Race, History, and Education in Brazil and in Portugal: challenges and perspectives

Amilcar Araujo Pereira[I]
Marta Araújo[II]

[I]Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro/RJ – Brazil
[II]Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra – Portugal

ABSTRACT – Race, History, and Education in Brazil and in Portugal: challenges and perspectives. This article proposes a dialogue between the political and academic debates on race, identity, and history in the Brazilian and Portuguese contexts. In order to do so, it examines the *myth of racial democracy* (as it was known in Brazil) and the idea of a national vocation for *interculturality* in Portugal to explore how they shape the contemporary debate on racism and Eurocentrism, as well its evasion, focusing on education - which is understood as an arena for important political struggles. By addressing crucial moments in these debates, this article seeks to contribute to wider discussions on race and power in the teaching of history, and to challenge the depoliticization of contemporary narratives that continue to take refuge in the tropes of the *historical specificities* of each of the national contexts.
Keywords: **Racism and Eurocentrism. History Teaching. Public Policies. Brazil. Portugal.**

RESUMO – Raça, História e Educação no Brasil e em Portugal: desafios e perspectivas. Este artigo propõe um diálogo entre os debates políticos e acadêmicos sobre raça, identidade e história nos contextos brasileiro e português. Para tal, examina a relação entre o *mito da democracia racial* (como ficou conhecido no Brasil) e a ideia de uma vocação nacional para a *interculturalidade* em Portugal e o debate contemporâneo sobre racismo e eurocentrismo, assim como a sua evasão, focando na educação – tomada como palco de importantes lutas políticas. Abordando momentos cruciais destes debates, o artigo procura aprofundar a discussão sobre raça e poder no ensino da História e contestar a despolitização das narrativas contemporâneas que continuam a escudar-se nas *especificidades* históricas de cada um dos contextos nacionais.
Palavras-chave: **Racismo e Eurocentrismo. Ensino da História. Políticas Públicas. Brasil. Portugal.**

Introduction

> Race is both a political and a social construction. It is a discursive category around which a socioeconomic system of exploitation and exclusion - that is, racism - is organized (Hall, 2003, p. 69).

This article aims to put forth a reflection on political debates and changes regarding issues such as racism, Eurocentrism, and the teaching of African history in the Brazilian and Portuguese contexts, as well as to identify future challenges and perspectives. More particularly, it discusses how the idea of race was politically mobilized in several moments and contexts, as we will see below. With the construction of what was called in Brazil the *myth of racial democracy* and the idea of a national vocation for *interculturality* in Portugal, we observe that both contexts refrain from discussing race as a historically-configured relationship of power (Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 1993; Hall, 2003). Such debate is analyzed by considering the realm of education as a privileged space, both for reproducing and challenging inequalities.

We first analyze the discussion on race and its impacts on education since the beginning of the Brazilian Republic, in order to reflect on the active role of the black movement in the political struggles against racism and Eurocentrism in education. This will be achieved by focusing on the contemporary period, highlighting some key achievements, and by forecasting some challenges and perspectives for these struggles. Next, we analyze how, despite the democratization of the Portuguese society and the revolutionary political environment lived shortly after April 25, 1974[1], the debate on race/racism and Eurocentrism was evaded. In order to do so, we present an analysis of the most relevant political debates and documents about history curricula and textbooks over the last four decades, considering the teaching of the history of European colonialism and of Africa as a space of dispute.

Race, History, and Education in Brazil: political debates and struggles

> When intellectuals and white progressive civil servants started implementing universal public education in Brazil over the first half of the 20th century, their motives and actions were influenced by racial ideology in three general ways. Firstly, their models were first based on centuries of domination by a caste of white European settlers and their descendants [...] For centuries, this white elite was also inspired by Europe regarding its frameworks for culture, ideas, and self-definition. Secondly, although these intellectuals and policymakers had become increasingly critical in regards to this heritage (going as far as to celebrate the racial mixing), they invariably came from the white elite and remained bound to social values that, after centuries of colonialism and racial domination, con-

> tinued associating whiteness to strength, health, and virtue – values that were preserved and reinforced via the belittling of other groups. Thirdly, because they created education policies that targeted the utopian dream of a modern, developed, and democratic Brazil, their vision was influenced by the meanings they attributed to race (Dávila, 2006, p. 23-24).

Since the late 19th century - when Brazil was still a monarchy – but fundamentally with the end of slavery and the rise of the Brazilian Republic (respectively 1888 and 1889), the discussions on the construction of a *Brazilian nation* revolved around the racial issue. These discussions also reflected on the public education that was going to be implemented in republican Brazil, as mentioned in the epigraph above. It is important to remember that, in the late 19th century, the poor and the non-white formed most of the population and were generally excluded. However, according to historian Jerry Dávila, the Brazilian public education managers in the early 20th century "did not prevent students of color from attending their schools"; on the contrary, they "[...] sought to improve race - to create a 'Brazilian race', a healthy, culturally European, physically fit, nationalist race" (Dávila, 2006, p. 21). Because they considered the majority of the poor and non-white as *degenerates* in racial and cultural terms, also according to Dávila, these public education managers "[...] defined schools as clinics in which the national ailments associated with race mixing could be healed" and, in this sense, "[...] their beliefs provided a powerful motif for the construction of schools and shaped the way these schools would work" (Dávila, 2006, p. 22).

In the education field, according to Dávila, "[...] as they were in charge of forging a more European Brazil and were tied to a sense of modernity that was connected to whiteness [...]", the Brazilian educators "[...] built schools whose almost all practical actions established racialized rules and either granted or denied rewards based on these" (Dávila, 2006, p. 25). The major example in this sense is probably Brazil's 1934 Federal Constitution itself, which, despite being the first to be *democratically* drafted by a popularly-elected Constitutional Convention, had articles that had been clearly influenced by the predominant racial theories at the time. The article 138 of the Brazilian Constitution, for example, established that *Brazil's Federal Government, States and Municipalities were in charge of stimulating eugenic education* in the terms of their related laws, among other things[2]. To Dávila, "[...] the Brazilian public education system was one of the main social areas for those who most actively studied the importance of race in the Brazilian society and made the most efforts to achieve a socially and culturally white nation". Thus, "[...] as education is a public policy field, it reveals the ways through which racial thinkers put their ideas and hypotheses in practice" (Dávila, 2006, p. 36).

These discussions on whether the Brazilian project regarding the racial issue was feasible or not and on which paths to follow to achieve success generated conflicts. Not only did these conflicts affect *scholars*,

but also the population as a whole, especially black movement activists, who also reflected on these issues, wrote newspaper articles, structured their organizations, held congresses, and carried out other initiatives since the early decades of the 20th century, aiming to discuss these issues and put forth their ideas and demands.

To a great extent, due to several social pressures in the 1930s, a movement that sought new paths in the political orientation of its project was created in Brazil, and it was mainly concerned with social development. The previous project, which sought the construction of a *European* nation, provided evidence that it would sink amidst the rising social and racial inequalities. A new orientation for the nation project that was being planned could no longer fit the racial theories of the late 19th century, which had become obsolete by then, at least in the opinion of some important intellectuals of the time. At this moment, Gilberto Freyre created theoretical instruments to fulfill this new social and political demand. According to Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, "Gilberto Freyre was the first in modern sociology to pursue again the old utopia of a racial paradise, which was dear to the common sense of abolitionists, and to give it a scientific perspective" (Guimarães, 2003, p. 4). He focused again on the racial topic, which by then was not only considered key to understanding Brazil but also to the whole of the discussion about Brazil's national identity issue. Freyre stated that black, indigenous, and mixed-race individuals had positive contributions to the Brazilian culture, and thus acknowledged the cultural debt the Brazilian nation had to these populations. According to Guimarães, Freyre broke from biological determinism but not with the idea of race. To Guimarães (1999, p. 53), Freyre[3] defends a "European conception of whitening", that

> [...] therefore started meaning the ability of the Brazilian nation (which was defined as an extension of the European civilization in which a new race arose) of absorbing and integrating mixed-race and black individuals. Such ability implicitly required the people of color's agreement to deny their African or indigenous ancestry. 'Whitening' and 'racial democracy' are therefore concepts of a new racialist discourse.

This idea hinders the perception of the racial inequalities in a society, due to the very ideas it supports regarding *democracy* and *equality*. In the context after the end of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship (1937-1945) and mainly after World War II, attempts were made to present Brazil as an example of a country with *racial harmony*, to a world that had been *devastated* by a *racial* War. The most important attempt made in this sense was carried out under the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which funded a set of studies regarding the race relations in Brazil as of the 1950s. This research was known as *Project Unesco*. In September 1949, Artur Ramos, who had been just appointed to a management position at Unesco and understood Brazil as a *civilization laboratory*, once it had supposedly

"[...] presented the most scientific and humane solution to the racial and cultural mixing problem, which was a very poignant issue for other peoples" (Ramos, 1934, p. 179) introduced a proposal, to be funded by Unesco, for conducting research on Brazil's race relations.

However, as of the mid-1950s, Florestan Fernandes – who stood out in the Brazilian scenario as an important intellectual of social sciences in Brazil, exactly because of his research work in Project Unesco, became the main exponent of a group of intellectuals who first appointed the existence of racial inequalities in Brazil, which was contrary to the *myth of racial democracy*. In the end, Project Unesco did the opposite of what had been planned by Arthur Ramos and other managers in the institution because, as stated by Oracy Nogueira, one of the people responsible for the project in countryside São Paulo state – "[...] the main trend that calls our attention in the studies funded by Unesco is the one of its authors to recognize the existence of racial prejudice in Brazil" (Nogueira, 1985, p. 77).

This social context, which saw the existence of *racial prejudice* be recognized, required the development of educational efforts, in order to raise questions regarding the relations established around the racial issue in Brazilian schools. As provided by the current Brazil's National Curriculum Guidelines on the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations, the whole school community is required to work in order to enable a re-education of race relations. Educating for equality implies fighting racism at the same time the construction of spaces for enunciating differences in curricula and schools is promoted, which can be capable of questioning deep-rooted prejudices and conducting educational practices that include and value the existing cultural and racial differences. As we saw above, the Brazilian society has a long history of racial inequalities. Transforming this reality requires studies that provide new concept approaches and, above all, a true political commitment to fight for the construction of a racism-free Brazilian education and society.

In this sense, the political struggle against racism, which was mainly fought in several levels of the Brazilian society as of the mid-20th century, has produced some social change, especially in the education field. It has been possible to identify, since the early decades of the Brazilian Republic, political organizations created by black people, such as Palmares Civic Center (1926 - *Centro Cívico Palmares*), the Brazilian Black Front (1931 - *Frente Negra Brasileira*), or the Experimental Theater of Black People (1944 - *Teatro Experimental do Negro*), which prioritized the fight against racism and for the black people's access to education in Brazil (Pereira, 2013). With the re-articulation and growth of the black social movement during the so-called *political opening* period of Brazil's civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985), as of 1974, and especially during the redemocratization period in the 1980s (mainly as of 1988, the centennial of the abolition of slavery, when hundreds of protests were carried out by black movement organizations in the whole country), many black leaders arose and contributed to political mobilization and articulation at different levels (with unions; political parties;

public institutions; municipal, state, and federal agencies; legislature representatives; etc.)[4]. By doing that, they enabled the achievement of a new *political and social place* for the black movement, especially in the education field (Abreu; Mattos, 2008, p. 6).

As already demonstrated in another article (Pereira, 2012), the text of the so-called 1988 *Citizen Constitution* (*Constituição Cidadã*) already reflected some of the issues called for by different social groups which until then were not included in the construction of history curricula. As provided by paragraph 1 of article 242 of the Brazilian Constitution, it was already established that "Brazilian history curricula will take into account the contributions from different cultures and ethnicities in the formation of the Brazilian people" (Brazil, 1988). To many leaders in the black social movement, fighting for the *reassessment of the black people's role in the Brazilian history* - a demand that was present in 1978's Unified Black Movement's (*Movimento Negro Unificado*) Charter of Principles - involved, at that time, an intervention in the process of creating curricula, especially history curricula. After all, as Antônio Flávio Moreira and Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (2002, p. 8) said:

> A curriculum is not a naïve and neutral element of transmission with no stake in social knowledge. Curricula are implied to belong to relations of power. They convey particular and biased social views, and produce particular individual and social identities. A curriculum is not a transcendent and timeless element – it has a history that is connected to specific and contingent ways to organize society and education.

Being aware of this battlefield, of this political and cultural arena which is a curriculum, black movement activists, especially as of the 1980s, sought ways to intervene in the education field, both by going to schools or producing textbooks and by taking part and intervening in the preparation of official curricular documents (such as Brazil's National Curricular Parameters, or PCNs - *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*, which were published in 1998) (Pereira, 2012). These activists even took part in political processes that led to the drafting of legislation or public policies which could enable a *reassessment of the black people's role in the Brazilian history*. Some examples in this sense are emblematic. The most resounding example, which has enabled cultural change in schools in the whole country and in the Brazilian society as a whole may be the creation of Law no. 10639/2003, which made it mandatory the teaching of African and African-Brazilian Cultures in schools in the whole country. This law was necessary to raise questions about the Eurocentrism that was historically present in Brazilian curricula, and it also has the potential to lead to the construction of education guidelines that contribute to consolidating a democratic and anti-racist perspective. Law no. 10639/2003 changed Brazil's 1996's National Educational Bases and Guidelines Law (LDB - *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional*) and had in its construction the direct participation of black movement activists, as observed in the testimonial given by

Edson Cardoso, a black movement leader in Brasília, who served in National Congress as chief of staff of representative Florestan Fernandes (PT-SP, between 1992 and 1995) and black representative Ben-Hur Ferreira (PT-MS, 1999-2000 and 2002-2003). In the excerpt below, which was published in *Histórias do movimento negro no Brasil: depoimentos ao CPDOC* (Black movement's histories in Brazil: testimonials to CPDOC, 2007), Edson Cardoso, who was an active black social movement leader and occupied a strategic space in the Legislative Power at that time, narrated, based on his experience as the Lower-house representative's Chief of Staff (who pushed for a bill in Brazil's National Congress that would later become Law no. 10639/2003, in his 1998-2002 administration), how was the process of drafting and submitting a bill that would be sanctioned by the newly-elected president Lula, already on January 09, 2003.

> [...] as soon as I arrived [when he became the Lower-house representative's Chief of Staff], I said: "Ben-Hur, I think the first thing we should do is see which bills were filed in this administration, because there may be important things there which we may defile". When I looked, guess what important project was there? Pernambuco's black movement had submitted a project introducing "African History" to Humberto Costa.[5] I say 'had submitted' because he said that in the justification item of the bill. As a matter of fact, this needs to be said: Beato, Lucila's father, served as a substitute senator, and it seems to me he submitted an education bill; Paim submitted one; Abdias submitted one; Benedita submitted one...[6] It is important to recover the other initiatives, as they reveal that the black movement was always concerned with resurfacing the past. Talking about African History and African-Brazilian culture is not an individual thing, this has been done by several generations of the movement [...]

> Paim, Abdias, Benedita, anyway, you had already seen many initiatives. Then Humberto Costa submitted his in another situation, and his bill was discretely approved in the Education Commission. However, as Humberto Costa was not reelected as a Lower-house representative, what happened? His bill was filed. When a representative does not come back for another term and one of their projects is not approved in more than one commission, for example, in order to go further, their project is filed. A lot of bills is approved in every legislature. Then I personally called Humberto Costa and told him that Ben-Hur was arriving, and I asked him what he thought about us defiling that bill, because that was our intention. He said: "I think that is great!". So, we defiled the bill (Alberti; Pereira, 2007b, p. 432-435).

As stated by Edson Cardoso in the excerpt above, the issue of teaching African History and African-Brazilian culture was always important for the black movement in the struggle against racism and Eurocentrism in Brazil, especially in Brazil's republican period. This

struggle has not been easy, and it still requires many political efforts, now in the sense of actually implementing the current legislation, the LDB that was changed by Law no. 10639/2003[7]. It is important to highlight that, once the related law was sanctioned, the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations were drafted and published in 2004, and their rapporteur, PhD and professor Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva, was a black intellectual appointed by the black movement to take part in Brazil's National Education Council (CNE - *Conselho Nacional de Educação*) between 2002 and 2006. Therefore, based on examples such as these, we may state that, in the political and social struggle, the process through which Law no. 10639/2003 was drafted and even the knowledge and syllabi that are currently being mobilized for the implementation of this law have their leading figures in the black movement (organizations, intellectuals, activists, congressmen etc.). This process is similar to the struggles that led to the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, whose leaders were black women and men, as well as the remaining abolitionists. It is not possible to see the abolition as a mere act of altruism from the Brazilian state (which was represented in the figure of Princess Isabel)[8].

From *Revolutionary* to *Intercultural Portugal*: race/racism in the debates on education and on teaching history

> What seems specific of the Portuguese situation is the fact that the explanations for the supposed lack of racism are based on a colonial historic process that, in itself, is the process of choice for a racialized and racist formation (Almeida, 2006, p. 362-363).

In Portugal, Gilberto Freyre's ideas on lusotropicalism came to be accepted in the 1950s among political and academic elites, in the context following the independence declarations of the late 1940s, the revolts and uprisings in what then were the *African colonies*, and the pressure from the United Nations on granting independences to the colonies (Castelo, 1998; Almeida, 2000). Freyre's thesis on a *multi-continental* and *multi-racial* Portugal, adapted to the political context at the time[9], allowed to sustain Portuguese people's ability to establish *friendly* relationships with the peoples in the tropics, the *meeting and mixing of cultures*, and the lack of racism, which were notions based on a narrative of Portuguese colonialism as somehow benevolent. The idea of a Portuguese *exceptionality* was not new. As pointed out by João Leal, the idea of a national identity as molded by a *blandness of character*, an *adventurous nature*, or a *tendency to fatalism* already circulated among the Portuguese elites of late 19th century (Leal, 2000, p. 86). Likewise, as we will see below, these ideas - and particularly the thesis on Portuguese exceptionalism in regards to racism - remained key in the construction of the political debate and its contours after the fall of *Estado Novo*, including in education (Araújo, 2013).

Immediately after the April 1974 revolution, Portugal witnessed a process for politically reforming the educational system, which sought, among other things, to deal with nationalism and Eurocentrism (viewed, however, as a European ethnocentrism), which had characterized teaching during the *Estado Novo* period. In this context of the mid-1970s, the Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC - *Período Revolucionário em Curso*) marked by the democratization in the access to education and the construction of a society with *new values* (Stoer, 1986), important debates took place and solutions were sought in order to deeply reform history teaching. Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, Portugal's Education Minister in 1974-75 and a historian who was strongly influenced by the *École des Annales* and particularly by the work of Fernand Braudel, led a reform in 1974 that was based on a more structuralist approach with higher emphasis to teaching the history of *other* peoples and civilizations: "Attempts are made to reverse or mitigate the Eurocentrism in the previous programs, by introducing topics regarding Eastern, Amerindian, and African civilizations" (Henriques, 2001, p. 103-104). In this context of concern with the *excess* centralization in Europe, African history arose as an optional education module, even though this measure was short-lived in curricula. At this point, an approach based on Marxism-Leninism predominated (Torgal, 1989), and even though it promoted a more comprehensive understanding of power issues – and, namely, how violence permeated the colonial relationship – it marginalized a further reflection on race, with consequences to the production and dissemination of knowledge. For example, a famous textbook author within this approach, António do Carmo Reis, when writing about colonialism and slavery, *cultural contacts and exchanges*, and *civilization clashes* in 1975, stated:

> The *Discoveries* led the Western European civilization to establish contacts with inferior, equal, or, in certain aspects, superior civilizations. In the first case, we have civilizations from black Africa, and, in the second, the Eastern civilizations of the Far East.
>
> *The retreat of African civilizations*: the first contacts were made with the civilizations of *Mali Empire* and *Gao Empire*, with strong Muslim influences and whose famous trade center was the *Timbuktu* market. Then came the contact with the tribal civilizations of the *inner and tropical African kingdoms*, whose organization was generally based on feudalism (Reis, 1975, p. 80, original emphasis)[10].

This interpretation, which sees the development stages of *other* societies (that is, non-Western) based on Eurocentric principles and notions of progress and civilization, is not capable of challenging the racial logic that underlies the construction of Europe as a *center* (this aspect is examined further in other works, namely Araújo; Maeso, 2012a; 2015).

In the late 1970s, after the revolutionary period of PREC and at a time characterized by a certain conservative retraction and accusations of anti-nationalism to those who challenged it, Portugal shifted

its attention to Europe, aiming to be integrated to what was then the European Economic Community (EEC) – effective in 1986 –, which resulted in the change of the political values to be conveyed by schools. This was reflected on the emphasis on *national identity* (Grácio, 1981, p. 44-45) – by reestablishing Portugal's European *origins* – which was followed by specific measures to this end. Regarding history teaching, the territories and processes considered were restricted to the 3rd Cycle of K-12 Education (7th, 8th, and 9th grades in Portugal, 12 to 15-year old students). In the legal document of 1979 that operated this change it can be read: "The time restrictions also forced us to abandon a wide study of the History of Humankind. Thus, we chose to highlight the historic-geographical complex centered around Europe, where we are inserted and where the dominant steps of the historic process took place" (Portugal, 1979). Being systematically legitimated through arguments regarding the necessary *selectivity* of contents and questions of *relevance*, the *defense* of a national identity was readjusted to the context in which Portugal got closer to Europe – no longer *proudly alone*[11], but *proudly together*. Europe then arose not only as a geopolitically privileged space, but rather and above all as a *producer* of history (Trouillot, 1995) - which would legitimize its political, scientific, and pedagogical centrality and relevance:

> We have long been aware that there is no such thing as world history. The whole history, especially taught history, is ethnocentric or, at least, ethnocentered - to say the same in a less shocking way. Anywhere in the world, history curricula need to select their contents, in order to avoid being diluted in a sterile, fully unmanageable encyclopedism. Besides this, each society produces a hierarchy of the knowledge it considers the most useful to convey, on behalf of their identity strategies. Thus, educational realism (let us call it this) and the social requirements from each period condition a naturally uneven division of knowledge. It is not shocking that compulsory schooling privileges the reality students are inserted in, which is, above anything else, the reality of the national group [...] In European countries such as Portugal, isn't Eurocentrism inevitable, even though it often bothers us? European history - which is largely centered around the Portuguese case, as we will see below - in fact ended up constituting the core of the curriculum for the 3rd Cycle (Caldeira, 2001, p. 141).

These guidelines were followed by several political initiatives, namely the Education Act of 1986 (*Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*) and the History teaching reform of 1989. The Education Act of 1986 was a core educational reform, and it was implemented immediately after the formal entry of Portugal into the European Economic Community. The Act established the following as the first organizing principle of the Portuguese educational system: "To contribute to the defense of national identity and to reinforce allegiance to Portugal's historical matrix, by raising awareness to the cultural heritage of the Portuguese

people, in the framework of the universalistic European tradition and the rising interdependence and required solidarity among all peoples of the world" (Portugal, 1986, Art. 3a). History as a school discipline would play a crucial role in fulfilling this goal[12]. We highlight the 1989 curricular guidelines for the 3rd Cycle of K-12 Education (Portugal; ME, 1991), approved in 1991 and still in force, which reinforced an approach to history based on *diachrony* and *universality* (Caldeira, 2001, p. 140). Once again, the emphasis on Portuguese and European history was justified by their *closeness* to the reality that was experienced by the students (Portugal; ME, 1991, p. 122), and this aimed at signaling and reinforcing Portugal's *national consciousness* (Caldeira, 2001, p. 139). This signals the change taking place, from the revolutionary ideals "[...] of equality, progress and democracy, the class struggle, and the affirmation of workers" – which were promoted in the context of democratization in the access to education – to the "[...] values related to civic consciousness, tolerance, autonomy, and the acquisition of methodological competences" (Henriques, 2001, p. 113). At that time, a certain emphasis on a methodological nationalist approach to imperialism and colonialism starts to become clear, which dissociates violence from the Portuguese colonial project (but not from the Spanish project, its competitor). This is an example from a textbook:

> At least in economic terms, the contacts established by the Western people in Asia, America, and Africa, through violent (the case of Spain in the Americas) or pacific *colonization* (the case of Portugal in Africa, in the East, and in Brazil), always resulted in benefits to Europe (Reis, 1981, p. 53).

From the 1990s onwards, no significant changes were recorded in regards to public policy on history teaching. At this same time, the "values of cultural coexistence and tolerance" were prominent (Portugal, 1991), particularly in education. Specially after Portugal joined what we know today as the European Union, the idea of *interculturality* came to be integrated in the political agenda, albeit always ambiguously. Although one of the guiding principles of the Education Act was to "recognize and value different cultures" (Portugal, 1986, Art. 3-D), this did not have a significant impact on the educational system or curricula, nor was it included in the training of teachers or in the pedagogical practice (Valentim, 1997; Cardoso, 1998; Araújo, 2013). For example, the Secretariat for Coordination of Multicultural Education Programs (*Secretariado de Coordenação de Programas de Educação Multicultural*, which was created in 1991 by the Ministry of Education and renamed to Interculture Secretariat - *Secretariado Entreculturas*) (Portugal, 1998) emphasized the following goals: "[...] to coordinate, foster, and promote, regarding the educational system, programs and events aiming at the coexistence, tolerance, dialogue, and solidarity among different peoples, ethnicities, and cultures" (Portugal, 1991). In a significant way, the need for substantial changes in regards to the teaching of history was put aside from the debate; on the contrary, ever since the Interculture

Secretariat was created an approach that confirms the legitimacy of a certain version of the Portuguese history has been reaffirmed:

> The Europe of the future will more authentically be a pluricultural Europe, of mobility, skills, and education for all. A Europe that is open to the world in new forms of solidarity and participation.
>
> Thus, overcoming the challenge that is put forth in the education field is to seek answers for the fundamental educational needs through a renewed commitment to giving everybody access to a basic education that promotes the human condition, multiplies the opportunities for personal and social accomplishments, increases educational success, broadens the fields of initial and in-service education, mobilizes the civil society to a civic and democratic education, and opens up new paths for cooperation and reinforcement of the international society.
>
> The Education Act, establishing the right of all Portuguese citizens to education and culture, determines, as an education principle, the openness to the values of cultural coexistence and tolerance, and the construction of full-fledged citizens who are able to act constructively in the society they are inserted in.
>
> Education should, therefore, play a role in individual behavior and contribute decisively to the comprehensive edification of human beings, enabling them to experience freedom and autonomy, qualifying them to the full dimension of solidarity and respect for other people's dignity, and making them aware of the value of their Language, National History, and dominant traces of the national identity (Portugal, 1991).

This defense *of the language, national history, and dominant traces of the national identity* took place simultaneously to the implementation of initiatives that aimed to socially and educationally integrate *ethnic groups* (sic) (Portugal; Scoprem, 1998, p. 18) and *socially-unprivileged* students (Portugal, 1993), namely the Intercultural Education Project (PREDI - *Projeto de Educação Intercultural* - 1993-1995-1997). This project - which was framed as responding to "difficulties of intercultural coexistence" (Valentim, 1997, p. 88) – extended its intervention on non-curricular fields (Araújo, 2013). An external evaluation of the project (from the Ministry of Education itself) recognized the need for an intervention at curricular level (integration of contents, changes in the curricular structure, new teaching methodologies) and a participatory approach capable of dealing with "deep-seated representations and traditional practices" (Portugal; Scoprem, 1998, p. 69). Nonetheless, such changes have not taken place. Although schools have had, since the late 1990s, increased freedom to adapt their curricula by considering the local community, under the flexible curriculum management principle (Portugal, 1997; 1999) and, later, with the reorganization of mandatory schooling (Portugal, 2001), most teachers follow what is established in

the official canon - due to different issues that relate to their educational background or to the way school knowledge is legitimated and evaluated[13].

Notwithstanding these issues, the *intercultural dialogue* has been adopted as an official strategy to "prevent segregationism, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance" (Portugal; Scoprem, 1998, p. 9). Throughout the 2000s, *interculturality* was consolidated as a national domestic policy:

> Portugal commits to maintain an external policy based on relationships of friendship and cooperation with all the other States. As a result from this principle, the successive governments of the Portuguese Republic have given priority to the dialogue with other peoples and cultures [...]. However, it is important to notice that intercultural dialogue is both an external and internal political objective, and in regards to the domestic policy, this dialogue is an important dimension of the policy focusing on the integration of immigrants in the national community. In 1991, for example, a program called "Education for All" was started, mainly in order to promote school success as a condition to achieve full-fledged citizenship, for children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, but also in order to promote the values of tolerance, dialogue, and solidarity among different ethnic and cultural groups (Council of Europe, 2004, p. 6).

Raising awareness to the value of different cultures and the development of intercultural communication skills have been core goals in the work of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI - nowadays the High Commission for Migration - ACM), and these were materialized in awareness and education campaigns and initiatives. However, in terms of the education system, this approach has led to mere *additions* to school syllabi and some cosmetic changes, in a compensatory and commemorative approach to difference, which is not capable of promoting a deep discussion on the need for transforming the official canons of knowledge. In particular, the debates on the teaching of history have not been able to challenge Eurocentrism and to produce critical thinking about the construction of the idea of a national/European/Western *we* in which *the other* ought to be included. Therefore, we need an approach that not only considers the absence or stereotyped representations of the other, but which also shows how *race* and *racism* are made invisible in the debates on nationality, citizenship, democracy, and human rights (Araújo; Maeso, 2015). While education is an important space to analyze broader political and cultural struggles, it is necessary to emphasize that these struggles have never been about mere symbolic representation, but rather to the access to resources (Wynter, 1992; Deloria, 1995) – the case of Brazil is paradigmatic.

In contexts such as the Portuguese, the official and academic narratives of colonialism and slavery illustrate how the marginality of Af-

rican History (and its teaching) is not so much an *unthought-of absence*, but the result of a Eurocentric approach that makes it scientifically and politically *irrelevant* (Trouillot, 1995) beyond the contact with *Europeans* and the *benevolent Portuguese colonialism*. Such approach arises based on an idea of colonialism as "[...] the cosmopolitan attraction to the large intercontinental spaces, and based on the discovery of 'the other', a tropism of soul and body that makes the Portuguese pioneers in the globalization and in the identity construction of an intercultural matrix" (Carneiro, 2007, p. 7), in the words by the former Minister of Education Roberto Carneiro, who was also the coordinator of Intercultural Portugal Collection published by the Immigration Observatory of the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue. In the first one of these publications, entitled *Interculturality in the Portuguese Expansion: 15th to 18th century*, it can be read:

> The Portuguese Expansion history teaches us that, even in what can be considered a cultural predominance system (in this case, dominance of the European culture and the Portuguese traditions), the global coexistence, which was fostered by the decompartmentalization of the world, was made of reciprocal influences. The Europeans left their marks in the world but, while interacting with the peoples overseas, also underwent significant cultural changes.

> It is useful to highlight that the contemporary Western culture is, in itself, a result from miscegenation [*mestiçagem*], and that the so-called minority cultures influenced it in a coexistence of exchanges, and not only conflicts (Costa; Lacerda, 2007, p. 12).

> [...] we will be twice as much careful when looking to the Portuguese Expansion in search of intercultural phenomena, as we are aware they were born from the most unlikely situations and in places and times that were averse to their formation. Take, for example, slavery, which was the mother of many of the intercultural societies in the American continent (Costa; Lacerda, 2007, p. 23).

It should also be noticed that there has been a growing trend to the depoliticization of narratives. This is very clear in the quotes from two versions of the same textbook that were published in the 2000s, about the *forced transportation* of enslaved populations[14]. In the second version of this book, violence was erased:

> [...] large migrations took place: by Europeans to America and other continents, while black African slaves were taken *by force* to the American territory (Barreira; Moreira, 2003, p. 28, emphasis added).

> [...] migrations of peoples took place - by European emigrants and African slaves, especially to America (Barreira; Moreira, 2008, p. 46).

The hegemony of these depoliticizing narratives has been challenged in Portugal by grassroots social movements, which have developed several activities in regards to education. With few financial resources, small collectives have promoted the dynamization of community libraries, debates with students and teachers in partnership with public schools, training and political awareness activities, among others. These initiatives make it clear how the anti-racist agenda has been marginalized by the Portuguese government, and its unavailability to rethink the canons of knowledge that keep guiding history and its teaching. The critique to the very production of knowledge has been essential, and it brings the connection of the history of colonialism and slavery to institutional racism to the fore - a marginal approach in the Portuguese context where, as in other contexts, a presentist and depoliticizing approach predominates in regards to racism, understood as resulting from *mutual prejudices and lack of understanding*. This is clear in the excerpt from a manifesto released on May 1, 2014, by the *Plataforma Gueto* (Ghetto Platform) collective movement:

> The black men and women in this country have been experiencing a situation that is not very different from the time they were imposed to an indigenous code to which the current immigration and nationality law is somehow due. The cheap or almost-slave workforce situation is an inheritance and an extension of colonialism in and outside the metropolises, and it keeps forcing us to immigrate, strangling the countries of origin and concentrating them in neighborhoods that are similar to the ones of indigenous people in the Portuguese colonies in the last-century.

> Workforce imports are constant in Portugal's history. The slaves who were imported in the 16th century to work the land that the Portuguese abandoned and to perform the domestic work that the wealthy Portuguese refused to do; the thousands of Mozambicans sold by Salazar to the apartheid regime in South Africa, to work in the gold mines; the so-called indentured laborers [*contratatados*] taken to Angola and São Tomé; to the more recent imports of workforce in the 1990s, to build Portugal's major public construction projects and to work in services, are euphemistically called immigration waves (*Plataforma Gueto*, 2014, online).

Despite the critical initiatives and proposals that have been developed in several contexts, there is still a long way to go. Although there is an increased visibility of the knowledge produced by grassroots movements' intellectuals, there is still a *segregation/separation* of the knowledge produced: most initiatives that challenge hegemonic narratives on the relationship between race and the processes of national formation, identity, and belonging result mostly from collective mobilization – as analyzed by Stephen Small (2015) in regards to the historical knowledge regarding enslavement in the United States. The struggle for knowledge is, therefore, a political one.

Final Remarks

In this article, we addressed debates on race, Eurocentrism, national identity, and history teaching in Brazil and Portugal - two contexts that were historically marked by many points of intersection, but seldom comparatively studied in this respect, to which contributes the scarce academic production on race/racism in the Portuguese context, in contrast with Brazil. The specific period studied in this article expresses this same unbalance: in Brazil, evoking the racial issue most often entails outlining the historicity of the debates since the constitution of the Brazilian Republic in the late 19th century; in Portugal, the idea and implementation of the Republic in 1910 is generally absolved from any intentionality, contribution, or impact in the construction of a racial political project for the nation (which is largely left aside in academic endeavors) – while the *Estado Novo* arises as the *racial period* by excellence. *Lusotropicalism* arises as one of the points of intersection between both contexts, even though in the two countries analyzed the ideas on the exceptionality of the Brazilian and Portuguese already permeated the debates on race, history, and national identity since the late 19th century, and have continued to be mobilized in the contemporary political debates. What we attempted to emphasize was how, even though with different nuances in the emphasis given to the notions of miscegenation and hybridity in the construction of the idea of the nation and in its articulation with notions of Europeanness (Hesse, 2007), both contexts have avoided a comprehensive debate on race and power, especially in education. This is particularly relevant in order to rethink the modern school as an institution that perpetuates the maintenance of racial privilege.

In Brazil, the analysis has been centered on the role played by race in debates on the idea of nation since the beginning of the Republic in the late 19th century, and it considered the part that was attributed to school in the construction of this political project - which favored, more or less explicitly, the notion of a "socially and culturally white nation" (Dávila, 2006, p. 36). In this analysis, we highlighted how the debates were correlated with the possibility of discussing the *myth of racial democracy*, with the example of Project Unesco, from the 1950s, which was organized according to the assumption that Brazil was a "laboratory of civilization" (Ramos, 1934, p. 179) and which established the idea of racism as prejudice. Even with all the political and cultural initiatives that were adopted in Brazil, such as responses to the historical demands of the black movement, one has to notice, however, that the *school* as an institution producer of social and cultural homogeneities keeps being legitimated, and that measures to deal with institutionalized racism, such as affirmative action and quotas for black students, for example, which albeit being fully adopted and supported by Brazil's Supreme Court, have not managed to reach national-level political consensus. In the Portuguese context, in turn, the debate on race/racism has been constantly avoided over the past decades. The democratic period of the last four decades is generally seen as having eliminated the Eurocen-

tric and racist excesses, and it was thus privileged in our analysis. And, even though the debate regarding Eurocentrism in the teaching of history was taken a little further in the mid-1970s, the proposals that were put forth by the intellectuals then - which were mirrored in textbooks - did not reflect on the role of race in the production of knowledge, thus informing the master narratives of history and continuing to ascribe black African peoples with a condition of civilization inferiority. In turn, with Portugal's *shift to Europe* – at the end of that decade, a fact that was particularly expressive in legislative terms in the 1980s, when Portugal officially joined the European Economic Community – the narrative of a European (implicitly white) Portugal was re-written in a more evident way. Initially, this led to the relinquishing of the debates from the previous decade related to education, curricula, and textbooks, that moved away from the political goals for the *European nation*, even though they emphasized the *values of cultural coexistence, tolerance, and respect towards differences*; at a later time, which began in the 1990s and was particularly visible in the last decade, we observed a rising depoliticization of the debate on the *celebration of difference and intercultural dialogue*, paving the way to delegitimize the demands from the grassroots movements for a place in (the production of) the national history. Thus, while the period after the 1974 revolution promised to bring a change in approach, racism and Eurocentrism kept being debated and theorized little, due to the heritage of certain ideas on race, identity, and European identity and belonging, which were largely consolidated with the success and legacy from lusotropicalism.

The depoliticization of the discussions regarding the teaching of history and the evasion of an approach to race as a historically-configured relationship of power are common characteristics which can be observed nowadays, both in Portugal and in Brazil. Similar challenges are therefore put forth in both contexts, namely to foster political debate, especially in regards to education, that critically engages with race and power, and, simultaneously to envisage and put in place education systems that are culturally enriching to all. The exchange of experiences and the comparative analyses on the Brazilian and Portuguese contexts, both in regards to political struggles and specifically concerning education, are key to contribute to the advancement of the debates in both social realities.

Notes

1 This was Portugal's 1974 revolution, which overthrew the authoritarian period of the *Estado Novo* (1926-1974).

2 Please refer to Brazil (1934). Eugenics was a particularly relevant movement in the late 19th century in Europe, which believed in genetics-based human perfectibility and fostered the *selection of the species* based on breeding individuals

that were considered *pure* and *superior*. Eugenics is frequently associated with the German Nazi period, which started in Hitler's administration in 1933.

3 Gilberto Freyre is also considered the most important Brazilian intellectual regarding the construction of a *racial democracy* in Brazil.

4 For the relations between the black movement and the Brazilian State, please refer to Alberti; Pereira (2007a).

5 Humberto Sérgio Costa Lima (1957) was a PT (Brazil's Labor Party) Lower-house member representing Pernambuco between 1995 and 1999.

6 Joaquim Beato (1924) was a senator from Espírito Santo from 1994 to 1995. According to Brazil's Senate database, he submitted two bills: one, from January 25, 1995, proposing the regulation of Law no. 8081, from September 21, 1990, which defined crimes that resulted from racial or ethnic prejudice; and another, from December 06, 1994, that proposed to change Law no. 4737, from July 15, 1965 (Electoral Code) and established a minimum time in advance for joining a party before someone could be registered as a candidate. Paulo Renato Paim (1950) was a Lower-house representative from Rio Grande do Sul in four administrations (1987-1991, 1991-1995, 1995-1999, and 1999-2002) and a senator representing the same state in 2003, always as a member of PT. In Brazil's Lower Congress House, he submitted Bill no. 678 from May 10, 1988, which established the inclusion of *General African and Black History in Brazil* as a subject in the mandatory school curriculum. When he was a senator, Abdias do Nascimento submitted Senate Bill (PLS - *Projeto de Lei do Senado*) no. 75, from April 24, 1997, which prescribed affirmative action measures to implement social equality for black people and included Yoruba and Swahili as optional languages in foreign language curricula. Female senator Benedita da Silva submitted PLS no. 18, from February 22, 1995, which included subject *African History and Culture* in the curricula.

7 It is important to point out that, still in president Lula's administration, in March 2008, the LDB was changed again by Law no. 11645/2008, which added the mandatory teaching of African, African-Brazilian, and Indigenous history and culture, in order to respond to the requests of Indigenous social movements.

8 Please refer to Hasenbalg (1988, p. 121-122). In fact, as stated by Carlos Hasenbalg, when slavery was abolished, the great majority of the black population in Brazil was free or had already been freed, as "[...] in 1872, the date of the first Brazilian census, 74% of the population of color was free; this share rose to approximately 90% in 1887".

9 In its first formulations in the 1930s and 1940s, the lusotropicalist thesis was not well received among political elites in Portugal: the right had a nationalist interpretation of the specificity of Portuguese colonialism; the left was skeptical about the accuracy of the historical facts in which this discourse drew on, namely arguing that it was contrary to colonial practice (Castelo, 1998) in a context of affirmation of the superiority of European civilization and the inferiority of the Africans (Almeida, 2000).

10 Please also refer to Barreira and Moreira (1996, p. 40).

11 This expression was coined by dictator António de Oliveira Salazar at the beginning of the African liberation wars in 1961, and reflected Portugal's political isolation at the time.

12 Please refer to Magalhães (2002, p. 68-69).

13 Please refer to Araújo e Maeso (2015).

14 Please refer to Araújo and Maeso (2012b).

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Amilcar Araujo Pereira holds a PhD in history from *Universidade Federal Fluminense* (UFF), and was a Capes-Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Columbia University, in New York, USA (2015-16). He is a professor at the School of Education, in the Graduate Program in Education (PPGE) and in the Graduate Program in History Teaching, of Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).
E-mail: amilcarpereira@hotmail.com

Marta Araújo holds a PhD in sociology from London University, and is currently Principal Researcher at the Center for Social Studies of Universidade de Coimbra - where researches on Eurocentrism, racism, education and public policy and teaches in several doctorate programs. She is also a guest lecturer in the *Black Europe Summer School* (*International Institute for Research and Education*, Amsterdam).
E-mail: marta@ces.uc.pt