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Decolonial approach and geography education: analysis based on a 5th grade textbook

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Decolonial approach and geography education: analysis based on a 5th grade textbook

ABSTRACT

The paradigm of decoloniality seeks actions to design a more just and egalitarian world. In this context, critical-reflexive thinking, exercised at schools, contributes to the analysis of Brazilian ethnic-racial issues from a decolonial perspective. The objective of this article is to reflect upon and present possibilities for approaching a decolonial School Geography using the textbook and other didactic-pedagogical tools. Methodologically, this study is qualitative in nature, of the case study type, and is also descriptive and exploratory. The selective textbook was the 5th grade "Geography" (2018), by Cândido da Silva. In it, Chapter 1, "The population", and Chapter 2, "The Brazilian people" were analysed. The results indicate that the images and narratives in the book portray the figure of Black individuals as poor, oppressed, and marginalised within society. Didactic-pedagogical strategies, such as the construction of poetry and other textual genres, will enable students to reflect on ethnic-racial issues, aiming to combat colonialist thinking.

Keywords: Ethnic-racial issues. Decoloniality. School geography. Textbook.

Abordagem descolonial e ensino de geografia: uma análise a partir de um livro didático do 5o ano

RESUMO

O paradigma da descolonialidade busca ações para conceber um mundo mais justo e igualitário. Nesse âmbito, o pensamento crítico-reflexivo exercitado na escola pode contribuir para a análise das questões étnico-raciais brasileiras numa perspectiva descolonial. Pensando nisso, o objetivo deste artigo é refletir e apresentar possibilidades de como abordar uma geografia escolar descolonial, a partir do livro didático e de outras ferramentas didático-pedagógicas. Metodologicamente, este estudo tem caráter qualitativo, do tipo estudo de caso, constituindo-se também como descritivo e exploratório. O livro didático selecionado foi Geografia, do 5º ano (2018), de Cândido da Silva. Nele, foram analisados o capítulo 1, intitulado A população, e o capítulo 2, O povo brasileiro. Os resultados apontam que as imagens e os discursos do livro expõem a figura do negro como sendo pobre, oprimido e às margens da sociedade. Estratégias didático-pedagógicas, como a construção de poesias e outros gêneros textuais, possibilitarão aos alunos refletirem acerca das questões étnico-raciais, visando combater o pensamento colonialista.

Palavras-chave: Questões étnico-raciais. Descolonialidade. Geografia escolar. Livro didático.

Enfoque decolonial y enseñanza de la geografía: análisis a partir de un libro de texto de quinto grado

RESUMEN

El paradigma de la decolonialidad busca acciones para diseñar un mundo más justo e igualitario. En este ámbito, el pensamiento crítico-reflexivo, ejercido en la escuela, contribuye al análisis de las cuestiones étnico-raciales brasileñas desde una perspectiva decolonial. El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar y presentar posibilidades de cómo abordar una Geografía Escolar decolonial, desde el libro de texto y otras herramientas didáctico-pedagógicas. Metodológicamente, este estudio tiene un carácter cualitativo, del tipo estudio de caso,

y además es descriptivo y exploratorio. El libro de texto seleccionado fue el de 5º grado *Geografía* (2018), de Cândido da Silva. En él, se analizaron el capítulo 1, *La población*, y el capítulo 2, *El pueblo brasileño*. Los resultados indican que las imágenes y discursos del libro exponen la figura del negro como pobre, oprimido y marginado de la sociedad. Las estrategias didáctico-pedagógicas, como la construcción de poesía y otros géneros textuales, permitirán a los estudiantes reflexionar sobre cuestiones étnico-raciales, con el objetivo de combatir el pensamiento colonialista.

Palabras clave: Cuestiones étnico-raciales. Decolonialidad. Geografía escolar. Libro de texto.

INTRODUCTION

When we consider Brazilian society and the various conflicts that emerge with increasing frequency, it is important to remember that we are a society with a colonial foundation. In other words, many of the country's problems have origins that span decades and have been present since colonisation (Abreu, 2011).

Thus, understanding Brazil as a society with a colonial foundation means understanding what colonialism is. According to Loback and Bezerra (2018, p. 2), colonialism can be understood as “[...] the structure of political and economic domination/exploitation of the labour and natural resources of a certain population by another with a different identity, whose central seats are located in another jurisdiction.” In this vein, colonialism manifests itself in various forms within our political and academic institutions, directly influencing the manner in which we construct knowledge (Cruz, 2017).

That way, it can be asserted that the colonality of power is “above all, the intention of the coloniser to eliminate “the many ways of knowing” (and living) of the subjugated and colonised people and replace them with new ways of knowing (and living) that directly served the purposes of the civilising processes of the colonial regime” (Cruz, 2017, p. 17). According to Quijano (2005), the colonality of power refers to the constitution of a capitalist, modern/colonial, and Eurocentric global power structure, founded on the creation of the idea of race, biologically imagined to naturalise the colonised as inferior to colonisers.

Fundamentally, the theory of the colonality of power offers a broader and more complex perspective on power relations. Mignolo (2010, p. 12) suggests that the colonial matrix of power “is a complex structure of intertwined levels”, involving the control of the economy, authority, nature and natural resources, gender and sexuality, and subjectivity and knowledge. In essence, “coloniality reproduces itself in a triple dimension: that of power, knowledge, and being” (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 100).

In this way, it is understood that one of the hallmarks of colonialism is the creation of disparities, for instance, through the economic, political, cultural, and epistemic advantages that certain social groups have received throughout history. This has allowed individuals from these groups to experience a privileged trajectory, distinct from the rest of society.

Despite the end of the colonial period, the traces of colonialism are deeply embedded in Brazilian society across different spaces and times. In light of this, decolonisation can be considered an act of resistance amidst the numerous debates that arise in contemporary times (Haesbaert, 2021).

In this vein, considering power relations, inequalities, forms of oppression, political dimensions, and historicity is central to decolonial thinking. In other words, decolonial studies do not overlook the dimensions of experiences, symbolic elements, and cultural

aspects. Everything is interpreted within a theoretical and methodological framework of power relations, and “to build a decolonial narrative, it is necessary to think of space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity” (Cruz, 2017, p. 22).

Therefore, it becomes evident how pervasive racism is in social dynamics, making it necessary to debate it across different spheres of society. That being so, the role of the school in making this discussion more fruitful is emphasized, in order to prevent instances of racism against Black and Indigenous people, for example, within the educational environment. Currently, there are regulations such as Law No. 10,639, enacted in January 2003, and Law No 11.645/08, enacted in March 2008, which are considered the primary “[...] instruments for combating racism in the field of education. They are the result of historical struggles by the Brazilian Black Movement” (Santos, 2011, p. 5).

Given the importance of debating racial issues in schools, it becomes relevant to observe and analyse what textbooks, the primary didactic-pedagogic tool used by teachers, convey about racism, and how we can use this teaching tool to think in a decolonial manner, by critiquing it or going beyond it. Santos (2011, p. 9) considers the textbook as the main regulator of curricular practices in schools, and in order to build an antiracist education, it is necessary to adopt critical stances towards it”.

In this regard, it is often observed that textbooks present stereotypical images of Black people and Africa, with simplified views and perceptions. Ratts *et al.* (2012), in a study on how Black individuals are represented through images in Geography textbooks used in the municipal school system of Goiânia, found that Black people are always depicted in a stereotypical and negative manner, whereas white individuals are portrayed as a positive reference. The authors also highlight that Africa is depicted as a wild continent, devoid of any development, and its population is portrayed as living in a rustic and miserable manner.

In this context, as Geography is considered “[...] an instrument of education for racial equality” (Santos, 2011, p. 5), it is necessary to contemplate the deconstruction of the narrative of minority/inferiority of Black and Indigenous peoples and African communities through a decolonising approach. This is essential because such epistemicide is prominently present in the formation of school knowledge (Loback; Bezerra, 2018). Building on this, this work aims to reflect on and present possibilities for conceptualising a decolonial School Geography using textbooks and other didactic-pedagogical tools that can be implemented in the school context by teachers and, most importantly, by students in the construction of decolonial thought.

After the above considerations, which constitute the introduction of this article, the following sections are presented: the theoretical framework of the research, based on works by Crenshaw (2002), Cruz (2017, 2020), Haesbaert (2021), Oliveira (2014, 2020, 2022), among other authors who address the relevant themes; the methodology, which outlines the research approach, modalities, and procedures for organising the study data; the results and discussions of the data based on the theoretical framework; and finally, the concluding remarks, which revisit the overall objective, the research hypothesis, and its relationship with the investigation process, bringing the text to a close.

The issue of race in Brazil and the decolonial debate

Discussing the racial issue in Brazil entails addressing a topic that remains taboo, as the intellectual elite and the dynamics of state political power have, for centuries, rejected

the idea that race, and thus racism, have shaped Brazilian society. According to Oliveira (2020, p. 76), “In Brazil, discussing race and racism means understanding dimensions of our society that are often silenced, omitted, and erased”.

Accordingly, racism, besides structuring the economic and political system, has also been ingrained in the dynamics of mentalities, that is, how society perceives the world. Hence, “[...] everything that is white, Christian, heterosexual, bourgeois, and Western is positioned as superior and central. Conversely, what is considered as the rest is viewed as the passive, inferior pole that is waiting for salvation from the modern world” (Oliveira, 2022, p. 3). As a result, colonial mentalities laid the groundwork for an epistemic racism, wherein racism is inscribed in knowledge production leading to the invisibility of certain groups and the prominence of others. These are epistemologies that blind us.

When we start from the concept of structural racism in the political and economic system, in the formation of mentalities, in epistemes, we are simultaneously striving to understand how these structures of domination have been interwoven and formed in an intersecting manner. In other words, racism has never acted or operates in isolation but always in conjunction with other oppressive systems. The intersectional debate has provided us with elements to consider the multiple hierarchies that reinforce each other. In this sense, intersectionality “specifically address the way in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and others” (Crenshaw, 2002, p. 177). In this regard, it is apparent that racism persists and continues to demonstrate its adaptability in all areas, whether in individual actions, institutional settings, politics, or the economy.

For this reason, it is essential to understand the inseparability of race, gender, and class to analyse the magnitude of social phenomena that affect various population groups. In this context, intersectional is a “[...] new theoretical and empirical framework in the social sciences, particularly in gender studies, both in theory and political practice.” (Rios; Perez; Ricoldi, 2019, p. 38). It provides guidance for the construction of equity in Brazil and globally in contemporary times.

On this account, while we engage in discussions about racism, there is a need to contextualize and periodize the debate on the racial issue¹(Oliveira, 2020). We are addressing structural racism in the modern colonial world system, where there are multiple racisms that do not operate in the same manner in the Brazilian and United States contexts, for instance. However, one should not approach the discussion of the racial issue by considering the United States to be more racist than Brazil. This is a misconception, as it is crucial to contemplate the following question: Is society racist or not? Racism engenders forms of dehumanization of the other in each of these socio-spatial formations (Oliveira, 2020).

Therefore, in discussing the regionalization of racism, we also need to contextualize it within the Brazilian framework. In other words, racism in Rio Grande do Sul is not the same as racism in Rio de Janeiro, especially due to the migratory dynamics that occurred at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century with the discourse of whitening the population (Oliveira, 2022).

¹ “Considering the world system as modern-colonial is to let space speak, given that it is the world-space as a whole that is shaped and not the world seen as if it were distinct stages of Europe and, thus, an evolutionism in which the places/regions of the world are silenced” (Porto-Gonçalves; Quental, 2012, p. 9).

In the context of the end of colonialism in Brazil, the Brazilian colonial elites, along with the State, used the idea that since the population was predominantly Black and mixed-race (a result of the colonial rape of Black women and women who were Eurocentrically labelled as indigenous), it was necessary to bring immigrants to Brazil (Oliveira, 2022). Some of these immigrants were granted land, credits, and even had their passages paid for by the Brazilian government with the aim of whitening the population and the territory. Thus, it is evident that “[...] Brazilian racism invented the Black person as a spatial problem. This is not just an epistemological issue, but also an ontological one” (Oliveira, 2020, p. 84).

In this sense, it is evident that since the abolition of the slave regime, whitening policies have been implemented. The Land Law of 1850 itself can be interpreted as a whitening policy. Dávila (2006), in the book *“Diploma of Whiteness: Social and Racial Policy in Brazil 1917-1945”*, highlights how eugenic thought has been entrenched in the history of Brazilian education, directly influencing educational reforms in Brazil. Such policies were aimed at non-white and poor Brazilians, in other words, those seen as holding back in the country. “Thus, it was these policies that would correct such differences by educating these segments of population and curing their illnesses, ultimately granting them a diploma of whiteness” (Selles, 2007, p. 531). There is also the book *“Pure Race”* by Pietra Diwan (2007) which addresses eugenics in Brazil and worldwide, highlighting the concern of eugenicists regarding the decrease in European immigration to Brazil during Getúlio Vargas’ government in the Estado Novo era (1930-1945). According to Seyferth (2002, p. 118), the Estado Novo was a “[...] period of the most radical disqualification of ethnic and cultural differences, imagined as a threat to the unity of the Nation-State”, as many physicians, notably the Brazilian physician Renato Kehl and intellectuals, aimed for the whitening of the population through interbreeding with Europeans.

It is important to consider that there was also a quest for whitening the image of the territory in an effort to create an imaginary world and prevent the “[...] degeneration of the nation by whitening it” (Gonçalves, 2018, p. 516). Therefore, in all areas of European colonization, there was an attempt to transplant landscapes derived from the civilized European world to the Brazilian territory. This transposition of landscape becomes a form of territorial re-appropriation as a tool for creating new prostheses in the territory; for example, in Londrina, Paraná, regarded as “little London”, and in Nova Friburgo, the “Brazilian Switzerland”.

Based on this, it is a territorial history that renders certain groups invisible in the territory, such as the longstanding presence of Black individuals in the city of Nova Friburgo, which earned the title of “Brazilian Switzerland” upon commemorating 200 years of Swiss colonization (Simoni; Rua, 2022). According to Simoni and Rua (2022, p. 3),

[...] much has been written about the white population in the production of the space in Nova Friburgo. However, little is said about the significant presence of Black individuals in the formation of Nova Friburgo over the past 200 years, so much so that they seem not to have existed as participants in the history and geography of the current municipality. The importance of groups of other ethnic and social backgrounds – such as Luso-Brazilians, Indigenous peoples, Germans, French, and others – is also marginalized.

Therefore, we have data on who lived in a specific territory, such as Nova Friburgo, but we also know that certain groups have been rendered invisible by history. Hence, regrettably, a status of non-existence is established, and if individuals from these groups do not exist, they can be exploited or even killed without it being considered a crime. “Then, decolonization can be seen as an ever broader dynamic, as it involves re-existence (in the sense of resisting to defend one’s own existence)” (Haesbaert, 2021, p. 10). Seyferth (2002, p. 118) points out that:

The racial issue is implicit in the Royal Decree authorizing the establishment of Swiss immigrants in the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro alluding to civilization, and primarily in article 18 of the aforementioned treaty [Treaty of Nova Friburgo, signed in 1818 by Dom João VI], which deals with the creation of a militia of 150 Swiss, capable of bearing arms, collaborating in the maintenance of the Portuguese regiments of white colour.

Accordingly, the idea of whitening the territory disguises the economic advantages, privileges, and usurpations that immigrant whiteness has had in the formation of Brazilian territory. A striking example is that, between 1824 and 1829, the first colonial settlements in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina were predominantly occupied by Germans, as they were perceived as efficient farmers but, moreover, they were white. “In the rules for admitting foreigners, the ideal immigrant, the only one deserving of subsidies, is the farmer; more than that, a white farmer who emigrates with his family” (Seyferth, 2002, p. 119).

Consequently, considering the debate on the racial issue means contemplating how it regionalized in Brazil. Thus, the racial classifications present in Rio Grande do Sul differ from those in any other Brazilian state, making it impossible to understand how groups are racialized without considering the territorial dimension. In this vein, we agree with Cruz (2020, p. 562, our translation) when the author asserts that: “Territory, as a result of territoriality, can be used to contain or restrict, as well as to include or exclude, producing borders, boundaries, and forms of social classification among individuals or groups”.

In this context, it is also necessary to consider that the corporeality of individuals will determine whether they can access certain spaces. The project of whiteness, therefore, aimed to define the use of space by Black people, that is, a discriminatory use where they could not go anywhere freely. Thus, an urban geo-chrono politics (Oliveira, 2014) is established, where being Black, in different places and times, can be a matter of life or death, an obstacle to accessing environments, or can lead to harassment and criminalization. Consequently, the territorial and corporeal distinction of rights creates a discriminatory use of spaces for Black people (Oliveira, 2014).

For this reason, it is essential to reflect on when the debates about Black geographies emerge. They arise precisely when the issue is brought into the knowledge-producing spaces of Brazilian society, namely universities. According to Mendes and Ratts (2022, p. 11), “Brazilian society, in a structural and institutional manner, has produced coloniality in a wide array of spaces [...], including universities and schools, causing them to become reproducers of hegemonic narratives.

The pressure from social movements brought the following question into debate: how are groups marginalized in the interpretation of reality? In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s,

the discussion expanded due to the Brazilian Black movement bringing this issue to the forefront, making education one of its primary fronts of struggle, with affirmative action debate as a central theme.

Currently, we observe that research focused on the debate of Black geographies is growing through research groups, extension projects, the creation of methodologies, and teacher training. That being the case, we emphasize that it is essential for educators, in their theoretical and methodological discussions, to debate and contemplate the curriculum in a decolonial manner, as “The process of decolonizing the curriculum becomes an extremely important factor for breaking the silencing that still persists in the educational environment” (Mendes; Ratts, 2022, p. 14).

To such a degree, when we think about the curriculum in a decolonial manner, the goal is not to delegitimize the knowledge produced in Europe, but to allow new knowledge to enter the school space, making it more plural and democratic. Through the daily work with the writings of Black and Indigenous authors organizing lectures, round tables, cultural presentations, exhibitions, and visits to museums that involve ethnic-racial issues and Indigenous traditions, it will be possible for children and young people to recognize the importance of the decolonial debate in teacher training universities stands out, with a focus on decolonizing the curriculum, taking into account, for example, ethnic-racial issues.

In such way, a decolonizing curriculum in Geography will give voice to Black and Indigenous people who have been negatively racialized, silenced, and even overshadowed in geographical thought, allowing for the consideration of ethnic-racial issues from the perspective of Black geographers, for example.

METHODOLOGY

The central scope of this work is to reflect on and present how we can conceptualize a decolonial Geography using textbooks, as well as to showcase some possibilities for employing didactic-pedagogical strategies to address this theme. Methodologically, a qualitative approach was chosen, specifically a case study, which also constitutes descriptive and exploratory research.

To address the research objective, we present a literature review on some aspects of coloniality and decoloniality, with the aim of grounding reflections on their significance and importance in geographical studies over time. Regarding the development of this study, a systematic reading was employed to obtain the necessary categories for deepening and discussing the topic explored here.

Furthermore, a documentary research was conducted. The textbook selected for analysis was “Geography, 5th Grade” by Edilson Adão Cândido Silva (2018), published by FTD. It is worth noting that the choice of the textbook was based on its use in municipal schools in Campina Grande/PB, the focus of the author’s research. The book is divided into four units, each subdivided into two chapters (Charte 1).

For the analysis, the chapters dealing with the topic of population were chosen, with an emphasis on the Brazilian population. Specifically, Chapter 1, titled “*The population*”, and chapter 2, “*The Brazilian People*”. After the selection of the chapters, an exploratory Reading was conducted to observe the main aspects of the book concerning the approach to the history of Brazilian peoples. Subsequently, the highlighted points were selected and analysed

Charte 1 – Content of the Units and Chapters of the 5th Grade Geography Textbook.

Unit	Chapter	Content		
Unit 1	Chapter 1	The World Population		
POPULATION IN THE WORLD AND IN BRAZIL	The population	Where the World Population Is		
		How Many We are		
	Chapter 2	Brazilian Children		
		Our Indigenous Roots		
		The Yanomami		
		Indigenous Festivals		
		Our African Roots		
		Down with Prejudice		
Unit 2	Chapter 1	The European and Asian Contributions		
		The Quilombo of Palmares		
	The Brazilian People	The Primary Sector		
		The Secondary Sector		
		Child Labour is Not Cool		
		The Tertiary Sector		
	Unit 3	Chapter 2	Women in the Labour Market	
			Understanding Inequality	
Quality of Life and Social Inequalities		Health and Life Expectancy		
		Education		
		Wealth and Poverty		
		Human Development		
		Learning to Be a Citizen		
		Differences and Similarities		
Unit 4	Chapter 1	Work and Income in Brazil		
		The Functions of the City		
	Unit 3	Chapter 1	The Urban Network	
			The city	
			Cities Have History	
			São Paulo: How I Became a City	
		Unit 4	Chapter 2	The History of My City
				Cities Grow
	The Metropolis		Parts of the City	
			The Importance of Cities	
			The Twelve Brazilian Metropolises	
			The Metropolis and Cinema	
Urban Mobility				
Accessibility				
Unit 4	Chapter 1	Brazilian Metropolises		
		Global Metropolises		
		The Urban Environment		
		Energy Yesterday and Today		
	ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNICATION	Brazil's Energy	Energy Sources	
			Electric Power in Brazil	
			Saving Energy	
		Chapter 2	Preventing Energy Waste	
			Transportation Past and Present	
			Railway Expansion	
Brazil's Transport Matrix				
Communication Means Past and Present				
Technology Vocabulary				
Newspaper: An Important Means of Communication				
Vehicle Production in Brazil				

Source: Prepared by the author based on Silva (2018).

based on our theoretical framework, through a critical, reflective, and interpretative reading of how we can think and act in a decolonial manner in school geography, without rendering invisible peoples and groups who are commonly remembered only on commemorative dates or in negative light.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To understand ethnic-racial issues in Geography education, we cannot overlook the debate about the population, as we are discussing bodies that move and alter different geographical spaces at different times, leaving imprints on the culture and daily habits of the inhabited localities. According to Martins and Pureza (2020, p. 8),

In Geography education, when addressing ethnic-racial content, it should be emphasized that women and men, Black and Indigenous people are also agents of transformation of geographical space. They are constructors of their own spatialities, territories, and territorialities, as well as landscapes and places marked by ancestral cultures.

Being a crucial theme in Geography, the population debate gains prominence in both primary and secondary education through various approaches, whether in relation to growth estimates, internal and international migration, migratory flows, among other issues, including racial matter.

In this fashion, it is crucial to pay attention to how the textbook presents the population, since, in many cases, Black individuals and Indigenous peoples are depicted negatively, always associated with slavery, poverty, subservience, and underprivileged positions in society. This can be observed, for example, in the studies by Silva (2003) and Ratts *et al.* (2012).

Thus and so, given that the textbook is the most widely used pedagogical resource in schools today, it is essential that they “[...] comply with Law No. 10.639/03 and represent Black individuals in a ‘real’ manner. This means not only associating them with slavery but also highlighting their contributions to society and their current life contexts” (Marques; Fonseca, 2021, p. 29)².

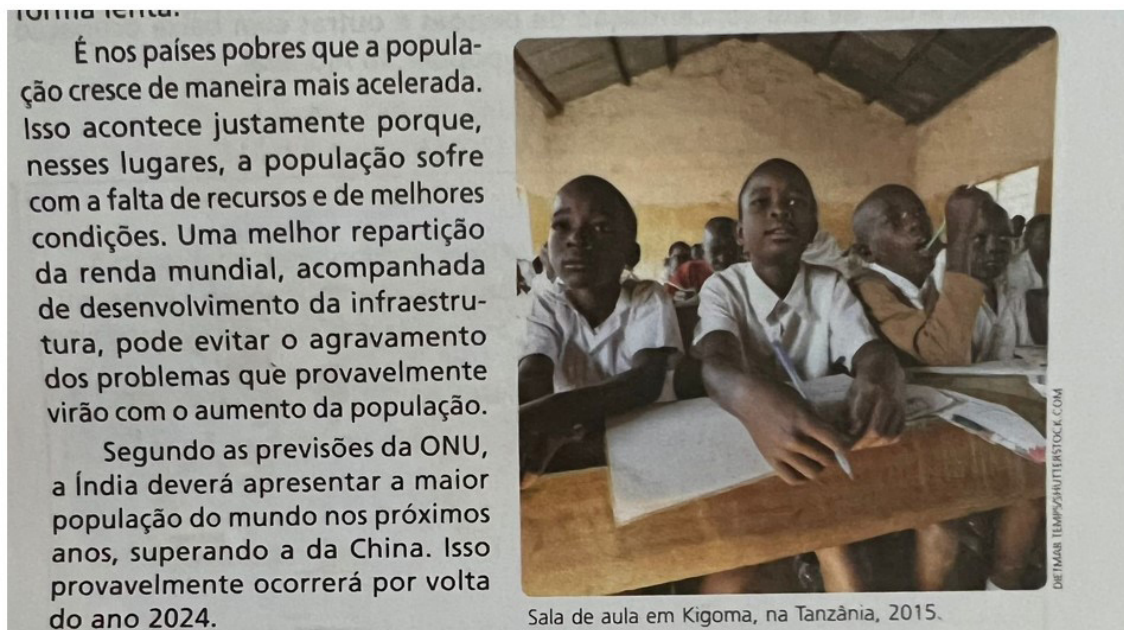
The first chapter analysed focuses on the world population. However, when highlighting global population growth, which occurs in different ways and has specific particularities, the book includes an image of Black children in a school in Tanzania, along with a text implying that population growth is more accelerated in poor African countries. This establishes a perceived connection between poverty and the race of the individuals.

In such a way, Black individuals are consistently portrayed as “burdensome” figures occupying marginalized spaces within society. Notably, the examples cited in this chapter, from global population growth to migration movements were related to African countries, which are often depicted solely in the context of poverty. It is important to emphasize that the author’s intention is not to deny the data regarding the African continent. Africa does indeed have some of the worst indicators in terms of poverty, illiteracy, access to

² The cited law “Amends Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996, which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education, to include in the official curriculum of the educational network the mandatory theme ‘Afro-Brazilian History and Culture’, and provides other provisions” (Brasil, 2003).

infrastructure, and the Human Development Index (HDI). Nevertheless, it is critical that textbooks do not disseminate such information as if it were inherent to the continent, as done in Figure 1. It is necessary to provide context, as these data are a reflection of the historical colonization and expropriation of African countries, which have left structural issues in their wake.

Figure 1 – Image of children in a Classroom in Kigoma, Tanzania, 2015³.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 13).

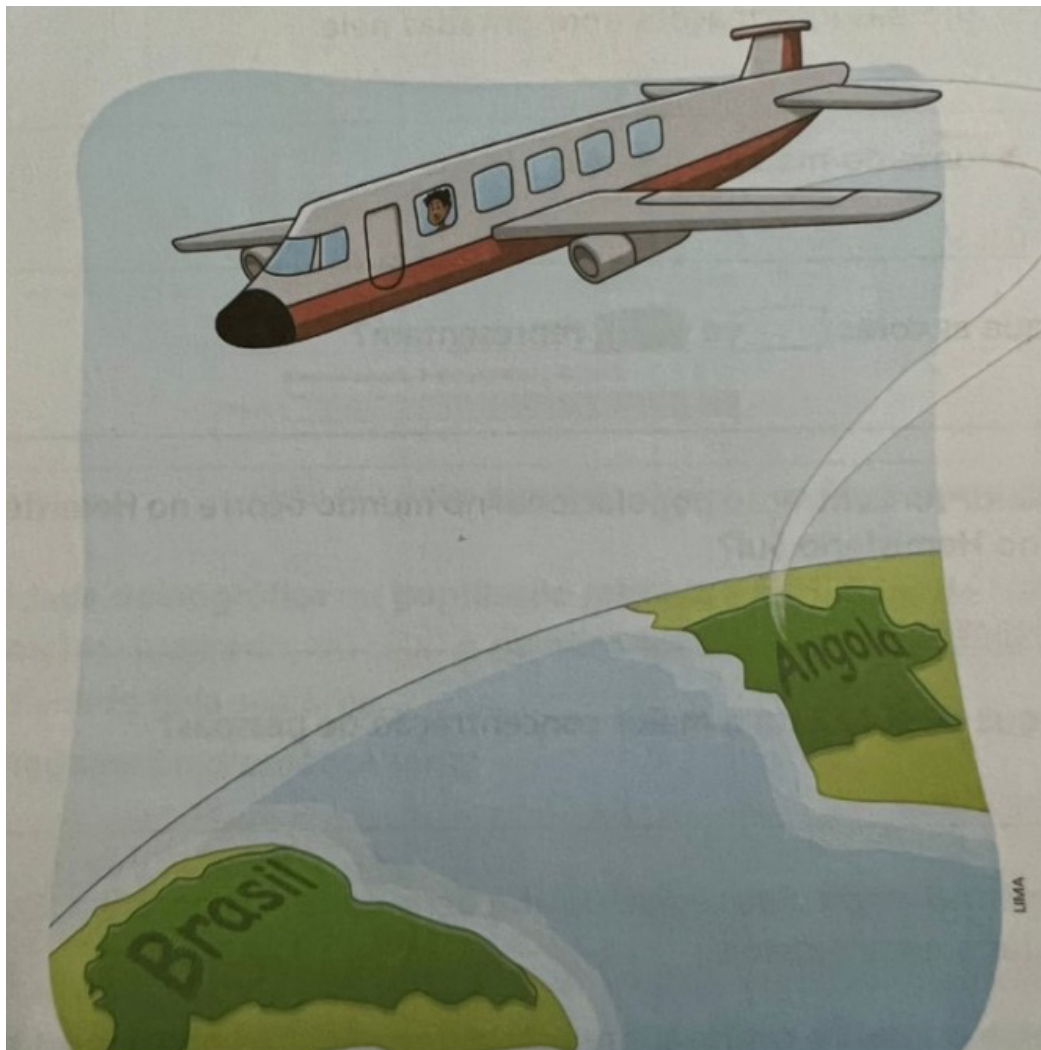
The book further infers that Angolans move to Brazil due to cultural and linguistic similarities, narrating a fictional story of a Black character named Keza (Figure 2), born in Angola, Africa, who immigrated to Brazil with the intention of studying at a university. Additionally, there is a passage intended for the teacher, dealing with the integration and segregation of Angolan refugees in São Paulo, demonstrating that Angolan individuals face challenges in Brazil largely due to the structural racism present in the country. Once again, the portrayal of the Black individual is depicted in a position of inferiority, having to cross boundaries in order to attain “better living conditions”.

Hence, through the images and discourses present, mindsets are shaped in children wherein the figure of the Black individual is generally perceived as someone who is poor, oppressed, and marginalized within society.

We can highlight, even in Chapter 1, the presence of peoples who, throughout history, immigrated to Brazil with the Portuguese, Italians, and Japanese leading this ranking for a long time. It is important to remember that in an attempt to whiten the population, many of these immigrants received government benefits such as land, credits, and even had their passage paid for at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. (Oliveira, 2022). Although the book emphasizes immigrations to Brazilian territory across different time periods, it did not highlight the regionalization of racism in the world and in Brazil.

³ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

Figure 2 – Illustration of an Angolan individual immigrating to Brazil in an attempt to enrol in university⁴.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 16).

Today, with the majority of immigrants being Latin Americans, originating from Bolivia, Haiti, Venezuela, and Colombia, predominantly Black, Indigenous, and Spanish speakers, it becomes necessary to inquire whether they are welcomed by Brazilian society. According to Fioravanti (2015), for an immigrant to be satisfactorily introduced and accepted into Brazilian society, they have needed to be white and European since the late 19th century. Furthermore, there is a lack of public policies for the integration of Latin American immigrants in the current context of the 21st century, which further hinders the social interaction of these individuals.

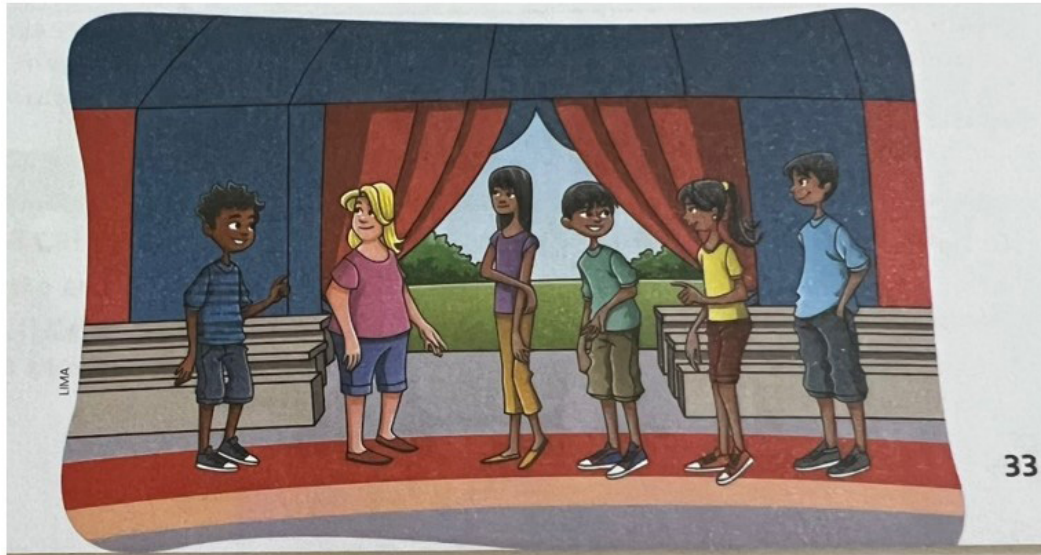
In one of the activities included in Chapter 1, students are asked to gather and think of a list of activities to welcome immigrant children arriving in Brazil. In the image, the majority of the immigrant children are Black, with only one White child with blonde hair. (Figure 3)

In light of this, it is essential to raise the question: even though Brazil is a country with such a varied ethnic composition, which of these children would be more readily accepted by

⁴ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

society? By structural standards, it would be the White child with blonde hair. Furthermore, another question arises: where is the diversity among the non-White children represented? All have been homogenized as Black, but are they all from the same place?

Figure 3 – Immigrant children in Brazil⁵.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 33).

In the second chapter analysed, entitled “*The Brazilian People*”, it is again emphasized that there has been a mixture of people since the colonial formation of Brazil. Although, at no point is there a discussion of the physical and moral exploitation of the Indigenous people, not the separation of Black families through the sale of individuals as if they were merchandise.

An interesting point at the beginning of the chapter pertains to the observation of the images contained in a Picture, where children from different ethnic groups are depicted (Figure 4).

Consequently, the book instructs the teacher to ask students to observe the images and report what caught their attention the most. “Images are essential for illustrating, complementing, and reinforcing the content taught; they capture students’ attention and improve understanding, making the content less abstract” (Marques; Fonseca, 2021, p. 35).

By observing the images, according to the author of the book, it is expected that students will depict the different characteristics of the children in the picture, which reflects the cultural diversity of Brazil. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to discuss the importance of respecting differences, which would already pave the way for a decolonial debate.

Further promoting the decolonial approach, a significant activity proposed by the textbook would be the creation of self-portraits by students, which would enable them to recognize their own image and observe their physical characteristics. What often happens is that Black children grow up without affirming their Black identity, as they feel inferior to their White peers and prefer, for example, to be called “moreno/a” as a way of denying their Black identity. This is a social Project and a reflection of structural racism.

⁵ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

Figure 4 – Children representing Brazilian cultural diversity⁶.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 36).

Proposals such as self-portraits would help children to reflect on diversity within the Brazilian context. It would also serve as a form of artistic representation that could be exhibited in the school courtyard, at a science fair, or during a cultural activity, focusing on their diversity in our country. One activity proposed by the book suggested that students past their own photo in the blank space (Figure 5)

As a suggestion, students could also be asked to paste a photo of another person, taken from a book or the Internet, and the teacher could pose the following questions: “Why did you choose this person’s photo? What stands out to you about them?” These questions may help children avoid creating stereotypes about what is considered beautiful or not, understanding that everyone has differences, and these differences make each person unique.

Subsequently, a debate on the Brazilian Indigenous roots is presented. At this point, the genocide of traditional peoples is highlighted. Still, even so it brings attention to the culture of the Yanomami people found in the North of Brazil, it does not emphasise that they are being decimated by the invasion of miners on their lands.

⁶ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

Figure 5 – Activity requesting the student to past a photo in the blank space⁷.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 37).

On that account, the teacher could bring various News articles and even documentaries that portray the massacre of the Yanomami people, explaining the reasons, causes, and consequences of the miners' invasion of this Indigenous group's territory. One suggestion would be the documentary *"The Last Forest"* by Luiz Bolognesi, which shows the life and customs of the Yanomami people and the threats posed by mining. In the documentary, Davi Yanomami issues a warning: "[...] the white people do not know us. Their eyes have never seen us. Their ears do not understand our words. Therefore, I need to go where the white people live" (Piotto, 2021).

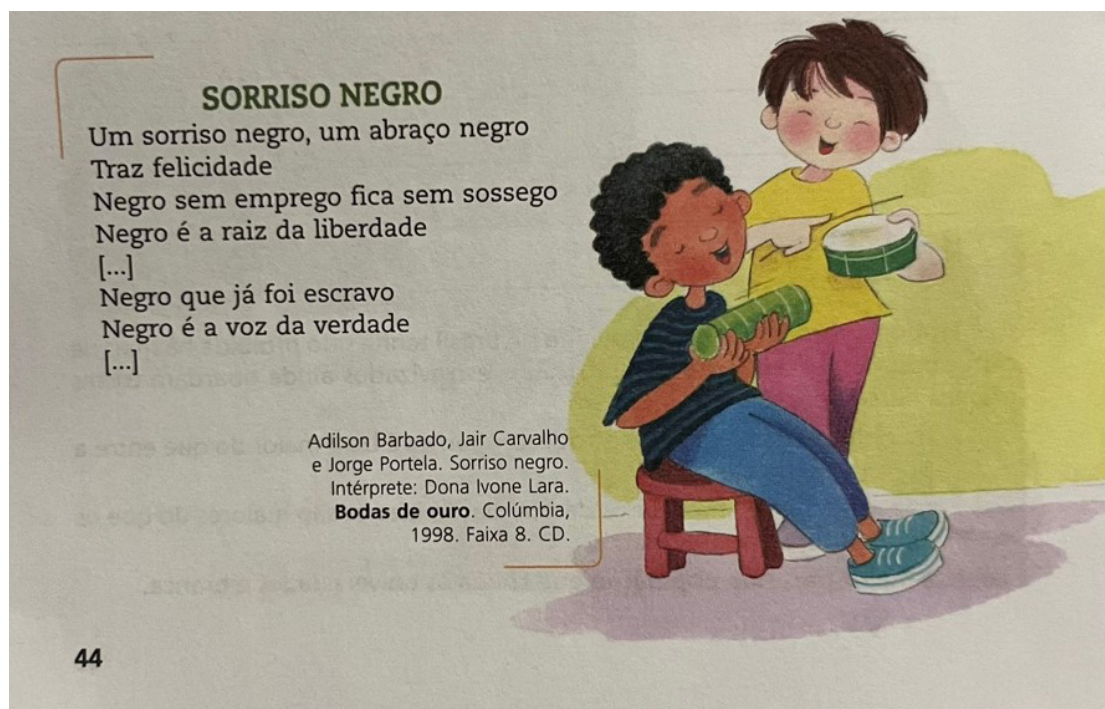
Beyond highlighting the Indigenous peoples, the textbook emphasizes the Brazilian African roots. It discusses the historical context of slavery in Brazil stressing that Black people still suffer from the prejudice present in society. Regardless of this not being explicitly

⁷ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

addressed in the discussion presented in the textbook, the teacher could facilitate a debate on the access of Black bodies to different spaces and the silencing of the Black population, addressing that the discourse of racial democracy, which is “[...] still today considered a component of Brazilian identity” (Almeida, 2019, p. 110), sought to neutralize latent racial conflicts. No matter how, one only needs to observe daily life: who is more frequently stopped by the police? Who is at greater risk when going to a party at night? According to a survey by the Observatories of Security Network, every four hours a Black person was killed by the police in Brazil in 2022 in the eight monitored states, namely: Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo (Rede Observatórios de Segurança, 2023). This brings us to the issue already raised in this article about urban geo-chrono politics (Oliveira, 2014), where being Black in different places and different times can be a matter of life or death.

With the aim of prompting students to reflect on racial inequalities, the book suggests reading an excerpt from the song “*Sorriso Negro*” (Figure 6), sung by the Brazilian samba artist Dona Ivone Lara.

Figure 6 – Excerpt from the song “*Sorriso Negro*” by Dona Ivone Lara⁸.



Source: Silva (2018, p. 44).

Long these lines, the teacher could facilitate a circle of conversation and even play the song for the children to listen to, followed by a discussion about the song’s lyrics. On top of that, the teacher could assist students in creating various text genres, such as poems, for example, aiming to contribute to the deconstruction of stereotypes and to value African ancestry Souza (2016, p. 5) points out,

⁸ Caption extracted from the analysed textbook.

A reflective approach to Geography education can create elements for the deconstruction of negative stereotypes attributed to Black individuals and the African continent, thereby guiding students to understand the complexities of various worldviews.

To build the poems, it is suggested that the subjects of Geography and Portuguese Language be integrated. Students could display their verses on a literary clothesline within the teaching unit and present them to the school community. Below is a poem created by the author of this article as a way to reflect on the ethnic-racial issues that permeate Brazilian society (Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Poetry “Silenced Voices: Ears Plugged?”.

Silenced Voices: Ears Plugged?

A colonial history, with real evils.
We live silenced by a macabre society.
Time has passed, the evil remains.
There is no reparation.
There is no compassion.
They tear our bodies apart for no reason at all.

The Black person in the slum runs through the alleys.
The armed police shoot and kill.
The constant scenes no longer evoke outrage.
What to do to change this situation?

The genocide of Black people is ongoing.
We have deaths at every moment.
Parents cry at the door of their homes watching their children's lives cut short.
So much cruelty, only those who experience it truly know.

The Black person can even find their voice:
But soon they are silenced.
Marielle and so many others were shot dead.
Whites order killings and continue to occupy the right to speak.
This is our nation with the false moralism of freedom of speaking.
There are many contradictions:
What to do to change this situation?

Public policies do exist.
We have quotas in institutions.
Many have been the struggles.
Many are the challenges.
There is a lack of equality in permanence.
Many give up along the way.
These are contradictions that span generations.
They cause outrage and indignation.
Money is used for corruption.
What to do to change this situation?

It is the 21st century.
“Democracy” is in effect.
Blacks can vote, but can they speak?
They are pursued in the streets and mistaken for criminals.
They can even hold privileged positions.
However, they arrive at stores and are mistreated.
Even a Black police chief is banned from entering Zara.
This is the discourse of our society:
To shout equality and practice cruelty.
It's worth remembering: we are all bodies.
Bodies, bodies, bodies...
Black bodies matter!

Source: Santos (2023).

The use of different forms of language promotes the development of geographical reasoning. In this regard, employing a poetic language promotes the development of geographical reasoning. In this regard, employing a poetic language combined with textual aesthetics that resonates with people can be a powerful tool for addressing themes that involves social, political, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects. Hence, Geography, poetry, and dialogue are political instruments that should be used in the civic education of children and young students.

In such a way, the teacher – whether in Education, Geography, Sociology, or other sciences – needs to think pedagogically about how to approach the content, particularly those related to the daily lives of the students and are reflected on the construction of a fairer and less prejudiced society towards those people who have been oppressed since Brazil's territorial formation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This work reveals a broad interpretation of historically racialised people, treated with inferiority, racism, and subaltern society in Brazil. Therefore, it reflects and allows for awareness of priority issues in the construction of a more equitable society, as it highlights events and pathways that are situated within the context of the ethnic-racial matter in Brazil.

From the perspective of geographical approach, it is possible to conduct readings and interpretations regarding the formation of the Brazilian people, Brazilian territorial formation, demographics, political and social history, as well as the economic development of Brazil. These are contemporary themes in the geography of population, urban, and regional studies also contributing to ethnic-racial debates.

From the analysis of the textbook, we observe that there remains a strong Eurocentric legacy, where a distorted and stereotypical view of Black individuals and other racialized groups still predominates. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that there is still symbolic violence behind the discourse of the textbook, in which the White individual, always associated with the dominant group, is the example to be followed.

In spite of the negative aspects present in the textbook disseminating stereotypes about black and indigenous people, with these groups generally being presented with texts and images associated with the ills they have suffered throughout history, it is essential to recognize some positive elements that contribute to the ethnic-racial and decolonial debate. For instance, the inclusion of songs and the construction of self-portraits may encourage children to reflect on diversity within the Brazilian context.

By teaching a critical, reflective geography course and taking effective action in the schools' environment, it is possible to mobilise knowledge and sharpen student's sensitivity to ethnic-racial concerns. It is imperative that Black students see themselves as also responsible for the progress of the Brazilian nation, rather than feeling inferior to other students who are seen as privileged due to their skin tone.

In the results, suggestions such as the use of poetry construction which can contribute to the social formation of the students involved and also the entire school community were put forward. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that teachers of all school subjects take a contextualised and playful approach to ethnic-racial issues at school, fostering an education that is decolonial, emancipatory, and focused on building the identities, values, and ethics of the subjects involved.

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