadania</i> .....	45
Coding race, coding intersectionality .....	47
Quantifying absences .....	50
Qualifying presences .....	56
African, Afro-Brazilian and indigenous content: a single-male route.....	61
Chapter Three: Change is Hard: The Production and Use of Textbooks in Brazil ...	64
The market: a comfort zone .....	66
The state: minimum and insufficient requirements .....	70
Textbooks versus school: who is the boss?.....	73
Racism and sexism: structural and transversal systems of oppression .....	79
Conclusion.....	85
Bibliography.....	97

## List of Tables

Codebook .....	93
Intercoder Reliability .....	96

## Introduction

“A boniteza de ser gente se acha, entre outras coisas,  
nessa possibilidade e nesse dever de brigar.”  
Paulo Freire

This thesis is a product of discomfort. First, a discomfort with the absence of half of humanity, maybe more, in the historical narrative we are taught in Brazilian schools—a fact that first called my attention about five years ago, when I was taking an extension course on the genealogy of feminism, in São Paulo. I remember being so shocked by my being unaware of all those significant women I was learning about, that one day after class I ran back home and got my history textbook from high school to check if I had really forgotten about them. Of course, I had not. They were just not there.

I then started looking at new history textbooks, to see if anything had changed—after all, it had been a decade since I left high school. The realization that the books were still portraying a predominantly white and male version of history took me to paths I had never imagined. I left a career as a reporter in the biggest communication company in Latin America, a life surrounded by friends and family in São Paulo, to come to the United States and study something completely different. In this sense, this thesis is also the result of the discomfort of having to adapt to a new country, a new language and a new field of work.

Another layer of uneasiness came from the political situation in Brazil. During the period of two years in which this work was produced and written, Brazilians suffered a political assault that harmed our yet fragile democracy and put basic social rights—achieved only after decades of struggle and suffering—at serious risk. Amid a severe economic crisis and an enormous corruption scandal involving many politicians but not the chief of state,

the Congress managed to impeach President Dilma Rousseff in September 2016. Our first female leader was accused of illegally using money from state banks to plug budget holes, something many presidents did before her.

The rhetoric of Rousseff's opponents was heavy with the weight of sexism. A magazine featured a cover depicting her screaming face, with the headline, "The President's Nervous Explosions," implying she was succumbing to female hysterics. Protestors shouted "Slut!" and "Whore!" as they marched in opposition. Many even adorned their cars with stickers that depicted the president spread-eagled, the gas tank's orifice between her legs. Every time they filled their tanks, it suggested rape.

While impeachment proceedings went forward, Rousseff was taken from power and Michel Temer, the vice-president, assumed control of the country. His first act was to purge the cabinet, replacing a moderately diverse group with all white men. He also extinguished the Ministry of Culture and the Secretaries for the promotion of racial and women's equality and announced a controversial education reform.

During the time I spent in São Paulo doing fieldwork, in June 2016, I felt a mix of anxiety, anger and frustration in most people I interviewed, especially professionals of education. Their fear of Temer's policies and their indignation with the whole process was evident in their words, gestures and facial expressions. It was not that Dilma was a great president, they would quickly explain. But with her, there was a possibility of dialogue and the preservation of basic rights. It was the opposite of what they were seeing now. "The

situation of the country today is not that of a normal democratic struggle,” Professor Margarida Maria de Oliveira told me during our first encounter. “It is a coup.”<sup>1</sup>

## **ARGUMENT AND METHODOLOGY**

This work investigates the structural motives for the reproduction of a traditional white and male narrative in Brazilian history textbooks, focusing on the ways that gender and race discussions have affected the debate on school curricula. Even though in the last decade Brazil has implemented affirmative action programs guaranteeing reserved positions for black and indigenous students in the universities, and has also approved two laws (10.639/03 and 11.645/08) mandating the inclusion of African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture in all schools, textbooks are still reproducing a gender and racial exclusionary version of history.<sup>2</sup> To understand this resistance to change, I start by reflecting on the shortcomings of a popular high school history collection, using an intersectional approach that examines both race and gender in the textbook content. I then look at the structures of production, evaluation and uses of textbooks in Brazil, drawing from official documents and semi-structured interviews with a school teacher, textbook editors and a federal evaluator.

Textbooks are cultural objects, commodities produced specifically for the use of teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning.<sup>3</sup> Alain Choppin argues that

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<sup>1</sup> Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, in interview with the author, June 2016. Oliveira worked in the technical commission of PNLD from 2004 to 2015. She is currently a history Professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, north of Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> Law number 10. 639, of January 9<sup>th</sup> 2003, accessed May 1st, 2017 [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/2003/L10.639.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/L10.639.htm). Law number 11.645, of March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, accessed May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2008/lei/11645.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2008/lei/11645.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Marisa Lajolo defines textbooks as books "written, edited, sold and bought, having in mind the scholarly and systematic use." Marisa Lajolo, “Livro Didático: Um (Quase) Manual do Usuário.” *Em Aberto* 16, no. 69 (1996):

school books tend to perform four main overlapping functions: 1. referential, as [they] guide the learning curriculum; 2. instrumental, “putting into practice learning methods” and proposing exercises; 3. documental, offering "set of documents, textual or iconic, which observation or confrontation can develop the critical spirit of the student" and 4. ideological and cultural, as a "privileged instrument of identity construction" recognized as a "symbol of national sovereignty."<sup>4</sup> In this study, I specifically look at the last one, analyzing the textbook as products of their own time and mentality, a vehicle carrying ideologies and dominant ideas educational and political authorities thought would be useful and important to pass to the new generations.

Taking the textbook as object of study, I follow two lines of inquiry. The first is a content analysis in the three volumes of *História, Sociedade e Cidadania*, by Alfredo Boulos, based on a 15-category coding scheme. The codebook (see table Codebook), which guided the analysis, was designed based on an intersectional approach, that is, the questions I asked aimed to gather information about historical character’s race, class, sex and the ways in which they are portrayed in the narrative.<sup>5</sup> This quantitative methodology summarizes and extracts information from written messages, converting the text in different categories of data that can be isolated and cross-analyzed. This specificity is important, because by

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4. Kazumi Munakata broadens and summarizes the concept, saying that a textbook "is a commodity destined to a specific market: the school." Kazumi Munakata, “O Livro Didático: Alguns Temas de Pesquisa,” *Revista Brasileira de História da Educação* 12, no. 3 (2012): 179-197.

<sup>4</sup> Alain Chopin, “História dos Livros e das Edições Didáticas: Sobre o Estado da Arte,” *Educação e Pesquisa* 30, no. 3 (2004): 552-554.

<sup>5</sup> Intersectionality is a black feminist method based on the idea that different systems of oppression, related to race, gender, class, religion, etc., do not operate separately. Instead, they work together, influencing one another. See Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989).

overlapping data on sex and race/ethnicity, it is possible to visualize how the book treats black women, white women and indigenous woman differently.

To search for answers to the question of why this white and male narrative is still predominant, the second part of the project leaves the books and digs into the dimensions of production (writing and editing), evaluation (the state system responsible for approving the books), and the use of textbooks in class. Through official documents and semi-structured interviews with one school teacher, two textbook editors and a scholar who worked on the federal evaluation committee for ten years, I analyze how these professionals perceive the questions of gender and racial representation in school material and the importance they give to the issue in the process of editing, evaluating and using textbooks in class.

My goal is to trace the stated and implicit rationales for the absence of non-white-male historical actors. Are non-white-male characters being ignored because the state, responsible for evaluate, buy and distribute textbooks for all public schools in the country, is not using its power to demand a book that more adequately represents the diversity of our society? Is it because publishers, a powerful conglomerate of a few big companies, find it too expensive to change the books? Are teachers, who have the power to choose the book they want to use in class, not aware of the omission of black and indigenous people—and women in general—or do they not perceive this as the most important selection criterion, in relation to other elements such as the language used in the books? Does the massive influence of the

“matrix of oppression” of racism, sexism, homo and transphobia prevent deep transformation in the textbook industry?<sup>6</sup>

In this thesis, I argue that a combination of these four factors contribute to the current situation of history textbooks. It is not only that the state, as the official buyer of almost half of all school books sold in the country, is missing an opportunity to demand better quality textbooks. It is also that publishing houses, as companies working in the capitalistic logic, will only change their products and put money into it, if they need it. Teachers could also use their power as clients and demand a change in the books, but in general, the issue of representation is not a priority when they choose a textbook to use in class (see Chapter Three). Covering all those layers are the systems of racial and gender oppression that reproduce violence and discrimination through all levels of Brazilian society.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

The implementation of history as a school subject in Brazil occurred after independence, between 1820 and 1830, when the elites were structuring the newly formed nation’s educational system.<sup>7</sup> As in many western countries at that time, the process of teaching history was used to legitimate the social and political order and promote a civic consciousness based on heroic narratives of the past. These narratives were usually a selection of political and military achievements, Eurocentric, and were thick with glorified myths and idealized characters. In Brazil, the concern with a history of the nation led to the

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<sup>6</sup> See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Tháís Nívia de Lima Fonseca, *História e Ensino de História* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2004).

creation of the Historical and Geographical Brazilian Institute (*Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*), which promoted, in 1840, a contest to choose the best answer to the question of how to write the history of Brazil. The winner, Karl Friedrich Von Martius, defended that Brazil deserved a narrative that arouse the people's love for the country and their "civic virtues."<sup>8</sup> He also believed that the Brazilian history should be told based on the encounter and mixture of three races: the natives, the black Africans and the Europeans.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in the Brazil of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "history produced and taught was eminently political, nationalistic and of exaltation of the Portuguese colonizers, the missionary actions of the Catholic Church and the monarchy."<sup>10</sup>

The characteristics of this type of history teaching, which in Brazil is usually known as "traditional" and to which I refer here as canonical, persisted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, being strengthened during the military dictatorship (1964-1985).<sup>11</sup> At this time, the Brazilian autocratic government not only put together history and geography in a discipline called "social studies," but also mandated the teaching of "moral and civic education" in primary and secondary schools in the country. This social studies program was based on a "directive, non-critical teaching, in which history appeared as a linear succession

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Friedrich Von Martius, "Como se Deve Escrever a História do Brasil," *Revista de Historia de America* 42 (1956), 433-458.

<sup>9</sup> The idea that a mixture of three races formed Brazilian population persisted in the Brazilian social and political imaginary for centuries, being reframed and strengthened in the 1930s, with Gilberto Freyre's idea of racial democracy – that pervasively masked the structural racism and served as a base for the implementation of whitening policies in the country. More on the myth of racial democracy in Brazil, see Edward Eric Telles, *Race in another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> Siep Stuurman and Maria Grever define canon as "a historical grand narrative, consisting of selected figures, events, storylines, ideas and values, colligated by definite plots, perspectives and explanations. In the context of modern national history, it is what textbook histories, historical commemorations and the dominant collective memory have in common." Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman, introduction to *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-First Century*, by Maria Grever et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 3-4.

of facts considered significant, predominantly of a political-institutional character.”<sup>12</sup> These characteristics persisted after the end of the dictatorship, when the disciplines of history and geography were restored, and helped maintain this “traditional” narrative alive in the teaching of history.

Re-democratization in 1985 brought broad acknowledgment of the necessity to change the history teaching in the country. After all, in academia, historiography had already been transformed by the advance of the new history and history of mentalities, as well as by the studies on women and gender. The advent of the new democratic government led to numerous calls for changes in history school curricula. States made investments in educational proposals and publishers updated textbook’s methodological approaches.<sup>13</sup> But even with the official condemnation of the traditional approach—the current National Textbook Program, created after the re-democratization in 1985, says that the history presented in textbooks should follow the innovations in historiography, seeking to disrupt Eurocentric and ethnocentric perspectives—the canonical foundations of history teaching, as this and many other studies show, are still alive and operating.<sup>14</sup> As Stuurman and Grever

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 58. Gatti shows how both Brazilian autocratic periods during the 20th century influenced the permanence of an official and elitist memory in textbooks. See Décio Gatti Júnior, *A Escrita Escolar da História: Livro Didático e Ensino no Brasil (1970-1990)* (Bauru: Edusc, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> The Brazilian educational system is regulated by the 1988 Constitution and the Law 9394 of December 20th, 1996 (“Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional”). The system is divided in basic education (equivalent to elementary, middle and high school) and superior (higher education). Municipalities are responsible to offer free day-care until three years old and the states and federal government are required to offer public and free education from five to seventeenth years old. The federal instance distributes the funding and gives technical assistance to the states and municipalities. The Brazilian state is also responsible to provide pedagogical material (including textbooks), transport, food and health care to students.

<sup>14</sup> See Ministério da Educação, FNDE, “Edital de Convocação para o Processo de Inscrição e Avaliação de Obras Didáticas para o Programa Nacional do Livro Didático PNLD 2018,” accessed May 1st, 2017 <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-editais>. Thaís Fonseca analyzes how textbooks from different periods on the 20th century address slavery, identifying a “persistent continuity of a, in many aspects, outdated historiographical approach.” Fonseca, *História e Ensino de História*, 98. More on the

state: “intellectually we might find ourselves ‘beyond the canon’, but when it comes to the practice of history teaching we are still very much ‘in it’.”<sup>15</sup> That is, even though in the last decades the academia has prioritized innovation and different perspectives related to historiography, the same did not happen in the school level.

Although textbooks are only one of the various items of the school curriculum, their state-approved narrative is, in many cases, the base for the construction of young peoples’ historical consciousness.<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricoeur reminds us that it is through narrative that memory is integrated into the construction of identity, and that it is through its function that the possibilities of manipulation open up, with strategies of forgetting and of remembering. “At this level of appearance, imposed memory is armed with a history that is itself ‘authorized’, the official history, the history publicly learned and celebrated.”<sup>17</sup>

Because textbooks carry this verified and approved version of the past, they are an important part of the maintenance of “traditional” views of history in the collective memory. It is, therefore, important to discuss their content, as well as how it came to exist this way, including the choices to portray certain stories and silence others. These decisions produce certain understandings of history. For example, the choice of telling the history of Brazil and

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traditional approach to history, see Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman, Introduction; Katia Maria Abud, “A Guardiã das Tradições: A História e o seu Código Curricular,” *Educar Em Revista*, 42 (2011): 163-171 accessed April 17th, 2017, doi: 10.1590/S0104-40602011000500011; Cinthia Monteiro de Araújo, “Por Outras Histórias Possíveis: Construindo uma Alternativa à Tradição Moderna,” in: *Pesquisa em Ensino de História*, edited by Ana Maria Monteiro et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X and Faperj, 2014), 227-242.

<sup>15</sup> Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman, Introduction, 8.

<sup>16</sup> In Chapter Three, I explore the importance of textbooks for the Brazilian public educational system, showing studies that analyze how teachers use the books in class. It is also important to say that as Brazil do not have a national curriculum, textbooks end up assuming an important role in the organization of content to be taught.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 85. For more on collective memory, see Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). For generational effects in collective memory, see Howard Schuman, and Jacqueline Scott, “Generations and Collective Memories,” *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 3 (1989): 359-381.

of the world only through political, economic and military developments—all public spaces of power—necessarily obscures the voices and perspectives of actors who were not in public spheres. These omissions prevent readers from having broader comprehension of other factors that interrupt, contradict or complicate these mainstream ‘historic’ narratives. As Geertje Mak explains, “a history foregrounding public and political issues runs the risk of obscuring how these are rooted in, connected to or interfering with what is mostly labelled as ‘private’.”<sup>18</sup>

The canonical and Eurocentric historical narrative also creates a white and male norm for historical actors, as if they were the only relevant participants in historical events. Toni Morrison magnificently analyzes this process of naturalization, showing how the presence of blacks and non-white characters in the American canonical literature works as a “vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical.”<sup>19</sup> Grada Kilomba, another black feminist intellectual, reminds that the structures of knowledge validation, “which define what ‘true’ and ‘valid’ scholarship is, are controlled by white scholars [...] who declare their perspectives universal requirements.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, science is “not a simple apolitical study of truth, but the reproduction of racial power relations that

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<sup>18</sup> Geertje Mak also says that “asymmetric relation between women and men, sexual and otherwise, is fundamental not just for the organization of gender in society, but for the formation and maintenance of almost all other socially, culturally and politically relevant categories as well.” Geertje Mak, “Gender in and beyond the Canon, or How to Make Women (In)visible in History,” in: *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-First Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 130.

<sup>19</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992): 52.

<sup>20</sup> Grada Kilomba, *Plantation Memories – Episodes of Everyday Racism* (Münster: Unrast, 2016): 27.

define what counts as truth and in whom to believe.”<sup>21</sup> In this context, Zeus Leonardo remembers that, when it comes to official history, “there is no paucity of representation of whites as its creator. [...] white imprint is everywhere. However, when it concerns domination, whites suddenly disappear, as if history were purely a positive sense of contribution.”<sup>22</sup>

The effects of this normalization are powerful. Nida Bikmen shows how black students test performances decreased when they were exposed to historical narratives of exclusion of their racial group. The control group also showed a decrease, what suggests that “a sense of exclusion and marginalization” is the prevailing narrative among black students.<sup>23</sup> In a study by Janice Fournier and Samuel Wineburg, students were asked to draw pictures of settlers, pilgrims or hippies, and both boys and girls overwhelmingly drew male figures.<sup>24</sup> In another work, a Brazilian teacher reveals the surprise of a student when the expression “cavemen and cavewomen” was used in a history class. “But, teacher, were there

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Zeus Leonardo, “The color of supremacy: Beyond the discourse of ‘white privilege’,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36, no. 2 (2004): 149, doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2004.00057.x. Black feminists scholars have not only been criticizing white male canon, but also brilliantly working towards the deconstruction of this narrative. See Barbara Christian, “The Race for Theory,” in: *New Black Feminist Criticism, 1985-2000/Barbara Christian*, ed. by Gloria Bowles et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Alex Ratts and Maria Beatriz Nascimento, *Eu Sou Atlântica: Sobre a Trajetória de Vida de Beatriz Nascimento* (São Paulo: Instituto Kuanza, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> This effect was eliminated when students were presented with the historical narrative of black resilience, suggesting that “history of marginalized groups can act as a resource for current challenges depending on how it is narrated, and that history curriculum can be designed to enhance these effects in order to improve the educational performance of disadvantaged group members.” Nida Bikmen, “History as a Resource: Effects of Narrative Constructions of Group History on Intellectual Performance,” *Journal of Social Issues* 71, no. 2 (2015): 309, accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, doi: 10.1111/josi.12112

<sup>24</sup> Janice E. Fournier and Samuel S. Wineburg, “Picturing the Past: Gender Differences in the Depiction of Historical Figures,” *American Journal of Education*, 105 (1997): 160-185, accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1085617>

cavewomen too?,” she asked amazed.<sup>25</sup> The question shows that a norm for historical characters—which is male—was already established in the student’s imaginary when learning about the past, and that the simple act of mentioning the existence of women arouse the student’s interest.

The silences towards non-white-male voices frequently share space with sexist and racists approaches to historical characters in the curriculum. The lack of representation, together with gender/racial stereotypes are proven to influence intellectual performance, interests and self-esteem of children as young as six.<sup>26</sup> The feeling of belonging to a specific group or collectivity is largely nourished by the material offered by history. In this sense, history teaching can promote the construction and assertion of student’s social identity.<sup>27</sup> As Bikmen explains: “the stories we tell about the origins of our group, its struggles, challenges, victories, and defeats give us a sense of who we are as members of that group and set models of action.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Valéria Fernandes da Silva, “Sujeito Da História Ou Reclusa de Caixa de Texto: Um Olhar Feminista sobre as Representações Femininas nos Livros Didáticos de História,” in: *Estudos Feministas e de Gênero: Articulações e Perspectivas*, ed. Cristina Stevens et al. (Florianópolis: Editora Mulheres, 2014): 265.

<sup>26</sup> In a recent study, six-year-old girls are shown to be less likely than boys to believe they are “really, really smart” and start to avoid activities supposedly aimed to brilliant students. Lin Bian, Sarah-Jane Leslie and Andrei Cimpian, “Gender Stereotypes about Intellectual Ability Emerge Early and Influence Children's Interests,” *Science* 355, no. 6323 (2017): 389. Another work indicates that girls reach higher levels of comprehension after being exposed to female scientist images than male ones. See Jessica J. Good, Julie A. Woodzicka, and Lylan C. Wingfield, “The Effects of Gender Stereotypic and Counter-Stereotypic Textbook Images on Science Performance,” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 150, no. 2 (2010): 132–47, accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, doi:10.1080/00224540903366552. In a study with African American students taking verbal tests and being exposed to the risk of confirming to a negative stereotype, Steele and Aronson revealed “stereotype threat causes a significant depression of scores.” See Claude M. Steele, and Joshua Aronson, “Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans,” *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 797-811, accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, doi: 797-811. 10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797

<sup>27</sup> Rebeca Gontijo, “Identidade Nacional e Ensino de História: A Diversidade como ‘Patrimônio Cultural’,” in: *Ensino de História: Conceitos, Temáticas e Metodologia*, ed. Martha Abreu et al. (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Bikmen, “History as a Resource,” 309. See also Hyun Kyoung Ro, and Karla I. Loya, “The Effect of Gender and Race Intersectionality on Student Learning Outcomes in Engineering,” *The Review of Higher Education* 38 (3) (2015): 359-96, doi: 10.1353/rhe.2015.0014.

## POSITIONING THE WORK IN THE FIELD

Scholars and civil organizations in the West have been debating and denouncing the existence of different types of discrimination in textbooks since the second half of the 19th century. Initiatives to review the content of history school books date back to 1889, when the first Universal Peace Conference, called textbooks to eradicate “false ideas about the nature and causes of war.”<sup>29</sup> The issue became more prominent after the World Wars, with different international institutions pushing for changes in European textbooks. Since 1946, Unesco has published regular reports with suggestions to improve school books, “in order to remove negative stereotypes and encourage a culture of peace.”<sup>30</sup> And along these lines, in 1975, Germany created the Georg Eckert Institute—named after one of the leading historians who coordinated efforts to analyze history school books in the German-Unesco commission. Today, the institution promotes and supports research on textbooks, and it has a collection of school material from several countries around the world.

In the U.S., one of the first accounts on the problem was a pamphlet called “Anti-Negro Propaganda in School Textbooks,” published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in 1939. Seven years later, Child et al. looked at thirty textbooks published between 1930 and 1946 to find that seventy-three percent of the characters were men and that “girls and women are thus being shown as sociable, kind and

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<sup>29</sup> Unesco, “A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding,” 1949, accessed April 13th, 2017,

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0006/000630/063011eo.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Unesco, “Como Escrever Livros Didáticos sem Estereótipos,” last modified May 10th, 2013,

[http://www.unesco.org/new/pt/brasil/pt/about-this-office/single-view/news/how\\_to\\_write\\_a\\_stereotype\\_free\\_textbook-1/#.VyUGRGNZYmc](http://www.unesco.org/new/pt/brasil/pt/about-this-office/single-view/news/how_to_write_a_stereotype_free_textbook-1/#.VyUGRGNZYmc).

timid, but inactive, unambitious and uncreative.”<sup>31</sup> After that, the 1949 study by the American Council on Education made a broad investigation of the treatment of minorities in textbooks.<sup>32</sup>

In 1973, Trecker published a classic study on thirteen of the most popular U.S. history textbooks, finding a “depressing” picture, with few women depicted, and most of them in stereotypes.<sup>33</sup> In order to provide tools for teachers and parents, the Council on Interracial Books for Children published a guide “for detecting racism and sexism” in US history textbooks.<sup>34</sup> At that same time, famous American publishing houses, like McGraw Hill, released guidelines for non-sexist treatment aimed to its own publications.<sup>35</sup> Thirteen years after Trecker, in 1986, Tetreault did a similar study, concluding that US history textbooks had been cosmetically changed, with moderate inclusion of women. According to her, “we have erroneously used a single, universal term--history--when the contents would be more appropriately labeled men's history, or in particular instances white men's history.”<sup>36</sup> More recently, in one of the few works that look at the intersection of race and gender, Woyshner and Schocker investigated the representation of black women in American history

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<sup>31</sup> Irvin L. Child, Elmer H. Potter and Estelle M. Levine, “Children’s Textbooks and Personality Development: An Exploration in the Social Psychology of Education.” *Psychological Monographs* 60 (1946): 1-54.

<sup>32</sup> For more works on underrepresentation of women and minorities in U.S. textbooks before 1970, see Jeana Wirtenberg, Robin Murez, and Rose Ann Alspektor, *Characters in Textbooks: A Review of the Literature* (Washington: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Clearinghouse Publication: 1980).

<sup>33</sup> Janice Law Trecker, “Women in US History High School Textbooks,” *International Review of Education* 19, no. 1 (1973): 133–39.

<sup>34</sup> Council on Interracial Books for Children, “Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in U.S. History Textbooks,” (New York: Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, 1977).

<sup>35</sup> McGraw-Hill Book Company. *Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-hill Book Company Publications* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970).

<sup>36</sup> Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault, “Integrating Women’s History: The Case of United States History High School Textbooks,” *The History Teacher* 19, no. 2 (1986): 247

school books.<sup>37</sup> Comparing their results with Trecker's, Woysner and Schocker conclude that black women are still marginalized and "appear only to a slightly greater degree than they did in the 1970s."

Since 1990, a new generation of western scholars has approached textbooks as commodities. This means they have not only been updating the state of gender and racial discrimination in textbooks, but also problematizing other spheres related to those books, like their uses in class, and the ways in which they are produced, regulated, evaluated and distributed.<sup>38</sup> This more complex way of looking at the object of study is associated with an understanding that the textbook is not created in a vacuum, but is rather a product usually designed not by one author, but by an editorial team, aiming to a specific market—the school—and that can also be totally subverted in its use during the teaching and learning experience in class.

One example of this new wave of research is Audrey Bryan's study of the correlations between "subtle curricular forms of racism and the ways in which young people themselves construct and articulate ideas about 'race' and racism."<sup>39</sup> To understand these connections, she interviewed thirty-five teenage students in Dublin, as well as analyzed

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<sup>37</sup> Christine Woysner and Jessica B. Schocker, "Cultural Parallax and Content Analysis: Images of Black Women in High School History Textbooks," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 43, no. 4 (2015): 442, accessed March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, doi: 10.1080/00933104.2015.1099487. Other important recent studies on American textbooks came from Clark and Mahoney, who investigated six history school books from the 1960's, 1980's and 1990's to find moderate but statistically significant changes. And Schmidt, who revealed how "the cult of true womanhood" is reproduced in South Carolina history textbooks. Jeffrey Allard Clark and Timothy Mahoney, "How Much of the Sky? Women in American High School History Textbooks from the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s," *Social Education* 68 (December, 2004): 57-63; Sandra J. Schmidt, "Am I a Woman? The Normalisation of Woman in US History," *Gender & Education* 24, no. 7 (December 2012): 707-724, accessed February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 doi: 10.1080/09540253.2012.674491.

<sup>38</sup> About the revival on the textbook field of study, see Choppin, "História dos Livros e das Edições Didáticas."

<sup>39</sup> Audrey Bryan, "You've Got to Teach People that Racism is Wrong and Then They Won't be Racist': Curricular Representations and Young People's Understandings of 'Race' and Racism," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44, no. 5 (2012): 599-629. doi: 10.1080/00220272.2012.699557

twenty textbooks from different subjects. Her findings show that students' perspective on racism mirror how racism was represented in their school texts. Just like in the books, "participants typically attributed racism in society to individual ignorance, a lack of appreciation or awareness of other cultures, or as a natural response to perceived or inherent difference." This conclusion is in line with what Hughes says about the omission of the discussion on racism in American textbooks: "When textbook authors bury the history of American racism within a larger narrative of inevitable American progress, students perceive race relations as a linear trajectory of improvement rather than a messy and continual struggle over power."<sup>40</sup>

Brazil, as other Latin American countries, started to investigate gender and racial discrimination in textbooks in the 1950 and 1960's, influenced by the American and European productions. Brazilian findings were very similar to what U.S. and European scholars were revealing: explicit racism and sexism, in a very white and male narrative in

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<sup>40</sup> Richard L. Hughes, "A Hint of Whiteness: History Textbooks and Social Construction of Race in the Wake of the Sixties," *The Social Studies* 98, no. 5 (2007): 203. doi: 10.3200/ TSS.98.5.201-208. Recent works made in other parts of the world also suggest that sexism and racism in school material are not localized problems. In Spain, López-Navajas quantified the historical figures in national textbooks and found that only 12.8% were female—which she calls "an active mechanism of discrimination." Ana López-Navajas, "Analysis of the Absence of Women in the ESO Textbooks: A Hidden Genealogy of Knowledge," *Revista de Educación* 363 (2014): 304, accessed February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 doi: 10.4438/1988-592X-RE-2012-363-188. Roohani and Zarei showed that Iranian pre-university textbook privileged men's in names, nouns, and pictures. The South African experience does not seem to be very different, as Maistry and Pillay revealed that stereotypes are reinforced by prevalent images of women in home environment while man are overtly represented in a variety of leadership positions. See Ali Roohani, and Zarei, Mandani, "Evaluating Gender-Bias in the Iranian Pre-University English Textbooks," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3 (2013): 115-25, accessed February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017, doi: 10.17509/ijal.v3i1.194. Preya Pillay and Suriamurthee Moonsamy Maistry, "Gender Representation in Contemporary Grade 10 Business Studies Textbooks in South Africa," *Perspectives in Education* 32, no. 4 (2014): 74-92.

textbooks of all subjects. The first accounts of racism in Brazilian textbooks were produced around 1950, by Leite and Hollanda.<sup>41</sup>

In the 1990's, Ana Célia Silva published a consistent study tracing racism in a body of kid's textbooks produced in the last two decades of the 20th century, noticing significant transformations. According to her, older books rarely portrayed black people, and when they did it was in a stigmatized and inhumane way. After ten years, she perceived a change.

“Black characters are not being illustrated in a caricatured way most of the time. They have names, families and they are not associated with a stereotyped representation of animals, like pigs and monkeys.”<sup>42</sup> To understand the changes in the treatment of black characters, Silva interviewed authors and illustrators. According to her, most of the interviewees said they started to socially interacting more with black people and therefore changed their perceptions about them. The second most common answer was that they became aware of discrimination suffered by black people after having witnessed it. Another factor not analyzed by her that might have influenced the transformation is the beginning of the federal evaluation on textbooks, which in 1996 started to ban school books presenting any type of discrimination and stereotype – an issue I address in Chapter One.

Scholars' reports of sexism in Brazilian textbooks started in the 1960s and, according to Rosemberg et al., it came mostly from feminist activists that were demarcating a social

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<sup>41</sup> Dante Moreira Leite, “Preconceito Racial e Patriotismo em Seis Livros Didáticos Primários Brasileiros,” *Psicologia* 3 (1950): 207-231. Guy de Hollanda, “A Pesquisa dos Estereótipos e Valores nos Compêndios de História Destinados ao Curso Secundário Brasileiro,” *Boletim do Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais* 2, no. 4 (1957). See also Esmeralda Vailati Negrão, “A Discriminação Racial em Livros Didáticos e Infanto-Juvenis,” *Cadernos de Pesquisa* 63 (1987): 86-87.

<sup>42</sup> Ana Célia da Silva, *A Discriminação do Negro no Livro Didático* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, Centro Editorial e Didático, 1995). Ana Célia da Silva, *A Representação Social do Negro no Livro Didático: O Que Mudou? Por que Mudou?* (Salvador: Edufba, 2011): 33.

problem: the differences in the education of boys and girls—and not from educators interested in textbooks.<sup>43</sup> This body of work found that textbooks often underrepresented female characters, associating them with domestic spaces, and with a predominantly passive behavior.<sup>44</sup>

Recent Brazilian scholarship on textbooks is slowly taking a broader look towards its object of study, and in the last decades more works are considering the questions of regulation, evaluation, production and uses of the books. Most studies analyzing gender and race, however, only look at the book's content. Marília Bernadelli, for example, concentrates in the images of women in twenty-four history textbooks for primary education, concluding that even though most women are still represented in the traditional role of mothers and teachers, they are also portrayed as actors of historical events.<sup>45</sup> In another recent Master's thesis, Paola Monteiro looks at five history high school collections, focusing on the representation of Brazilian women.<sup>46</sup> She observes a partial recognition of women's history, but always in side notes and apart from the main narrative. Monteiro timidly looks at the intersections of gender and race, examining the situation of black women, but not including

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<sup>43</sup> The authors explain that this differentiation marked both areas of research: “the theme ‘sexual stereotypes’ did not enter the large area of research on textbooks, just as the area of school books has had little influence in the academic production on ‘sexual stereotypes.’” They see such a ghettoization negatively affecting the mobilization to change textbooks contents. “In this context, the production on sexism in textbooks, despite having remained in the academic scene since 1975, is also, in Brazil, sporadic, of individual authorship, without organizing itself in groups that debate theoretical or political divergences or monitor continuities and changes in the content of textbooks.” Fúlvia Rosemberg, Neide Cardoso Moura, and Paulo Vinícius Baptista Silva, “Combate ao Sexismo em Livros Didáticos: Construção da Agenda e sua Crítica,” *Cadernos de Pesquisa* 39, no. 137 (2009): 491-507, accessed January 22th, 2017, doi: 10.1590/S0100-15742009000200009

<sup>44</sup> See the works of Vera L. de O. Lins, “Os Estereótipos Sexuais no Livro Didático,” in: *A Dominação da Mulher: Os Papéis Sexuais na Educação*, ed. Regina A. G. de Toledo (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1983): 21-25; Regina Pahim Pinto, “O Livro Didático e a Democratização da Escola,” Master's thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1981. Norma Telles, “A Índia e o Olho do Branco,” *Mulherio* 7, n. 27 (1987): 17.

<sup>45</sup> Marília Alcântara Bernadelli, “Entre Permanências e Subversões: a Composição Visual Feminina nos Livros Didáticos de História,” Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Paola Monteiro, “(In)Visibilidade das Mulheres Brasileiras nos Livros Didáticos de História do Ensino Médio (PNLD, 2015),” Master's thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, 2016.

them in the methodological core of her work. Márcia Silva focuses on the representation of homosexuals in six history textbooks between 2005 and 2011, to conclude that there was a timid progress in the presences of LGBTQ's characters in the books, mainly in the proposed activities.<sup>47</sup>

Brazilian scholarship on textbooks remains concentrated in the book's content, hardly considering all the external factors that affect textbooks as final products. Choppin reminds us how both views, of textbook's content and context, are important and should be complementary: "To write the history of textbooks—or to simply analyze their content—without considering the rules that political or religious power impose on the diverse agents of the educational system, either in the political, economic, linguistic, editorial, pedagogical or financial domain, does not make any sense."<sup>48</sup>

This research aims to contribute to this debate. With a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, I bring together an analysis of the textbook's content and look at it in the perspective of the external elements involved in its production, evaluation and the books uses in class. While content analysis in the three volumes of *História, Sociedade e Cidadania* allows us to count and cross information on historical characters, semi-structured interviews with editors, teachers and a professor involved in the federal evaluation program help us understand the contexts in which that narrative was produced.

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<sup>47</sup> Márcia Barbosa Silva, "Representação de Homossexuais nos Livros Didáticos de História para os Anos Finais do Ensino Fundamental, Distribuídos pelo Programa Nacional do Livro Didático (2005-2011)," Master's thesis, Universidade Federal de Sergipe, 2013. For recent work on the representation of black people in textbooks, see Paulo Vinícius Baptista da Silva, *Racismo em Livros Didáticos: Estudo sobre Negros e Brancos em Livros de Língua Portuguesa* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica Editora, 2008); and Georgete V. J. Chaves de Oliveira, "Mulheres Negras no Livro Didático de Língua Portuguesa: Uma História a Ser Contada." Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Choppin, "História dos Livros e das Edições Didáticas," 561.

Another characteristic of the scholarship on textbooks in Brazil is a lack of works that intersect categories of race, class and gender. Even though the concept of intersectionality has attracted considerable scholarly attention since the term was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, “few applications in quantitative methods exist, and those that do are typically not framed as intersectional or are only weakly intersectional.”<sup>49</sup>

Rooted in black feminism and critical race theory, intersectionality is the idea that different systems of oppression, related to race, gender, class, religion, etc., do not operate separately. Instead, they “mutually construct one another”.<sup>50</sup> By looking at the multidimensionality of subject’s experiences, intersectionality breaks the single-axis framework that normalizes and erases all non-white realities.<sup>51</sup> It places “those who currently are marginalized in the center.”<sup>52</sup>

Even though popular, Intersectionality is far from being the first criticism black feminists did of a white pattern for “woman” imposed in feminism and the male pattern for “black” generally used in the fight against racism. For decades, even centuries, black activists and scholars have been denouncing the erasure of black women’s voices from social

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<sup>49</sup> Nicole M. Else-Quest and Janet Shibley Hyde, "Intersectionality in Quantitative Psychological Research," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2016): 319. doi: 10.1177/0361684316647953

<sup>50</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, “It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation,” *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 62-82.

<sup>51</sup> Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women are White, and All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury: Feminist Press, 1982).

<sup>52</sup> Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” 167. Jasbir Puar offers a different way of thinking about the intersections of gender and race, arguing that the concept of assemblage offers a better theoretical tool to understand the connections responsible for women’s experiences. See Jasbir K. Puar, “I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory,” *Philosophia* 2, no. 1 (2012): 49-66.

movements, from history and from historiography.<sup>53</sup> It is respecting and embracing their knowledge and legacy that I aim to contribute to this conversation.

Any production of knowledge is shaped by the ways in which authors exist in the world and interpret it. As Costa explains, “from the start, we are differently positioned in places of privilege or oppression, and we can only narrate anything from our specific points of view (here understood both in its literal and metaphorical senses, that is, both as a geographical place and as an imaginary location, political and mental).”<sup>54</sup> Costa argues that situating one’s position is important so that “as feminists, we can become more responsible for what we say and what we do and for the sites/positions from where we say and do such things.”<sup>55</sup> To this end, I situate my position as a white middle class Brazilian woman. Having existed as a white woman in a racist and extremely unequal country like Brazil for most part of my life gave me unearned advantages, privileges intrinsic to my racial condition, due to the nature of the racist system.<sup>56</sup> It is from this position, from this way of existing in the world that I write.

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<sup>53</sup> Angela Davis, *Women, Race, & Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*; Ratts, and Nascimento, *Eu sou Atlântica*; Sojourner Truth, *Look at Me! Ain't I a Woman?* (Baltimore: The Crisis Publishing Company, 1999); Sueli Carneiro, *Racismo, Sexismo e Desigualdade no Brasil* (São Paulo: Selo Negro Edições, 2011); and Lélia Gonzalez, and Carlos Alfredo Hasenbalg, *Lugar de Negro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Marco Zero, 1982).

<sup>54</sup> Claudia de Lima Costa, “O Sujeito no Feminismo: Revisitando os Debates,” *Cadernos Pagu* 19 (2002): 85, accessed April 2nd, 2017, doi: 10.1590/S0104-83332002000200004.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 82.

<sup>56</sup> The Brazilian journalist Eliane Brum recently wrote in her column in *El País* newspaper that “as ethical as we whites may be, our status as white in a racist country throws us into an everyday experience where we are violent only by existing. When I was born in Brazil, instead of in Italy, because the elites decided to whiten the country, I am already somehow violent at birth. When around me blacks have the worst jobs and the worst wages, the worst health, the worst education, the worst housing, the worst life and the worst death, I, as white, exist violently even without being a violent person.” *El País*, “De uma Branca para Outra”, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Last accessed March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, [http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2017/02/20/opinion/1487597060\\_574691.html](http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2017/02/20/opinion/1487597060_574691.html)

## **ORGANIZATION**

This work is organized in three chapters. Chapter One gives a brief historical overview of the circumstances in which education became a social right in Brazil. Even though it was written into the first Constitution of 1824, free education only became a reality for most Brazilians around 1960. Within this new scenario, textbooks assumed a fundamental role, helping structure poorly-trained teachers' pedagogical approaches in a country that does not have a national curriculum. The wide and free distribution of textbooks gained official outlines with the creation of the National Textbook Program, in 1985. Nine years later, the government assumed the responsibility for evaluating the books, making decisions on their content and imposing restrictions on what could and could not be published. In this context, two laws (10.639 and 11.645) were approved requiring the inclusion of African, Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in all educational system in the country. Even though difficult to implement, the laws not only meant the achievement of an old goal towards which the black and indigenous movements had been fighting for over decades, but they also led to a new type of right: the right to representation within the curriculum.

This right is analyzed in relation to textbooks in Chapter Two. Using content analysis with an intersectional approach, I show how the historical narrative of the most well-distributed high school collection of 2015 is masculine, white, and elitist. I argue that the right to black and indigenous representation guaranteed by the laws of 2003 and 2008 is not only being violated, but is also ignoring women from those two groups.

In the last chapter, I analyze four factors that I visualize as responsible for the reproduction of this standard narrative in Brazilian history textbooks. The first is related to the nature of textbooks as commodities, therefore, with the capitalist rationale that prescribe maximum profit. The second factor is the fragility of the federal requirements for textbook evaluation, which are not guaranteeing the right to representation. Third is linked to the criteria teachers use to choose their books—and the fact that the question of gender and racial representation is not in their priorities list. And the last element is associated with the nature of racism and sexism as structural systems of oppression that act simultaneously in all spheres of Brazilian society, including in the way textbooks are written, edited, evaluated and used in class.

Because of the textbooks' complexity, their relationship with the Brazilian state, and the teaching environment in which they are inserted, any effort to profoundly change the book's contents must consider all instances of the product. This work is an attempt to amplify these connections, not always jointly analyzed, exposing the actors implicated in the production of a current school history that can still be called a white man's litany.

## Chapter One: Education as a right and the right to representation

The democratization of public schooling is a relatively recent event in Brazilian history. Although the earliest institutions were built in the beginning of the 19th century, they were mostly focused on higher education, at a time when education was essentially a privilege for wealthy white adolescent boys.<sup>57</sup> When Brazil became a republic, in 1889, with a great part of the population formed by freed and poor black men and women, the state started negotiating the terms of what it meant to be a citizen.<sup>58</sup> In this context, the access to education was strategically manipulated.<sup>59</sup> For example: by making literacy a condition to vote, and, at the same time, not effectively providing extensive free elementary instruction—only 21% of the free population could read and write in 1872—the Brazilian state used an implicitly racialized strategy designed to exclude black Brazilians from political participation.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Heloisa Villela explains how the arrival of the Portuguese royal court in Brazil in 1808 created an immediate need for professional training. The public elementary school was slowly built later. “This level of education [primary] was, for a very long time, almost entirely restricted to the private sphere, that is to say, paid for by families.” Heloisa de O. S. Villela, “O Mestre-Escola e a Professora,” in *500 Anos de Educação no Brasil*, ed. Eliane Marta Teixeira Lopes et al. (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000): 98. Higher institutions were opened to women in 1879, even though few could afford getting a degree. See Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>58</sup> Brazil was the last country of the Americas to abolish slavery, in 1888.

<sup>59</sup> In his essay “Citizenship and Social Class”, T. H. Marshall develops the concept of citizenship as a legal status in which all members of the society share equal civil, political and social rights. He understands popular education as a social right of fundamental importance for the expansion and development of all other rights. T. H. Marshall and T. B. Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Literacy statistics and more on the Brazil’s racialized strategies to restrict citizenship, see Richard Graham, “Free African Brazilians and the State in Slavery Times,” in: *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil*, ed. by Michael Hanchard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). Requirement of literacy to vote only ended in 1985. Other legal measures hampered black people’s full access to instruction, like the decree n°1.331, of 1854, which prohibited enslaved to go to school, restricting their instruction to teacher’s availability. The decree n°7.031-A, of 1878, determined that freedmen—not women—could only study in evening courses.

Slowly, education started to be considered a right. Within this new perspective, textbooks assumed a fundamental role in state policies aimed at democratizing schooling. Today, with 93.6% of its kids in schools, Brazil is the biggest buyer of books in the country—and its National Textbook Program is one of the largest in the world.<sup>61</sup> This chapter considers the relationship between education and rights. More specifically, it traces the history of textbook production in Brazil to explore two related processes: the right to education, and the right to representation within the curriculum.<sup>62</sup>

The Brazilian state gradually assumed the responsibility of providing free public education around 1960. At that time, the government started to distribute textbooks to all public schools in the country—first boosted by American funding received in the context of the U.S. support of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985), and after re-democratization, as a regular state policy. In the 1990s, amid a wave of criticisms on the poor quality of the textbooks, the government implemented a federal evaluation system. Since then, the state decides what must and what must not appear in the school books based on specific criteria.

In the 2000s, two laws added an important layer of requirements to the evaluation process. As part of the black and indigenous` movements long struggle, the Brazilian state mandated the inclusion of those groups' history and culture in the curriculum of all schools. In the context of a broader access to education, those laws were the official recognition of

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<sup>61</sup> According to the organization Todos Pela Educação, schooling reaches 93.6% of all Brazilian population between four and seventeen years old. “Todos pela Educação,” accessed March 29th, 2017 [http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/indicadores-da-educacao/5-metas?task=indicador\\_educacao&id\\_indicador=9#filtros](http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/indicadores-da-educacao/5-metas?task=indicador_educacao&id_indicador=9#filtros)

<sup>62</sup> Representation is used here as “a symbol or image, or the process of presenting to the eye or the mind,” that comes from “‘represent’ used in the sense of ‘symbolize’ or ‘stand for.’” Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York, Oxford University Press: 2015): 208.

these populations erasure from the Brazilian production and sharing of historical knowledge. I argue that, more than that, these legislations meant the achievement of another level of rights: the right to representation within the curriculum, the right to be part and have a voice in the collective memory that is produced and reproduced in school, the right to participate in the shared version of the past.

I finish by looking at the potentialities of the laws for transforming the history school curriculum and the difficulties of enforcing those legislations in the Brazilian educational context, especially regarding textbooks.

#### **FROM EDUCATION FOR A FEW TO TEXTBOOKS FOR ALL**

During the course of 150 years, the process of textbooks production and evaluation in Brazil developed from a small number of mainly imported or translated editions approved by the state, to one of the biggest textbooks programs in the world, based on a bidding notice and a list of defined criteria in which a strong national editorial industry compete to get the state approval. To understand how the Brazilian state became the main buyer of books in the country we must understand how education went from a privilege of white rich boys—when there were few textbooks available—to a legal right, with a whole editorial market set to cover the demand. After all, textbooks are a school commodity, they only develop their full value as products in the educational context.

The public debate about the necessity of a free public education in Brazil dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. Even though the first Brazilian Constitution, enacted in 1824, stipulated free public instruction for all citizens, black enslaved men and women were

not considered citizens. Thus, the Brazilian Constitution conceived of public education as a racialized right, not a universal right. During the period of the Empire (1822-1889), schooling became a central element in the formation of the new generations. At that time, textbooks were a scarce item. Most of them were handwritten, or edited and printed abroad, mainly in Portugal and France. They were used largely for professors' training and had to be approved by the government. According to Circe Bittencourt, textbooks were "designed so that the state could control the knowledge diffused in schools."<sup>63</sup>

In 1932, following the creation of the Ministry of Education just two years earlier, intellectuals and the media started a publicly debate about the necessity of effectively offering free public education for all Brazilians. The Manifesto of the Pioneers of a New Education ("Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova"), signed by a group of twenty-six intellectuals, stressed the importance of education for the formation of citizens and the need for the state to assume its responsibility in sponsoring instruction to all Brazilians. The efforts to reform education at this time, however, were strictly related to eugenics ideologies, which sought to whiten Brazilian population. Jerry Dávila says that those educational pioneers "turned the emerging public schools into spaces where centuries of white European supremacy was re-scripted in the languages of science, merit, and modernity. The school

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<sup>63</sup> Luciano Filho argues that the teaching method known as "simultaneous", when the teacher lecture to a whole group of students instead of only one at a time, only began to exist with the production of pedagogical materials, such as black board, textbooks and notebooks, that kept all group occupied. When that method started to spread across Brazil around 1890, specific spaces for schools started to be built. Before that, teaching happened in the teacher's houses or in farms—besides domestic education. See Luciano Mendes de Faria Filho, "Instrução Elementar no Século XIX," in: *500 Anos de Educação no Brasil*, ed. Eliane Marta Teixeira Lopes et al. (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000). Circe M. F. Bittencourt, *Livro didático e Saber Escolar: 1810-1910* (São Paulo: Aulêntica, 2008), 61.

they created were designed to imprint their white, elite vision of an ideal Brazilian nation on those mostly poor and nonwhite children who were to be the substance of that ideal."<sup>64</sup>

Although the Manifesto caused a stir in academia and in the media, it did not effectively change the situation of the educational system, still predominantly elitist. An Educational Reform in 1946 legally stipulated the state's offering of free, compulsory elementary school, but as the regulation did not specify the means by which the state should fund and implement the new system, the measure went unheeded. It was only in 1961, with the approval of the first law that regulated the educational system in the country (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional*) that the ways to implement the free and mandatory elementary education were defined and that the expansion of schooling gradually started to happen.<sup>65</sup> And as more people were offered access to public schools, textbooks also changed. They went from small productions in family publishing houses to high circulation materials, printed by companies with specialized teams of editors and marketing campaigns that lead to the formation of a powerful industry.<sup>66</sup>

During most of Brazilian history, the state managed to control—and even co-edit—textbooks through different agencies, alternatively extinguished and created according to the

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<sup>64</sup> Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2003). See also Diana Gonçalves Vidal, "80 Anos do Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova: Questões para Debate," *Educação e Pesquisa* 39, no.3 (2013): 577-88.

<sup>65</sup> High school was only established as a right in the 1989 Constitution. For more on the history of education as a right, see Otaíza de Oliveira Romanelli, *História da Educação no Brasil (1930-1973)* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1978); and Simone de Fátima Flach, "Direito à Educação e Obrigatoriedade Escolar no Brasil: Entre a Previsão Legal e a Realidade," *Revista HISTEDBR On-line* 43 (2011): 285-303. Accessed March 28th, 2017 [http://www.histedbr.fe.unicamp.br/revista/edicoes/43/art20\\_43.pdf](http://www.histedbr.fe.unicamp.br/revista/edicoes/43/art20_43.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> Gatti Júnior, *A Escrita Escolar Da História*.

group in power.<sup>67</sup> The first federal textbook evaluation initiative was set in 1938, when legislation was passed to regulate the import, production and use of school books.

More actions towards the expansion of schooling—and, consequently, of the textbook’s market—occurred in the 1960s during the military dictatorship (1964-1985). Between 1960 and 1970, for example, the growth of elementary school enrollment was of 83.7%.<sup>68</sup> For Filgueiras, this rapid increase in the number of schools, students and teachers “exposed the need for a new concept of instruction,” a “less elaborate” one.<sup>69</sup> Gatti considers that the state’s effort to put more people in schools without an appropriate financial investment caused an almost tragic situation, with many unqualified teachers in need of pedagogical support. Textbooks were one of the tools offered to help these educators.<sup>70</sup>

The increase in demand caused by the expansion of schools met other changes in the publishing industry, transforming textbooks during the 1960s. The first of them was the development of more sophisticated printing techniques that allowed the existence of a better quality paper, a plasticized cover, and color pages. Second, in an effort to reach the new wave of unskilled teachers, textbook’s editors started to include questionnaires and

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<sup>67</sup> For more on textbook’s state policies in Brazilian history, see Rita de Cássia Cunha Ferreira, “A Comissão Nacional do Livro Didático Durante o Estado Novo (1937-1945),” (Master’s Thesis, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2008); Décio Gatti Júnior, “Entre Políticas de Estado e Práticas Escolares: Uma História do Livro Didático no Brasil,” in: *Histórias e Memórias da Educação no Brasil Vol.3*, edited by Maria Stephanou et al. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2005), 379-400; Maria Luiza de Alcântara Krafzik, “Acordo MEC/USAID – A Comissão do Livro Técnico e do Livro Didático – COLTED (1966-1971)” (Master’s Thesis, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2006); Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira and Itamar Freitas, “Historiografia Didática e Prescrições Estatais Sobre Conteúdos Históricos em Nível Nacional (1938-2012),” *Territórios e Fronteiras* 6, no. 1 (2013): 6-24, accessed April 19th, 2017, doi: 10.22228/rt-f.v6i0.242.

<sup>68</sup> Bernadete A. Gatti, Rose Neubauer da Silva and Yara Lúcia Espósito, “Literacy and Basic Education in Brazil,” in: *Brazilian Issues in Education, Gender and Race*, ed. Elba Siqueira Barreto et al. (Fundação Carlos Chagas: São Paulo, 1996): 52.

<sup>69</sup> Filgueiras, “Os Processos de Avaliação de Livros Didáticos No Brasil (1938-1984),” (PhD diss., Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Gatti Júnior, *A Escrita Escolar Da História*.

suggestions of activities for class, narrowing the relationship with instructors and “assuming a high level of dependency of the classroom context”.<sup>71</sup>

Another important change was the professionalization of activities related to the publishing industry—such as of editors, photographers, illustrators, authors and copy editors. Also, publishing houses improved their selling techniques, creating the figure of the sales representative, responsible for fomenting the relationship with teachers and the school.<sup>72</sup> Finally, a tax exemption granted to the entire publishing industry in 1967—from production, to equipment import and selling—increased the industry’s capacity and its versatility.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, with the increase in the demand, professionalization of the production and tax benefits, the textbook market significantly expanded.

The educational editorial business was also helped by the 1966 agreement between the Ministry of Education, the National Union of Book Publishers and the United States Agency for International Development, which, in three years, funded the free distribution of fifty-one million textbooks for Brazilian schools, the implementation of local libraries and the training for school teachers.<sup>74</sup> In order to decide which books to buy, evaluation criteria were created based on scientific precision, appropriate language and layout. Both schoolteachers and members of the government looked over the existing books—and the result exposed the poor quality of most of national textbooks. USAID assisted and gave technical support for the experts working on the program. The American “quality standards”

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<sup>71</sup> Antônio Augusto Gomes Batista, “Um Objeto Variável e Instável: Textos, Impressos e Livros Didáticos,” in: *Leitura, História e História da Leitura*, ed. by Márcia Abreu. (Campinas: Mercado das Letras, Associação de Leitura do Brasil, Fapesp, 1999): 554.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 555.

<sup>73</sup> Laurence Hallewell, *Books in Brazil: A History of the Publishing Trade* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1982): 339.

<sup>74</sup> “Histórico,” FNDE, accessed February 9th, 2017, <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-historico>.

were used as guidelines for both evaluation and teacher trainings organized in schools for a “better use of the textbooks”<sup>75</sup>

As part of the agreement with USAID, Brazil promised to keep up the distribution of textbooks with their own resources after the period of three years—and it did, albeit unstably and unevenly (not reaching all public schools).<sup>76</sup> During this period, the government implemented a system of co-edition of textbooks in which states had to make a financial contribution. The evaluation was also made with states and aimed to adapt school books to the new objectives of each discipline (during the dictatorship, for example, history and geography were combined in one discipline called ‘social studies’), and standardize the book’s layout and graphic design.<sup>77</sup>

#### **UNIVERSAL DISTRIBUTION AND FEDERAL EVALUATION**

Following re-democratization in 1985, political and social rights reemerged as a prominent issue in Brazil. In education, the new government’s acknowledgement of the “lack of compliance of the state with its obligations related to education of the masses” and of the necessity of a universalization of schooling laid the groundwork for the adoption of a set of changes—including related to textbooks.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Filgueiras, “Os Processos de Avaliação.” Krafzik, “Acordo MEC/USAID.”

<sup>76</sup> See Jorge Abrahão Castro, “O Processo de Gasto Público do Programa do Livro Didático,” texto para Discussão n. 406 (Brasília: IPEA, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> Filgueiras, “Os Processos de Avaliação.” During the military dictatorship, the structure and content of the Social Studies discipline was defined by the Ministry of Education. According to Fonseca, the program followed the current trends in history teaching at the time: “A directive, non-critical teaching, in which history appeared as a linear succession of facts that were considered significant, facts predominantly linked to the political-institutional sphere, and in which highlighted the positive spirits that would lead history.” Fonseca, *História e Ensino de História*, 58.

<sup>78</sup> Marco Maciel, “Proposta Educação Para Todos: Caminho para a Mudança” (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 1985): 2, accessed March 28th, 2017 <http://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/handle/id/200466>

The two main educational goals for the New Republic were to eliminate illiteracy (25% of the population of fifteen years or more at the time) and to democratize high-quality education.<sup>79</sup> In order to do that, the government proposed a “plan of immediate action”, which focused in funding initiatives related to: 1. the valorization of elementary and middle school teachers, 2. the expansion of institutions and 3. the assistance to vulnerable students by offering school meals, textbooks and other materials.

Thus, schoolbooks became part of the new government’s main strategy to improve Brazilian education. In 1985, a National Textbook Program (PNLD, or Programa Nacional do Livro Didático) was created—and, since then, significantly expanded. Its initial goal was to guarantee free distribution of textbooks to all elementary and middle students of public schools in the country. Besides that, PNLD implemented a rule for the reutilization of books by students, changing the idea of the textbook as disposable material, and giving teachers the ability to decide which title to use in their classes.

With a total spending of 1.29 billion Brazilian reais—approximately \$410 million in February 2017—and 152.3 million books distributed in the 2017 edition of the program, the federal government is now the biggest buyer of books in the country, and PNLD is one of the largest textbook distribution programs in the world.<sup>80</sup> Today, PNLD not only distributes, but also evaluates textbooks for elementary school, middle and high school, special education, school for adults and rural schools.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>80</sup> “Dados estatísticos,” FNDE, accessed February 13th, 2017, <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-dados-estatisticos>

<sup>81</sup> In 2000, the PNLD started buying and distributing dictionaries. In 2001 it included braille books and in 2003 the program incorporated high school textbooks. In 2007, the PNLD started covering adult learning.

But the path to this apparent stability was meandering. In the first years, the program was flooded with accusations of corruption and complaints from schools that did not receive the books or received wrong titles.<sup>82</sup> In her analysis of the Brazilian textbook market in the twenty-first century, Célia Cassiano argues that the main goal of PNLD—universalizing the distribution of textbooks—was only fully achieved in what she calls the “second phase” of the program, which began in 1995 with substantial changes in the acquisition and distribution systems.<sup>83</sup> It was also at that time that the government implemented the official evaluation process, which was taken from the hands of schoolteachers and transferred to a group of academics of each specific discipline.

The Brazilian commitment to improving education was boosted by two important international education agreements signed by the country in the last decade of the 20th century. In 1990, during a forum organized by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, delegates from 155 countries and representatives from civil society met in Jomtien, Thailand, and signed the World Declaration on Education for All. The document reaffirmed primary education as a “fundamental human right” and committed to make it universally accessible. Three years later, the nine high-population developing nations reaffirmed the Jomtien agreement at a meeting in New Delhi, signing The Delhi Declaration.

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“Histórico,” FNDE, accessed March 29th, 2017 <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-historico>.

<sup>82</sup> The decree that established the PNLD did not specify a regular source of funding, which only happened in 1993. Cassiano says that this might explain partially the problems with volume of purchases in the first years of the program. Célia Cristina de Figueiredo Cassiano, *O Mercado Do Livro Didático No Brasil: Da Criação Do Programa Nacional Do Livro Didático (PNLD) à Entrada Do Capital Internacional Espanhol (1985-2007)* (São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2013).

<sup>83</sup> Cassiano, *O Mercado Do Livro Didático No Brasil*.

To meet the commitment, Brazil launched a ten-year plan. The proposal lists textbooks as one of the eight critical points for reaching the goal of education for all. It states that the school book is “one of the main inputs of the schooling system” and that its political, economic and pedagogical aspects are inseparable from the Brazilian educational structure.<sup>84</sup> The text also explains that although there are good textbooks available in the market, the country had not yet developed a “consistent policy” to emphasize quality. “The principle of the teacher’s free choice” to choose the titles, it says, limits the decision “because of their [teachers] insufficient qualification to evaluate and select.”<sup>85</sup> Putting the responsibility of the poor quality of school books used in schools over the teachers, the document calls for a new textbook policy, one that assures high standards.<sup>86</sup>

The criticisms of textbooks’ low quality came from academia, from the black movement, and from the media.<sup>87</sup> Most of the literature on school books of that time consisted in denunciations of racial and sexual discrimination and stereotypes, as well as incorrect concepts and anachronisms.<sup>88</sup> In 1993, the government created a commission to

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<sup>84</sup> Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, “Plano Decenal de Educação para Todos (1993-2003)” (Edição escolar, 1993): 5.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>86</sup> Cassiano also analyzes how “a scenario is generated” that exalts “teacher disqualification” and the “erasure of the teacher’s voice.” Cassiano, *O Mercado Do Livro Didático No Brasil*, 109-110. It is interesting to notice the release of World Bank publications at this time emphasizing the importance of textbooks in the achievement of successful educational records. See Eduardo Velez, Ernesto Schiefelbein, and Jorge Valenzuela, “*Factors Affecting Achievement in Primary Education: A Review of the Literature for Latin America and the Caribbean*,” (Washington: Human Resources Development and Operations Policy, World Bank: 1993).

<sup>87</sup> Luiz Alberto Oliveira Gonçalves and Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva remember how black groups from Brasília pressured the Foundation for the Assistance of the Student (*Fundação de Assistência ao Estudante*) to end the racial discrimination in textbooks. Luiz Alberto Oliveira Gonçalves and Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva, “Movimento Negro e Educação,” *Revista Brasileira de Educação* 15 (2000): 134-158.

<sup>88</sup> Circe Bittencourt, “Produção Didática de História: Trajetórias de Pesquisas,” *Revista de História* 164 (2011): 487-516; Kazumi Munakata, “Histórias que os Livros Didáticos Contam, Depois que Acabou a Ditadura no Brasil,” in: *Historiografia Brasileira em Perspectiva*, ed. by Marcos Cezar Freitas (São Paulo: Contexto, 2000), 271-296; Kazumi Munakata, “Produzindo Livros Didáticos e Paradidáticos” (PhD diss., Pontifícia Universidade de São Paulo, 1997); Rosemberg et al, “Combate ao Sexismo em Livros Didáticos,” 489. The works of Nosella,

analyze content, layout and pedagogical aspects of the ten most requested books in each subject. The results showed students were using a material full of racial and gender discrimination, conceptual errors and stereotypes.

Professor Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, who worked in the technical commission of PNLD from 2004 to 2015, explained that the list of problems found in those books served as a base for the permanent evaluation:

There were stereotypes, incorrect information, prejudice. There were problems with the graphic design. This is the basis of the *editais* [the public notice in which the requirements are announced]. It was in the 1993 evaluation. You see... It was not the state that said what book they wanted. It was the market that said the books they had... And that made the criteria.<sup>89</sup>

Especially relevant here is Oliveira's observation that while the state had some say in textbook content, the final product was largely determined by market forces. This is an abiding problem in textbook production. It makes economic sense for publishers to revise textbook content as little as necessary, in that wholesale revisions or rewriting entire series of books would be substantially more expensive. Still, PNLD has an impact on textbook

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Franco, Telles, Toscano, Silva and Faria critically analyze textbooks content during the second half of 1980 and 1990. Munakata calls the denunciation of lies and manipulation in Brazilian textbooks by academics in the 1970's and 1980's a "literary genre" boosted by the studies of Marc Ferro and Eco & Bonazzi and by a political conjuncture of the military dictatorship. Oliveira called these kind of studies "historiography of absences", saying that even though most of them had important and correct analysis, they were often "incomplete in the sense that it removes the textbook of its context of production and circulation and its relations with the knowledge produced." Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, "O Direito ao Passado: Uma Discussão Necessária à Formação do Profissional de História" (PhD diss. Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 2003): 89; Maria de Lourdes Chagas Deiró Nosella, *As Belas Mentiras: A Ideologia Subjacente aos Textos Didáticos* (São Paulo: Cortez & Moraes, 1979); Maria Laura P. B. Franco, *O Livro Didático de História no Brasil: A Versão Fabricada*. (São Paulo: Global Editora, 1982); Norma Abreu Telles, *Cartografia Brasilis, ou, Esta História Está Mal Contada* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1984); Moema Toscano, *Igualdade na Escola: Preconceitos Sexuais na Educação* (Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Estadual dos Direitos da Mulher-RJ, 1995); Ana Célia da Silva, *A Discriminação do Negro no Livro Didático* (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, Centro Editorial e Didático, 1995); Ana Lúcia G. de Faria, *Ideologia no Livro Didático* (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1994).

<sup>89</sup> Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, in interview with the author, June 2016.

content, particularly with respect to demanding the removal of inaccurate or blatantly offensive content.

The PNLD officially instituted the process of evaluation in 1996. For each school subject, a commission of experts was formed. Two experts of the discipline evaluate each collection separately. Each specialist produces an opinion statement, commenting on whether the book meets each criterion set by the government and either approving or rejecting the title. A third expert writes a final statement considering both previous opinions. The result, with all titles and a summary of collections approved, is published in the format of a teacher guide (*Guia do Livro Didático*) and distributed to all public schools. From that pre-approved list, teachers can choose the books they want to use. In this way, the state managed to control the editorial options and, at the same time, leave some room for the teacher's autonomy.

From 1996 to 2017, the program went through few changes. It started demanding textbooks authors have a degree, any degree, and that books must come with a “teacher’s guide” in the end that help instructors in the preparation of their classes. But the main modifications were related to the way the government published the results of the evaluations in the guide. It started with a list of all titles—approved and rejected—ranked as not recommended, recommended with reservation, recommended, and recommended with distinction. The strategy generated a wave of complaints from publishers and authors that felt harmed for being exposed when their books were not well evaluated. Furthermore, it became clear the mismatch between what the government considered a good textbook (recommended with distinction) and the teacher’s opinions: 71.9% of teacher’s options in

1997 consisted of “not recommended” books. Not even one “recommended with distinction” title was chosen by a teacher that year.<sup>90</sup>

To manage the controversy, in 1999 the government eliminated the “not recommended” category, and thus, excluded the option they considered the worst. However, publishing industry continued to criticize this approach at least until 2005, when the government finally excluded the classification and started to publish only the approved titles as a list, giving all the same status and describing each collection strengths and weaknesses in a detailed review.<sup>91</sup>

Therefore, in the context of re-democratization, Brazil officially recognized its poor offering of public education as one of its main challenges in order to achieve development. In this scenario, textbooks achieved a privileged position of fundamental pedagogical tool to help Brazil reaching the goal of education for all. They became a state priority. With the PNLD, the government guaranteed the distribution of textbooks and later, with the evaluation, tried to control its quality.

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<sup>90</sup> I address the teacher’s selection criteria for textbooks on Chapter Three. Antônio Augusto Gomes Batista and Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, “Recomendações para uma Política Pública de Livros Didáticos” (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, 2001): 20. Cassiano, again, sees the governmental explanation for this discrepancy as a way of erasing the teacher’s voice. “What teachers really wanted to say with their choices did not have an appropriate treatment by the government.” Cassiano, *O Mercado Do Livro Didático No Brasil*, 128.

<sup>91</sup> Publishing houses never stopped complaining about the evaluation. Two editors even wrote a book exposing what they called ‘severe’ conceptual mistakes in the federal evaluation. See Francisco Azevedo de Arruda Sampaio and Aloma Fernandes de Carvalho, *Com a Palavra, o Autor: Em Nossa Defesa—Um Elogio à Importância e uma Crítica às Limitações do Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (São Paulo: Editorial Sarandi, 2010).

## THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

We might understand the federal criteria for evaluating textbooks as either positive or negative. Positive criteria, as I use it here, is a set of specific demands of what must be in books. They can be presented as mere recommendations or be mandatory measures. Because Brazil does not have a national curriculum, the only means of imposing positive criteria on textbook publishers is via law.<sup>92</sup> By contrast, negative criteria are rules that determine what must not be in school books for them to be approved by the Brazilian state.

Since the beginning of the evaluation, the negative criteria were largely aimed at prohibiting textbooks with racism, strong ideological stances, or copy that was largely thinly-veiled advertising. With time, the eliminatory aspects increased and were improved. Consider, for example, the first evaluation, in 1996. As negative criteria, it demanded the exclusion of any textbook containing: 1. incorrect concepts and/or incorrect information; and 2. ideas that damage citizenship (by conveying prejudices of origin, race, sex, color, age, as well as any other form of discrimination).<sup>93</sup>

Yet in the latest edition of the program, made for a 2017-2019 provision of textbooks, six criteria were listed as eliminatory, or negative: 1. respect to current legislation, guidelines and official norms of elementary and middle school; 2. compliance to the ethical principles needed to the construction of citizenship and republican social coexistence; 3.

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<sup>92</sup> A recommended guideline for what should be taught is described in the National Curricula Parameters, which works as a basis for schools and textbook's editors structure their content. A National Common Base bill, proposing an unified curricula for the entire country, was in discussion in Congress until May 2017. I go back to this topic in the conclusion to explain how the construction of the Common Base bill had the potential to change the way textbooks are written in Brazil.

<sup>93</sup> Batista et al., "Recomendações para uma Política Pública," 57; Ministério da Educação, "Guia dos Livros Didáticos" (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 1996).

coherence and adequacy to the collection’s theoretical-methodological proposal; 4. correction and updates of concepts, information and procedures; 5. compliance with the aims of the teacher’s manual and its pedagogical approach; 6. graphic and editorial projects aligned to the collection’s pedagogical goals.<sup>94</sup> All of these items are later detailed in the *edital*—a bidding notice where the state lists all requirements for a textbook to be approved. The second criterion, for example, “compliance to the ethical principles needed for the construction of citizenship and republican social coexistence”, is defined as:

Textbooks will be excluded from PNLD 2017 if they: 1. convey stereotypes and prejudices of social, regional, ethnic-racial, gender, sexual orientation, age or language, religious, disability status, as well as any other form of discrimination or violation of human rights; 2. engage in religious or political indoctrination, disrespecting the secular and autonomous character of public education; 3. use school material as a vehicle for advertising or dissemination of trademarks, and commercial products or services.<sup>95</sup>

Compare this with 1996, which had only two negative criteria and did not mention discrimination related to gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability. PNLD’s last *edital* explicitly recommends textbook publishers to include specific kinds of content, some of them directed to “promote a positive image of women”, “address the question of gender, aiming to the construction of a non-sexist, just and equal society, including related to fighting homo and transphobia” and “to promote the debate around [...] the educational commitment with an agenda of non-violence against women.”<sup>96</sup> Even though of good intentions, these requests are not mandatory. In other words, if a textbook does not mention

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<sup>94</sup> Brasil, Ministério da Educação. Edital de Convocação para o Processo de Inscrição e Avaliação de Obras Didáticas para o Programa Nacional do Livro Didático PNLD 2017. February, 2015. Page 40.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 42

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 40.

the question of gender or does not contextualize the fight against homo and transphobia, the program can still approve it.

Without a mandatory curriculum, as mentioned before, the only possibility of positive criteria to be enforced in the PNLD is by law. That happened in two occasions: in 2003 and in 2008, when president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva signed the legislation 10.639/03, that mandates that the history and culture of African and Afro-Brazilians are taught in every school—public and private—across the country, and the law 11.645/08, which does the same with indigenous content.<sup>97</sup> This legislation came after the Brazilian’s commitments—pressured by the black, specially black feminist, movements—at the Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerances in Durban, South Africa, in 2001.<sup>98</sup> The demands for an anti-racist schooling and inclusive curricula, however, are an old agenda of the black movements in Brazil. The First Congress of the Black Brazilian (*I Congresso do Negro Brasileiro*), in 1950, already recommended "the stimulus to the study of African reminiscences in the country."<sup>99</sup> The claim became more specific with time, being cited in the Plan of Actions of the Brazilian Unified Black Movement, in 1982, and in the Program for Overcoming Racism and Racial Inequality, a

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<sup>97</sup> “Lei n.10.639, de 9 de janeiro de 2003,” Presidência da República, accessed March 29th, 2017 [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/2003/L10.639.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/L10.639.htm); “Lei n.11.645, de 10 de março de 2008,” Presidência da República, accessed March 29th, 2017 [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/ato2007-2010/2008/lei/111645.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/ato2007-2010/2008/lei/111645.htm).

<sup>98</sup> More on the black women’s actions on the “Durban battles,” see Sueli Carneiro, “A Batalha de Durban,” *Estudos Feministas* 10, no. 1 (2002): 209-14.

<sup>99</sup> Abdias do Nascimento, *O Negro Revoltado* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1982): 293.

document submitted to the Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso after the Zumbi dos Palmares March Against Racism, in 1995.<sup>100</sup>

More than a correction of the violent erasure of more than half of the Brazilian population from the school history curriculum, these pieces of legislation represented an opportunity for Brazilians to rethink and recreate the epistemological basis of their modes of teaching history and subvert the traditional ways historical knowledge is (re)produced in the classroom. In this sense, the laws can be interpreted as a legal possibility of break with the notion of coloniality, towards a decolonial pedagogy and a non-Eurocentric epistemology.<sup>101</sup>

Coloniality, according to Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations.”<sup>102</sup> Torres says that, as coloniality “survives colonialism”, it remains alive in “books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self.”<sup>103</sup> Coloniality, as explains Torres, also includes the naturalization of certain practices of war, like physically eliminating certain groups of subjects—for example black and indigenous peoples—their subjectivities and, I add, their histories and memories. Therefore, the laws mandating a re-inscription of these

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<sup>100</sup> Petrônio Domingues, “Movimento Negro Brasileiro: Alguns Apontamentos Históricos,” *Tempo* 12, no. 23 (2007): 100-22, accessed April 11th, 2017, doi: 10.1590/S1413-77042007000200007; Sales Augusto dos Santos, “A Lei nº 10.639/03 como Fruto da Luta Anti-Racista do Movimento Negro,” in: *Educação Anti-Racista: Caminhos Abertos pela Lei Federal nº 10.639/03* (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade, 2005).

<sup>101</sup> For more on decolonial pedagogy, see Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994) and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2005)

<sup>102</sup> Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being,” *Cultural Studies* 21(2) (2007): 243, doi: 10.1080/09502380601162548

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 243.

populations histories have the potential to break the cycle of an epistemology (re)produced by coloniality. It has the power—always there, of course, but now is enforced by law—to build a new way of looking at and thinking human actions in the past.

Following the approval of the first law, in 2003, the Brazilian agency responsible for the promotion of racial equality and the Ministry of Education published a document with guidelines on how to enforce the legislation. The idea of a right to representation is stated in the text: “It is important to emphasize that such policies have as goals black people’s rights to recognize themselves in national culture, and to express their own worldviews, to express their thoughts individually and collectively.”<sup>104</sup> The guidelines also mention the need to break away from Eurocentric path in education. After listing the guiding principles of the law - political and historical consciousness of diversity, strengthening identities and rights, and educational actions to fight racism and discrimination—the document explains their importance:

These principles and their ramifications show a need for a change in mentality, in the ways of thinking and acting of individuals in particular, as well as of institutions and their cultural traditions. [...] To succeed, the school and its teachers [...] have to undo racist mentality and secular discrimination, overcoming European ethnocentrism, restructuring ethnic-racial and social relations, liberating pedagogical processes.<sup>105</sup>

The guidelines are broad and encompass teacher’s training, working groups in schools and the provision of specific textbooks and bibliography related to African and Afro-Brazilian history to all schools in the country.

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<sup>104</sup> Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial, “Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-Brasileira e Africana,” (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial, 2004): 15.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 15-20.

But besides the publication of the guidelines and the national plan to enforce them, the efforts made by social movements, and an apparent major national agreement with the necessity of teaching black and indigenous history in schools, there were—and still are—many difficulties in implementing the legislation.<sup>106</sup> According to a study using data of a 2009 inquiry, only seven in ten elementary and middle schools were adopting either systematic or isolated actions towards the application of the laws.<sup>107</sup> Another survey of 2012 revealed that not even one of the forty-four public universities analyzed had disciplines related to teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture in their programs—mainly in courses like Education, Pedagogy and History, which train future school teachers.<sup>108</sup> Also, the funding aimed to finance actions related to the laws in schools and universities is not being completely used. In 2012, a report showed that little more than 11% of that year’s federal money designed to educational projects promoting racial equality had been used. The

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<sup>106</sup> According to a survey made by the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America, 83% of Brazilians agree that schools should teach black and indigenous history. Marcelo Paixão and Graziella M. Silva, “Mixed and Unequal: New Perspectives on Brazilian Ethnoracial Relations,” in: *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, race, and color in Latin America*, ed. Edward Eric Telles et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Ministério da Educação, “Plano Nacional de Implementação das Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para Educação das Relações Etnicorraciais e Para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-Brasileira e Africana” (Brasília: Ministério da Educação); See also IG, “História e cultura afro ainda longe dos currículos escolares,” accessed March 29th, 2017, <http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/educacao/historia-e-cultura-afro-ainda-longo-dos-curriculos-escolares/n1237831299224.html>

<sup>107</sup> Laboratório de Análises Econômicas, Históricas, Sociais e Estatística das Relações Raciais. "A Aplicação da Lei 11.645/2008 nas Escolas Públicas de Acordo com a Prova Brasil 2009," *Tempo em Curso* 5, no. 5, vol.2 (2013): 2-4.

<sup>108</sup> IG, “Lei completa 10 anos em janeiro, mas professores ainda não são formados para trabalhar com tema que deveria fazer parte da rotina escolar desde 2003,” accessed March 15th, 2017 <http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/educacao/2012-11-20/disciplina-sobre-educacao-etnico-racial-ainda-nao-esta-nos-curriculos.html>

reasons go from bureaucracy to corruption and the unawareness in relation to the possibilities of using federal resources.<sup>109</sup>

In relation to textbooks, the lack of explicit instructions or official guidelines specific to the publishing houses hampers the enforcement of the laws. The general guidelines mention the distribution of pedagogical material especially produced to train teachers in African history, but it does not point out how the new content should be treated in the regular textbooks evaluated by PNLD. The result, as we shall see in Chapter Two, is the punctual inclusion of content related to African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture, without a significant change in the way the whole history is told.

Just as with the access to education, guaranteed by law since 1824 but only actually enforced in the 1960's, the right to representation in the curriculum was assured in 2003/2008, without being yet fully implemented. Besides that, because the Brazilian laws of representation did not include the category of gender in their writing, the modifications made in history textbooks basically reflected the male experience. Black and indigenous women are, still, completely excluded from the historical narrative. In the next chapter, I quantify these absences in a highly popular history collection distributed by the PNLD in 2015.

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<sup>109</sup> IG, "Só 11% da verba de projetos educacionais para igualdade racial foi usada," accessed March 29th, 2017 <http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/educacao/2012-11-20/so-11-da-verba-de-projetos-educacionais-para-igualdade-racial-foi-usada.html>

## Chapter Two: Men, white and powerful: the narrative of *História, Sociedade e Cidadania*

With a national textbook program of gigantic proportions, one decade of federal evaluation and two laws enforcing the teaching of Indigenous, African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture, one might expect that the current textbooks offered in Brazilian public schools do not present explicit discrimination or stereotypes related to gender, race/ethnicity or class. And, at least in the collection analyzed here, it does not indeed. The narrative is largely free from pejorative adjectives, explicit prejudices and judgments. It is clean, sanitized, carefully produced and edited to pass the state evaluation by avoiding the negative criteria.

But the text is also mostly free from women in general, and from black and indigenous women in particular. Homosexuals and transgendered people and their historic fight for equal rights are not even mentioned in the narrative. It seems that by deleting discriminatory content, the editors removed all characters that are not white and male. What is left to other historical figures is absence. After all, one cannot discriminate against who is not there.

This chapter quantifies the absences in *História, Sociedade e Cidadania*, a highly popular three-volume series used in high schools across the country, and written by Alfredo Boulos Júnior, a historian whose PhD denounced, precisely, the lack of content related to black people in Brazilian textbooks. The intersectional content analysis applied in the textbooks reveals the extent to which the main protagonists in the narrative are white, male, and in

positions of power—and to which women, especially indigenous and black women, are underrepresented.

I interpret those results in relation to the two laws mandating the inclusion of history and culture of black and indigenous populations in all school's curricula. While the disproportion between white and nonwhite historical characters is striking and clearly non-compliant with the legislations, the lower numbers of black and indigenous women compared to black and indigenous men reveals what happens when categories of race/ethnicity are not crossed with gender: the books address those contents mostly through men's experiences. Therefore, the lack of an intersectional approach in the laws—and in the work of the PNLD evaluators, as they are the ones deciding on the compliance of each collection—makes the right to representation in the curriculum a male exclusivity.

I chose to study *História, Sociedade e Cidadania I, II and III*, written by Alfredo Boulos Júnior and published by FTD, because of its wide reach. Boulos' books were the most well distributed in the country in 2015. According to the Ministry of Education, in that year, 1,385,765 Brazilians received a copy of his collection—that means twenty percent of public high school students in the country.<sup>110</sup>

My decision for using content analysis came from the fact that the method allows not only for the counting of historical characters but also for capturing information on their race/ethnicity, class, sex, place in the narrative, family relations, etc. The quantitative methodology summarizes and extracts information from written messages, converting the

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<sup>110</sup> “Dados Estatísticos PNLD,” FNDE, accessed March 27th 2017, <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-dados-estatisticos>. From the Dataset available at “Resultados e Resumos,” FNDE, accessed March 27th 2017, <http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/resultados-e-resumos>

text in different categories of data that can be isolated and cross-analyzed.<sup>111</sup> This specificity is important, because by overlapping data on sex and race/ethnicity, it is possible to visualize how the book treats black women, white women and indigenous woman differently.

My approach here is influenced by intersectionality, which sustains that elements of identity are interwoven and experienced as occurring simultaneously. As Crenshaw states, the “adoption of a single-issue framework for discrimination not only marginalizes Black women within the very movements that claim them as part of their constituency but it also makes the elusive goal of ending racism and patriarchy even more difficult to attain.”<sup>112</sup> In this sense, my use of an intersectional framework aims to highlight black and indigenous women’s existences as actors in the current Brazilian high school history textbooks.

#### **CODING RACE, CODING INTERSECTIONALITY**

Coding characters’ race raises a number of methodological and theoretical issues. The foremost of these is the problematic nature of the concept of race. In attempting to codify historical actors’ race one immediately confronts the category’s limits. How can we know the race of historical actors? When dealing with, say, continental European philosophers or noblemen, who were largely white—and were often invested in the reification of whiteness as an identity—ascribing a racial identity is more or less straightforward. But race is often ambiguous. Also, we cannot know how such historical

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<sup>111</sup> Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002). I agree with Neuendorf that content analysis “presents gender researchers with a set of useful tools [...] for studying messages containing information about sex and gender roles.” Kimberly A. Neuendorf, “Content Analysis - A Methodological Primer for Gender Research,” *Sex Roles* 64, no. 3 (2011): 276.

<sup>112</sup> Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” 152.

figures would have racially identified, or if the notion of “racial identity” would have even made sense to them.<sup>113</sup>

Likewise, racial categories are sufficiently tenuous that their meaning often shifts between time and space. “Creole,” for example, means something very different in contemporary Louisiana than it did in seventeenth-century Spain, and “mulatto” means something different in the contemporary United States than it does in Brazil.<sup>114</sup> In codifying these textbooks, one risks reproducing the classificatory violence inherent to race.

At the same time, however, racial (in)visibility shown by data can be an important tool in the fight against discrimination—as race remains a salient category in much of the world, and Brazil is no exception. As Paixão and Silva point out:

Statistical visibility is also probably the reason why policies targeting racial inequalities are much more developed in Brazil than in other countries of the region [Latin America]. More visibility of racial discrimination and a better understanding of how racial inequalities recur will help to develop mechanisms to fight them.<sup>115</sup>

The intention here, therefore, is to highlight racial absences in the broader gender context of omissions in order to expose the exclusionary aspect of the history chosen to be taught.

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<sup>113</sup> Because the collection analyzed encompass all periods of history, I faced the problem of coding race in pre-Modern societies. Although scholars like Moore have shown the existence of a “history of conflicts between peoples arising from phenotypic differences” before the Modern era, other intellectuals like Aníbal Quijano defend that the racial identities as we know them today are products of Modernity and colonialism: “The idea of race, in its modern sense, has no known history before the America.” Aníbal Quijano, *Colonialidad del Poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2002), 3. Carlos Wedderburn Moore, “O Racismo Através da História: da Antiguidade à Modernidade,” accessed March 10th, 2017 [http://www.ipeafro.org.br/10\\_afro\\_em\\_foco/index.htm](http://www.ipeafro.org.br/10_afro_em_foco/index.htm).

But even with phenotypic differences and, therefore, racism happening before the year Christopher Columbus started his voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, in 1492, it is based in today’s racial identities that teachers will teach and students will learn history. Therefore, I decided to only code race for characters that were living in and through Modern Age.

<sup>114</sup> Michael Omi, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>115</sup> Paixão and Silva, “Mixed and Unequal,” 216.

Still, coding characters' race presents other difficulties. In the content I analyze here, race is rarely explicitly indicated. We can, however, code it using outside sources, particularly for known historical figures. Besides Google Search for images, I used Nei Lopes's *Dicionário Escolar Afro-Brasileiro* and *Enciclopédia Brasileira da Diáspora Africana* as sources to identify black and brown historical figures in Brazilian History.

The categories I used in order to define a character's race/ethnicity were based on the Brazilian census. Even though problematic, the classification used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics—black (*pretos*), brown (*pardos*), white (*brancos*), yellow (asian, *amarelos*, *asiáticos*) and indigenous (*indígena*)—reflects and reinforces how Brazilians think about race. As textbooks are used in the context of teaching and learning, whether or not students see themselves racially represented in textbooks has a lot to do with the way these categories have been historically defined in the country.<sup>116</sup>

My decision to code race is also related to a non-singular view of womanhood. As mentioned before, keeping track of how different types of social markers of difference are presented is important because it uncovers single-axis discourses, showing the complexity of female and LGBTQ experiences in the narrative.

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<sup>116</sup> As Nobles argues in “Shades of Citizenship,” Brazilian censuses always helped to maintain and support racial discourses, serving, in the 20th century, as promoters of the ideas of racial democracy and whitening. In Brazil, blacks are counted as the sum of the color categories of brown and blacks in the census. Although using the brown and black coding categories, in this text I recognize blacks as a race classification, therefore the total number of *pretos* plus *pardos* coded. Melissa Nobles, *Shades of citizenship: Race and the census in modern politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). More on the color in the Brazilian Census, see Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães, “The Brazilian System of Racial Classification,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35, no. 7 (2012): 1157–62, accessed April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, doi: 10.1080/01419870.2011.632022.

## QUANTIFYING ABSENCES

The results of the content analysis reveal that the books are telling the history of white rich men. Most of these men are referred to by their professions or activities, they do things in the active voice more often than women and they essentially exist by themselves without needing to be presented as wives, daughters or sisters of someone else, like lots of female characters do.

The investigation on the 853 pages of Boulos’s collection—composed by both world and Brazilian history in interleaved chapters—was done through manually coded content analysis, using a fifteen-category coding scheme applied to all historical characters. Content analysis involves objectivity, reliability, replicability, validity and hypothesis testing. For this study, a reliability subsample was employed during the training stage. It consisted of 10% of the full sample, selected randomly by the intercoder. I calculated the intercoder reliability using both percent agreement and Krippendorff’s alpha coefficient (for the results for each category, see table Intercoder Reliability).<sup>117</sup>

In order to extract information from the textbook’s narrative, I designed a codebook—a kind of dictionary detailing all categories analyzed for all historical characters in the book (see table Codebook). The codebook answers not only how many women the story portrays, but, mainly, who they are. Are they mostly queens and princesses or are there middle and lower class women as well? Are they black, white, indigenous? Are they referred

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<sup>117</sup> Andrew F. Hayes and Klaus Krippendorff recommend Krippendorff’s alpha as the standard reliability measure, as “it can be used regardless of the number of observers, levels of measurement, sample sizes, and presence or absence of missing data.” Andrew F. Hayes, and Klaus Krippendorff, “Answering the Call for a Standard Reliability Measure for Coding Data,” *Communication Methods and Measures* 1 (2007): 77.

to by what they did in history or only as wives, daughters or nieces of famous men? All these questions were proposed to every historical figure in the narrative. The answers form the data I will present hereinafter.

The methodology has its limitations. First, content analysis is a descriptive method. Even with a complex codebook, the results provide a “numerically based summary of a chosen message.”<sup>118</sup> It is not meant to explain or interpret reality. Also, by counting historical figures and extracting information on how they are presented in the story, the method remove characters from their context. In order to balance this problem, I offer, later in the chapter, some comments on specific parts of the textbooks in order to re-contextualize some of the people cited in the narrative.

Because I am interested in the representation of social markers of difference in the text and because of the limitations of space and scope of the thesis, in this study I only coded the written narrative, excluding images and captions from the analysis. Activities and exercises were only coded if authentically produced by the book’s author, not in case of reproductions of old “vestibular” exams (university entrance exams). Citations, bibliography and the teacher guide included in the teacher’s edition were not coded.

All names of people existing inside the narrative were coded. Mentions to groups of people (e.g. “soldiers”, “men”, “women”, “workers”) were understood as collectives and not individuals, therefore not coded. I did not code names presented as sources or cited in quotations.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, 14.

<sup>119</sup> Historical characters presented both as sources and as part of the content taught were coded.

As expected and in line with previous works, indigenous, Asian and black women are the main absences in the narrative.<sup>120</sup> Of the 859 historical characters coded in the three books, only one is an indigenous woman.<sup>121</sup> Two Asian and ten black women appear in the narrative. White women are the majority: 72.3% of all historic figures with race/ethnicity defined. Sexuality is completely absent from the text. The history of gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender fights for equality in Brazil and all over the world is absolutely non-existent in the three volumes.

Race/ethnicity is specifically mentioned in respect to individuals in thirteen different instances. All of them occur when the individual is either black—ten cases, with one being a woman - or indigenous—three cases, with one being a woman. For example, in a discussion of the battle at Canudos, a conflict involving the federal government and a missionary in Bahia in the end of nineteenth century, the text reads: “[...] Called Belo Monte by its inhabitants and evil village by its opponents, Canudos was destroyed. On October 5th there was only 4 *sertanejos* [a person from the *sertão*, or dry Brazilian backlands] alive - one old man, one youngster, one *caboclo* [mixture between indigenous and white] and one black - which were killed without trial.”<sup>122</sup> The manner in which the authors ascribe racial identity is telling. Only the *caboclo* and the black *sertanejos* are identified by race/ethnicity, whereas the old man and youngster are simply *sertanejos*—which is to say they are most likely white. While the textbooks’ authors do not cite a source, they most likely reproduced a 1902 account from a

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<sup>120</sup> The books presented a total of seven indigenous men (0.8% of all historical figures with race defined), nine Asian men (1.4% of all characters with race defined), 70 black men (11.5% of all characters with race defined) and 472 white men (78% of all characters with race defined).

<sup>121</sup> Because only characters that existed during Modern and Contemporary ages were classified by race, all the race-related categories percentages were counted using the total number of 604, which is the totality of historical figures that existed after 1453.

<sup>122</sup> Alfredo Boulos Júnior, *História, Sociedade e Cidadania III* (São Paulo: FTD, 2013), 63.

soldier who fought at the scene.<sup>123</sup> For the textbook's authors—as for the author they cited—whiteness is the implicit norm, even in a country with such a rich and visible black presence. As Morrison affirms when, in her work criticizing the “Africanist” presence in American literature, she analyses a character in Hemingway's novel *To Have and to Have Not*, “Eddy is white and we know he is because nobody says so.”<sup>124</sup>

As characters' social class is rarely explicitly mentioned in the books, I coded historical figures' activity or profession in order to gather that information. This category was determined by the most prominent activity in the person's life. For example: if a man went to the army and years later was elected president, the profession chosen to designate him is “presidents/kings/prime ministers/emperors/dictators.” For this reason, prominent politicians who had backgrounds in engineering, medicine or law, for example, were coded as politicians.

The most coded profession/activity was the one of “presidents/kings/prime ministers/emperors/dictators”: 31% of characters.<sup>125</sup> The second most marked activity is “politician/public servant” (15.6%), followed by “military, warrior” (7.6%) and the category “visual artist, singer, composer, actor, movie director” (7.5%). From that analysis is possible to interpret that the history portrayed in *História, Sociedade e Cidadania* privileges the

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<sup>123</sup> This account is most likely Henrique Duque-Estrada de Macedo Soares, *A Guerra de Canudos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Altina, 1902), 76.

<sup>124</sup> Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 72.

<sup>125</sup> From all characters, 64 did not have their profession mentioned. The following percentages were coded considering all characters with profession mentioned.

traditional spaces of power: the political and the military arenas. This is true both for men and women.<sup>126</sup>

The intersection between sex, race/ethnicity and class reveals that white women are more likely to be referred by their professions/activities.<sup>127</sup> Only one woman coded as black was characterized by her occupation. She is Maria Bonita, the first female to join Cangaço, a Brazilian guerilla movement from the 1930's. Despite her incontestable importance in Brazilian history—she is known as “Cangaço’s queen”—the author gives her only passing mention in a single sentence that says she and Lampião, the Cangaço’s leader and Maria Bonita’s husband, a character much more developed in the narrative, were decapitated in 1938.

This analysis also investigates if and how historical actors are mentioned in relation to their families. Even though this only happened with 7% of the characters, women were proportionally much more affected by it—34.3%, in comparison to 4.7% of men. Also, and more importantly, for 75% of the women cited as someone’s family, this is the only way they exist in the book—in contrast to 21.6% of men in the same situation. For example: this is how the author mentions Theodora, the byzantine empress: “[...] that was what happened on that Sunday when Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora were on the racetrack.”<sup>128</sup> This

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<sup>126</sup> While 27.1% of all women are “presidents/kings/prime ministers/emperors/dictators,” the same happens with 28.5% of men. Proportionally, more men are politicians (15.5%, against 5.7% of women), writers (5.4% of all men for 2.8% of all women) and military (8.1%, against 2.8% of women). The only category that women exceed men, proportionally, is nobility: 8.5% of all women are presented as nobles, while this happens with only 1% of men.

<sup>127</sup> Eleven white “presidents/queens”, four “politicians/public servers”, four “artists”, two “writers”, four “nobles”, two “scientists” and one “researcher/expert/intellectual”; 27 women had no profession mentioned and 13 had no race defined.

<sup>128</sup> Boulos Júnior, *História, Sociedade e Cidadania I*, 180.

is how one of the “best-known women of the early Byzantine Empire” is presented in the book.<sup>129</sup>

Men are referred to by their names more often than women. They are also more active in the narrative. I define agency based on whether each actor appears as an active subject of a verb. For example, in the phrase: “Callone, Louis XVI’s minister, suggested that the clergy and the noblemen should pay taxes,” Callone is considered an actor, because he is the subject of an active verb.<sup>130</sup> Based on this criterion, 40.6% of all men are agents, compared to 15.7% of all women. Not even one black or Asian women are actors. This clearly shows the difficulty in seeing women as actors, capable of affecting the course of historical events.

This analysis also found that little more than half of the relatively few women appeared in the core of the narrative, the central text. A significant number of female figures only exist in segregated spaces on the page, like a side note or a suggested exercise. Men, on the other hand, were 92.7% mentioned in the central story. When intersecting categories, again, we get the perspective of race privilege: while 23 white women are presented in the main body of text, only three black females are mentioned in the same space. All Asians and indigenous are in side notes.

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<sup>129</sup> Stratis Papaioannou, "Theodora," in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Accessed April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195148909.001.0001/acref-9780195148909-e-1072?rskey=bLJMN8&result=1>. For all three black women referenced in relation to family, that is the only way they appear in the book. The only indigenous woman is cited as part of a family. Ten white women are referred to their lineage - nine of them are only presented in the narrative that way. No Asian women appeared in relation to families.

<sup>130</sup> Boulos Jr., *História, Sociedade e Cidadania* 2, 169.

The textbook's narrative is almost free from adjectives. The text is clean and does not purport to judge or evaluate attitudes. It is sanitized, carefully crafted to be approved by a criterion that bans any type of stereotype or discrimination. But even with few adjectives, women are proportionally more affected by them. While only 2.8% of all men receive some type of evaluation, the same happens with 5.7% of women.

The last categories analyzed are related to the evaluation and image of historical characters. Not coincidentally, these are the only sections in which women scored more than men—considered proportionally. Even though not many characters in the books are depicted in photographs, illustrations or comics, 25.7% of all women have their images printed, while the same happens with 19% of men. Crossing the information with race—and considering that almost half of women in pictures did not have their race coded—we find that white women were the most exposed in pictures, followed by Asians, black and indigenous peoples. This can be interpreted as part of the social constructed role for the women's presence. As John Berger puts it, women are constantly surveyed—and, at the same time, have to constantly survey themselves, because “how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life.” In other words: “*men act and women appear.*”<sup>131</sup>

### **QUALIFYING PRESENCES**

Although *História, Sociedade e Cidadania's* narrative consists of only 8.2% women, 13% blacks and no more than 2% indigenous and Asians characters, this does not mean that their

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<sup>131</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), 46-47. Emphasis by the author.

story is completely absent from the book's narrative. Boulos's collection has one chapter dedicated to Brazilian indigenous communities, one about the Ancient Africa and another specifically about slavery and black resistance. The discrepancy between the few number of characters and the existing number of pages related to those people's history can be explained by the way those stories are told. While in the traditional white and European-centered history a numerous list of individual achievements and decisions are considered important, the story in the chapters related to black and indigenous past is told in the collective. That is, most mentions to those people are made of them as a group: "the indigenous", "the enslaved", "the black movement," etc. One example can be seen in the chapter about the industrial revolution, where in only two pages the reader is exposed to the full names and roles of nine white men responsible for the development of the steam engine. Yet in the chapter about Brazilian indigenous groups, the only name cited in the entire section of ten pages is of Pero Vaz de Caminha, a Portuguese official in charge of reporting on the voyage of the fleet commanded by Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500.

Women are also collectivized, mainly when the author mentions the question of sexism and gendered violence. Although the ways those topics are addressed might be questioned, it is important to say they are present in the book. This content is mostly approached in exercises, side notes or accompanying texts. In general, the author asks student's opinions about sexist behaviors, giving room to a broad debate on whether sexism is an acceptable and good behavior or not. For example, in the beginning of the first volume, the author explains that history not only studies the transformations in societies, but also the continuities. He writes that "one example of continuity is the sexist incidents in the current

Brazilian society. Faced with a bad driving situation, it is common to hear: 'I bet it is a woman.' The sexism contained in this phrase is an old behavior; it is present in the lands where came to be Brazil for centuries; in other words, it is a continuity."<sup>132</sup> What follows is a side note of two questions: "What is your opinion about sexism?" and "Why this behavior has resisted over time?" Although it is clear that the idea here is to leave an open space for a debate in class about sexism, the narrative is deliberately open to both ways: students can argue either against or for it.

Another example is in the chapter related to ancient Rome. One exercise cites a quote from a book saying that Roman tombstones carried information about how men and women were remembered in that society, explaining that men were usually praised for their political activities and dedication to their families, and women were complimented for their kindness, beauty, chastity and modesty. The questions that follow ask: "what attributes are valued today in a woman? And in a man?" and "what are the similarities and differences between us and Romans regarding what is important in a woman?"<sup>133</sup> Again, the quotes and questionnaire might be used to discuss gender roles and its impacts. But the way they are written leave room to arguments that reinforce the idea that women should have specific attitudes and characteristics in order to be considered "valuable."

A last example regarding gender roles can be found in the text "Women's struggle", in the third volume. It starts by saying that women intensified their fight for rights in the twentieth century and that the popularization of the pill boosted this process, as it marked the beginning of a sexual revolution. The pill, according to the author, gave women the

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<sup>132</sup> Boulos Jr., *História, Sociedade e Cidadania I*, 12.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

control over pregnancy and allowed them to have a “more intense sexual life.” “Women started to openly talk about virginity, sex before marriage and other issues until then considered taboos. They debated and denounced the idea that women were incapable of having an intellectual life and were inferior to men.”<sup>134</sup>

The text continues by citing writers like Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir and their contribution to the feminist struggle. It says that in the 1960s women promoted debates, published writings and went to the streets in various parts of the world to demand equal payment, the right to get divorced and more access to education and public careers. The author finishes by saying: “In the last decades, and after a persistent fight, women reached leading positions in companies, in politics, in the Army, in sports, in communications and in the courts; nevertheless, they are still victims of discrimination, violence and sexist behavior all over the world.” What follows are two pictures. One is a black and white photo of group of four white women in skirts. The caption reads: “Girls in miniskirts, a fashion trend in the 1960s that contributed to a new image of women (less shy and more confident).” The second picture shows two white women walking in the streets in skirts. The caption is: “Youngsters in miniskirts in Beijing, China, 2012. As you can see, the miniskirt is back in fashion.”<sup>135</sup>

The questionnaire that follows asks the main points of the feminist agenda of the 1960s and if the student considers it would be fair to have a certain number of seats reserved for women in the Brazilian Congress. It also suggests students write about a prominent

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<sup>134</sup> Boulos Jr., *História, Sociedade e Cidadania III*, 224.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

Brazilian woman who works in the social or political arenas and compose a critical analysis of the sexist behavior in Brazilian society.

Although the questions address the feminist movement's main demands and invites the student to think about sexism in Brazil, the fact that the entire history of the women's struggle for social and political rights is condensed to half of a page, separated from the main narrative, and illustrated by two images of women in miniskirts is revealing. The beginning of the text relates the women's movements to the sexual revolution, suggesting that the autonomy over reproduction empowered women to challenge taboos related not only to sex, but to unequal treatment in other areas. The problem with that statement, besides its reductionism, is that it gives the impression that before the existence of the pill those and many other issues were not important or not debated or challenged. Also, it does not mention the divergences within the feminist movement and, by only citing white feminists, the author omits (again) black women's demands and historic struggle. Another problem with the text is that it conditions women's fights to their sexuality, associating women's empowerment to "having a more intense sexual life." This objectification is reinforced with the photographs of miniskirts, which "contributed to a new image of women (less shy and more confident)." In this way, any potential discussion that might follow from the questionnaire will be conditioned by the narrative and pictorial comment, which reproduces a stereotyped view of women and the feminist movement.

## AFRICAN, AFRO-BRAZILIAN AND INDIGENOUS CONTENT: A SINGLE-MALE ROUTE

As mentioned before, the main absence in Boulos' collection is the one of non-white women. Even in chapters related to black resistance and indigenous history, those stories are usually told through male experiences. In one of the few sections that individualizes black characters, when the author narrates the Brazilian abolitionist movement, only men—and one white woman, Princesa Isabel, the princess that signed the law that ended slavery—are cited. In another passage that escapes from the standard collectivization of black and indigenous history, when in book III the author narrates the fights for independence in African and Asian countries, all eighteen historical figures cited in the fifteen pages are male.

Besides invisibility, some passages might be interpreted as offensive to indigenous history of oppression and struggle, especially in relation to the sexual violence women suffered during colonization. In the second volume of the collection, for example, after explaining that Native Americans were “never integrated to the British colonization” in North America, the text follows:

In the Brazilian colony, the shortage of white women stimulated the union between settlers and indigenous women. In the case of North America, this union was not stimulated. There was miscegenation, but to a much lesser degree than in the Spanish and Portuguese America. For this reason, there is a criticism by contemporary historians to the lack of a project that integration of Native Americans in the process of colonization of British America.<sup>136</sup>

In this passage, the constant sexual violence indigenous women suffered in Brazil during colonial period is reduced to a “stimulated” union, which, as happened in fewer numbers in the north America, are being the subject of a criticism by contemporaneous

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<sup>136</sup> Boulos Jr., *História, Sociedade e Cidadania II*, 65.

historians. The gravity of this statement lays in not only consider the “union” of indigenous women to colonizers as pacific and consensual relationships—which could happened but were not the rule—but also in put the absence of a project of “integration” as a problematic point of the colonization process, according to historians who remain unnamed.

Even though the collection was praised by the PNLD’s evaluators in relation to the “space and relevance given to the experience of African and their descendants in different temporalities,” black and indigenous women are not part of this history.<sup>137</sup> And this does not seem to be a problem for the evaluators, as they considered the collection to comply with the laws 10.639 and 11.645. The lack of an intersectional approach in the legislation - and in the evaluators’ work, as they are the ones deciding about the compliance of each collection—makes the right to representation in the curriculum a male exclusivity.

These women’s absences are particularly interesting if we consider that Alfredo Boulos wrote a PhD dissertation in 2008 in which he analyzed the way African and African descendants were portrayed in pictures of three Brazilian history textbooks. After looking into the 2004’s collections of books for elementary school, he concluded that the history that the images were telling was “marked by absences, silences and forgetting: there are no positive images of Afro descendants; images about their post-abolition trajectory are missing; there are missing images from Afro descendant as ordinary citizens.”<sup>138</sup> A few years after defending his dissertation, Boulos published *História, Sociedade e Cidadania I, II and III*, with a clear intention to prioritize—at least iconographically—the approach to African and Afro-

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<sup>137</sup> Ministério da Educação, “Avaliação de Livros Didáticos,” PNLD 2015. Obra: *História, Sociedade e Cidadania*, código: 27569COL06.

<sup>138</sup> Alfredo Boulos Júnior, “Imagens da África, dos Africanos e seus Descendentes em Coleções de Didáticos de História Aprovadas no PNLD de 2004” (Phd diss., Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2008): 178.

Brazilian history.<sup>139</sup> That might have happened with photographs, which were not the subject of this study. But, as Boulos explained in his dissertation, the inclusion of issues related to the Afro-Brazilian culture hardly combine text and image. And this can now be applied to his own textbooks, which only mentions ten black and one indigenous women in almost 900 pages.

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<sup>139</sup> In the publishing house's Youtube channel, Boulos teaches two classes on African history in order to promote his collection. See "FTD: Parte 1 - Aula de História - Alfredo Boulos Jr.," accessed April 10th, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyYIIAwvr8s> and "FTD: Parte 2 - Aula de História - Alfredo Boulos Jr.," accessed April 10th, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HO3g25bR1Q>.

## **Chapter Three: Change is Hard: The Production and Use of Textbooks in Brazil**

I started this research to understand why, in 2017, Brazilian history textbooks still portrayed a predominantly white and male narrative. After exploring the origins and the development of the relation between textbooks and the state, and after digging into the content of one collection, we can outline some possible explanations. This chapter explores the four factors that, together, are responsible for the reproduction of a homogeneous body of history textbooks. The first is related to the commodity nature of the textbook. The second involves the state's laws and requirements for what should and what should not be in the textbooks. The third factor is the structural reality of racism, sexism, and homo and transphobia. And the last element is connected to the teaching of history.

From the point of view of publishers operating in a capitalist competitive environment of mass textbook production, any cost associated with changing their product must be well justified. If publishing houses do not need to change the books to sell millions of copies to the Brazilian state every year, why would they? In the first section of this chapter, I investigate the entrails of the federal textbook trade in order to understand the companies' economical disinterest in making profound transformations in their products.

I then turn to state strategies aimed to force changes in the books, in an effort to understand why they are still insufficient. When the state began evaluating textbooks in 1996, it did not require a specific product from the market. Instead, the government evaluated and imposed restrictions on existing books in the market, mainly aimed to eliminate racial, gender and other forms of discrimination. As mentioned before, as Brazil

does not have a national curriculum, any imposition on the content taught in schools must happen by law. Two examples of laws are the ones mandating the inclusion of African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture in the curricula. But the absence of laws related to gender ended up erasing mainly black and indigenous women. Even though the PNLD *edital* mentions some positive criteria related to gender, the fact they are mere recommendations makes its effect almost insignificant in the push for a change in textbooks.

The third factor analyzed here is the relationship between the type of historical narrative perpetuated in the textbooks and the history teaching in Brazil. In this section, I explore the reasons why, in a country with a full pedagogical freedom gave by no mandatory national curricula, textbooks still reproduce the traditional, canonical version of history. The answer relates to the different visions of what is a good textbook for the government and for teachers training and the demands for an “easy” and traditional pedagogical material.

The last layer of analysis is related to the structural racism and sexism in Brazilian society and its implication for textbooks. Although it is difficult to measure and sometimes to pinpoint its impacts, the institutionalization of unequal racial and gender relationships is widespread and powerful. In this sense, it is crucial to understand the Brazilian context related to racial and gender inequality in order to comprehend why a predominantly male and white version of history is still being reproduced. It is in this framework that all pedagogical material is written, edited, revised, evaluated, chosen, bought, distributed and used.

These four factors overlap, having a simultaneous impact in what constitutes the body of history textbooks in Brazil today. They cannot be isolated, just as the textbook

cannot only be looked at as a commodity in a vacuum. Not only the production of school books involves a large group of professionals working in specific conditions, but the book's uses in class can vary tremendously. Even though it is known that in Brazil textbooks are a fundamental tool for untrained teachers in schools with few pedagogical resources, educators have the power to completely reinvent the books, changing the student's learning experience. Therefore, the maintenance of a predominantly white and male narrative in history high school books can only be explained by looking at a broader context, involving regulations, the market, racism and sexism and the way history is taught.

### **THE MARKET: A COMFORT ZONE**

For publishing houses working with textbooks, having a collection approved by the PNLD can mean millions of dollars of income paid in lump sum. Depending on how many schools choose their books around the country, the state's annual purchase can financially sustain an entire year of businesses. And the Brazilian state is a faithful client. Sales are guaranteed, even though sometimes payment is delayed.<sup>140</sup> Federal purchases of textbooks in 2015 counted for 46% of all school book sales in the country. This means 134 million of textbooks sold and an income of approximately \$37 million. In a year of financial crisis, like 2015, the regular publishing market sales had a negative growth of 3.99%, while the government sales sector had a smaller decrease, of 0.86%.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, in an economically

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<sup>140</sup> "Governo federal atrasa pagamento de livros didáticos a editoras," Folha de São Paulo, November 16th, 2015 <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/educacao/2015/11/1706922-governo-federal-atrasa-pagamento-de-livros-didaticos-a-editoras.shtml>

<sup>141</sup> Pesquisa Fipe, "Produção e Vendas do Setor Editorial Brasileiro 2015," accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <http://pesquisaeditoras.fipe.org.br/Home/Relatorios?id=1> The income for all publishing market for textbooks

unstable country like Brazil, having a fixed client buying in huge quantities can save a business.

Thus, with a great interest in having textbooks approved by the evaluation team, publishers study the *edital* carefully, making sure they are following all specifications. Once the publishing house gets a collection approved, it means the book achieved the minimum requirements and is ready to be bought by the government. After reaching this stage, most companies basically reprint the same “successful” collections over and over in the next years. Textbooks that reach minimum prerequisites of content and design end up having long lifecycles, being republished for years, even decades, with minor changes from one edition to the next.

Making changes in a finished collection always involves extra costs. The production of new content or editing of an old text, the revision process and updating layout and design can add significant costs to a new edition. Therefore, most modifications are redactions or removal of content that can disqualify the book from state approval. Because publishing houses operate under a capitalist rationale, profound transformations in school books are not only financially disadvantageous, but also unnecessary for the purpose of selling millions of copies. Consequently, today we have a homogenous body of textbooks in Brazil, which tends towards reproduction, lacking stimulus for innovation.

Professor Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, who worked in the technical commission of PNLD from 2004 to 2015, confirms that selling to the government is a lucrative business. “[Publishing houses are] in a great comfort zone. They know what the

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sales to the government is 1.15 billion Brazilian *reais*. According to the conversion rate in February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the amount is equivalent to \$37 million.

*edital* says, they adjust. [...] So we are buying textbooks like we buy a chair. If the leg is not broken, then it is fine. In the end, we are putting public money into an object that is important to the students, but that we are making minimum requirements.”<sup>142</sup>

Unlike in the United States, where state school boards choose textbooks, in Brazil, teachers can select any collection, as long as it appears in the pre-approved list. The process works like this: after the federal evaluation, the government prints a “Textbook Guide,” a publication containing detailed reviews of all approved collections. This guide is distributed to all public schools in the country—all that are registered within PNLD.<sup>143</sup> Teachers, then, choose their titles and inform the Ministry of Education of their choice. After a few months, all textbooks should be delivered to schools. This generally happens before the academic year began so students receive their textbooks on the first day of classes. Therefore, the quantity of books the Brazilian state buys from each publishing house depends on how many teachers choose their collections.

This logic has led to a marketing strategy focused on the school teacher. In the 1990s, textbook publishers started to invest heavily in putting promoters inside public schools, mainly in the period in which teachers are making their decisions about which approved collections to use in the next three years. Until 2007, when the Brazilian state prohibited some advertising practices by publishing houses, promoters could give gifts and

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<sup>142</sup> Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, in interview with the author, June 2016.

<sup>143</sup> Some public schools do not participate in PNLD. It is a choice of the school—in case it is a federal institution—and the municipality or state—in case of city or state schools. If the institution do not use the federal system to get books, they can get the money to buy the textbooks they chose—without a federal evaluation. In 2010, 220 cities out of 5.560 chose not to participate in PNLD, according to the organization Observatório da Educação. Accessed April 11th, 2017  
<http://www.observatoriodaeducacao.org.br/index.php/sugestoes-de-pautas/48-sugestoes-de-pautas/977-64-dos-municipios-que-nao-aderiram-ao-pnld-sao-paulistas>

free samples of any material to persuade teachers to choose their collections.<sup>144</sup> Another common strategy was to offer teachers lectures, workshops or even conferences on any topic related to education, always emphasizing the strengths of their textbooks collections at the end of the presentation.

This aggressive merchandising is often expensive, especially considering the Brazil's size and the number of public schools. Small companies, therefore, ended up having less chances of competing for teacher's attention, generating a concentration in the textbook market. Today, a few big editorial groups share the state budget for textbooks.<sup>145</sup>

Besides all merchandising for convincing school teachers to buy their materials, the ways in which textbooks are manufactured today might also contribute to a mindset averse to change. In a lecture given in 2007, Francisco Homem de Melo, a professor of Architecture at the University of São Paulo (USP) and a textbook graphic designer for more than twenty years, explained the modifications inside publishing houses since the 1990s. At that time, he said he could discuss the original text with authors and editors, and was responsible for the graphic design, iconographic research, illustration and desktop publishing. But:

Over the years, professionalization led to a radical division of labor and planning has entered into the process: a good book is a book that faithfully follows what is planned. Often this rule is enforced in its

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<sup>144</sup> The regulation norm "Portaria 7" prohibits publishers to offer money, gift, lectures and any kind of advantage for people involved in the process of choosing books in schools. Ministério da Educação, Portaria Normativa no. 7, de 5 de abril de 2007, accessed April 17th, 2017 [https://www.fnnde.gov.br/fndelegis/action/UrlPublicasAction.php?acao=abrirAtoPublico&sgl\\_tipo=PNT&num\\_ato=00000007&seq\\_ato=000&vlr\\_ano=2007&sgl\\_orgao=MEC](https://www.fnnde.gov.br/fndelegis/action/UrlPublicasAction.php?acao=abrirAtoPublico&sgl_tipo=PNT&num_ato=00000007&seq_ato=000&vlr_ano=2007&sgl_orgao=MEC)

<sup>145</sup> In the last edition of the PNLD, 2017, the Brazilian state bought 2,018 textbooks titles from 23 publishers. Although that might seem a big number of publishers, 68,8% of these titles were sold to only five companies or editorial groups. Twelve of those publishers sold less than fifty titles to the government. Source: FNDE, Dados estatísticos, "PNLD 2017 - Valores de aquisição por editora - Ensino Fundamental e Médio," accessed April 25th, 2017, <http://www.fnnde.gov.br/programas/livro-didatico/livro-didatico-dados-estatisticos>

strictest sense: no matter if the book has undergone changes that improved it, the mere fact that it has undergone changes works against the editor. What can editors do about it? Make sure no changes happen because their performance indicators depend on that.<sup>146</sup>

Homem de Melo continues by saying that now his job is restricted to the book's graphic design and he is not allowed to interfere in the text anymore. The desktop publishing is done by "offices specialized in producing pages in a frenetic pace". According to him, today, textbooks are produced in an "orthodox assembly line", in which the parts of the chain cannot talk to each other.

Having a faithful client and knowing exactly what to do to sell millions of copies every year, textbooks publishers are not financially stimulated to heavily edit or rewrite their books. As professor Oliveira said, "They [publishers] are very much assisted. They have great power. They have power and they have gained a lot of space in recent years."<sup>147</sup> So if the market is not interested in rewriting the books in order to expand the right to representation to all marginalized populations in history, what could the state do to force a change?

## **THE STATE: MINIMUM AND INSUFFICIENT REQUIREMENTS**

Another element that counts for the current whiteness and maleness of Brazilian history textbooks today is the fact that the state never requested a specific type of book from publishers. On the contrary: it was the market that offered their available textbooks and,

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<sup>146</sup> Presentation during the Third Information Design International Conference, in October 10th, 2007, Curitiba, Brazil. Accessed April 11th, 2017, <http://www.abcdesign.com.br/livros-didaticos-e-as-relacoes-editor-autor-designer/>

<sup>147</sup> Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, in interview with the author, June 2016.

after analyzing them, the state said what publishers could and could not remain in terms of content and layout. Since 1996, when PNLD started to evaluate textbooks, a list of criteria was created based on the ten most used books in each discipline. As Oliveira explains: “In Brazil, no one said: 'we want a textbook this way.' What happened was: they [government] took the books they had on the market and evaluated. And they said: what are the problems with those books? Let's fix it. No one thought: what is the nature of the textbook? Who does it serve?”<sup>148</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter One, because Brazil does not have a national curriculum, the only way to mandate a specific content is by law.<sup>149</sup> The *edital*, a bidding notice where the state lists all requirements for a book to be approved and then bought, cannot rule on the curricula. It can only stipulate the negative criteria that would prevent a book to be selected. Therefore, unless other laws guarantee other marginalized groups their right to representation, the only thing the *edital* can do is to block explicit racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

Also, even in case of laws, there is no specifications to enforce their application in textbook's content. For example, in the case of the laws mandating the inclusion of African, African-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture, what can be considered a fair inclusion? The presence of black and indigenous people in every chapter, every page, every two chapters? Their presentation only in pictures or as historical actors in the texts as well?

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> In February 16th 2017, the president Michel Temer signed an Education Reform for high school. This measure implements a common and mandatory curriculum for 60% of all school's workload. But the law will only be effective when Base Nacional Curricular Comum, the national curricula itself, is approved. This is expected to happen in late 2017. In the conclusion of this work, I address the possibilities of a change in textbooks with this new law.

The content analysis performed in the case study collection presented in Chapter Two showed that books with only 13% of black and 1.3% of indigenous characters are today considered to comply with the law.

The authors of the 2015 textbook evaluation considered that *História, Sociedade e Cidadania I, II and III* did a good job in dealing with the question of race and gender:

Throughout the work, the experience of Africans in different times gains space and relevance and their descendants are seen as protagonists, in the continent itself and in other countries, like Brazil. Gender and the issue of non-violence are also present, aiming at a construction of a non-sexist society, promoting, above all, female participation throughout history. Education and culture in human rights and the right of children and adolescents are also discussed. Afro-descendants and women are also positively promoted through images.<sup>150</sup>

This disparity between the numbers revealed in the content analysis and the federal evaluation's benevolent words can be partially explained by the characteristics of the historical narrative presented in the textbook. As mentioned in Chapter Two, unlike most of the general content, the parts related to Africa, African descendants and indigenous people are presented as collectives, not individuals. As such, they were not counted in the content analysis. Rather than a shortcoming of my content analysis, I think this a problem with the historical narrative. As I argued last chapter, by presenting these groups as homogenous collectives, the narrative robs them of agency.

There is no doubt that the books have content related to Africa, African-Brazilians and indigenous peoples. But there has not been a collective discussion about whether this content is adequate. Is the way black and indigenous history and culture is being portrayed—not to mention the absence of gender categories—good enough for the development of

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<sup>150</sup> Avaliação de Livros Didáticos, Parecer Final, História, PNLD 2015.

Brazilians as critical citizens? Without a public debate about what history textbook must have to be considered in compliance to the laws, this decision will continue to be made only by two evaluators. Therefore, the question of whether *História, Sociedade e Cidadania* gave those groups—gender categories included—their right to representation, in fair way and faithful to their contributions to the nation, is still open to debate.<sup>151</sup>

### **TEXTBOOKS VERSUS SCHOOL: WHO IS THE BOSS?**

The classroom is the main element in the entire chain of textbook production and circulation. It is in its space that the books achieve their full use value as commodities, complete their life cycle and accomplish the goal to which they were produced. As “clients” of the school material, teachers have the power to not only choose what book to use, but to decide how they are going to use it in class. In the following paragraphs, I will explain how these decisions can affect the textbook production and, therefore, the student learning experience.

Through PNLD, the Brazilian state evaluates, buys and distributes textbooks to every public school in the country. But it is up to teachers to decide, from the approved list of titles, which book they want to use in the next three years of high school. This

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<sup>151</sup> In 2004, the Ministry of Education published a set of guidelines to implement the law mandating the inclusion of African and Afro-Brazilians history and culture in the curricula. The document detailed the necessity of working in teacher training, offering bibliography and pedagogical material to all schools. When it comes to textbooks, the text only says that they must “address the cultural plurality and ethnic-racial diversity of the Brazilian nation, correct distortions and misconceptions in already published titles on the history, culture, and identity of afro-descendants, under the encouragement and supervision of the MEC's educational literature diffusion programs.” See “Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-Brasileira e Africana,” Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 2004.

relationship of purchase and sale, even though mediated by the federal government, can be seen as a regular monetary exchange. Therefore, in theory, if there was a demand for a specific type of approach in the school books, the market could fill it. If, for example, a publisher released a new history textbook with a very different historical perspective, giving much more space to non-white and non-male characters within the narrative, would that collection necessarily be a huge success among teachers? Does this demand really exist? It is hard to say.

There are few studies about how Brazilian schoolteachers choose their history textbooks from the PNLD Guide. Most of the works are Master's thesis focusing on middle school. Those investigations reveal a discrepancy between what teachers consider to be a good textbook and what PNLD evaluators believe is a great collection. Teachers' decisions are mostly based on their view of student's levels of learning and their own style of teaching, while PNLD criteria is focused on eliminating prejudices and discrimination, correct and updated concepts and methodological approaches.

Queiróz, for example, shows how and why fourteen schoolteachers from public institutions in Rio de Janeiro, chose books that are not well reviewed in the 2011 PNLD Textbook Guide.<sup>152</sup> According to her investigation, teachers want a book that reflects their students learning levels and their own teaching style. Most of her interviewees, for example, said the first thing they look in a book is the language. They argue that their students do not have a vast vocabulary and that most books have complex prose. "Teachers choose the

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<sup>152</sup> Carolina Penafiel de Queiróz. "Só Quero Saber do que Pode dar Certo, não Tenho Tempo a Perder": Escolhas e Usos dos Livros Didáticos de História em Escolas Municipais" (Master's thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2012).

books taking into account their students' low insertion in the written culture [...] the question of the inadequacy of the book's vocabulary emerged often in the interviews."<sup>153</sup>

Another study made with twenty-two schoolteachers from eight public institutions in Londrina, Paraná state, presented similar findings. For the teachers researched, above all, "a good textbook is the one that addresses the contents in a simple, clear and summarized way, with language appropriate to the student's level."<sup>154</sup> The adequacy of the prose is not a negative criterion in the PNLD evaluation, even though it appears as a recommendation to publishers. Note the discrepancy here: as Amaral notes, it seems that for the Ministry of Education, the book is evaluated with the teacher in mind, as if they were the consumers. This is not entirely unwarranted, as teachers rely on textbooks in planning the curriculum. They think about the experience their students will have with the books.<sup>155</sup>

Therefore, according to these studies, the question of representation is not a priority for teachers when they are choosing the book to use in class. Another investigation, made with teachers from Itabuna, in Bahia state, not only confirms these results, but shows that the question of representation was not part of the criteria used by the researched group of teachers. In her interviews, Almeida noticed that all of them gave complete answers when asked about how they choose the books, but only half responded if they considered the question of race in their decision-making process. The ones that answered said that no, they

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 114-117

<sup>154</sup> All interviewees said to use the book in class, with 81.8% of them dedicating 25% or more of the class time to the material. See Sandra Regina Rodrigues do Amaral, "Significações do Professor de História para sua Ação Docente: o Livro Didático de História e o Manual do Professor do Segundo Segmento do Ensino Fundamental no PNLD 2008" (Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, 2012), 111.

<sup>155</sup> For more on the teachers' criteria for choosing history textbooks in public schools, see Nayara Silva de Carie, "Avaliações de Coleções Didáticas de História de 5ª a 8ª série do Ensino Fundamental: um Contraste entre os Critérios Avaliativos dos Professores e do Programa Nacional do Livro Didático" (Master's Thesis, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2008).

have not looked at that. The author describes a disturbing silence in the room after the question was posed and says that most teachers tried to explain or acted as if they have not realized the importance of the criterion and the negligence to which they were treating the matter. At the same time, they all acknowledged that the textbooks are not in compliance with the law that mandates the inclusion of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture.<sup>156</sup>

But one might argue that even though teachers do not use racial, ethnic and gender representation as criteria to choose their books, the use they make of the books might subvert the narrative of omission. Inside the classroom, instructors have autonomy to either use the books fully and without restrictions, to alternate and contextualize it with other pedagogical materials or even not use it at all. Although it would be impossible to identify exactly how teachers make use of textbooks in class—considering that there are 150,000 public schools around the country—the few studies available show that instructors still rely heavily on the books for preparing class and define the curriculum. In her investigation on history education in public schools of Minas Gerais, southeast Brazil, Nunes concluded that:

Textbooks are still the guiding reference for history teaching [...] Even when they are not adopted in class, teachers use them to define the contents they will present to students. In addition, textbooks are determinants for the organization of the curricula, when it should be the opposite, that is, the books should adapt to the pre-established curricula.<sup>157</sup>

Hammerschmitt found similar results in her work on history teaching in public schools in the state Paraná, in south of the country.<sup>158</sup> Observing different teachers in class,

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<sup>156</sup> Livia Jéssica Messias de Almeida, “Velhos Problemas, Novas Questões: uma Análise dos Discursos Raciais na Política Nacional do Livro Didático” (Master’s Thesis, Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, 2013).

<sup>157</sup> Silma do Carmo Nunes, “O Pensado e o Vivido no Ensino de História.” (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2001): 205.

<sup>158</sup> Ida Hammerschmitt, “O Livro Didático em Aulas de História nos Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental” (PhD Diss., Universidade Federal do Paraná, 2010).

she noticed that textbooks are used in different ways and in alternate moments during the courses. She also saw it being used as a support material for class preparation. In the student's point of view, Hammerschmitt noticed they showed “great appreciation for the textbook, considering it an important resource. Their actions reveal interest, curiosity, and a fascination for their presence in the classroom.”<sup>159</sup>

Observing one full academic year in four public schools in Ceará, northeast Brazil, Isaíde Timbó not only corroborated the idea of student’s affection for textbooks, but also revealed how important the material is to the history teaching.<sup>160</sup> “I think the textbook is fundamental!” said one teacher. At the same time, Timbó noticed a suboptimal utilization of the books. Almost no teachers interviewed took advantage of the orientations addressed to them in the end of the textbooks or used the activities, extra texts and sidenotes.<sup>161</sup>

According to the author, “although the textbook has clearly improved after the PNLD evaluation [...] in the classroom practice, many teachers still use them partially, limiting their potential.”<sup>162</sup>

But there are also alternative experiences. María del Pilar Tobar Acosta, for example, created a project to teach women’s history for her class of high school students in São Sebastião, Federal District. In an article explaining her project, she states that textbooks

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>160</sup> Analysing how student from public schools evaluate their history textbooks, Edilson Aparecido Chaves and Tânia Maria F. Braga Garcia revealed “a clearly positive relationship between the teenagers and the book they used. Students use the book in the classroom, including independently of teacher guidance, in addition to using it at home to study. In different situations they expressed agreement and disagreement with the contents conveyed by the book, which is an indication that when using the book, they do it carefully.” Edilson Aparecido Chaves and Tânia Maria F. Braga Garcia, “Avaliação de Livros de História por Alunos do Ensino Médio” *Espaço Pedagógico* 21, n. 2 (2014): 343, doi: 10.5335/rep.v21i2.4305

<sup>161</sup> Isaíde Bandeira Timbó, “O Livro Didático de História: um Caleidoscópio de Escolhas e Usos no Cotidiano Escolar (Ceará, 2007–2009)” (PhD Diss., Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, 2009).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 256.

written “even after PNLD” continue to reiterate the old historical canons, which represent “in their overwhelming (and oppressive) majority, white men of privileged social classes.”<sup>163</sup> Another initiative started in a public school of Ceilândia, also in the Federal District, when the teacher Gina Vieira Ponte decided to include in the curriculum books that make reference to inspiring women in history and in the world today. The project included group presentations on the life of famous inspiring women and an interview and report about a woman from student’s social interaction they found inspiring. In an interview, Ponte said that what moved her most was “to hear from a student that because of the project she discovered that she also wanted to be a woman with a great story. Another student told me that she realized that the expression frail woman is a big lie, because after studying the life of ten great women she discovered that women are fortresses.”<sup>164</sup> The Inspiring Women project was so successful that in 2017 the Federal District will finance its expansion to 15 other schools in 2017. Ponte also received at least four national awards in teaching and invested all the money in the school in Cinelândia.

Other initiatives include textbooks on African history and culture, books produced by indigenous communities and quilombolas groups. These materials are usually locally distributed by the municipality or by a specific category of PNLD, called “rural”. The ministry of Education also funded, together with UNESCO, the Portuguese translation of an eight-volume collection on African history. The books were distributed to public schools in 2012. Although these are all necessary projects with a positive impact, they have either

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<sup>163</sup> “Heroínas sem estátua: o conhecimento a partir das mulheres,” accessed April 17th, 2017 <http://educacaointegral.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/projeto-Heroi%CC%81nas-sem-esta%CC%81tua.pdf>

<sup>164</sup> “A Professora que Ensina o que é Inspiração,” Think Olga, accessed March 9th, 2017 <http://thinkolga.com/2016/10/06/professora-que-ensina-o-que-e-inspiracao/>

restricted range of influence or are not long term initiatives. Also, leaving African and women's history content as supporting pedagogical material does not change the type of history that is still being reproduced in regular textbooks.

### **RACISM AND SEXISM: STRUCTURAL AND TRANSVERSAL SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION**

The last layer that influences the process of textbook production, evaluation and use are the systems of oppression that act simultaneously in all spheres of Brazilian society. I understand racism as defined by Moore, a structural system that maintains “endogenous and automatic networks of solidarity around the phenotype, networks that are specifically aimed at capturing, sharing, preserving and monopolistically controlling the basic resources of a society.”<sup>165</sup> In other words, “racism is a cultural restoration from a set of aggressive, violent and selfish behaviors arising from the human evolutionary process, aiming at structuring and sustaining management resources systems racially monopolized.”<sup>166</sup>

Yet sexism, as defined by Janet Swim and Lauri Hyers, can be comprehended as a group of “individuals’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender” or support and promote gender inequality.”<sup>167</sup>

It is hard to measure the impact of racism and sexism in both the production of knowledge, its inscription in the form of the textbooks historical narratives, the evaluation of those texts and their use in class. Few studies have analyzed the influence of gender and race

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<sup>165</sup> Carlos Wedderburn Moore, “O Racismo Através da História: da Antiguidade à Modernidade,” 212, accessed in March, 10th, 2017, <http://www.abruc.org.br/sites/500/516/00000672.pdf>

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 212

<sup>167</sup> Janet K. Swim and Lauri L. Hyers, “Sexism,” in *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination*, ed. Todd D. Nelson (New York: Taylor and Francis, Psychology Press, 2009), 407.

bias in the editorial market, most of them focus on women, especially black women, as writers.<sup>168</sup> Works looking at the effects of racism and sexism on individual approaches in the dealing with Brazilian history textbooks—in both production, evaluation and use—are still to be done.

But it is still possible to have an idea of the scope, weight and depth of the violence generated by racism and sexism—and by both together—in Brazil today, by looking at some recent socioeconomic data:

- **Housing:** In Brazil, women are 50.9% of urban people living without proper sewage—most of those women are black (61.2%). Also, 36.1% of Indigenous houses do not have bathrooms.<sup>169</sup>
- **Housework:** In 96% of the households with at least one woman living in it, she is the main responsible for all housework. This composes a total of 65 hours of work (paid and not paid) per week.<sup>170</sup>
- **Education:** Illiteracy affects 2.3 times more black women in comparison to white women. The proportion of black women without instruction or with incomplete elementary school is 34.6% more than white women. White women also have more access to higher education (26%) than black women (11.2%). 23.3% of Brazilian indigenous peoples are illiterate. In rural areas, less than 5% of indigenous people

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<sup>168</sup> See Regina Dalcastagnè, “A Cor de uma Ausência: Representações do Negro no Romance Brasileiro Contemporâneo,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 29, no. 2 (2010): 297-307; and Edith Pompeu Piza, *O Caminho das Águas: Estereótipos de Personagens Negras por Escritoras Brancas* (São Paulo: Edusp, 1998).

<sup>169</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, “The Social Inequality Matrix in Latin America,” accessed April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40710/1/S1600945\\_en.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40710/1/S1600945_en.pdf)

<sup>170</sup> Gustavo Venturi, Marisol Recamán and Suely de Oliveira, *A Mulher Brasileira nos Espaços Público e Privado* (São Paulo: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2004).

aged 20 to 29 have 13 years or more of education. Twenty three percent of Indigenous Brazilians are illiterate—the national rate is 8.7%.<sup>171</sup>

- **Labour:** The number of women in Brazilian workforce is growing. But even though they have more years of schooling (women are 57.1% of students in higher education), they are paid less. Even considering areas where women are proportionally more represented, like education (83%) and humanities/arts (74.2%), female’s monthly average income is inferior to men in every sector. In areas in which the number of women equals the number of men, like social sciences, business and law, women are paid 66% of men’s salary. White women are majority between females with registered jobs (*carteira assinada*).<sup>172</sup> Maids, a historically marginalized profession in the country, are mostly black in Brazil. And even within maids the white privilege is evident: 62.3% of black maids are not registered, while the same happens with only 36.5% of white maids. Black men earn an average of 54% of white men. Black women earn an average of 58% of white women.<sup>173</sup> Within the 500 biggest Brazilian companies, women are in 13.7% of the executive boards. Only six black women are directors—all of them brown, that is, of lighter skin. In this position, 119 are women and 1.162 are men.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Conselho Indigenista Missionário, “Relatório Violência contra os Povos Indígenas no Brasil - Dados de 2015,” accessed April 2nd, 2017 <http://www.cimi.org.br/pub/relatorio2015/relatoriodados2015.pdf>

<sup>172</sup> In Brazil, a registration within Labour Ministry guarantees benefits like social security. This type of work is called “registered”.

<sup>173</sup> IBGE, “Estatísticas de Gênero: Uma análise dos resultados do Censo Demográfico (2010),” accessed March 5th, 2017 <http://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv88941.pdf>

<sup>174</sup> Instituto Ethos, “Perfil Social, Racial e de Gênero das 500 Maiores Empresas do Brasil e Suas Ações Afirmativas,” accessed March 14th, 2017, <http://www3.ethos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/4Perfil-Social-Racial-e-de-G%C3%AAnero-das-500-Maiores-Empresas-do-Brasil-e-suas-A%C3%A7%C3%B5es-Afirmativas-Pesquisa-2010.pdf>

- **Unemployment:** Young non-Afro-descendent men share an unemployment rate of 9.9%, while the same happen with 19.4% of young Afro-descendent men.<sup>175</sup>
- **Poverty:** in 2011, only 26% of black women were not poor while the same happened with 52.5% of white women and 52.8% of white men.<sup>176</sup> Poverty rate among indigenous people is close to 40% in Brazil. Extreme poverty affects 18% of indigenous Brazilians—six times more than the rest of the population.<sup>177</sup>
- **Politics:** There are no blacks in Brazilian Supreme Court. Forty five Afro-Brazilian were elected in a total of 567 representatives in Congress. From those, only 6 (1%) are black women.
- **Violence:** Every eleven minutes a woman is raped in Brazil.<sup>178</sup> One third of all Brazilians believe that victims are blamed for the rape they suffer.<sup>179</sup> The murder of black women increased 54.2% between 2002 and 2013 in Brazil. In the same period, the murder rate of white women decreased 9.3%. In 2002, 56,000 people were murdered in Brazil. From these, 30,000 are between fifteen and twenty-nine years old. From these, 77% are black. Brazil has the fourth biggest incarcerated population in the world, with 620,000 people in jail. In overcrowded prisons, two in three male

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<sup>175</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, “The Social Inequality Matrix in Latin America.”

<sup>176</sup> Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, “Dossiê Mulheres Negras: retrato das condições de vida das mulheres negras no Brasil,” accessed March 10th, 2017, [http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=20978](http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20978)

<sup>177</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, “The Social Inequality Matrix in Latin America.”

<sup>178</sup> Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, “Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2015,” accessed February 19th, 2017, [http://www.agenciapatriciagalvao.org.br/dossie/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/9-Anuario-Brasileiro-de-Seguranca-Publica-FSB\\_2015.pdf](http://www.agenciapatriciagalvao.org.br/dossie/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/9-Anuario-Brasileiro-de-Seguranca-Publica-FSB_2015.pdf)

<sup>179</sup> “Um terço dos brasileiros culpa mulheres por estupros sofridos,” Folha de São Paulo, September 21st 2016 <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2016/09/1815301-um-terco-dos-brasileiros-culpa-mulheres-por-estupros-sofridos.shtml>

prisoners are black.<sup>180</sup> Brazil is the country that most kill transgenders in the world. According to a report of the organization Transgender Europe, 123 transgenders were murdered in the country between 1st of October 2015 and 30th of September 2016. The second country is México, with 52 killings.<sup>181</sup> In 2015, at least 137 indigenous people were assassinated in Brazil.<sup>182</sup> Cases of violence against indigenous women are increasing in the country. In Mato Grosso do Sul, the state with the second largest Indigenous population, the number of cases raised 495% between 2010 and 2014.<sup>183</sup>

Those numbers show the social and economic vulnerability of marginalized groups in Brazil. They also help to visualize the transversality of racism and sexism by highlighting the presence of racial and gender components of inequality in all instances and relationships in Brazilian society. As Moore puts it, “both sexism and racism share the uniqueness of being assertive and historically constructed dynamics [...] persisting in contemporary consciousness in phantasmatic, symbolic and timeless forms.”<sup>184</sup> More than figurative, gender and racial discrimination are lethal forms of violence that remove voices, size powers and eliminate whole groups of people. The numbers above also confirm what black feminist around the world have been saying for centuries now: the combination of different experiences of oppression adds layers of marginalization to the lives of non-white women. It

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<sup>180</sup> Crioula and Geledés, “A Situação dos Direitos Humanos das Mulheres Negras no Brasil - Violências e Violações, 2016” accessed March 11th, 2017, <http://www.criola.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Dossie-Mulheres-Negras-PT-WEB3.pdf>

<sup>181</sup> Transgender Europe, accessed in March 12th, 2017, <http://tgeu.org/tdor-2016-press-release/>

<sup>182</sup> Conselho Indigenista Missionário, “Relatório Violência Contra os Povos Indígenas no Brasil - Dados de 2015” accessed March 16th, 2017, <http://www.cimi.org.br/pub/relatorio2015/relatoriodados2015.pdf>

<sup>183</sup> “Violência contra índias cresce e MS traduz cartilha sobre Maria da Penha,” G1, last modified September 5th, 2016 <http://g1.globo.com/mato-grosso-do-sul/noticia/2016/09/violencia-contra-indias-cresce-e-ms-traduz-cartilha-sobre-maria-da-penha.html>

<sup>184</sup> Moore, *O Racismo Através da História: da Antiguidade à Modernidade*, 210.

is what Deborah King calls multiple jeopardy: “racism multiplied by sexism multiplied by classicism.”<sup>185</sup>

This means that although not yet quantified, it is almost evident that racism and sexism have an impact in federal evaluators’ readings of textbooks, authors and editors decisions on what to prioritize in the texts and the ways in which students relate to the material in class. And taking as a basis the numbers shown above, this impact is probably far from light.

Therefore, together with the role of the market operating in a capitalist rationale, the state with its few legislative requirements and the limited demands presented by school teachers, an important layer of gender and racial bias should be added in the panorama of contemporary Brazilian history textbooks. Acting simultaneously, those four factors are responsible for the reproduction of a predominantly white and male, canonical and traditional historical narrative in school books in Brazil.

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<sup>185</sup> Deborah K. King, “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology,” *Signs* 14, no. 1 (1988): 47.

## Conclusion

In 2015, Brazil started to discuss its national curricular base, as specified in the National Educational Plan, approved in 2014. When approved, the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC, or *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*) will dictate the “learning goals” of each discipline, as well as a 60% common curricular program for what is taught in each educational level, with the other 40% being free to each school’s choice. Its importance lays in the fact that standardizing a minimum content for all schools in the country can potentially reduce the educational inequality in Brazil. It can also change radically the content of textbooks.

The first version of the BNCC was elaborated by 116 experts of thirty-five universities and coordinated by the Ministry of Education. The first draft, released in September 2015, was published without the guidelines for history, which generated a huge stir in the academia and in the media. The reason for the delay regarding history had to do with a disagreement inside the Ministry about the scholars’ decision to drastically change the subject’s curriculum. The Minister of Education at the time, Renato Janine Ribeiro, said the program “almost completely ignored anything that was not Brazil and Africa,” complaining that the curriculum did not present world history, but “at most, in high school, a Brazilian view of relations with other continents.”<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> “Currículo de história sem Tiradentes é criticado por ex-ministro da Educação,” G1, accessed April 3rd, 2017, <http://g1.globo.com/educacao/noticia/2015/10/janine-diz-que-falta-de-repertorio-em-novo-curriculo-proposto-para-historia.html>

According to professor Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, one of the authors of the BNCC first draft, the group's goal was to emphasize Brazilian history, going against an Eurocentric and traditional approach. "Our idea was: how a Brazilian sees the world... In relation to Africa, Europe, America, Latin America... It was always from us to other places [...] And there was, without any doubt, an option to obviously give a considerable weight to the history of African enslaved men and how this shaped our society."<sup>187</sup>

Oliveira said the backlash came mainly from Ancient and Medieval historians, due to the exclusion of most of those contents from the text. "They believed they would be harmed, that the fact that this content does not exist in the primary and secondary education would extremely reduce the field."<sup>188</sup> But in a public letter about the draft, the Brazilian National Association of Historians issued a broader criticism.

Among its many objections was what they called a "mismatch" between the proposal and the historiographical research. According to them, even though the draft intended to break with a traditional approach, it presented "traditional or canonical versions of historiography" that was "widely questioned" by the last decade's historiographical researches.<sup>189</sup> They note the draft begins with the Portuguese arrival in the Americas to tell both Brazilian and African histories. They also criticize the uncritical use of the term "Conquest", which, in their opinion, reveals "a Eurocentric narrative that the BNCC has set out to overcome."<sup>190</sup> The association acknowledged scholars' efforts to include indigenous

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<sup>187</sup> Margarida Maria Dias de Oliveira, in interview with the author, June 2016.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> "Manifestação pública da Anpuh sobre a Base Nacional Comum Curricular," Anpuh, accessed April 2nd <http://site.anpuh.org/index.php/2015-01-20-00-01-55/noticias2/noticias-destaque/item/3352-manifestacao-publica-da-anpuh-sobre-a-base-nacional-comum-curricular>

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

and African history, in compliance with the laws 10.639/03 and 11.645/08. But they thought it problematic that these histories were only presented from the fifteenth century onward, as if the indigenous and African societies did not have any significant past before the colonization.

After a public debate, Oliveira's group started working on a second version of the history curriculum. But before the work was finished, another minister assumed the office and demanded a complete modification of the text, which was rejected by the academics that prepared the first version. Another group of scholars, thus, assumed the job and in May 3rd, 2016, a second draft of the BNCC was released—now with Medieval and Ancient history included.

The National Association of Historians did not issue a new public statement regarding this new version. The only manifestation came from a small group of seven professors of State University of Rio de Janeiro, who signed a note published on the Association's website. Among other criticisms, the group questioned the marginalization of black and indigenous groups and the prevalence of a traditional version of history. "It seems that the strategy of the team responsible for the historical curricular component was the complete exclusion of the previous proposal and its replacement by a curriculum of traditional bias and with few surprises besides their absences," they wrote.<sup>191</sup>

The new draft curriculum is similar to the ways history textbooks are currently organized. This version "fully attends this tradition that it was based on. Including with the reintroduction of Ancient and Medieval, in a French quadripartite approach: ancient,

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<sup>191</sup> "Nota sobre a segunda versão da BNCC," Anpuh, accessed April 3rd, 2017 <http://site.anpuh.org/index.php/2015-01-20-00-01-55/noticias2/diversas/item/3574-nota-sobre-a-segunda-versao-da-bncc>

medieval, modern and contemporary,” explains Margarida. A third version of the document was released for elementary and middle school levels in April 2017, with no big changes in relation to the second. It is expected that the high school third draft be available in the second semester. Therefore, it is highly possible that, by the end of 2017, the BNCC will be approved with a history curriculum that will not force the so necessary rewriting of history textbooks.

The preoccupation with the questions of tradition, Eurocentrism and black and indigenous histories in the public debates about the BNCC shows how these aspects are at the center of the battle for narratives in the history curriculum. And once again, questions of gender and sexuality have been sidelined. The topics were absent from both versions of BNCC and only briefly mentioned in the Historians Association’s critique of the first draft. In the third version of the document—which only contemplates elementary and middle school—the concept of gender was excluded.

Questioned by Brazilian reporters about the reasons for the exclusion, the executive secretary of the Ministry of Education said they do not work with the concept of gender: “we work with the respect to plurality, including with regards to gender, race, sex, everything [...] Groups that both defend and reject the concept of gender came to us. We do not want to be for or against it. We are in favor of plurality, of openness, of transparency, of law.”<sup>192</sup>

The quote is emblematic. It shows not only the lack of understanding of the concept of gender as a social construction and its impacts, but it also highlights a conservative intervention in the educational field. After all, not addressing a question is taking a stand in

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<sup>192</sup> “Veja 8 pontos de destaque na nova base curricular do ensino fundamental,” G1, accessed April 6th, 2017. <http://g1.globo.com/educacao/noticia/veja-8-pontos-de-destaque-na-nova-base-curricular-do-ensino-fundamental.ghtml>

omitting it. This position is in line with what evangelical politicians had been pressuring for: the ban of any educational policy related to gender equality and sexual diversity in the country.<sup>193</sup>

These recent debates reveal the political struggle in the broader field of education, and especially in the history curriculum. The elimination of terms related to gender and sexual diversity in the future curricular basis and the lack of intersection between race and gender within the already constitutional guarantees over representation (laws 10.639 and 11.645)—analyzed in this work—show the marginalization of the issue, which more broadly reflects the marginalization of all non-male and white subjects in the Brazilian society. All efforts made by black and indigenous movements and the continuous pressure civil society have been doing to eliminate racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination in textbooks and in school curricula are a major improvement. But it is not enough to break with the traditional historical narrative that still reproduces a partial version of history, contributing to form identities and collective memories that do not consider all subjects as equal participants in the construction of the human experience on earth.

In the last decades, scholars and teachers around the world have been thinking about creative forms of challenging the tradition in history teaching—that is not a problem only in Brazilian curricula. Jörn Rüsen, for example, suggests a humanistic approach to it, one that

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<sup>193</sup> According to evangelical websites, few days before the release of the third draft of BNCC for elementary and middle school, the same executive secretary met evangelical politicians, guaranteeing them that the document would not have any mentions to sexual diversity and gender. See “MEC garante à deputados cristãos que ideologia de gênero não será implantada nas escolas,” *Folha Gospel*, accessed April 6th, 2017, <http://folhagospel.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=33593>. See also “Bancada religiosa diz que 'diversidade de gênero' não é assunto do MEC,” *O Globo*, accessed April 6th, 2017, <http://blogs.oglobo.globo.com/poder-em-jogo/post/bancada-evangelica-diz-que-diversidade-de-genero-nao-e-assunto-do-mec.html>. And “Ministério tira 'identidade de gênero' e 'orientação sexual' da base curricular,” *Folha de São Paulo*, accessed April 7th, 2017, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/educacao/2017/04/1873366-ministerio-tira-identidade-de-genero-e-orientacao-sexual-da-base-curricular.shtml>.

shows that different societies had—and still have—different concepts of what it means to be a human being. "The historical experience of inhumanity is a very important provocation for the students to realize the historicity of their deepest conviction about the value inherent in their being human. What they think of being evident turns out to be a result of a long historical development with no fixed guarantee for the future."<sup>194</sup> In this perspective, according to him, the question of gender should gain attention, as during many years in the past, western intellectuals seriously discussed whether women were humans.

Yet Geertje Mak believes that to break with canonical histories, teachers should “deconstruct the opposition between the public and political realm and the domain of the socio-economic and private.” She exemplifies by imagining the world history being taught taking the food as the protagonist, organizing topics as “hunger and rebellion, spices and trade routes—ranging from slavery and sugar to the emergence of the potato, the mechanization of agriculture, the rise of the coffee trade and coffee houses.”<sup>195</sup> This approach, according to her, could offer a different perspective on social change over time, “showing how societies have interacted regionally and globally, how power and politics were involved, and how the ensuing transformations affected people in every aspect of their lives.” And, she finishes by saying that with this attitude, “nobody will have to worry about where to find an example of a woman to compensate for a male-dominated story. They will be there.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Jörn Rüsen, “Forming Historical Consciousness – Towards a Humanistic History Didactics,” *Antítese* 5, no. 10 (2012): 534, doi:10.5433/1984-3356.2012v5n10p519.

<sup>195</sup> Mak, “Gender in and Beyond the Canon,” 138-140.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

Addressing the question of race, Peggy McIntosh remembers how schooling does not train white people to see themselves as unfairly advantaged individuals who participate in a racist culture. “I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. At school, [...] we were not taught to see slaveholders as damaged people. Slaves were seen as the only group at risk of being dehumanized.”<sup>197</sup> Zeus Leonardo goes beyond, arguing that “it is not only the case that whites are taught to normalize their dominant position in society; they are susceptible to these forms of teachings because they benefit from them. It is not a process that is somehow done to them, as if they were duped, are victims of manipulation [...] Rather, the color-blind discourse is one that they fully endorse.”<sup>198</sup>

Leonardo argues that, to break with this pattern, a critical pedagogy should address white supremacy as a process that reaffirms domination. He explains: “Discourses of supremacy acknowledge white privileges, but only as a function of whites’ actions toward minority subjects and not as mysterious accumulations of unearned advantages. [...] Through discourses of supremacy the racial story unfolds, complete with characters, actions, and conflicts.”<sup>199</sup>

All these ideas and approaches can and should be considered during the production of a new Brazilian curricular base. Or during the preparation of a new collection of textbooks. Or in the organization of a class for students of any educational level. It is our duty as society to make sure new generations do not reproduce systems of oppression

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<sup>197</sup> Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A personal Account of Coming to see Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies,” in: *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. M. Andersen & P. H. Collins (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992).

<sup>198</sup> Zeus Leonardo, “The color of supremacy: Beyond the discourse of ‘white privilege.’”

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

incorporated in historical narratives, and that, more important, that they be able to identify daily violences—or the opposite, daily taken-for-granted privileges—as legacies of policies that persist and need urgently to be changed.

## Codebook

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Code</b>
1	<b>Book</b>	The name of the book	1 = <i>História, Sociedade e Cidadania 1</i> 2 = <i>História, Sociedade e Cidadania 2</i> 3 = <i>História, Sociedade e Cidadania 3</i>
2	<b>Page</b>	Page number	
3	<b>Character's name</b>		
3.a		Is the character named?	0 = No 1 = Yes
3.b		If yes, what is the character's name? If no, how the character is mentioned?	
4	<b>Sex</b>	What is the character's sex?	0 = Unknown 1 = Male 2 = Female
5	<b>Sexuality</b>	Does the text mention the character's sexual orientation?	0 = Do not mention 1 = Heterosexual 2 = Homosexual 3 = Transsexual
6	<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
6a		Is the character's race/ethnicity mentioned in the text?	0 = No 1 = Yes, white 2 = yes, black 3 = yes, brown 4 = yes, Indigenous 5 = yes, Yellow (Asian)
6.b		Based on a Google search, what is the character's race or ethnicity? <i>(Categories are based on the last Brazilian Census, of 2010. Only code if character has lived through Modern and Contemporary ages. I am considering here race as a modern concept that cannot be applied in Ancient History and Middle Ages)</i>	0 = Could not identify character's race or ethnicity 1 = White 2 = Black 3 = Brown 4 = Indigenous 5 = Yellow (Asian)
7	<b>Class/social strata</b>	Does the text mention the character's class status?	0 = The text does not specify class 1 = Rich 2 = Middle class/middle wealth holder 3 = Poor 4 = Enslaved

Codebook (continued)

8	<b>Profession/Activity</b>	Does the text mention character's profession? If yes, what is the profession?	<p>0 = No  1 = King or queen; president; emperor, prime minister, dictator  2 = Noble  3 = Clergy or missionary (include popes)  4 = Military, warrior  5 = Politician (mayor, governor, representative, senator), public server  6 = Businessman, businesswoman  7 = Economist  8 = Lawyer, judge  9 = Scientist, doctor  10 = Researcher, expert, estudioso, intellectual  11 = Engineer  12 = Professor, teacher  13 = Anthropologist  14 = Historian  15 = Archeologist  16 = Writer, journalist, poet  17 = Student  18 = Philosopher  19 = Sociologist  20 = Visual artist, singer, composer, actor or movie director  21 = Factory worker  22 = Sportsman or sportswomen  23 = Farmer  24 = Housewife  25 = Preacher  26 = Fisherman  27 = Explorer, navigator  28 = Pirate  29 = Prostitute  30 = Inventor  31 = Theologian  32 = Architect  33 = Editor, publisher  34 = Mathematician  35 = Bandeirante  36 = Miner  37 = Artesão  38 = Cangaceiro  39 = Car, bus, truck driver</p>
9	<b>Family</b>		

Codebook (continued)

9.a		Is the character's family relations cited? If yes, what is the character's family attribute?	0 = No 1 = Wife, concubine 2 = Husband 3 = Parent 4 = Son or Daughter 5 = Children (12 years old or younger) 6 = Brother, Sister 7 = Nephew 8 = Widow 9 = Acquainted (da mesma familia, parente) 10 = Grandson, granddaughter
9.b		Is this the only way the character is related to the narrative?	0 = No family relation cited 1 = No 2 = Yes
10	<b>Agency</b>	Is this character an actor in the narrative?	0 = No 1 = Yes
11	<b>Appearance</b>	Does the text mention how the character looks or dresses?	0 = No 1 = Yes
12	<b>Place in the narrative</b>	Is the character inside the narrative or in a side note/exercise?	0 = Sidenote or exercise 1 = In the narrative
13	<b>Character evaluation</b>	How does the text evaluate the character? <i>(Positive evaluation: when the text has a positive adjective or word showing approval of the character's acts or traits. The same happens with Negative. A balanced code goes for characters that are treated both with positive and negative adjectives)</i>	0 = No evaluation 1 = Positive 2 = Balanced 3 = Negative
14	<b>Times cited</b>	How many times the character was cited? <i>(anywhere in the text, side notes and activities)</i>	
15	<b>Photograph</b>	Is the character presented in a photograph or illustration? <i>(is is also considered 'yes' if the illustration or photograph is from a film depicting the character)</i>	0 = No 1 = Yes

## Intercoder Reliability

Variable	Percent Agreement	Krippendorff's Alpha
1. Book	100%	undefined*
2. Page	100%	1
3a. Name	94.5%	0.836
4. Sex	100%	1
5. Sexuality	100%	undefined*
6a. Race/ethnicity mentioned	100%	undefined*
6b. What is the race/ethnicity	100%	1
7. Class	98.1%	0.660
8. Profession/activity	85.4%	0.805
9a. Family relation	96.3%	0.703
9b. Only way cited?	98.1%	0.660
10. Actor	92.7%	0.847
11. Appearance	100%	undefined*
12. Place in the narrative	100%	1
13. Character evaluation	100%	1
14. Times cited	83.6%	0.730
15. Photo	94.5%	0.836

\* According to ReCal [<http://dfreelon.org/utis/recalfront/>], the online calculator used here to compute the intercoder reliability coefficients, Krippendorff's Alpha is undefined for this variable due to invariant values. That means that two conditions are simultaneously being applied to the data: "1) all of your coders have attained 100% agreement and 2) they have all selected the same variable value for every unit of analysis."

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