Policy discourses and multi-scalar interactions in curriculum development: Institutionalizing and translating ethnicity/race issues in Brazilian education
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Conclusions

This thesis centers on the question of which discourses and multi-scalar interactions influence the process of curriculum development with regard to ethnicity/race and education in contemporary Brazil. The object of study was Brazilian Law 10.639, enacted in 2003. By modifying the 1996 Education Act (Law no. 9.394, of 1996), the objective of Law 10.639 was to recognize the contributions of the black population in the social, economic, and political sectors of importance for the history of Brazil. In sum, Law 10.639 promotes the inclusion in the official curricula of private and public schools for primary and secondary education of the study of the history of Africa and of the African population, of the resistance of blacks in Brazil, of Brazilian black culture, and of the role of blacks in the formation of the nation-state.

In analyzing the process of curriculum development (understood as initial formation and transformation), the focus was on understanding the process of framing “alternative” policy discourses concerning ethnicity/race and education, the formulation of the official policy instruments, and the recontextualization of the contents of these policy instruments in pedagogical practices and strategies. In order to deal with these issues, the study consisted of two levels of analysis, addressed through two sub-questions. The first sub-question concerns the process of agenda-setting and institutionalization. Focus here went to investigation of the discourses and multi-scalar interactions that explain the uneven policy change process with regard to ethnicity/race and education (see Figure 7.1 below). The second sub-question addressed was the translation of Law 10.639 and the Curriculum Directives 003/2004 in schools. Here the reception and recontextualization of the new policy discourse at the school level was analyzed, as well as the conditions contributing to its effective implementation (see Figure 7.2 below).

Based on the strategic relational approach to structure and agency (Hay, 2002a; Jessop, 2008) I understood the nature of the relation between policy discourses and recontextualization of these in pedagogical practices and strategies to be dialectical. Hence, it was important to understand the relationship between political actors such as policymakers, social movement actors, and teachers, and the environment in which they operate. Ideas and discourses were considered to be pivotal in the relationship between agency and structure, mediating between structural factors and agency of individual actors and groups within the school. Based on theories of policy processes, I began with the idea that processes of framing, the production of policy as texts, and enactment on policies are three phases that interrelate and overlap. A theoretical framework was developed that visualizes the three main arenas involved in the process of curriculum development with regard to ethnicity/race and education in contemporary Brazil (see Figure 7.1). The three arenas concerned are the civil society arena, the official political arena, and the pedagogical arena. It was argued that in the civil society arena the strategies of actors are mainly focused on problem framing and influencing agenda-setting. In the official political arena, policy texts are negotiated and constructed. And in the pedagogical arena, (negotiations on) implementation regarding the policy agenda and recontextualization, and the translation of this agenda into pedagogical practices, takes place.
Figure 7.1  Theoretical framework and sub-questions part A

Sub-question A
What discourses and multi-scalar interactions explain the uneven policy change process with regard to ethnicity/race and education?

- a1) What arenas, actors, and events influenced the agenda-setting process concerning ethnicity/race issues in education in Brazil until the moment when Law 10.639 was passed and its regulation came about?

- a2) What arenas, actors and events have (had) an effect on the process of institutionalization of Law 10639 and the Curriculum Directives:003/2004?

- a3) How do different actors interpret, maintain, or contest (the constitution of) this agenda and its institutionalization?
Figure 7.2 Theoretical framework and sub-questions part B

(see Figure 7.1)

Sub-question B
How is the new policy discourse received and recontextualised at the school level and what conditions contribute to its effective implementation?


b2) How do members of the pedagogical/management team and teachers in the school receive and translate the context of Law 10.639 and the Curriculum Directive 003/2004?

b3) How does personal background influence the way teachers in the school work with ethnicity/race issues?
Hence this study emphasized the importance of looking at these three arenas and investigating political processes, institutional processes, and the formulation of pedagogical practices. The model visualizes how the three arenas and the processes of agenda-setting and implementation are embedded in six different contexts (ranging from the global scale of governance to the school context). The model was also designed to highlight the relation between and overlapping of the three arenas in the dialectical process between agenda-setting on ethnicity/race in education, and the implementation of this agenda. The assumption underlying this study was that in these overlapping spheres dynamic interaction and mobility between actors takes place that strengthens the process of agenda-setting and enactment on its outcomes. This concluding chapter returns to this model, its underlying theories and assumptions, drawing out conclusions regarding the research questions, based on analysis of the collected data.

The agenda-setting process on ethnicity/race issues in Brazilian education

Since the mid 1990’s policies began being developed that included a “race factor”. This was understood to be a sign of an increasing openness towards alternative discourses of parts of the population, and in some sectors in the official political arena, the civil society arena, and the pedagogical arena. In this thesis it is argued that this is the result of strategies of the Brazilian Black Movement in a context of increased political opportunity. To understand the discourses and multi-scalar interactions that explain the uneven policy change process with regard to ethnicity/race and education, it was considered essential to understand the frame and strategies of the actors involved. The Brazilian Black Movement, as an “epistemic community” (Lopes, 2006) tried to gain legitimacy, together with its allies in the civil society arena and the official political arena, through shaping and disseminating a discourse on ethnicity/race issues in society in general, and in education in particular. The redemocratization process since the end of the 1980’s, and the openings for participation at different levels of politics emerging in the neoliberal state in the 1990’s, contributed to transforming the relation between civil society (the Brazilian Black Movement specifically) and the state. These nation-wide transformations resulted in Black Movement-linked actors finding room to include their claims on municipal and state agendas. As a result, since 1989 – and more intensively so since the 1990’s – policy instruments similar to Law 10.639 have already existed at municipal and state levels, forming the basis for the formulation of a national law one decade later.

From the mid-1990’s onwards, stimulated by global actors and processes of globalization and neoliberalization, the debate on social issues, ethnic/racial inequality and race-based policies internationalized. Even when building on other frames than the one proposed by the Brazilian Black Movement, the debate disseminated by global actors also intensified the discussion on racial inequality in Brazil. It was shown how a complex multi-scalar and intra-scalar process of strengthening and tensioning with regard to race issues emerged in conjunction with the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) held in Durban in 2001. Here the Black Movement used a global event to present its local, regional, and national agenda. Drawing on the work of Santos (Santos, R.E., 2006), and Santos and Soeterik (2012), it was argued that the Durban conference should be understood as an example of how the Brazilian Black Movement used a “politics of scales” to take advantage of and create political opportunities for putting race on the agenda and make it a topic of debate in society. Using a “scales of politics” means more than “going beyond” the national, but rather working at a variety of scales (national, global, regional, and local) and mobilizing other actors, resources (such as financial and legal resources), and processes allocated in a power-scaled order (Santos & Soeterik, 2012: 184). Thus, the agenda-setting phase was influenced by a multi-scalar interplay of actors, events, and related processes. Figure 7.3 indicates the different
arenas, most important events and most active actors that influenced the agenda-setting process concerning ethnicity/race issues in Brazilian until the moment when Law 10.639 was passed and its regulation came about.

Though the Black Movement was a key actor in furthering the anti-racist education agenda in Brazil, the effective construction of policies only became possible within a global context that strengthened the movement in its struggle. In Brazil, the period after the World Conference Against Racism was characterized by public recognition within the Brazilian official political arena of racism in Brazilian society. It was then also recognized that the education system played an essential role in reproducing racism, and could possibly play a role in combating it. Popularization and politicization of the issue of racial inequality and affirmative action started in this period, forcing sectors of society to take position regarding the legitimacy of these kinds of policies.

Although increased political opportunities for developing race-based education policies were perceived, this study also shows the tensions and conflicting interests concerning the construction of such policies that still exist. While the Black Movement debated on how best to cooperate and negotiate with the state, conservative forces within Brazilian society frustrated and continued to hinder the agenda-setting process, stripping policy proposals of their transformative character. Looking specifically at the institutionalization and implementation of Law 10.639 and related legal instruments, it was found that progress and contestation was mostly expressed in the different interpretations of the essence and rationale of the policy.

Together with allied scholars and social movement actors, the Brazilian Black Movement constructed a frame, or an “imagined horizon” (Lopes, 2006), in which Brazilian society in general, and education in particular, is understood as structured through racial inequality and racism. One of the ideas behind Law 10.639 is to stimulate actors within the school to deconstruct these mechanisms, politicizing race. This politicization implies a reflection on, and revision of, representations of society as a whole (Soares, 2009), as well as a reflection on the involvement of all actors within the social dynamics of society. To comprehend the rationale behind and objective of Law 10.639, it is thus essential to understand the “social materiality” of race – that is, the way in which race as a social construct and discursive category is sustained on the level of social relations. This study has shown, however, that a majority of actors in both the official political arena and the school do not interpret Law 10.639 the way it was framed in first instance. The uneven policy change process concerning Law 10.639 was therefore marked by non-critical interpretations of the law, and neglect of (the importance of) these issues.

Contestation to Law 10.639 and related instruments was mostly found at the discursive level, in the different interpretations of the (essence of) the law, and in theorizations on Brazilian society. Accordingly, this study confirms the idea formulated by Lopes (2005: 45) that the national curriculum, due to the hybridity of the related discourses, often becomes a horizon imagined by collective subjects articulating their relevant interests and power relations. Concerning the interpretations of the legal instrument, this study identified in both the official political arena and the pedagogical arena discourses dominated by a non-critical liberal/conservative approach to ethnicity/race issues. This often led to no priority or visibility being given to the institutionalization and implementation of the policy in political, bureaucratic, and educational processes. Powerful actors in the official political arena, unwilling to politicize race, still maintained an image of a Brazil characterized by a history of harmonious racial relations (the myth of Brazil as a racial democracy). The presence of racism and the racial structuring of Brazilian society were not acknowledged.
Inequalities were explained by referring to socioeconomic differences (sometimes referring to the legacy of slavery) on the one hand, and individual responsibility on the other. The own involvement as a person with an own ethnic/racial identity within the social dynamics (e.g., in professional contexts) in which ethnicity/race plays a role (hidden and implicit too) often went unrecognized. Hence, legal instruments, such as Law 10.639 and related curriculum directives, are referred to as only being designed for the black population. Accordingly, the dominant debate in the official political arena focused on education about different ethnic/racial groups (studying the “other” and “their culture”). This led to a naturalization of differences, and a reification of the concept of culture. In so doing, the customs and world visions of the (white) majority were often implicitly taken as norm and whiteness went undiscussed. In the majority of discourses expressed by highly positioned actors operating in the official political arena, no criticism of or engagement with power issues, processes of exclusion, discrimination, and racism in education was found. Lack of commitment and conflicting interests with regard to the agenda was observed at both national, Rio de Janeiro state, and Niterói municipal government levels.

This interpretation was reflected in the process of institutionalization. When the law proposal finally entered the national official political arena, it remained shelved for years. Similarly, before enactment of Law 10.639, two essential clauses of the law proposal were vetoed. Although the approval of the law was long desired by Brazilian Black Movement-linked actors, many felt the vetoes took the backbone out of the project, as those elements were deleted which formalized the links between the Brazilian Black Movement, teachers, and schools regarding such matters as teacher training. This study has also shown that insufficient attention and resources were directed towards the (distribution and presentation of the) “National Curriculum Directives for the Education of Ethnic-Race Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture,” (the Curriculum Directives) written to explain in more detail the rationale and possible ways to implement the law. Accordingly, all these aspects contributed to the fact that the version of the law that was finally approved in 2003 was not specific, and could be interpreted in various ways.
Figure 7.3  Agenda-setting on ethnicity/race in Brazilian education, multi-scalar interactions, arenas, actors, and events
Several political and pedagogical challenges still exist with regard to institutionalizing and enacting the law in institutions linked to the official political arena. At the time of data collection, institutionalization and implementation mainly happened in separate “islands” or “appendixes” (such as special commissions or departments within the official political arena) and depended on individuals identifying themselves with the case of the Brazilian Black Movement. Within these “appendixes”, actors linked to the Brazilian Black Movement were often held responsible for promoting the further implementation related to the legal instruments. An effect of this model was that ethnicity/race was not worked on as a transversal issue – passing through all aspects and levels of the education system. Analysis of the accounts of high-positioned actors in the Ministry of Education and the Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Education showed the conscious choices made in this regard. The Secretariat for Continuing Education Alphabetization and Diversity (SECAD), at the national government level, was discussed as an example of an “appendix,” as well as the special diversity commissions and divisions at state and municipal government levels. This institutional “appendixing” of ethnicity/race issues was partly explained by the fact that powerful actors in the official political arena still consider it to be “an issue for blacks.”

In addition to a lack of broader institutional support, the “appendixes” also had to cope with low staffing and budgets. This, combined with the relatively autonomous character, and instable and discontinuous relations between political institutions at different levels of governance, led to a situation in which Law 10.639 and related legal instruments were an issue on which no coordination existed between the various levels of government and their different institutions. Hence, despite the actions of some individuals, the institutionalization and implementation process of Law 10.639 in the bureaucratic apparatuses at national, state, and municipal level stagnated.

The findings illustrate that huge political challenges still exist regarding the implementation and institutionalization of work related to ethnicity/race issues in Brazilian education. A remobilization of sectors of the Brazilian Black Movement was observed with regard to these challenges since the end of 2007. This remobilization resulted among other things in a document being presented to the Minister of education, on the basis of which the ministry published a “Plan for Implementation of Law 10.639” in 2009.

The lack of coordination and communication between political players at the different political scales was identified as one of the important factors frustrating the institutionalization of Law 10.639. “Finger pointing” dynamics showed that nobody considered themselves and the institution or organization they worked for to be accountable for taking essential steps towards institutionalization of and enactments related to the law. These dynamics were observed both between national government, and state and local municipal governments, as well as within institutions (e.g., the Ministry of Education). While actors at different levels should in fact have played a role in order for policies like Law 10.639 to realize their transformative potential, the observed dynamics resulted in situations where the teachers were often held responsible for implementation. The stagnation of the institutionalization process led to a lack of financing, dissemination, and development of material, and to insufficient teacher training. Accordingly, the structural support needed for teachers to implement the policy seemed to be lacking. This non-institutionalization of the law in the official political arena and its institutions at various scales was

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242 For example the Ministry of Education, the National Education Council, and the State and Municipal Education Councils.
then found to play an important role in the lack of implementation of the law in other arenas, including the pedagogical arena.

The study highlights that the Brazilian Black Movement played a central role in various phases of the policy change process. This was the case in the first phase identified in the process, the campaign against racial inequality (in education). In the phase where the proposal of Law 10.639 circulated in the official political arena (the second phase identified in the process), Brazilian Black Movement-linked actors again played a central role. As shown in Figure 7.4, the same was the case with concern to institutional/network strengthening (Phase 4), network revitalization, and remobilization (Phase 5). Interestingly, in the Law 10.639 project, the Brazilian Black Movement assigned itself an explicit role in the phase of implementation within the pedagogical arena as well. This aspect was, however, one of the elements vetoed before the law passed.

These conclusions highlight the value of adding a third arena – the civil society arena – to the two recontextualization fields (the official political arena and the pedagogical arena) identified by Bernstein (1996). Without this third arena, in which “alternative” pedagogic discourses are framed, it would have been difficult to understand the crucial role played by social movements and their actors in the agenda-setting process, acting inside, but at the same time also often independently of both the official political arena and pedagogical arena. Hence, this study shows that if the actions of Brazilian Black Movement-linked actors had not taken place, probably less would have happened – perhaps even nothing – regarding curriculum development concerning ethnicity/race issues in Brazil. For more profound curricular transformation to take place, a social movement is needed that moves between and operates within the various arenas, including the pedagogical arena. The Brazilian Black Movement and the multi-scalar action undertaken by this movement were essential to the agenda-setting process. However, analysis of the political and pedagogical processes related to Law 10.639, and the role of the Brazilian Black Movement therein, have shown that action from within the civil society arena alone is not enough to provoke more radical transformations in the education sector. For more widespread implementation, a broader and more profound institutionalization of the agenda (in this case the agenda concerning ethnicity/race and education) within the official political arena is needed.
Figure 7.4  Institutionalization of Law 10.639 and the Curriculum Directives 003/2004: arenas, actors and events

Events on different scales influencing the process of institutionalization
- Start new government PT
- Start diversity forums

Black Movement linked NGOs
- Advocacy organizations

Black Movement linked
- Advocacy organizations

Teachers unions

Scholars & research entities

School

Education secretariats
- State/municipal diversity commissions & divisions

Ministry of Education
- SECAD
- CADARA

Official political arena
- Institutional restructuring
- Financial support

Civil society arena
- Knowledge/material production
- Teacher training
- Advocacy

Pedagogical practice & strategy

Pedagogical arena
Reception and Recontextualization of Law 10.639 at the School Level

The second level of reach concerned how the new policy discourse is received and recontextualized at the school level and what conditions contribute to its effective implementation.

This study started from the idea that teachers – as well as other members of the pedagogical team in schools (such as educationists, school management, and coordinators) – are crucial agents in the (de)construction of mechanisms of exclusion in education. They play a fundamental role in counteracting ethnic/racial inequalities in education, contributing to the promotion of a more just society, also in an ethnic/racial sense. However, implementation processes in the school were considered to be in dialectical relation to processes and actors “outside” the school context, such as those discussed in the previous paragraphs. Based on the theoretical framework, I argued that in order to understand the actions of agents, we need to understand the relationship between the agents as political actors and the environment in which they find themselves. Pedagogical practices and strategies cannot be understood in isolation. Actors in their context were conceptualized as conscious, reflexive, and strategic, capable acting strategically, based on a strategic assessment of the context (Hay, 2002a: 128). Therefore, keeping the notions of strategic and discursive selectivity in mind, and recognizing the specific temporal and spatial constraints that operate in the school context, this work started from the idea that the school context never ultimately determines strategies. Nonetheless, I argued that strategic selectivity within the school favors certain strategies over others as a means towards realizing a given set of intentions or preferences (Hay, 2002a: 129).

In the first place this study found that although a slight majority of professional actors in the school had heard about Law 10.639, very few team members knew about its exact contents. The percentage of teachers that had read the law was even smaller than the number of pedagogical/management team members that had read it. At the same time, a majority confirmed that the school worked with the contents of the law. Analysis of the accounts of these actors shows, however, that within the Niterói municipality school taken as a case, a majority of actors did not consider its transformative potential with regard to their own practices. This is interesting because many actors “external” to the school emphasized the responsibility schools and teachers bear with regard to the implementation of Law 10.639. Professional actors in the school – independent of their exact interpretation of the law – in turn emphasized structural and contextual factors limiting their agency regarding the formation and transformation of practices in the domain of ethnicity/race issues.

The main factor identified which explains why the law has been recontextualized and translated in School 10 the way it was is the lack of understanding by the professional team of the concepts race and racism as used in the framing of the Brazilian Black Movement. A second factor concerns the absence of a school-wide ongoing project related to ethnicity/race issues.

Most interpretations of law 10.639 in School 10 emphasized its cultural elements. This interpretation was often accompanied by the principle of non-discrimination, a focus on “the other” and whiteness as norm. Hence, on the level of practices of individual professionals in the school, recontextualization of the law was strongly marked by offering “additional” educational contents. When referring to the daily practices in the school, inequalities, lived realities of racism, and underlying power issues were only recognized by a few members. There was no recognition of the sociohistoric context in which education takes place and where identities are shaped. Education contexts, processes, and actors were primarily discussed as being neutral and color blind, not connected to differences and inequalities in society. A few actors in the school understood the essence of the law as being transformative, involving the entire society and all Brazilian citizens.
These actors indeed did problematize dominant ideas, attitudes, and educational contents, and recognized the need to revise them.

As the interpretations found in School 10 reflect to a great extent the ideas dominant in Brazilian society, the outcomes of this case study are considered to be an example of how dominant societal discourses and social beliefs in the school mediate between structural factors and agency of individual actors and groups.

The absence of a school-wide, ongoing project on ethnicity/race issues, going beyond the prescribed curriculum was identified as a factor contributing to the non-development of critical interpretations and transformative practices by individual professionals in the school. At institutional level recontextualization was mainly found in the yearly special project and celebration of National Black Consciousness Day. This on its turn was related to the unavailability of space for knowledge construction in which voices of “minorities in power” are included and, a lack of external support received in the school for implementing policies such as Law 10.639.

Concerning the conditions contributing to effective implementation of Law 10.639, it was found that it was much more important to gain insight into how different actors face these issues, and use opportunities and their space for maneuver, than to consider the presence of certain “frustrating” or “stimulating” factors internal or external to the school. It was found that contextual issues such as (availability of, or access to) time, material, and knowledge were presented by some actors as a positive influence, while others identified these as a negative influence in working with Law 10.639. Hence, individual professional actors in the school were found to position themselves differently within the context in which they operate. While a few teachers perceived some “room for maneuver,” embracing the responsibility and attempting to develop or transform practices within their daily working context, a majority of the teachers and pedagogical/management team members did not seem to see – or did not want to see – their possible capacity to (at least partly) change the situation in which they find themselves. The majority of negative factors identified by the teachers were presented as lying outside their ability to change.

However, the few alternative discourses present in the school opened discussion about the issue. These sometimes led to a renegotiation with regard to the concept of racism and its manifestations. Examples were given of how reference to Law 10.639 at specific moments triggered a reflection on ethnicity/race issues in the school. At such moments, the legal instrument served as a tool or vehicle for actors willing to work with the issue in making their point.

The personal background of teachers influenced the way they work with ethnicity/race issues; the input from team members that identified themselves as black, or self-identified white members referring to an intimate relationship with (a) black person(s), presented more critical problematizations of the issue of racism in the institution. Being a minority, these members addressed the issue of racism not only as an individual problem, but primarily as a societal and institutional problem. Consequently, they expressed a more critical sociopolitical interpretation of Law 10.639, and recognized their individual agency, and the need to act on it. The theoretical discussion on social and personal beliefs in this thesis, helps to explain the differences perceived in the problematization and development of practices by team members. Beliefs are understood as

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243 The data collected through the surveys and in the interviews at School 10 show that the majority of the actors with a positive opinion regarding the law identified themselves as black or brown (62%). Of the remainder, 27.3 percent identified themselves as white, 3 percent as yellow, and 3 percent as indigenous, while the rest did not answer the question on race/color identity. In addition, all professionals that openly expressed a negative opinion about the law identified themselves as white. Of those professionals expressing an ambivalent opinion regarding the law, 63 percent identified themselves as white, 13 percent as black, and 25 percent as brown.
having a strong affective and evaluative component, as they are often linked to experiences lived by
the individual (Nespor, 1987). Hence they guide perceptions and “color” subsequent experiences.
In a societal context dominated by the ideology of Brazil as a racial democracy, and an institutional
context characterized by a lack of support and training on the issue, members who themselves
never suffered racism or who do not have an intimate relationship with an individual who has
suffered this form of exclusion, find it difficult to understand what racism is, and to recognize its
dynamics in daily situations and practices. This lack of understanding leads to a non-critical
problematization of the issue, and non-recognition of their own related role. It is interesting to
observe that a few times – after a few critical contributions to the group discussions – some
teachers also began to reflect on the possible meaning of Law 10.639 in their pedagogical practices
and their role as educators. It became apparent that there are opportunities for beliefs and practices
to change. This is in line with existing theory that highlights that it is possible to change beliefs, and
to become conscious of and reflect on them (Pajares, 1992; Nespor, 1987). This study also
confirmed that changing beliefs is not a process that stands alone; it needs both the will to bring
about change and external support.
Concluding Remarks

Summarizing, considering agenda-setting on ethnicity/race in education in Brazil, and the multi-scalar and inter-scalar power struggles surrounding it, shows that although “minority issues” (such as ethnicity/race issues) are still often excluded from dominant agendas at various levels of governance, the increased inter-scalar and multi-scalar dynamics in the globalized world at the same time present new opportunities for these minorities to “navigate scales.” This study has shown how in Brazil the Brazilian Black Movement took advantage of these opportunities and succeeded in putting its issues on the political agenda. Moreover, this study exemplified why the process of curriculum development, the power-knowledge relations therein, and the “paradoxical character of the relation between autonomy and control” (Macedo, 2006: 103) cannot be understood when the process is taken to be and investigated as a top-down linear process. In the case of Law 10.639 it...
was the Brazilian Black Movement moving “up” and “down,” operating within different arenas, that was the motor behind the developments. Linked to this, policy documents and instruments such as Law 10.639 cannot be taken as a “closed preserve of the government apparatus of policy making” (Ozga, in Ball et al., 2012: 2) depending for its institutionalization and implementation on “local characteristics” on the one hand, and on “external factors” (Fullan, 2007) on the other. Such a hierarchical and non-dynamic understanding of the policy process would have made it impossible to recognize the different arenas, actors, and factors that influenced the phases of agenda-setting, and the development, adjustment, and approval of the policy instruments. It would also have made it difficult to understand why at present Law 1.639 has been implemented in the way it has been, and has been implemented so modestly.

Discursive processes and social beliefs were found to play a fundamental role in the enactments related to the legal instrument. Specifically where it concerns ethnicity/race issues – a theme that entails reflection on and revision of representations of the society as a whole – beliefs and discursive processes regarding ethnicity/race issues were found to play a key role in transforming and reproducing education related to these matters. In Brazil the ideology of a racial democracy was found to still serve to disseminate the idea of “social cohesion” within society. Thereby the discourse of the Brazilian Black Movement was – and still is – systematically withheld legitimation by powerful sectors in society that invest in maintaining the belief in this ideology. Here this study would like to recall Bernstein’s statement that “every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is space in which ideology can play” (1996:47); in the process of policymaking, the discourse about racial inequality and racism, created by the Brazilian Black Movement, constantly circulated in both the civil society arena and the official political arena. However, it was found that when it entered the latter arena, at various moments “ideology played,” and transformed the meaning of (parts of) the project to a less transformative policy.

Hence, regarding the process of curriculum development concerning ethnicity/race and education in contemporary Brazil, huge political and pedagogical challenges still exist. The political challenges relate to the educational system, where it concerns the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, and the coordination and interaction between institutions at different levels of politics. The pedagogical challenges have to do with the need for a more explicit and profound discussion in institutions linked to the three identified arenas of the concepts culture, race, and racism, and their meaning in the context of Brazilian society and education.

Based on these findings, the question arises where exactly change in education should start. Is quality in education a condition for transformation, or is transformation a condition for quality? Or should change come from both sides at the same time? If so, which actors and institutions bear what responsibility for giving impetus to this change process? And is the answer different when the proposed transformation concerns an “alternative agenda,” an initiative by a “minority in power”? This study illustrated the complexity of these issues. In the theoretical chapter the expectation was formulated that the process of agenda-setting and enactment on its outcomes is strengthened mostly in the spheres where the official political arena, the civil society arena, and the pedagogical arena overlap. It was assumed that in the overlap a dynamic interaction between actors existed, which with the actors’ mobility would facilitate the process. The data collected in this study show, however, that the interactions between arenas and actors were not so dynamic and reciprocal. As argued above, the initiatives of actors linked to the civil society arena provided the basis for the national law and implementation related to it. While one could refer to multi-scalar dynamics between different arenas in the phases in which the agenda was set, reference to a “dynamic
interaction” between and mobility within arenas would be misleading. Initiative and activity came mostly from the civil society arena, specifically from the Brazilian Black Movement. Concerning the phases of institutionalization and implementation, multi-scalar dynamics stagnated. It was found that in the phases of institutionalization and implementation, actors from the official political arena often pointed to actors and institutions in the pedagogical arena as responsible for this process. Interesting, but unsurprising considering the vetoes of the original law proposal; most of the time the role of the civil society arena (and specifically the Brazilian Black Movement) went unmentioned in this regard. At the same time, Black Movement associated actors and allies were found to be the ones taking the lead in local small-scale initiatives regarding implementation of the law.

Based on the findings, I argue that in the case of constructing a curriculum that includes ethnicity/race issues in Brazil, both the challenges at the political level and challenges at the pedagogical level should be tackled at the same time. Both (transformation of) structure and agency should thereby be considered. First off all, political challenges need to be faced at the level of the national government. This study indicated the need for institutionalizing the issue in the official political arena at national level, specifically through the Ministry of Education. A solid presence of this national institution, also at state and municipal levels, could mean working with the issue at local level would develop further. Government-linked institutions and actors should take a more leading and proactive role in the process of institutionalization and implementation related to the law. This process will be impossible to realize, however, if the pedagogical challenge is not addressed too. Training on ethnicity/race issues should be developed and provided to actors both in the pedagogical arena and the official political arena. For implementation related to Law 10.630 to become transformative, actors should become familiar with the frame, history, and contemporary reality behind the law and linked legal instrument. Moreover, actors should be stimulated and challenged to consider how they themselves are shaped by history, how they are involved in contemporary reality as a person and a professional, and how they can use their agency to change this reality, albeit perhaps only in part.

Future studies should shed light on whether the more recent interventions in the policy process, such as the plan for implementation of Law 10.639 drawn up in 2009, helped to address the political challenges and set in motion a real transformative process both within the official political arena and the pedagogical arena. Future studies can fruitfully investigate “cases” made by other “minorities in power,” such as the indigenous population and women (with regard to education), and the relations and tensions between the demands made by various groups regarding other policy initiatives. Research could also provide more in-depth analysis of the micropolitical processes in which the different interests and forces were played out, with President Lula at the time approving the law, yet also signing the vetoes. While in this study the arguments were analyzed given at the time the vetoes were published, it would be interesting to include analysis of internal reports from the commissions, chambers, and the Senate, the parties involved in the process immediately before the vetoes were made public. Examination of such documents could clarify in more detail the micro-processes of discursive selectivity and negotiations related to the arguments given, as well as the power relations that played a role in this specific part of the process.

This study has shown how change in education is a complex and slow process involving many actors linked to different arenas. While in the case of Brazil ethnic/racial inequality is still one of the main challenges to citizenship, it is important to emphasize that this study was also proof of how in the last decades Brazilian society has become more receptive to discussing the issue. As one participant formulated it when referring to the inclusion of race on the political agenda since the
late 1990’s: “It was much less than we wished for, but much more than we thought was possible ten years earlier” (A2:30). However, it should be remembered that even though progress has been slow, and many things have yet to improve, the Brazilian case can be considered an example for many other countries. It could be stated that the process concerning Law 10.639 is an example of the search for democratic answers needed to repair important ruptures in Brazilian society (Koonings, 2012: 23). Individual actors (in both the official political arena and the pedagogical arena) feel strengthened, as at present Law 10.639 represents one of the tools they can use; it is one of the laws they can refer to and build on in their struggle for a more racially just society.

Focusing on a “minority issue” that was left off the Brazilian agenda on education, the study also relates to the broader (regional and global) agenda on education, citizenship, and development. In other contexts too, it is essential to critically reflect on who defines the issues on the education (and development) agenda, and which issues are being left out. Current globalization processes offer new opportunities, but also impose limits. It is still a fact that to be a “global actor” one must be recognized globally by other actors, cause global impacts, and be capable of engaging in dialogue and imposing one’s projects in environments where others are unable to. The case of the Brazilian Black Movement has shown that recognition also depends on the emergence and use of political opportunities at various scales. Globalization, and the social and technological developments associated with it, brought new dimensions and opportunities for social movements to organize themselves. This study has shown that such dynamics can have a positive influence on political development on other scales. Analyzing the process of agenda-setting concerning Law 10.639 shows how entities within the Black Movement, being a movement “confined” to the local or national scale, “learned to manipulate and use the scalar organization of power games” (Santos & Soeterik, 2012: 184). In this case globalization also clearly offered opportunities. However, in processes of globalization, remaining power structures and related dominant discourses – such as those that disseminate non-critical cultural interpretation of social justice (in education) – are also strengthened by powerful actors, thereby frustrating the development of “alternative” agendas and more profound transformations in various countries.

The Brazilian case should be understood within its regional context, where in the last thirty years citizenship has increasingly been presented as a theme related to development (Koonings, 2012: 22). The same applies to education. The case of the Brazilian Black Movement fits a wider pattern in which a strong consciousness about rights exists among the non-privileged groups in Latin America, on the basis of which at present the state and politicians are actively questioned. Accordingly it is concluded that, even considering the many major challenges still existing regarding structural inequalities in Brazil, the country has made great strides compared to many other countries in putting the issue of ethnic/racial inequality on the agenda. Although many challenges remain in this regard, the discussion in certain sectors of society is much more evolved in Brazil than in many other countries. In future studies it would therefore also be interesting to compare the Brazilian case with developments elsewhere. It is hypothesized that such a comparison in many cases would emphasize the fact that Brazil could serve as inspiration for other countries.

Huge challenges concerning citizenship, democracy, and participation still exist in Brazil. Regarding political challenges, the history of Brazil as an elite society needs to be highlighted. The recent huge mass protests in the streets of several state capitals around the country show how many – especially young – Brazilian citizens still feel frustrated within their own country, one which so strongly disseminates its “success story” in the contemporary world. They show the current challenges regarding the search for ways in which the different sectors of society, with their distinct
interest and claims, can effectively feel part of the process of nation-building, seen by many citizens as an “inclusive imagined community on the basis of social justice and participation” (Koonings, 2012: 24-25). Hence, the findings of this study are in line with Koonings’s affirmation that the country is still far away from serving as “a paradigm for a new scientific view on development” (Koonings, 2012: 18).

Concerning the search for new paradigms for inclusive development, it would be interesting to investigate the political (education) models in countries characterized by various forms of diversity that do not have a society structured along different categories of the population. As theories on coloniality lead us to understand, the need to have policies that focus on redistribution for or recognition of certain (identity) groups in the population only exists in (historically) profoundly disrupted systems. If people grow up in a system that recognizes everyone, and from birth onwards gives everyone the same chances and equal access to health, education, etc., would policies that approach different groups in society differently then also be needed? Investigation of such a different social, political, and historical context would help to formulate answers to the question of how to campaign simultaneously for inclusion of all citizens as well as for more structural changes to the system.

In studying a particular issue, in a particular place, in a particular time period, this book by necessity had to leave out many issues. Accordingly, I conclude by expressing the hope that this study inspires others to formulate new questions and stimulates reflection on possible new answers to already existing questions, also in contexts other than the Brazilian one.