

History Education and Race Relations in Brazil

How to teach controversial issues and rethink
history

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Construction of L.A. national identities

- Independences – majority between 1810-1825
- The Black and Indian ‘problem’
 - Extermination
 - Whitening (white immigration)
- ‘Whiteness ideology’

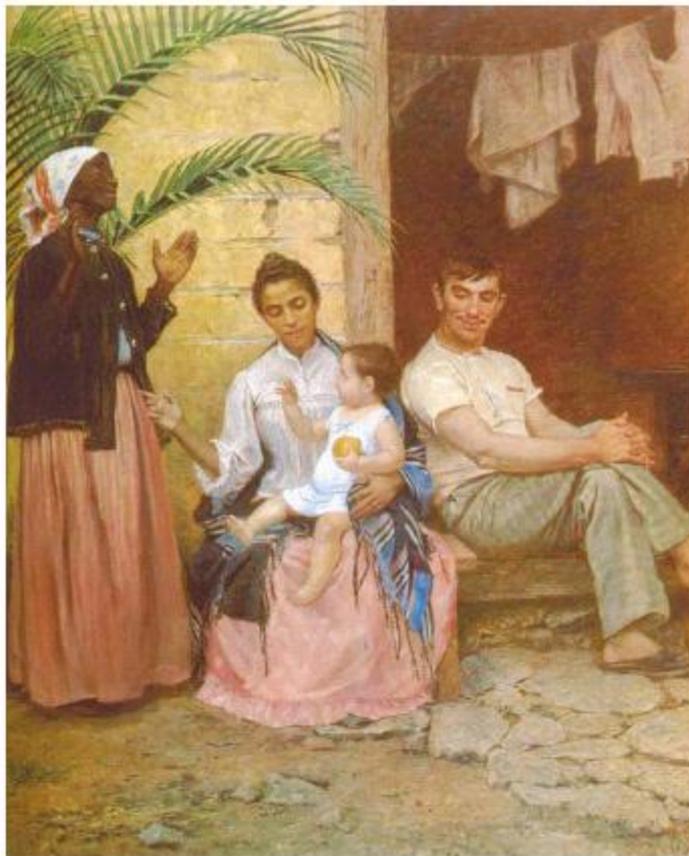
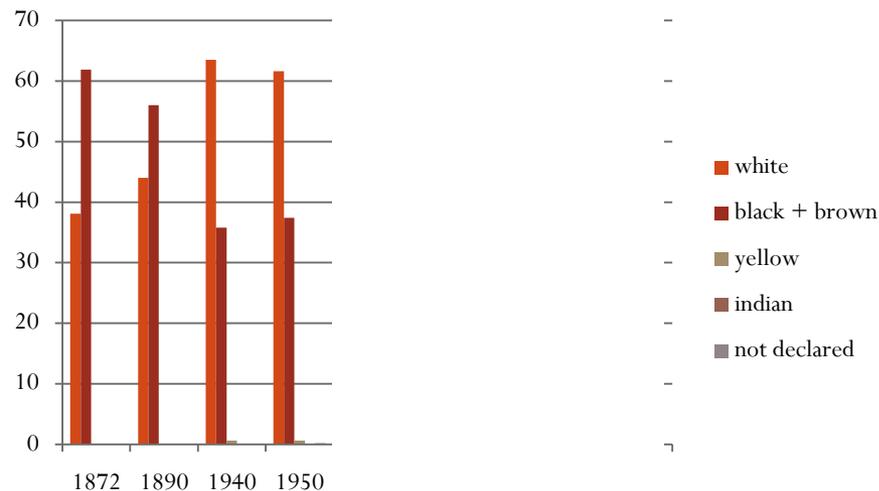
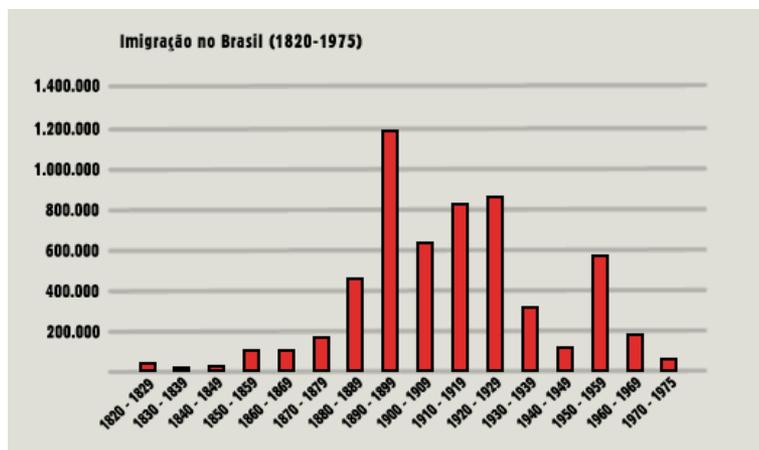


Fig. 36
A Redenção de Can, 1895
Modesto Brocos Y Gomes
óleo sobre tela, 199 x 166 cm
MNBA, Rio de Janeiro

‘Whitening’ in censuses - Brazil

	1872	1890	1900	1920	1940	1950	
white	38,1	44			63,5	61,6	
black	19,7	14,6			14,6	10,9	} 37,4
brown	42,2	41,4			21,2	26,5	
yellow					0,6	0,6	
indian							
not declared					0,1	0,2	
total	9.930.478	14.333.915	17.438.434	30.635.605	41.236.315	51.944.397	

Censuses in Brazil (%)



Construction of LA national identities

- Independences – majority between 1810-1825
- The Black and Indian ‘problem’
 - Extermination
 - Whitening (white immigration)
- ‘Whiteness ideology’
- Mixture, miscegenation
 - Fernando Ortiz - Afro-Cuban studies, ‘transculturation’ (1906-)
 - Manuel Gamio – *Forjando patria* (1916)
 - José Vasconcelos – *La raza cósmica* (1925)
 - José Carlos Mariátegui - *7 ensayos* (1928)
 - Gilberto Freyre – *Casa -grande & senzala* (1933)

What kind of 'mixture'?

- Inequal – 'contribution' of blacks and indians to Brazilian culture
 - The black nursemaid, the old black man, the household slave, the (female) cook 'succeeded in the life of the former *Brazilian*'.* (Freyre, 1933)
- Normative 'whiteness': white is seen as the norm; whiteness becomes naturalized; cultural traits are applied only to non-white groups.
- Louis Dumont – encompassing value in hierarchies

*A ama negra, o negro velho, a mucama, a cozinheira 'se sucediam na vida do *brasileiro* de outrora'.

Teaching of controversial issues

- Time to consider and address matters in sufficient depth.
- Effective resources that are attractive and stimulating and can make personal engagement more likely – such as individual narratives and experiences.
- Diversity (de-homogenization)
- Safe environment and the willingness of school and teacher to take risks

‘Black’ history

- “The sensitivity of ‘race’-related issues, as with so many other complex contemporary matters, can only be properly understood by reference to history.” (Rob Phillips, 2002)
- “It is vital to recognize that ‘racialised identities are a product of history’ and also that ‘pastness can be a tool that people use against each other’.”
- “We need a complex understanding that conceptions of racism and their manifestations are constantly changing in relation to specific historical and political conditions.” (Mirza et al, 2005)

‘Black’ history

- We can only understand racism through history
- We have to be aware of the struggles about the past
- Racism and its manifestations are constantly changing in historical and political contexts
- Race as social construct
- Narrative as a pedagogical tool – possibility to see ‘what has been there all along’ ‘from a new point of view’ (Taylor, 2009) – to understand the ‘non-white’ experience.

Life history narratives



- “And I have a very emblematic experience in that sense: a couple went there to enroll their daughter and they had to ask for an appointment with the pedagogic coordinator. So, the secretary called them and said: ‘Please, come in, the coordinator is ready to receive you.’ Then I came out and said: ‘Let’s go’. They didn’t move. And I said: ‘Let’s do the interview?’ And the woman said: ‘There must be some mistake here. We are waiting for the pedagogic coordinator.’ I said: ‘Ok.’ I went to my room and stayed there for a while. Then the secretary came back: ‘But you’re still here?’ And the woman said: ‘It’s because the coordinator hasn’t...’ ‘But the coordinator is here, she is in her room.’ It was me.”
(Maria Olívia Santana)

Life history narratives



- “When I’m traveling, the guys speak to me in English, as they think I must be a foreigner. If I’m flying, I can’t be a Brazilian. And I think this behavior is rather shameful.” (Ivanir dos Santos)

Life history narratives



- “I went to this place in Chapadinha, and there was a deputy there, named Wagner Pessoa. There was a party going on, an auction, and I stood behind this deputy in the middle of a crowd of people. The guy who was conducting the auction was someone who knew me, and he said: ‘Now, to conduct the auction, there are a deputy and a councilman.’ The deputy looked back, his eyes passed through me and he never saw me. Because I was black. He couldn’t imagine I was a councilman because I didn’t look like one...” (Justo Evangelista)

Plural history

- “Schools conveyed the idea of a Brazil without differences, originally composed by three races — Indians, whites and blacks — who blended together to give rise to the Brazilian, an idea that has also been spread by text books, neutralizing cultural differences and sometimes subordinating one culture to another. The concept of a uniform culture has been spread and underplayed the diverse contributions that composed the national identity and continue to do so.” (Ministério da Educação, PCN, 1998)

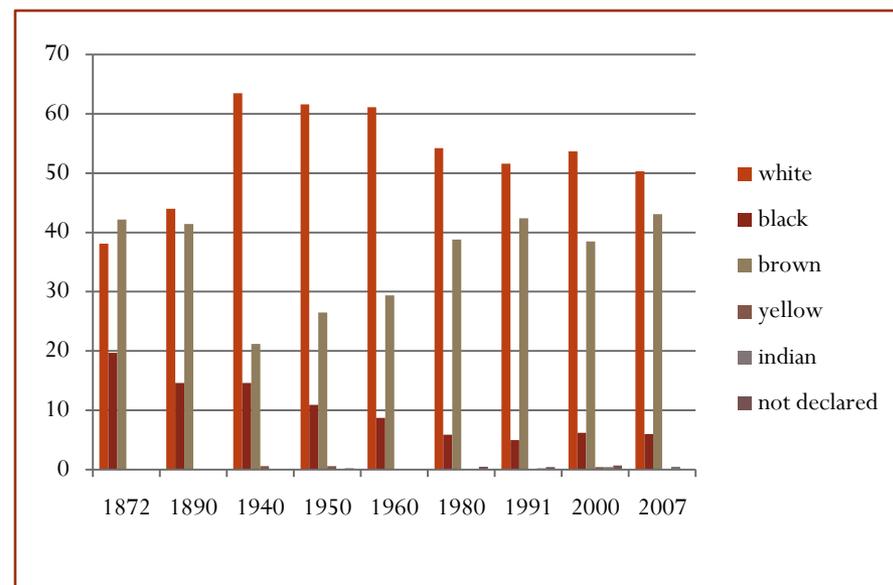
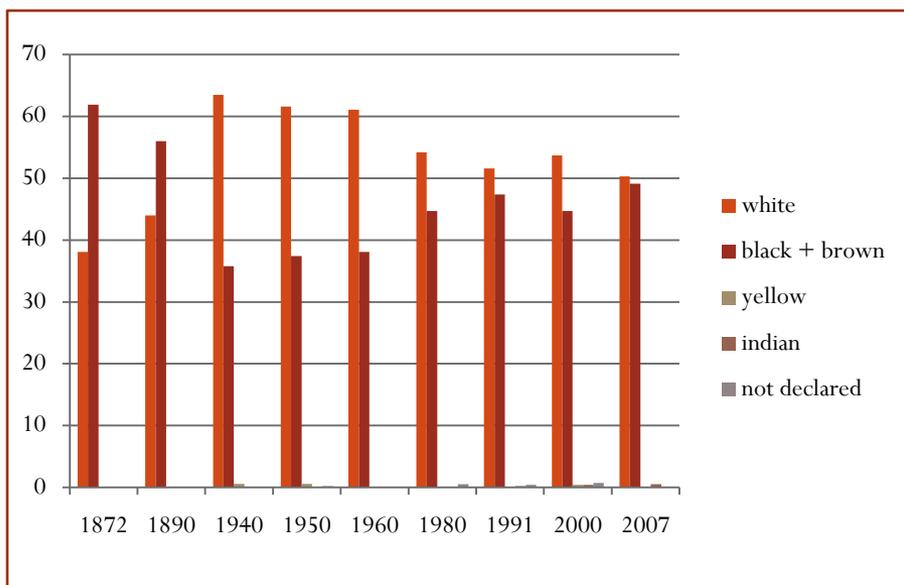
Legislation on teaching history

- The teaching of Brazilian history has to take into account the contributions of the different cultures and ethnicities to the formation of the Brazilian people, especially of the Indian, African and European matrices (LDB Act, 1996)
- The study of the Afro-Brazilian and the Indian history and culture is mandatory in the basic education (LDB Act, 2003, 2008)
 - “the study of Africa and Africans’ history, the fight from Black and Indian people in Brazil, the Black and Indian Brazilian culture (...), recovering their contributions in the social, economic and political areas (...)”
 - Arts, Brazilian Literature and Brazilian History

Colour/race in further censuses

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000	2007 (PNAD)
white	61,6	61,1		54,2	51,6	53,7	50,3
black	10,9	8,7		5,9	5,0	6,2	6
brown	26,5	29,4		38,8	42,4	38,5	43,1
yellow	0,6	0,7		0,6	0,4	0,4	
indian					0,2	0,4	0,5 (outra)
not declared	0,2	0,1		0,5	0,4	0,71	
total	51.944.397	70.191.370	93.139.037	119.011.052	146.521.661	169.872.856	183.987.291

Censuses in Brazil (%)



Increase of 'Blacks' and 'Indians'

