

# Teaching practices in the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture\*

Zilfran Varela Fontenele<sup>1</sup>

ORCID: 0000-0001-7577-5976

Maria da Paz Cavalcante<sup>2</sup>

ORCID: 0000-0003-0893-2411

## Abstract

The paper deals with the applicability of Law 11,645/2008, which determines the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the Basic Education curricula, preferably in the areas of Art education and Brazilian literature and history. The objective is to investigate the applicability of this law in relation to the obligation of teaching Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, in the teaching practices of high school history teachers. A qualitative approach was used and the semi-structured interview was used as a technique. The teachers, historians interviewed, work in state public schools in a city in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. A reflection was made about the processes of training and qualification of these teachers and the impacts of this law on their teaching practices. Teachers recognize the importance of this legislation, but do not consider it sufficient to bring about effective changes in schools, in order to overcome prejudices rooted in social practices strongly present in our society. The requirement for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture content in the referred law does not guarantee its applicability in the teaching of History, given the gaps identified in the initial and continuing education processes of the teachers surveyed. It is vital that history teachers resort in their teaching practices to value the memory of the various ethnic groups that make up our society as an instrument of consolidation of citizenship and democracy, which demands processes of teacher education in universities and in the teacher's practice spaces.

## Keywords

Teaching – History – Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture.

**1-** Instituto Federal do Ceará. Crateús, CE, Brasil. Contato: zilfran.fontenele@ifce.edu.br.

\* English version by Francisco Marcos de Oliveira Luz. Contact: marcosluzuern@gmail.com

Federal Institute from Ceará. Crateús, CE, Brasil. Contact: zilfran.fontenele@ifce.edu.br

**2-** Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte. Pau dos Ferros, RN, Brasil. Contato: mariapaz@uern.br.



DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634202046204249>

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons attribution-type BY-NC.

## Introduction

Our country underwent economic and social transformations in the early 21st century, associated with a process of universalization of education, in a reality of consolidation of democracy - which began in the late decades of the twentieth century - but which is currently experiencing serious difficulties and has suffered serious setback threats.

The Brazilian reality has been marked, over the last decade, by the socioeconomic rise of millions of Brazilians, resulting from the reduction of absolute misery, especially during the government of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011), according to 2014 National Sample Survey data of Households - PNAD, from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE, released in 2015.

By associating democratic openness with liberal legislation, the socioeconomic rise and access to education of traditionally marginalized social groups such as low-income people, women, people with disabilities, homosexuals, blacks and indigenous people made it possible to implement educational measures aimed at the appreciation and respect for diversity, as well as the need to recognize the historical contribution of social actors normally relegated to subordinate or supporting conditions, such as black and indigenous.

Such changes demanded changes in school contents, as according to Tardif and Lessard (2007), the mass schooling determined that content was rethought due to the heterogeneity of new school clients, establishing a demand for a general education and a history teaching in particular, characterized by a permanent need for reconstruction of historical and pedagogical knowledge.

Amendments were made to Law No. 9,394 of December 20, 1996 - which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education - by Law No. 10,639 of January 9, 2003, regarding the inclusion in the curriculum of elementary schools and medium, official and private, of the obligation of the theme "Afro-Brazilian History and Culture" and the inclusion in the school calendar of November 20 as "National Day of Black Consciousness", respectively, articles 26-A and 79- B. And Law No. 11,645, of March 10, 2008, which amended Law No. 9,394/1996, as amended by Law No. 10,639/2003, to include in the official curriculum of the educational network the obligatory theme "African History and Culture". Brazilian and Indigenous".

The results were significant advances in the process of affirmation of marginalized sectors, such as blacks, with the promulgation of Law 10.639/2003, and black and indigenous, with the promulgation of Law 11.645/2008, which determines the obligatory study of the theme History and Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Culture in elementary and high school establishments, notably in the areas of artistic education and Brazilian literature and history. These laws are important in the process of leading black and indigenous, traditionally marginalized social subjects, to the proper recognition of their contribution to the construction of Brazil, as well as becoming instruments to combat racism and discrimination in schools. The second law, being more recent and comprehensive, contemplates both ethnic groups, so important for the historical, social, economic and cultural formation of Brazil.

It's important to stress out that the current historical moment puts at risk these advances, which are not yet fully consolidated, as it is the case with the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture.

Law 11.645/2008 encourages what Bergamaschi (2010) defines as “intercultural dialogue”, as the encounters of cultures, identities, beliefs, symbols, myths and ideologies are revisited in an environment of equality that overcomes prejudice and stereotypes, especially rooted against blacks and indigenous people.

The challenge for schools is to ensure spaces in curricula and classrooms for the positive inclusion of black and indigenous history and culture. It is important that, for the proper applicability of these legal determinations, educational institutions rethink their role in the formation of individuals prepared to live and coexist in diverse environments, recognizing themselves as important actors of historical processes, regardless of their ethnic, economic or social status or social. Thus:

Affirmative actions need to be implemented by universities, institutes and schools, thus opening new territories for formative practices that revolve around African and Indigenous History and Culture, ethnic-racial relations, diversity, preservation of our material heritage and immaterial. (ROCK, 2012, p. 98-99).

This demands works of historical nature, amid processes permeated by dialogues between theories and practical situations of teaching Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture. Zarth (2010), in relation to this, advocates not only a methodological review, but, above all, reconsidering in a critical perspective, the conditions of different ethnic groups, especially reviewing inequalities of treatment.

Studies have been developed on the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, with emphasis on the works of Bergamaschi (2010), which discusses contemporary issues in classrooms, including prejudice; Bittencourt (2004, 2007) whose research on teaching and historical knowledge in the classroom help us understand the reality we study; Funari and Piñon (2011), who present contributions about the teaching work on indigenous knowledge in the classroom, among others, which have brought important contributions to the reflection on this theme.

We also refer to some theses researched in the repositories of Brazilian Universities (University of São Paulo - USP, State University of Campinas - Unicamp, Federal University of Juiz de Fora - UFJF, Fluminense Federal University - UFF, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ, University of Brasilia - UnB) produced from 2005 to 2016, of which we highlight the works of Antunes (2016), Macena (2015), Oliva (2007) and Paim (2005). Referring to the first production, Antunes (2016), dealing with Indigenous History and Culture reveals, through a rich analysis of documentary sources, visions about the role of the Indian in the formation of northeastern society, especially in Ceará. Macena (2015) proposes, based on a reinterpretation of abolitionism in Minas Gerais, a review of the role of blacks in society as a whole; Oliva (2007) discusses the teaching of African History and the deconstruction or preservation of black-related stereotypes in both Brazilian and

Portuguese schools, and Paim (2005) analyzes the teaching practices of recent history teachers, revealing important elements of these teaching practices.

In the literature we consulted, the questions raised about changes in the teaching of history are recurrent, but we still perceive a lack of studies on reflexes that have provoked the aforementioned legislation on the chalk-covered floor of the classrooms. Evaluations of teaching practices in light of the transformations imposed by Law 11,645/2008 are still scarce, especially at the level of public schools in the Northeast.

Analyzing these everyday teaching practices depends on the observation of what Certeau (1998) calls procedures, ie, the set of schemes, manipulations and techniques used and therefore requires understanding the relationship of teachers with the theme of History and Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Culture in the teaching-learning process of History.

Given the above, we seek to understand how this legislation impacts the practices of teachers in the teaching of history - where their bases of execution, operationalization and consolidation reside. The research was conducted considering the view of teachers of public high schools in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

Thus, with this work, we aim to verify the applicability of Law 11,645/2008 (which amended Law 9,394/1996 that was modified by Law 10,639/2003), as to the obligation of teaching Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, in the practices of history teachers. In this respect, Chartier (1988) already draws our attention by arguing that it is necessary to analyze the articulation between reading and teachers' understanding of themselves and the legal demands.

## **Education for ethnic-racial relations and the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture**

The Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Statute of the Child and Adolescent - ECA assure quality basic education as a fundamental right for Brazilian children and young people. The National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education (DCNEB) state that for the nation project being built in Brazil, "school education is the indispensable foundation and prerequisite for the full exercise of citizenship and access to social, economic, and civil rights and politicians." (BRASIL, 2013, p. 4). Thus, education has as its principle the full development of the potential of individuals, in environments of freedom and ensuring respect and appreciation of dignity and differences between people.

With LDB, Law no. 9394/1996, we had the legal framework for the structuring of education in Brazil, establishing principles, determinations and purposes, among other aspects and, in 2004, the National Education Council - CNE approved the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic and Racial relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture (BRASIL, 2005). It is noteworthy that although the title emphasizes discussions related to black history and culture, in several

passages of the text are addressed the issues regarding indigenous as well as by analogy, various aspects of these guidelines apply to all ethnicities.

Although Law 11.645/2008 is later, these curriculum guidelines apply to its demands. This document provides pertinent guidelines for the promotion of a teaching of history that enables the assurance of the affirmative inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, enabling one more achievement, not only for subjects related to these themes, but also to citizenship and to democracy in Brazil.

However, the inclusion of education as a fundamental right of Brazilian citizens was far from the reality of previous generations and constituted a slow and gradual process, achieved through various social and political struggles in various processes in our history, and which, during the stages of its construction, the satisfaction of the interests of the ruling groups was often prioritized and the general population's full access to the exercise of full citizenship and effective political participation was not guaranteed. And, as Tardif (2002) states, legislations are often imposed with direct repercussions on teaching practices, without proper preparation of these for the purposes that are sought.

Constitutional guarantees do not necessarily mean that reality will be marked by universal access to quality education. According to the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2013), the difficulties of access to basic education mostly affect blacks, and the rates of these difficulties in indigenous people are high, especially in relation to whites.

This process of dehumanization and suppression of cultural roots has been maintained and often deepened throughout Brazilian history, culminating in today's society that discriminates, often without realizing it, or denies this discrimination because it is already a *fait accompli*. Hence the need to rethink the educational system, acting to contribute to the transformation of our society through the school.

Regarding the teaching of history, it must increasingly focus on the contributions it can offer and encourage the memory of social segments excluded from an inclusive perspective, which values diversity. As stated by Fonseca (2003, p. 29), "Exploring this territory, contesting it and transforming it implies facing an obvious theme for us historians: the organic relationship between education, memory and the teaching of history".

The demands are obvious and fair, the legal determinations are clear and the guidelines are rich and encouraging of works in this teaching in order to value the historical and social contribution of marginalized sectors, such as black and indigenous, as a way to guarantee the equality of the different ethnic groups and strengthen citizenship and democracy.

Therefore, it is up to the school to assume this role of formation of adolescents and young people in a multicultural, multiethnic, plural, diverse context: reference systems and heterogeneous meanings among themselves". (CERTEAU, 1995, p. 142). The school is situated in a democratic environment, reinforcing an egalitarian view of all as participating citizens and important to historical, social, cultural and economic processes.

The multicultural, multi-ethnic and democratic character of current Brazilian society imposes a national education that positively recognizes Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, along with legal determinations and guidelines. Thus, in order to repair the damage that had been repeated for over 500 years and to rescue the historical

and cultural contributions of blacks and indigenous people equally, Law 11.645/2008 contemplates the obligation of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous education and determines that these inclusions occur preferably in the areas of Brazilian History, Artistic Education and Literature.

The determination of the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the curricula of elementary and high school, by determination of Laws 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2008, which amended the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - Law 9,394/1996, ratify a historical moment of consolidation and maturation of democracy in Brazil and seek not only to transform the ethnocentric focus of school curricula, but to broaden this horizon for the ethnic, historical, cultural, social and economic diversity in our country. In this sense, "the transformation of history teaching is strategic, not only in the struggle to break with homogenized and uncritical practices, but also in the creation of new school practices". (FONSECA, 2003, p. 34).

Blacks and Indians were present, and with important performance, in Brazilian historical processes since the colonial period. To value their contributions is to give meaning to the struggles of these peoples and to correct gaps in the national historical formation, as opposed to the myth of a supposed racial democracy, through which, according to Freyre (2003), the ethnic and cultural miscegenation of the formation of Brazilian society had produced a democratizing effect on society. The result would be an ethnic integration, which was not at all democratic or egalitarian, because it kept the vision of blacks and Indians in a position of submission and acceptance of the alleged superiority of whites - so widespread in traditional historiography, as the foundation of this domination imposed on the world over several generations.

Problematizing and questioning such situations allows us to collaborate in overcoming various instruments that allowed the consolidation of prejudiced stigmas and stereotypes in relation to blacks and indigenous people. The existence of official documents with expressions such as diversity, inclusion, citizenship and democracy are not sufficient to prevent in school the reproduction of exclusionary, discriminatory and prejudiced practices. According to Silva (2010), the challenge posed to the school is the promotion of actions and attitudes that translate into practice the recognition and appreciation of cultural and social diversity, with the establishment of respect among human beings.

Thus, the school should adopt a positive agenda of inclusion of all subjects and promote curriculum changes that allow the consolidation of these advances through their incorporation into the daily lives of students, especially the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination. In this process, the history teacher plays a fundamental role, understanding its importance and contributing to the implementation of educational guidelines and legal determinations, focused on the need to include Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the reality of schools.

As Certeau (1995) tells us, the current situation demands the need to think of a plural culture, considering different perspectives, ways of life and different understandings of reality, by parameters often opposed to the dominant and culturally

rooted ones. This reality requires a history teaching based on the deconstruction of the myth of a racial democracy.

Thus, education in general and the teaching of history in particular need to move towards the recognition and encouragement of a plural reality, comprehensive and in a permanent process of reconstruction. This impetus must be the main driver of initiatives for education that respects and meets the inclusive, citizen and democratic demands of the 21st century. In search of success:

[...] the school and its teachers cannot improvise. They have to undo racist and secular discriminating mentality, overcoming European ethnocentrism, restructuring ethnic-racial and social relations, disaligning pedagogical processes. (BRASIL, 2013, p. 501).

To undo this mentality necessarily involves the recognition of its existence within society and school. Recognizing and problematizing racism allows such practices to be identified and avoided. It is therefore, especially for history teachers, to recognize the dynamics of social change in time and space, recognizing themselves as an integral part of a dynamic process that requires that their conceptions and practices be constantly reviewed and rethought.

### **The impact of the applicability of law 11.645 / 2008 on the teaching practice of history teachers**

We conducted our research in two state schools offering high school in a city in the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Norte. Institutions we will call EEJF and EEME. These are the only schools in the state education system that offer regular high school in this Upper West Potiguar pole town, which is 389 kilometers away from the capital, Natal.

In the Upper West Potiguar, which covers thirty municipalities of this state, research on legal and cultural demands is rare, so we found no work on the applicability of Law 11,645/2008, which understanding may encourage the development of other research that allow a proper discussion in classrooms, notably public schools, of topics so dear to society.

The EEJF school has 11 classrooms, among other facilities and 41 employees distributed in various school functions. It Offers only high school, whose classes take place in the three shifts, with two history lessons per week in each class.

EEME School offers Elementary School (final years), High School and Adult Education - EJA. In high school, the classes are distributed in the morning and afternoon shifts in which two history classes take place per week. This institution employs 57 staff, also distributed in various school functions.

As for the construction of data in the investigation, we opted for the qualitative approach because it involves a universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which correspond to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables (MINAYO, 2001), which meets our concern to understand aspects of a social group, the history teachers

of the researched schools, in their relation to a legal demand - the obligatory history teaching and Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Culture.

We opted for the semi-structured interview, as a technique, in order to, as stated by Gerhardt and Silveira (2009), based on an established script, allow and encourage the interviewees to talk freely about issues pertinent to the unfolding of the main subject. These interviews were conducted individually with three historians who taught High School History at the schools mentioned, between August and September 2015. To preserve their identities, ensuring anonymity, we resorted to codenames. At EEJF school we interviewed Zombie and Luiza Mahin, and at EEME school, we counted on Professor Joênia - the only one who works in this institution with this curriculum component.

The interviews with Joênia and Luiza Mahin took place in the schools themselves, in rooms provided by the coordinations. As Zumbi, for not being available to meet us at school, welcomed us at his home, one evening.

Through these interviews, we sought to establish a dialogue that would allow us to know the performance of these teachers in their teaching practices, seeking to find out how they have been dealing with the obligation to work with the theme Afro Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture. These interviews were questions about the initial and continuing education of these teachers; how they have been appropriating themes related to the contents of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture; what they think about Law 11,645/2008 and their views on their practices regarding the applicability of this law.

For the analysis of the interviews, we considered the following categories and indicators:

**Chart 1** - Interview analysis categories

Categories	Indicators
Teacher Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial Training</li> <li>- Continuing education.</li> </ul>
Law 11.645 / 2008 in teaching practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge about the legislation.</li> <li>- Evaluation of the importance of the law</li> <li>- Impacts of legislation on school.</li> </ul>

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Thus, we interpreted the data trying to find out how teachers understand, in the materialization of their practices, the impact of the obligation of teaching Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture.

The need to understand what teachers express about their practices occurs in line with what Tardif (2002, p. 230) tells us when he states: “[...] research on teaching should

be based on a fruitful dialogue with teachers, considered not as research objects, but as competent subjects who have knowledge specific to their work.”

In this process of establishing dialogue, it was necessary to understand traces of the trajectory traveled by the subjects. Thus, starting with Zumbi, he recently finished the Integrated Computer Technician course at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte - IFRN and was attending the second year of the higher education course in Science and Technology at the Federal Rural University of Semiarid - UFRSA, both at city of Pau dos Ferros/RN.

Working with education for over twenty-six years, Zumbi began his teaching activity at the private initiative in his hometown (Sousa/PB), where he taught in this sector, in just over a year, the curriculum components Mathematics, Geography and Moral and Civic Education and Social and Political Organization of Brazil - OSPB, (these last three ones are currently extinct). The professor only came to work with history in the state public network of Rio Grande do Norte, when he became a permanente teacher in 1990, in the EEJF, which is still today, “waiting for retirement” (as he told us). Soft-spoken and low-pitched, this gentleman is fair-skinned and declares himself white, showing in his words a certain discouragement when it comes to his practices and those of his students.

Luiza Mahin showed herself among the interviewees that she seemed most comfortable with our presence. Born in the state capital of São Paulo, she has clear eyes and a mulatto skin, representing the typical ethnic mix that marks Brazilian society. Even declaring herself “proudly black,” because she is of a black family, she jokes about the color of her skin and cites prejudice suffered since childhood for having a lighter skin than her sister, stating that “my family, she is black, although I am this horrible color, neither flesh nor fish. My sister she is black we suffered a lot of prejudice because they asked if we were sister, daughter of the same father, the same mother ...”.

The teacher reveals having suffered discrimination and demonstrates something common in Brazilian society, a rooted prejudice that often ignores miscegenation. The teacher came to Rio Grande do Norte in 1996, accompanying her mother who was returning to her homeland, with her younger daughters, after a separation process in the matrimonial sphere. She finished the degree course in History in 2008, from the State University of Rio Grande do Norte - UERN, in the city of Alexandria - RN. She excitedly dreams on taking a master degree course and doctorate, both to improve her teaching practice and salary.

She joined the EEJF institution in 2013 through a public tender, becoming since then an effective teacher of the state public system. In addition to history, she was forced to teach, since she joined this school, in some classes (all high school), in the three shifts, the curriculum components: Arts, Sociology and Physical Education as a way to complete their workload. This situation is due to the teacher’s interest to avoid having to teach history classes in other schools in other cities, as there are no more places for history in the two state schools (unique) in the municipality, countryside of Rio Grande do North, where we conducted the research.

Unlike his colleague Zumbi, Luíza Mahin did not participate in the choice of the textbook used at school because, during this time, being away from work due to illness. He regretted not having participated in this choice, revealing that it was his dream, because “always worked with the choice of third parties.”

The third teacher is the youngest among the teachers who collaborated with our research. She is also the one with recent higher education degree and the latest to join the state public system. Joenia drew our attention for her objectivity in her responses and attitude from the first contacts. She has fair skin and red hair; she is white and comes from Pau dos Ferros/RN.

Her experience in the teaching field began in 2011 and lasted until 2013, during the time that she would take History course; She joined the Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships - PIBID. Thus, she taught as a fellow in state and municipal schools in the city of Caicó - RN. From May 2015, she started working in the private sector, working in a private course that offers preparatory classes for public tenders in the city of Pau dos Ferros. Also this year, she had the opportunity to join the state school network through a public tender, starting at the EEME school. Being a novice at this institution, she did not participate in choosing the collection of textbooks adopted for the 2015-2018 triennium.

What has been said above makes us understand the teaching of history by teachers of different ethnicities, sex. One man and two women; one black and two white; an experienced teacher awaiting retirement, and two young women in early career.

## **Teacher education and training**

We started the interviews with questions directed to the training and qualification of teachers Zumbi, Luíza Mahin and Joênia, because we believe that understanding the way they teach the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture is related to the processes that involve their teacher education - beyond conception, ideology and lived reality.

The first to speak was Zumbi, who works at EEJF. His academic background dates from 1988, when he completed the degree course in History from the Federal University of Campina Grande - Campus de Cajazeiras / PB. Since then, he has not attended postgraduate courses. The teacher pointed out that “he always tries to attend the training courses or lectures” that are eventually offered at the school itself in pedagogical weeks that occur before the beginning of the school year. These courses / lectures, which take place at the beginning of each school year, are not exclusively dedicated to teacher education processes, but are marked by the limited time that is usually insufficient to discuss issues pertaining to the school and the teaching and learning process as we could find out. This time limitation prevents the access and discussion of texts such as theses, dissertations, books and works in general that could and should be read and discussed as a way to support and base the various questions posed to the reality of schools.

Zombie confessed to have become outdated in relation to his studies (in the field of education) and revealed that many colleagues have questioned him for never having

done a postgraduate, a masters, but reports never having had a time or opportunity to do so, and now, as he is already near retirement, and he believes that “It does not matter anymore”.

We believe this situation of absence of complementary education processes, either at postgraduate level or training courses, can cause damage to teaching practices, as they limit the process of knowledge development, knowledge production and improvement of practice since: “[...] vocational training occupies in principle a good part of the career and professional knowledge shares with scientific and technical knowledge the property of being revisable, criticizable and subject to improvement.” (TARDIF, 2002, p. 249).

Luiza Mahin, in turn, reported that she started teaching in 2005, in a public school, while still studying for her degree in History at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN). She added that “a well-known director, knowing that she was studying for a degree in history”, invited her to teach geography, stating that she was “exactly what she needed, since it was all the same.” From her initial experience with teaching a curricular component, different from what she was studying in undergraduate, she says: “She taught for more than two years which included, beyond Geography, Science and Arts, until starting teaching practices in History.” Her salary came through a scholarship, which she did not specify, but pointed out that she usually worked all year and only received at the end of the term or “there still were some kind of under the table agreements, which were people working overtime in the name of another teacher, ... and these teachers were receiving and passing me”. After completing her degree, she took a Specialization Course in Brazilian History, in the Distance Education modality at the Delta International College in Parnaíba - PI.

Continuing, she told us: “I did not come to have specific disciplines about subjects or themes of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the undergraduate course” – which were concluded in the same year of the enactment of Law 11,645 / 2008. According to Luiza Mahin, not even “the part of black or African history, which had already become mandatory a few years before” (by determination of Law 10,639 / 2003) was “adequately addressed” in the undergraduate degree in history. The teacher added, criticizing the inadequate training in the degree to comply with the law: “We did not learn in a way that was sufficient for [...] adequate preparation, to deal with these subjects or a more efficient process of awareness, especially the need to combat racism, so present in our reality”.

She also stated that she always sought to participate in conversation circles, seminars and lectures on diversity and African History and Culture, especially “because of affinity, especially when she knew about the occurrence of this type of activity in outdoor environments [...]” “This affinity, which is due to the ethnic identification presented by the teacher, favors a greater attention to the contents of Afro-Brazilian history and culture, enabling an impact on teaching practice. As Rocha tells us (2014, p. 46): “[...] personal predilections for one or another group of manifestations or cultural products, built in daily life, as well as those constituted during their academic formation, lead teachers to broaden a repertoire.”

This “repertoire broadening” is an important instrument in the teaching and learning process, as a teacher with a broader understanding of the world is better able to engage in classroom discussions about racism and discrimination that have not been reevaluated or reviewed as way of overcoming misconceptions, prejudices and stereotypes.

The last teacher, Joênia, completed the Degree in History in 2013.2, from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) - Caicó Campus and was studying Specialization in History and Geography Teaching at the Integrated College of Cruzeiro - FIC, private institution. According to the teacher, there was in the curriculum grid of her degree course in History of UFRN, a specific curriculum component for African History. Regarding Indigenous History and Culture, the teacher stated that it was not offered.

She added that she intended to pursue a master’s degree in the area of History or Education, but that her priorities at the moment concerned the completion of this specialization course and the higher course in Science and Technology she was attending at the Federal Rural University of Semiarid (UFERSA) - Pau dos Ferros Campus / RN, because “studying is always good and opens new perspectives”.

These two teachers show interest and awareness of the need to continue studying and improving, which is expected for teachers working with young people living in a world marked by the dynamics of rapid change, motivated especially by the growing scientific and technological development. These changes require that the teacher never stop studying, becoming empowered. This is an important instrument in the teaching and learning process, as a teacher with a broader vision is better able to foster the interest and thinking of his students to grasp the theme in evidence in the construction of multiple readings and interpretations. In this sense, a formation of history teachers, in accordance with multicultural issues, implies tensions and challenges inherent in the present.

The three teachers, when discussing their processes of formation, qualification and experiences, involving teaching, signal to an understanding that the realities in which they have been and may have an impact on their practices, particularly in the way of working with Afro History and Culture. Brazilian and Indigenous and its valorization as a way to encourage and reinforce citizenship and respect for diversity, because “the historical contexts lived by teachers, at different times, reveal dimensions of struggles for survival and daily political clashes, sometimes ignored by historiography”. (FONSECA, 2003, p. 79).

Thus, changes in legislation that impact not only on content, but also on the way in which teaching in general and History in particular should work, demand greater supervision of its compliance and efficient processes of teacher education, at the risk of not being the proposed objectives are achieved. And these processes should be encouraged by government agencies and school managers. Incentives ranging from better wages and benefits to improvements in working conditions and better spacetime organization.

Continuing education should be included in the daily life of schools, as a way to ensure that basic education accompanies the legal changes and general transformations that interfere with students’ daily lives, avoiding a distance between school and life.

It is also up to universities and institutions of higher education, especially those offering a degree in history, to make changes in their curriculum (if they have not yet done so), in order to meet the legal requirements, allowing that since the initial training, teachers have a better preparation to work with this theme. This does not prevent a closer relationship between higher education institutions, graduating teachers and schools, especially through the attendance by the former, regarding the demands of complementary and continuing education.

### **Law 11.645/2008 on teacher evaluation**

Knowing the opinions of historian teachers about Law 11,645 / 2008 and their assessment of its importance and its impact on school is the purpose of this item. Starting with Zumbi, he claimed to know the law, not by its number, but by its content, saying that: “The law I knew, but by number, not. I didn’t even know it was that number, but since 2008 it was decreed, right?”. According to Zumbi, “since then I have started to work with themes of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, even without the book bringing these contents [...]”.

The teacher’s first impression of the law was that this obligation brought something that he called “different” to the school, because it has no reference in the textbooks “neither about the indigenous nor about the African, right? It was a new thing, but gradually they were adapting”. The teacher spoke of changes in the books, from the point of view of a greater presence of this theme and continued by stating: “I have not yet noticed a significant impact on the school or classroom, due to the greater presence subjects related to History and afro-Brazilian and Indigenous cultures” and added: “the students were not very surprised because they recognized descendants of these peoples” and understood, according to the teacher, “that we are the country with the most mix of races, so they were not surprised”.

The teacher stated that, when the law was enacted, even though there was no reference in the textbooks to the theme Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture at that time, they started to have discussions in the classroom.

In discussing the ethnic constitution in Brazil, with emphasis on the “mixture of races”, it offers more meaning than a genetic exchange in which different ethnicities reproduced among themselves, generating a population marked by a diversity of skin color only in that all groups mingled and generated diverse descent. From this point of view, his teaching practice does not seem to favor a greater appreciation of the contributions of the various social groups to the formation of our country.

History teaching should increasingly focus on the contributions it can make and encourage the memory of excluded social segments in an inclusive and valuing perspective of diversity. Thus, as stated by Fonseca (2003, p. 29), “exploring this territory, contesting it and transforming it implies facing an obvious theme for us historians: the organic relationship between education, memory and the teaching of history”.

Luiza Mahin, in turn, expressed that she knew the content of Law 11,645 / 2008 and stated: “Although I consider it interesting, I see as absurd the need for a law to oblige

teachers to work with subjects that should be in the daily lives of students rooms of course". Clearly skeptical about the effectiveness of the law, the teacher said she understands "that this law works like the day of the Indian or the day of Black Consciousness." As you watch people "spend the whole year making racist jokes, having opinions, and then on November 20th you have to be aware that they are an important group for [our] culture; it was a group that suffered, was persecuted."

According to this teacher, there is hypocrisy in a society that discriminates against some subjects of its history, but elects specific days of the year to praise or honor these groups, despite maintaining racist attitudes throughout the year - which represents the absence of significant impacts of law in daily school life. In Luiza Mahin's opinion, as much as there is an obligation not only of History, but also of other curricular components to work themes related to Indians and Blacks, a law that obliges the teachers to work on these subjects is not enough to guarantee that changes occur significant in daily school life. Despite the widespread criticism and caveats against the referred law, she stated "to consider an advance that may contribute to a future of greater respect and recognition of the contributions of these ethnic groups and their descendants to the social and economic formation of Brazil".

Luiza Mahin also referred to the textbook, pointing out that it does not provide enough information on these subjects, stating that "you don't see much talking about ... or just a few strokes and if you compare the indigenous issue with the black, the indigenous is still far behind".

We note that the teacher, who declares herself black and has already suffered prejudice, speaks with eloquently that racism and discrimination are present in reality in a common and rooted way, and that the mere imposition of a law does not seem to have the power to guarantee transformations that benefit and promote the recognition and inclusion of marginalized social groups in our society. For Fonseca (2003, p. 79), "the reports of shared situations, difficulties, sadness and joy demonstrate how certain historical experiences are potentiating the personal and professional development of each subject".

The other teacher, Joênia, in turn, said she had heard a lot about this law, "although I never took the article to [read] properly." Returning to what she had previously said about having in the "[...] curriculum grid of her degree course in History of UFRN, a specific subject for African History, both world and Brazilian [...]", emphasizes: "the we had a very good base on that." Regarding Indigenous History and Culture, even though no specific curriculum components were offered, the studies on these peoples in colonial Brazil and the History of America curriculum component were satisfactory. Thus, she expressed that the knowledge built at the University made a contribution to "work according to the parameters of the law".

She also showed some discomfort with the need for a law to force teachers to work on subjects that "were often overlooked." However, she understands that these issues are "primordial, as they concern the ethnic composition of our people." For her, it should be something natural in school to value the national identity, through the equitable teaching and study of the historical contributions of the various ethnic groups that contributed to

the formation of the Brazilian people. But as this is not really the case in all schools in the country and in our region, she considers the law appropriate, saying that “it came in handy [...], because it kind of makes us all study our identity”.

For the teacher, the compulsory inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the teaching of Brazilian History did not change her teaching practice so much, as she preserved, considering what she learned in the academy, the study aimed at recognizing the importance of actions the various social actors, not just the heroes or elements of the ruling classes. She stated that the law contributed to “modify the practice in general, because it is a subject that was often left aside, right? Especially the Indigenous History”.

In making these considerations about the law, the teacher, who had more recent academic formation, reinforces our understanding of the relevance of a process of formation in the academy that deals with the subject in evidence, providing a teaching practice that contributes to the recognition of the various contributions from the various sectors that make up Brazilian society.

She appropriately assessed the impact of the Law on the school, stating that “students seem to value more and have increased assimilation on the historical contributions of Indians and blacks”, despite noticing among students a greater proximity, interest or excitement for aspects related to black history and culture. She notes that there is a greater difficulty for these students to assimilate with regard to indigenous history and culture. According to the teacher, this happens because of the long period in which this theme “was treated in a worthless way”. Given this situation, Joênia expressed that she has been concerned, in her practice, with the demystification of this feeling of greater distance from the Indians (which she perceives among her students) and that she has tried to make them realize “that they are actually so close. [Indigenous people] who don’t even know”.

The teacher highlights a concern and sensitivity regarding the learning gaps in her students, while demonstrating to seek to exercise the important teaching function of contributing to correct them. What happens in encouraging their students, not only in building perceptions of something beyond their comprehension - as in the case of distancing from indigenous history and culture -, but also in the awareness of their origins linked to the indigenous, the side of a sense of belonging that diminishes this distance.

The three teachers were unanimous in recognizing the importance of the law, but do not consider it sufficient to bring about effective changes in schools, in order to overcome prejudices rooted in social practices strongly present in our society. This requires the adoption of educational policies and pedagogical strategies that promote the appreciation of diversity at different levels of education. A free, plural, diverse, democratic and citizen environment - as the law stands.

The research reveals the importance and the necessity of the continuous formation of the teachers, in relation to this subject, since two of them did not have them contemplated in the universities where they studied - and one teacher, although studied in the academy African History, did not have the same studies regarding indigenous history and culture.

Gaps in the processes of academic education of history teachers, such as those revealed in the interviews, may be hindering the consolidation of Law 11,645/2008 in public high schools in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. This discussion points out that future research may focus on the role of teacher education and its relationship with the consolidation of Law 11,645/2008.

We evidenced the existence of some autonomy for teachers to work with the various subjects, such as those determined by the law, and may encourage students to reflect on the recognition and importance of the various social segments in the historical and social construction of Brazil, perceiving themselves as citizens in the historical process (regardless of their ethnic, social, economic, ideological or cultural position).

The History teacher, by dialoguing with the world in which he/se lives, with the challenges, struggles and dreams, improves the way he reconstructs and interprets the past/present/future relationship and helps his students achieve the same.

## **Final remarks**

Verifying the applicability of Law 11,645/2008 regarding the obligation of teaching Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in the practices of history teachers, allows us to consider the importance of this law in helping to correct injustices against black and indigenous peoples, especially for a Eurocentric history that has traditionally valued whites and placed those groups in positions of submission and even exclusion.

However, the mere legal imposition of the obligation to work with such a theme does not guarantee the full implementation of the legal determinations, as teachers, who are mainly responsible for the execution, present gaps in the initial and continuing training to work on them.

The consolidation of Law 11.645 / 2008 still depends on political factors, especially through mobilizations of sectors of society concerned with guaranteeing democracy in Brazil, whether they are progressive, legalistic, intellectual, class associations, and especially the various groups linked to the academic world in order to pressure councilmen, deputies and senators to avoid the advancement of projects that are in the municipal, state and federal legislative spheres, which put at risk several democratic achievements and one of the pillars of education in the 21st century: learning to live together.

Civil society and the various sectors linked to and committed to quality education must be united and mobilized to combat any proposals or bills against the construction and consolidation of a plural, secular and democratic society and schools, fundamental to a civilizing and emancipating nation project.

With this work we seek to collaborate and provide elements, information and suggestions that can assist in the effective application of Law 11,645 / 2008 in public schools, at local, regional and national level, helping to overcome a teaching of Eurocentric history, which marks the national education for many decades and has not given due importance to the historical and cultural contributions of indigenous, African and African descent matrices.

We recognize that the historiographical review of what is being told about our ancestors is not a task that will have immediate effects. The advance consists in stopping exclusionary practices and rebuilding a History of Brazil teaching that places blacks and indigenous people on the level of importance they really have.

A history teaching-learning process focused on the interaction of different cultural matrices, as a way to strengthen interethnic relations, requires: a) educational policies and pedagogical strategies that favor the integration of different sectors of education, especially the adoption of Pedagogical Political Projects that reflect the school's commitment to these demands; b) questioning ethnic relations based on prejudices that disqualify blacks, indigenous and mestizos; c) valorization and dissemination of individual and collective resistance processes; d) understanding of values and struggles through awareness of the suffering of these groups and their descendants - results of slavery, exclusion and prejudice to which they have historically been subjected; e) creating conditions so that blacks, indigenous people and mestizos can increasingly attend school systems and not be subjected to rejection or exclusion; and f) guaranteeing the right to have their ancestors' historical and cultural contributions recorded and equitably addressed.

It is vital that history teachers use in their teaching practices the appreciation of the memory of the diverse ethnic groups that make up our society, as a way to encourage students to hear the voice of the excluded and the lessons they can bring to enrich their lives experiences.

With the immersion of young people in a world of technological innovation, with wide access to information, it is becoming increasingly necessary to train new generations to exercise citizenship, to encourage students to understand the social context, the need to interpret facts from history, as an assumption for uplifting work.

Given the above, we consider the need for a teaching of history, increasingly focused on diversity and that encourages the inclusion of diversity inherent in the Brazilian reality, not only in the context of ethnicity, but also gender, ideology and religion.

Thus, reforms are needed at the various levels of national education for proper implementation and efficient achievement of the results proposed by Law 11,645 / 2008. Such reforms should occur in the processes of teacher education at universities, with the inclusion of this theme in curriculum components (for those that have not yet done so), both undergraduate and postgraduate, and that schools open spaces for these discussions, as well as managers and government entities offer training and encourage teachers to participate in these training processes.

## References

ANTUNES, Ticiana de Oliveira. **Índios arengueiros: senhores da Igreja? Religião e cultura política dos índios do Ceará oitocentista**. 2016. 258f. Tese (Doutorado em História) – Instituto de Ciências Humanas e Filosofia, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, 2016.

BERGAMASCHI, Maria Aparecida. Povos indígenas e ensino de história: a lei nº 11.645/2008 como caminho para a interculturalidade. In: BARROSO, Vera Lucia Maciel et al. (Org.). **Ensino de história: desafios contemporâneos**. Porto Alegre: Anpuhrs/EST/Exclamação!, 2010. p. 151-166.

BITTENCOURT, Circe Maria Fernandes. Identidades e ensino de história no Brasil. In: CARRETEIRO, Mario et al. (Org.). **Ensino de história e memória coletiva**. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2007. p.33-52.

BITTENCOURT, Circe Maria Fernandes. **O saber histórico na sala de aula**. 9 ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2004.

BRASIL. **Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil**: texto constitucional promulgado em 5 de outubro de 1988, com as alterações determinadas pelas Emendas Constitucionais de Revisão nos 1 a 6/94, pelas Emendas Constitucionais nos 1/92 a 91/2016 e pelo Decreto Legislativo no 186/2008. Brasília, DF: Senado Federal, 2016. Disponível em: <[https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/518231/CF88\\_Livro\\_EC91\\_2016.pdf](https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/518231/CF88_Livro_EC91_2016.pdf)>. Acesso em: 08 ago. 2017.

BRASIL. **Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnico Raciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-brasileira e Africana**. Brasília, DF: MEC, 2005.

BRASIL. **Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente**. Brasília, DF: Senado Federal, 2017. Disponível em: <[http://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/534718/eca\\_1ed.pdf](http://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/534718/eca_1ed.pdf)>. Acesso em: 15 jul. 2017.

BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. Secretaria de Educação Básica. Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão. Secretaria de Educação Profissional e Tecnológica. Conselho Nacional de Educação. Câmara Nacional de Educação Básica. **Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais da Educação Básica**. Brasília, DF: MEC: SEB: Dicesi, 2013.

BRASIL. Secretaria da Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade. **Orientações e ações para educação das relações étnico-raciais**. Brasília, DF: Secad, 2006.

CERTEAU, Michel de. **A cultura no plural**. Tradução de Enid Abreu Dobránszky. Campinas: Papirus, 1995.

CERTEAU, Michel de. **A invenção do cotidiano: artes de fazer**. Tradução Ephraim Ferreira Alves. 3. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1998.

CHARTIER, Roger. **A história cultural: entre práticas e representações**. Tradução de Maria Manuela Gallardo. Lisboa: Difel, 1988.

FONSECA, Selva Guimarães. **Didática e prática de ensino de história: experiências, reflexões e aprendizados**. Campinas: Papirus, 2003.

FREYRE, Gilberto. **Casa grande & senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal**. 4. ed. São Paulo: Global, 2003.

FUNARI, Pedro Paulo; PIÑÓN, Ana. **A temática indígena na escola: subsídios para os professores**. São Paulo: Contexto, 2011.

GERHARDT, Tatiana Engel; SILVEIRA, Denise Tolfo (Org.). **Métodos de pesquisa**: Universidade Aberta do Brasil – UAB/UFRGS e Curso de Graduação Tecnológica – Planejamento e Gestão para o Desenvolvimento Rural da SEAD/UFRGS. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2009.

IPEA. Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada et al. **Retrato das desigualdades de gênero e raça**. Brasília, DF: IPEA, 2013. Disponível em: <<http://www.ipea.gov.br/retrato/apresentacao.html>>. Acesso em: 15 jun. 2016.

MACENA, Fabiana Francisca. **Outras faces do abolicionismo em Minas Gerais**: rebeldia escrava e ativismo de mulheres (1850-1888). 2015. 295f. Tese (Doutorado em História) – Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, 2015.

MINAYO, Maria Cecília de Souza (Org.). **Pesquisa social**: teoria, método e criatividade. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2001.

OLIVA, Anderson Ribeiro. **Lições sobre a África**: entre as representações dos africanos no imaginário ocidental e o ensino na história da África no mundo atlântico (1990-2005). 2007. 404f. Tese (Doutorado em História) – Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, 2007.

PAIM, Elison Antônio. **Memórias e experiências do fazer-se professor**. 538f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, 2005.

PESQUISA NACIONAL POR AMOSTRA DE DOMICÍLIOS: síntese de indicadores 2014: IBGE, Coordenação de Trabalho e Rendimento. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2015. Disponível em: <<https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv94935.pdf>>. Acesso em: 17 nov. 2015.

ROCHA, Aristeu Castilhos da. História e cultura afro-brasileira: Lei 10.639 / 2003 como um caminho para formação docente. In: CAMARGO, Maria Aparecida Santana et al. (Org.). **Mosaico de vivências acadêmicas**. Cruz Alta; Santa Maria: Unicruz; Palotti, 2012. p. 87102.

ROCHA, Helenice. A presença do passado na aula de história. In: MAGALHÃES, Marcelo et al. (Org.). **Ensino de história**: usos do passado, memória e mídia. Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2014. p. 33-52.

SILVA, Ana Lucia da. O ensino de história, África e a cultura afro-brasileira na educação básica: diálogos possíveis. In: COSTA, Luciano Gonsalves. **História e cultura afro-brasileira**: subsídios para a prática da educação sobre relações étnico-raciais. Maringá: EUEM, 2010. p. 141-157.

TARDIF, Maurice. **Saberes docentes e formação profissional**. 2. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002.

TARDIF, Maurice; LESSARD, Claude. **O trabalho docente**: elementos para uma teoria da docência como profissão de interações humanas. Tradução João Batista Kreuch. 3. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2007.

ZARTH, Paulo Afonso. O retorno das etnias no ensino de história: do melting pot ao multiculturalismo na imprensa de Ijuí. In: BARROSO, Véra Lucia Maciel et al. (Org.). **Ensino de história**: desafios contemporâneos. Porto Alegre: Anpuhrs/EST/Exclamação!, 2010. p. 117-133.

*Received on: June 18<sup>th</sup> 2018*

*Revised on: April 09<sup>th</sup> 2019*

*Approved on: May 08<sup>th</sup> 2019*

**Zilfran Varela Fontenele** holds a master's degree in teaching from Rio Grande do Norte State University. PhD student in education from the University of Valencia - Spain. Professor at the Federal Institute of Ceará, Campus of Crateús / CE. She works with research and extension projects in the areas of teacher education and education for ethnic-racial relations.

**Maria da Paz Cavalcante** holds a doctorate in education from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte. Professor at Rio Grande do Norte State University, where she works in the research line teaching of human and social sciences of the Graduate Program in Teaching, Campus de Pau dos Ferros/RN.