



## **The presence (or absence) of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in the school curriculum: challenges after Law No. 10.639/03**

*The presence (or absence) of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in the school curriculum: challenges after Law No. 10.639/03*

Andreia Rocha de Macedo  
Elilcileth do Amaral Brandão  
Iraílce Silva Cardoso  
Raquel do Amaral Mesquita  
Regina Brandão Silva  
Tatiane Costa Silva  
Assis Severo

### **Summary**

The trajectory of the Black population in Brazil is marked by social inequalities in various areas, and the educational landscape is no different. The struggle for Black rights, driven by social movements such as the Black Movement, was fundamental to the enactment of Law No. 10.639, which represents a significant milestone in the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian history in Brazilian school curricula. However, despite this achievement, many challenges remain and hinder compliance with this legislation. Given this context, this literature review aimed to investigate the main challenges faced in implementing Law No. 10.639/03. Among the main challenges encountered are the lack of adequate academic training for teachers, the lack of appropriate teaching materials in schools, the lack of acceptance and participation of the school community, and the persistence of structural racism. Therefore, public policies aimed at providing continuing education to teachers, monitoring to verify compliance with the law, and the commitment and awareness of the school community become fundamental for the effective implementation of the actions provided for in the legislation.

**Keywords:** Curriculum decolonization; Ethnic-racial diversity; Anti-racist education; Racial equity.

### **Abstract**

The trajectory of the Black population in Brazil is marked by social inequalities in various areas, and the educational sphere is no different. The struggle for the rights of the Black population, driven by social movements such as the Black Movement, was fundamental to the sanctioning of Law No. 10,639, which represents a significant milestone in the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian history in the curriculum of Brazilian schools. However, despite this achievement, many challenges persist and hinder the enforcement of this legislation. In this context, this literature review aimed to investigate the main challenges faced in the implementation of Law No.

10,639/03. Among the main challenges identified are the lack of adequate academic training for teachers, the scarcity of appropriate teaching materials in schools, the lack of acceptance and participation from the school community, as well as the persistence of structural racism.

Therefore, public policies aimed at providing continuing education for teachers, oversight to verify compliance with the law, and the commitment and awareness of the school community become essential for the effective application of the actions set forth in the legislation.

**Keywords:** Curriculum decolonization; Ethnic-racial diversity; Antiracist education; Racial equity.

## 1. Introduction

The trajectory of the black population in Brazil is marked by social inequalities in various areas, and the educational scenario is no different. For many years, black people They were prohibited from accessing education and were seen only as slave labor. Even after the abolition of slavery, this scenario did not change significantly. Although the black population has achieved a certain autonomy, access to fundamental rights such as education remained limited (Araújo, 2015).

The myth of racial democracy made it difficult to recognize the ills and neglect faced by the black population throughout Brazilian history. Social actions, carried out by organizations like the Unified Black Movement were fundamental to large achievements that marked the history of Brazilian education and many other aspects (Pereira, 2011; Santos; Santana, 2022).

Among these achievements, the enactment of Law No. 10,639, on January 9, stands out. of 2003, which implemented the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture in basic education institutions throughout the country. In order to promote and value Black identity and combat racism through education, encouraging recognition and respect for ethnic-racial diversity in the school environment (Brazil, 2003; Costa; Ribeiro, 2024).

However, despite the progress made, especially with the enactment of this law, there is more than 2 decades, many challenges are still relevant for its application to occur in a effective, as provided for in legislation (Costa; Brandão, 2023).

Failure to comply with the law directly harms the process of valuing ethnic-racial diversity in the school environment, since the fight for racial equity is not restricted only to the extra-class environment, but also in schools, to awaken the interest of student for critical sense, active voice on equality and racial democracy, it is necessary (Lima; Plaster; Schutz-Foerste, 2022).

Given this context, this literature review aimed to investigate the main challenges faced in implementing Law No. 10,639/03 in the education curriculum basic Brazilian, with an emphasis on valuing Afro-Brazilian history and culture and promoting of anti-racist pedagogical practices.



## 2. History of ethnic-racial relations in Brazilian education

The history of ethnic-racial relations in Brazilian education is marked by social inequalities that have persisted from the colonial period to the present day. The people Africans, brought by force to serve as slave labor for the great lords of land, were deprived of access to schooling (Araújo, 2015).

This reality persisted for several years, even after the abolition of slavery. in 1888. The black population continued to be marginalized and suffer the impacts of racism structural, with limited access to educational opportunities. This exclusion contributed directly to the continuation of social inequalities faced by this population (Pereira, 2011).

After the abolition of slavery, the myth of racial democracy was widely disseminated in Brazil. According to this myth, in the country, because there was great racial diversity, there was harmonious coexistence between different groups, that is, it was a society where racism was practically non-existent (Santos; Santana, 2022).

This ideology, in practice, served as an instrument to make racism and inequalities, being widely criticized by Abdias do Nascimento (1978) and Lilia Schwarcz (2012).

The Brazilian school curriculum, for many years, was based on a Eurocentric vision, resulting in the marginalization of the contributions of African and indigenous peoples. Only in end of the 1990s, with the realization of social mobilizations, advances were achieved in educational legislation, such as the creation of Law 10.639/03, which represents a historic milestone in this process (Almeida; Sanchez, 2017).

## 3. Law 10.639/03 and its legal framework

The enactment of Law No. 10,639 represents a major milestone in the inclusion of history Afro-Brazilian in the school curriculum of all primary and secondary education institutions in the country (Brazil, 2003).



This standardization is characterized by the addition of articles 26-A, 79-A and 79-B to the Law.

No. 9,394/96 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN), namely:

Art. 26-A. In public and private primary and secondary education establishments, teaching about Afro-Brazilian History and Culture becomes mandatory.

§ 1. The programmatic content referred to in the caput of this article will include the study of the History of Africa and Africans, the struggle of black people in Brazil, Brazilian black culture and black people in the formation of national society, recovering the contribution of black people in the social, economic and political areas relevant to the History of Brazil.

§ 2. Content related to Afro-Brazilian History and Culture will be taught throughout the school curriculum, especially in the areas of Art Education and Brazilian Literature and History.

Art. 79-B. The school calendar will include November 20th as 'National Black Consciousness Day' (BRAZIL, 2003).

In addition to amending the LDB (Law No. 9,394/96), Law 10,639/03 was also accompanied by the approval of the National Curricular Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Cultural Relations.

Racial and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture (DCNERER) published in 2004 by the National Council of Education (CNE) (Brazil, 2004). These guidelines guide schools in implementing the law.

The implementation of the aforementioned legislation is essential for the construction of a anti-racist education, promoting the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity in Brazil. In addition to contributing to overcoming racism in the school environment, with the promotion racial equality and respect for diversity inside and outside schools (Costa; Ribeiro, 2024).

### **3.1. The role of the Unified Black Movement in the creation of Law 10.639/03**

The fight for the recognition and appreciation of Afro-descendant culture has been going on for centuries, being marked by several factors such as trajectory, conflicts, heterogeneity, aspects social, economic and political (Andrade, 2017).

In Brazil, the Black Movement stands out for its demand for racial equality and recognition of Afro-descendant identity. It is a social movement composed of various groups and leaders who fight for the elimination of social inequalities in the spheres educational, political, social and cultural (Domingues, 2007; Gomes, 2012).

The approval of Law 10.639/03 was directly influenced by mobilizations carried out by the Unified Black Movement, especially from the 1980s onwards, in which the protesters demand the creation and implementation of public policies that value Afro-Brazilian history and culture in the country's school curricula (Pereira, 2011; Santos; Santana, 2022).

As Gomes (2016) points out, the achievements of the black movement have several perspectives and are the result of long and painful processes, with actors and protagonists who often they shed blood to be heard (Gomes, 2016).

Currently, the black movement is gaining ground, albeit late, reflects the fight for the right to equality that was never fully conceived, bringing with it debates on discrimination still present in the 21st century, seeking patents for equality, guidelines and overcoming these problems (Gomes, 2017).

In this sense, as Gomes (2012) observes, the struggle of the black movement is a continuous process of resistance and demand for equality, directly influencing the decolonization of the curriculum and construction of pedagogical proposals that resulted in the creation of Law 10.639/03 (Gomes, 2012).

#### **4. Challenges for implementing Law 10.639/03 in the school curriculum**

Despite the implementation of Law 10.639/03 more than 2 decades ago, there are still evident many structural, political and pedagogical challenges for its application to be truly carried out in all Brazilian schools (Costa; Brandão, 2023).

Among the main difficulties encountered in introducing the teaching of history and Afro-Brazilian culture in the country's school curriculum highlighted by black leaders and some studies, the lack of adequate training for educators stands out (Pereira, 2016; Rodrigues, 2021).

Many teachers did not have academic training that adequately covered content related to African history, Afro-Brazilian culture and cultural relations. ethnic-racial (Santana; Alves, 2010; Sousa *et al.*, 2024). Thus, many educators do not have complete control over these contents, which generates insecurity in their practice



pedagogical and contributes to the maintenance of stereotypes and silences within the classroom (Prado; De Fatima, 2016).

Furthermore, the difficulty in implementing and monitoring the law is also a great challenge. Although its approval was a great achievement, the lack of oversight compromises its continuous application (Rocha; da Silva, 2013).

Furthermore, factors such as the resistance and lack of commitment of some institutions teaching and educational managers, are significant barriers that hinder full implementation of Law 10.639/03 in Brazilian schools. Even with the mandatory implementation of the law, it is often not prioritized by professionals, either due to a lack of knowledge about the same, or by the reproduction of Eurocentric culture (De Jesus, 2017).

Furthermore, many educational institutions have adopted the introduction of the law, but in a superficial, restricting its approach only to subjects such as history, arts and sociology (Santana; Alves, 2010). As well as the carrying out of activities pedagogical activities related to the subject, only during the month of November, in allusion to the Day of Black Consciousness. This reality distorts the proposed legislation, as it establishes that there must be an interdisciplinary and continuous approach to ethnic-racial aspects in the school curriculum (Rodrigues; Oliveira; Santos, 2016).

The lack of appropriate teaching materials is also highlighted as a factor that directly impact the incorporation of knowledge about Afro-descendant culture in Brazilian school curriculum (Rodrigues, 2021). Many textbooks and pedagogical resources made available to students, are still produced based on Eurocentric culture, and present a limited or stereotypical view of Afro-Brazilian culture. This reality, impacts the identity and self-esteem of black students, requiring the production and distribution of diversified pedagogical resources (Santos; Pinto; Chirinéa, 2018).

Challenges related to school community acceptance and participation and persistence structural racism in schools are also obstacles that make it difficult to offer a anti-racist education (Alves, 2017). Often, resistance from students, parents and even of teachers, may be related to the lack of knowledge of this public about the importance of valuing Afro-Brazilian history and culture (Prado; De Fatima, 2016).

#### 4.1. Teacher Training and the Implementation of Law 10.639/03

The implementation of Law 10.639/03 in Brazilian schools is directly related to quality of initial and continuing teacher training, especially in courses degree (De Paula; Guimarães, 2014; Rodrigues, 2021; Sousa *et al.*, 2024).

Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to have specific training in order to base and plan your classes appropriately, ensuring compliance with the law and its resolution no. 1 of 17/06/2004 CNE/CP which, according to its Art. 2, highlights that the objective of classroom discipline is the propagation and dissemination of knowledge surrounded by attitudes, attitudes and values, thus expanding the theme and ethnic-racial awareness, having respect as a determining factor for legal rights (Brazil, 2004).

However, many undergraduate courses do not include in their curricula, disciplines focused on teaching ethnic-racial relations and the appreciation of history and Afro-Brazilian culture, which compromises the preparation of future teachers to act in critical, inclusive and anti-racist way (Rodrigues, 2021).

The absence of these subjects in undergraduate courses creates a gap between university education and the social and cultural reality of students, which contributes to the non-decolonization of the curriculum in all educational areas (Sousa *et al.*, 2024).

Given the gaps in school curricula, both in Basic Education and of Higher Education, there is a need for a decolonization of the curriculum, not only in basic education, but also in higher education, especially in training courses Bachelor's degree. After all, so that future teachers can pass on solid knowledge and diversified, it is necessary first that they have access to this training (Prado; Fatima, 2016).

#### 5. Advances and possibilities

Despite the challenges faced in implementing Law 10.639/03, its enactment brought a significant advance to education, making the teaching of history and Afro-Brazilian culture in public and private schools in Brazil (Costa; Brandão, 2023). This

measure, has contributed directly to the construction of an education that values ethnic-racial diversity and above all in confronting structural racism (De Jesus; Silva, 2018).

Since its enactment, the Law has driven the implementation of initiatives innovative pedagogical approaches, such as the inclusion of content related to Afro-Brazilian history and culture. Brazilian through interdisciplinary projects, artistic activities, discussion groups, literary productions and other activities developed in the school environment (Guedes; Nunes; Andrade, 2018).

These activities encourage the development of students' critical thinking, helping them understand the diversity present in Brazil and deconstruct stereotypes (Rocha; Silva, 2013; Gonçalves, 2018).

Another major advance was the expansion of academic production and the development of courses and training, which has generated new research, teaching materials and training specific information on ethnic-racial relations (Cardoso; Matos, 2013; Silva; Tobias, 2016).

Furthermore, the establishment of the Law also contributed to the creation of programs continuing education for educators, affirmative action in universities and guidance for quilombola school education. These initiatives are important for promoting equity racial in education, being an action of collective and continuous construction (Rocha; Silva, 2013; De Jesus; Silva, 2018).

## 6. Final considerations

The implementation of Law 10.639/03 in the school curriculum of public institutions and private institutions in Brazil represents a significant milestone in the history of Brazilian education. Since its enactment, many actions were taken to ensure racial equity for everyone. However, we have not yet fully achieved this goal, as many challenges remain are relevant.

Among the main challenges, the lack of academic training stands out. adequate for teachers, the lack of appropriate teaching materials in schools, the lack of acceptance and participation of the school community, as well as the persistence of structural racism.

Thus, public policies aimed at providing continuing education to be offered to teachers, inspection to verify compliance with the law, in addition to commitment and awareness of the school community (managers, teachers, students), become fundamental for the effective application of the actions provided for in the legislation.

Therefore, society's commitment to building an education is essential that values diversity and combats all forms of discrimination.

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