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CHAPTER NINE

Ethnic/Racial Diversity and Education Policy: The Role of the Black Movement and Multi-Scalar Processes within the Public Agenda in Brazil

Renato Emerson dos Santos and
Inti Soeterik

Introduction

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, policies to combat racism and racial inequalities have emerged in Brazil in a range of fields, and this has been especially visible in education. Throughout almost the entire twentieth century, Brazil officially claimed to be a ‘racial democracy’, and these policies appeared to be (or were based on) a negation of this idea. This chapter will examine the relationship between this emergence and global processes of constructing and disseminating anti-racist agendas, including in the realm of education.

In Brazil, the decisive protagonist role within the emergence process of a national public policy agenda against racial inequality is currently subject to intense debate. A longstanding explanation in Brazil (as part of the ideology of racial democracy itself) claims that these policies, known as ‘affirmative action’, are the fruit of artificially copying or importing an agenda developed in the United States. This explanation appears in the famous article entitled ‘*As Artimanhas da Razão Imperialista*’ (‘On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason’), written by Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc

Wacquant (2002). These authors point to North American 'new imperialism' (through cooperative foundations and agencies) as a vector of the exportation of agendas, translating a comprehension of US race relations that is incompatible with the historic pattern of development in Brazil, where 'race' does not make sense. These arguments have strongly influenced Brazilian social thought as they offer a line of reasoning for how such international agendas, actors and processes are imposed on intranational agendas, actors and processes.

This chapter proposes two critiques of this perspective. Firstly, the 'imperialist import' explanation leads to a reflection on the processes of forming scales. In this argument, scales are understood as fields, arenas and spheres of power wherein political behaviour defines plans, practices and uses of and within a territory, while indicating a certain relation of primacy between them: the global (American imperialism) imposing itself on the national using its 'cunning.' In other words, scales are seen as distinct, separate 'levels', with independent logic and a hierarchical relationship between them. This chapter proposes then a critique on this understanding of scale. Secondly, we argue that the aforementioned perspective overrates the role of international organisations (so-called 'global actors') and overlooks the existence of the historic struggles of social movements, in this case that of the Black Movement in Brazil, as if it were not a causal force in the emergence of racial policies. Therefore another aim of this chapter is to discuss the role of this specific social movement in these developments.

With these objectives in mind, first the approach to the concept of 'scale' adopted in the chapter will be explained, pointing to the importance of understanding multi- and inter-scalar processes while investigating the emergence of race-based public policies¹ in Brazil. Then in the second section, the focus will turn to a discussion on the emergence of the national public policy agenda against ethnic/racial inequality in Brazil, offering a brief historic overview. The key role of the Brazilian Black Movement (BBM) on different scales will be highlighted, introducing the concept of 'area of movement.' In the third part, the relation between the emergence of ethnic/race issues in public policies in Brazil and on the global agenda will be examined critically. In so doing, the process of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 under the auspices of the United Nations will be discussed as an example of how the BBM used a 'politics of scales.' This process is considered especially interesting as it was characterized by the widespread participation of both official and civil society delegations from Brazil and all around the world in both the conference, parallel events and the preparatory process. To strengthen the argument that events and actions on a global scale have not played a significant direct role on the shaping of anti-racist education policies in Brazil, we subsequently discuss two World Bank documents and analyse the rationales and frameworks on ethnicity/race issues of this international organization. In the fourth and

final section, in order to attempt to identify which global and local factors have contributed to the emergence and reinforcement of this agenda in Brazil, the applicability, in this case of concepts such as the 'boomerang effect', 'short-circuit', 'jumping scales' and 'embedding-disembedding' of scales of politics, is discussed.

Multi-Scale Processes and the Definition of Political Agendas

Scale is a concept that lies at the heart of understanding the contemporary world. The almost omnipresent use of the idea of globalization to explain phenomena and processes in a wide variety of areas brings scale to the centre of many narratives. The idea of globalization is in itself a scale-based narrative, pointing to scalar redefinition of processes. When the idea of 'thinking globally and acting locally' is proposed, this implies redefining scalar relationships in organising strategies and actions. Accordingly, one increasingly speaks of relations between the global, regional, national and local in order to understand recent processes and transformations. However, this raises a number of questions. The way in which one understands the concept of scale has itself a major influence on constructing explanations for phenomena. There is a current tendency to view things in a manner dissociated from preconceived and reified scales interrelating hierarchically (see Lacoste 1988).

The traditional vision of scalar ordering in the world, based on relations of contiguity, hierarchy and articulation, considers that a set of locations forms a region, a set of regions forms a country, a set of countries forms a continent and a set of continents forms the world. The emerging image is always somehow similar: spatial groups or entities relating and uniting to form new groups or entities on another scale. Each scale would correspond to a 'level of aggregation', which could be identified whenever the problem or phenomenon observed undergoes significant changes through redefining the size of the spatial area. This representation leads to the perception of these levels of aggregation, which are scales thought of as articulated 'spatial levels' but are in essence differentiated and dissociated. This is because the metaphor of the level (as a vertical overlapping of different horizontal planes) constructs an image of hierarchy and the subordination of spatial scales: each level is formed by the summation and embedding of territorial divisions on the scale immediately below in terms of area covered. This world appears, therefore, as the result of the 'embedding' of scales (Vainer 2001).

It has become clear that this hierarchical model of the world that dissociates scales and thereby makes processes and actors autonomous (making local processes and actors separate from others that are called national

or global, for example) is insufficient. The very idea of scale needs to be revised. Scale is a social construction based on power relations; it is a container of power. In this sense, scale, as a heuristic instrument, enables levels of analysis of the real to be distinguished; yet, in the real, such levels are not levels, but rather simultaneities – of social actors, objects and actions that construct geographic space (Santos R. E. 2006).

What justifies scalar narratives is, in fact, the assertion that phenomena, as interrelated simultaneities, have impacts and effects on distinct environments and spatial units. Local, regional, national and global are in the same place, so that elements (actors, processes, phenomena and objects) are multi-scalar, with one scale influenced by other phenomena within other scales. This is the magic (and the importance) of the scalar organisation of political relations: it enables actors, relations, processes and phenomena that co-exist in space to be ordered so as to establish systems of domination and power. This is true both when one considers scale as a heuristic instrument (that explains the world while valuing the global over the local, the universal over the specific, and consequently that which one wishes to affirm as global/universal and that which one wishes to criticize as local/specific: see Santos B. S. 2004) and as the organisation of the experiences of individuals, groups and social actors, which are hierarchically ordered, and included in or excluded from power games.

The scalarity of political games is therefore related to the hierarchy of social actors, of arenas in which they participate and of contexts of interaction that serve or do not serve as arenas. It is also clearly related to legitimations and exclusions imposed on social actors in each 'scale.' It is thereby understood as an ordered power game, with defined spatial coverage, recognized actors (and others not recognized), its own rules and standards of conduct and specific objects of dispute. To be a global actor, one must be recognized globally by other actors, cause global impact, and be capable of engaging in dialogue and imposing one's projects in environments where others are not able to. Despite this, what has become increasingly clear is that social actors 'confined' to local or national scales have learned to manipulate and use this form of scalar organisation of power games. That is how expressions such as 'jumping scales' (Swyngedouw 1997), 'disembedding' and 're-embedding' (Giddens 1991), unpredicted linkages or 'short circuits' (Silveira 1996) and 'boomerang effect'² have arisen.

This multiplicity of terms shows the diversity of ways in which subordinate social actors use the 'scales of politics' to produce a 'politics of scales.' When speaking of 'cross-border activism' or multinationals, therefore, one must consider that this means more than 'going beyond' the national, but rather articulating a variety of scales (national, global, regional and local) and mobilising other actors, resources (financial, legal, etc.) and processes allocated in a power-scaled order.

In the case of the emergence of race issues in Brazil, we propose that it

is most appropriate to think in terms of a 'politics of scales' of the Black Movement, given that, at different times and in different spaces, it is this movement that has been at the forefront in constructing, maintaining and imposing the agenda. There has been no international pressure, nor intra-national pressure, but rather the mobilisation of resources and processes by the social movement on different scales, and the use of processes on different scales as a justification for the Black Movement to strengthen the racial agenda. The value of thinking in terms of 'politics of scales' is that this concept enables a combination of the complexity of political games organized in multi-scale form and an emphasis on the leading role played by the social movement in creating and maintaining the agenda in the public debate and the spheres of social coordination.

It can be observed that a large share of the public policies that were initiated in the twenty-first century had been demanded and fought for by the Black Movement for a long time, and that some had already been implemented as public policies by municipal and state governments in previous decades. Therefore it is interesting, in our view, to investigate the role of the internal leadership of the Black Movement (on the local, regional and national scale) vis-à-vis global dynamics of policy dissemination, including with regard to policies on diversity and multiculturalism.

The Emergence of Race on the Education Agenda in Brazil

The incorporation of race issues as a foundation for education policies has been intensely debated over the last ten years in Brazil. Some policies, such as that of reserving quotas for black people at universities, have provoked some of the most controversial debates seen recently in the country. Within the framework of the development of anti-racism policies in several sectors³, and developments such as the establishment of a Secretary for Racial Equality (SEPPIR) in 2003, and the creation of more than one hundred municipal and state bodies of a similar kind, the field that has experienced the most profound changes is that of education.

The two main areas in which race-based policies are being created in the Brazilian education system are (i) access to higher education and (ii) the combating of racism in the school environment. Starting in 2003, quotas have now been implemented at approximately forty universities throughout the country. In addition, the Ministry of Education is providing scholarships for black students to attend private universities, and both national government and some state and municipal governments are funding university admission preparatory courses for black and socio-economically disadvantaged youngsters. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education is funding university institutes and groups researching issues related to

racial inequality. In terms of combating racism in education institutions, in 2003, Law 10.639 was approved that modified the Law of Guidelines and Foundations for National Education (MEC 1996). This law defined the teaching of issues related to ethnicity/race, African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture, and the inclusion of contents on the contributions of the BBM's struggles over the course of history as obligatory.

The construction of this agenda has involved historic struggles of the BBM on different scales, as well as international processes and actors more recently. These multi-scale processes are examined in this chapter. However, first the context wherein race issues started to emerge in Brazil will be briefly discussed. In our view, such information is key to understanding the internal processes in Brazil which contributed to these developments.

New Forms of Social Coordination in Brazil of the 1980s and 1990s

In this section we will argue that it is the emergence process of new forms of social coordination (Lechner 1997) that led to the incorporation of new agendas by the Brazilian state. In addition, we point to the key role played by the BBM as responsible for the strengthening of the anti-racist agenda. The emergence of new forms of social coordination can be understood when considering important factors which influenced Brazilian society, such as the re-democratisation process in the 1980s and the spread of neoliberal ideas and policies in the 1990s.

First of all, the emergence of race as a foundation on which to construct public policies in Brazil has to be understood as part of transformations in the relation between the state and civil society in recent decades. Starting in the late 1970s, Brazilian society experienced a process of re-democratisation, which culminated in the transition from the military regime to democracy in 1985. This process of democratisation generated the need to form social coalitions as an alternative to hegemonic forces and made it possible for social struggles to emerge. New social movements were organized, new mechanisms were created to represent sectors of civil society within the structure of the executive power (Burity 2006, p. 70) and, while some of civil society's social demands began to find an environment conducive to the creation of public policies, new agendas promoted by social movements were incorporated by spheres of the state.

The 1980s also witnessed some crucial moments for the Black Movement's actions in the field of education. While during this period discussion on the theme of race relations was still taboo in many sectors of society, the centenary of the abolition of slavery in 1988 turned race into a national issue. In that same year, a new federal constitution was being drawn up. This created an environment in which it was possible for the Black Movement to set out grievances against and demands to the state. In the

process of constructing the new constitution, the education agenda of the Black Movement was strengthened by initiatives such as the Black National Constitutional Convention, held in Brasília in August 1986. As a result, the new constitution included, for the first time, the criminalisation of racial discrimination. Furthermore, a small portion of the movement's demands in relation to education was also incorporated in the 1988 Constitution.⁴

The activities of different organisations and actors in the Black Movement in the re-democratisation process also led some state and municipal governments to create councils, commissions, coordination boards and advisory posts in order to tackle issues of racism and racial inequality. Jaccoud *et al.* (2002) and Jaccoud (2008) point to the fact that in the 1980s these councils and advisory bodies created a base for dialogue and pressure for the Black Movement, culminating in the creation, at the federal level, of the *Fundação Cultural Palmares* in 1988, entrusted with the task of formulating and implementing public policies to promote the participation of the black population in development processes.

Specifically in the field of education, beginning at the end of the 1980s, politicians of diverse ideological tendencies in different states and municipalities across Brazil began to recognize the need to reformulate state and municipal instruments regulating the education system (Santos S. A. 2005, p. 25). Consequently, even before the federal government formulated national and regional policies in this area, various municipalities introduced measures to ban the use of textbooks that spread prejudice and racial discrimination, and initiatives were implemented to include the history of black people in Brazil and the history of the African continent in primary and secondary school curricula at state and municipal schools (Santos S. A. 2005, p. 26).

Thus far, the discussion highlights the importance of considering the multi-scale process of producing public education policies in Brazil for understanding the construction of anti-racism public policies in the 2000s. Initiated in the 1980s, this process was strengthened by other factors, such as the process surrounding the Durban Conference, which shall be discussed later on.

Besides a strengthening of democracy, the 1990s in Latin America were marked in the economic sphere by a deepening of the technical and scientific revolution, globalization and the spread of neoliberal ideas and policies. In this dispute, it is important to recognize the presence and influential role of international and regional agencies (such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean.) Accordingly, during this period, education changes, such as the creation in Brazil of the new Law of Guidelines and Foundations for National Education (MEC 1996), found logical coherence with the project of adjusting Brazilian society to the demands of the neoliberal agenda of multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American

Development Bank. Reforms in the field of education, such as decentralisation, were characterized by objectives defined by an agenda that placed an emphasis on assessment, merit, private property and the rules of the market (Frigotto 2003; see also Frigotto *et al.* 2003; Sarubi 2005) and were therefore resisted by a significant number of social actors campaigning in the education field (such as labour unions, the school community, etc.).

Paradoxically, however, the neoliberal prescription in this period also involved creating channels for dialogue with private actors, including civil society, which enabled tensions to be established around the opening up of movement agendas (see also Burity 2006). It was in this context that it became possible for the state to recognize not only the social movements' agendas, but also the movements' (and their activists') capacity and store of experience and knowledge, which could be used to help formulate, implement and evaluate new policies. Consequently, despite domination by hegemonic forces, the state's sphere of social coordination was strengthened.

The multiple recognition of social movements by the state (recognition of both agendas and expertise) allowed the movements to perform functions inside (or alongside) the state as well as to provide parliamentary assistance. One example is the Inter-ministerial Working Group to Value the Black Population, created as a response to demands expressed during the Zumbi dos Palmares March Against Racism, For Citizenship and Life, the largest ever mobilisation of the BBM held in 1995 in Brasilia. This working group, formed by representatives from eight ministries, the Secretary for Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic, and eight representatives from the BBM received the task of preparing policy proposals to combat racism and racial inequality. S. A. Santos (2005, p. 25) claims that some of the historic demands made by the Black Social Movement were granted by the Brazilian government in subsequent years. In relation to education, he mentions, for example, the policy of reviewing textbooks, with the elimination of those containing material representing or encouraging racial discrimination.

Although the participation of movements inside the state apparatus was intermittent and subject to the political, institutional and financial fragility in which many policies are created and implemented, the passage through the state apparatus of some militant leaders of social struggles helped build the knowledge and capacity of these movements, with activists gradually learning to deal with state bureaucracy and navigate the institutional and political intricacies in the formulation of public policies (see Alves dos Santos 2006). In the case of the BBM, Jaccoud (2008) points out that the creation of state and municipal councils to tackle racial inequalities and other issues faced by the black population starting in the 1980s acted as an agent to build and develop relations between this movement and the state. According to this author, the creation of the councils represented the first generation of affirmative action policies in Brazil, and had a major influence on ensuing events, culminating in the profusion of actions experienced in

the 2000s (such as the enactment of the aforementioned Law 10.639 in 2003).

As becomes clear from the discussion above, it is in this period of the 1990s, a period marked by profound clashes between projects and distrust from a significant number of social actors campaigning in the education field, that concern for the race issue emerged. The fact that some factors and developments in this neoliberalising context facilitated the inclusion of race issues on the political (education) agenda in Brazil also strengthened negative reactions to it, as some education militants pointed to this development as another item in the neoliberal prescription. One of the challenges in the effort to understand this process is then, in our view, to demonstrate that these are not developments created 'from the top down' or 'from the outside to the inside' but, in the first instance, are the fruit of the Black Movement's historic struggles in the field of education.

The Brazilian Black Movement and the Construction of an Anti-Racist Education Agenda

As stated in the introduction to this section, education has always been an active battlefield for the Black Movement. Demands in relation to education already featured on the agenda of Black Movement initiatives such as the statute of the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (the Brazilian Black Front), created in 1931. This struggle intensified after the Black Social Movement underwent transformations – for example, with the creation of *Movimento Negro Unificado* (the Unified Black Movement) in 1978 – as the military dictatorship weakened and Brazil entered the re-democratisation process. To understand the role of the BBM in the emergence of race-based public policies, as well as the new forms of social coordination that emerged in Brazil in the 1980s and 1990s, it is also necessary to consider processes internal to the movement. Two of these processes are highlighted in this section: the transformation of the forms of collective social action; and the redefinition of priority and hegemonic foci in the fight against racism.

The Black Movement is characterized by a multiplicity of forms of action, as it is composed of many participants linked to entities of different natures (for example, political, social or cultural), acting in different forms of institutionalisation, operating in different ways (individual or collective, more or less formal, more or less autonomous, more or less continuous, etc.). Recognising the fact that, at various times there have indeed been attempts to build a national entity to bring together all initiatives, the BBM, beyond an 'entity', needs to be seen as a specific kind of social struggle in which different forms of action (individual and collective) are mixed. These multiple forms act and engage in dialogue in various spaces: there are local, regional, national and supranational entities and forums; there are actors that participate in actions on different scales; and there are actors

(individual and collective, institutionalized and informal) that communicate with local, regional and national entities, among others. In a country such as Brazil, with a political and administrative structure comprising three levels (federal, state and municipal)⁵ and with a history marked by a federalism that oscillates between federal centralisation, autonomy for state governments and municipal localism, an understanding of the spatiality of actors is of great importance. Their spatiality will determine what dialogues are possible, and this in turn leads to varying correlations and possibilities of power. In the case of the Black Movement in Brazil, there are individuals, groups and entities acting and interacting in power relations on the full range of scales, from local to supranational. Such interactions at the supranational scale include, for example, meetings of black parliamentarians of the Americas and the Caribbean held in 2003 and 2004, as well as the 'Durban Process' activities that we will discuss in the next section.

From this perspective, the BBM resembles an 'area of movement', a set of forms of action constituting a field for dialogue, which moves in a direction that is the result of interrelated stances taken by (and public demands made by) its actors (Melucci 1994). According to Burity (2001), this concept endeavours to:

[...] provide empirical concreteness to the study of these multiple actors that are usually described as social movements. The areas would correspond to fields for **structuring** collective identities and spaces for **recomposing** identity (which would be continuously exposed to fragmentation in a complex society.) In this case, however, individuals and groups would find the area of movement to be a space in which to recompose the identity divided by multiple belonging and by the different periods and roles experienced in society (p. 18, emphasis by the author).

This interpretation enables us to undertake a unified analysis of all individuals and groups that take a stance and act against racism, and that present themselves in society as black, within a pluralist social movement called the Black Movement. Consequently, divisions and differences (in terms of organisation, activities and even plans) within the field should be understood as a sign of diversity within the unity.⁶ Nevertheless, diversity does not imply an absence of hegemonies. In terms of the organisational format of action, it is worth highlighting the trend termed the 'NGO-isation' of the Black Movement (see Silva 2004). It is noted that this trend of NGO-isation is part of a process of steering collective action and diverse forms of activism, which uses relations with the state as a way of achieving its demands, plans and desires. This creates a political culture that values participation and establishes a sphere of social coordination via social networks directly related to social coordination via the state. In the present case, it enables the encounter of the neoliberal state with activist sectors and social movements that have grown in Latin America since the

1960s: in both the former and the latter, 'single' or 'local' experiences are valued and understood as concrete actions to combat society's problems.

Although the tendency of accommodating the Black Movement's activist sectors inside this form of structuring action may be open to criticism of many kinds (see Silva, *op. cit.*), it brought fundamental changes for the emergence of affirmative action in Brazil in the 2000s. First, NGO-isation strengthens the focus of anti-racism action in relation to the state, and increasingly holds the construction of public projects and policies as an objective. Secondly, NGO-type action 'professionalises' militant sectors so that, although they are now required to pursue resources to sustain their activism, at the same time they gain practical knowledge regarding the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, as well as the functioning of the state. The latter aspect is fundamental, since it extends militants' capabilities, enabling participants in the Black Movement to be prepared to operate together with and inside the state, insofar as the latter recognizes their agenda and initiates measures to introduce anti-racism policies. Consequently, recognition of the agenda is accompanied by recognition of expertise, allowing activists to be channelled into the different spaces for formulating and implementing policies within the diverse spheres of the state.

The processes inherent to the Black Movement described above – the transformation of the forms of collective social action and the redefinition of priority and hegemonic foci in the fight against racism – contributed to a new focus of the movement on the construction of public policies.

The Emergence of Ethnic/Race Issues in Brazil and the Global Agenda

In Brazil, there is a consensus that the emergence of public policies incorporating race issues originated to a large extent after the third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) held in Durban in 2001. The often-cited explanation is that the Durban Conference was a moment in which nation states came together with civil society entities to discuss racism and, as such, were obliged to take a stance with regard to race relations. It is then argued that this moment saw a build-up in tension in the Brazilian state from which policies emerged.

We agree with the idea that the Durban Conference has proven fundamental in the recent process of inclusion of race issues in formulating education policies in Brazil. Promoted by the United Nations, it was an important arena of discussion on racial injustices and policies on a global scale. Nevertheless, we would like to highlight here that the main outcomes of the conference on the creation of public policies in Brazil were not due to

the declaration signed by the Brazilian government, but much more to the actions (on local/municipal, regional/state and national scales) carried out by the BBM during the process that surrounded the Durban Conference (see also Santos *et al.* 2010). In this reading of the Durban conference, there was a complex multi- and inter-scalar process of strengthening and pressure, in which the Black Movement used the existence of a global occurrence to implement its local, regional and national agenda.

It therefore becomes necessary to view the Durban Conference not only as an *event*, a moment in time, in which a convention was signed and the Brazilian state complied with the international treaty to which it was a signatory. This perspective enables us to consider that it was the heightened tension in the global agenda that allowed the nation state to initiate policies against racism. Considering the Durban Conference and its subsequent consequences, we argue that the conference needs to be understood, for Brazil, as a *process*, something that was initiated beforehand, through regional conferences, a national conference and a preparatory South American conference. These conferences became opportunities to articulate and strengthen the Black Movement on various scales. Within this process of strengthening the movement and increasing pressure on the state on various scales (local/municipal, regional/state, as well as national), anti-racism agendas and policies were constructed and strengthened.

In Brazil, the preparatory phase of the Durban Conference was accompanied by the organisation of civil society movements and cooperation between them and different state actors (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice) and civil society actors (such as social movements, particularly the Black Movement, and universities). Thereby leadership roles were given to new organisations such as the aforementioned Inter-Ministerial Working Group to Value the Black Population. The plural composition of the National Preparation Committee, including political parties, government representatives and representatives of non-governmental organisations, contributed to more in-depth discussions regarding priorities within the Brazilian state in relation to the conference. The preparatory process for the Durban Conference was seen by representatives of different social movements as a unique opportunity to incorporate issues related to the fight against racism and discrimination and the promotion of racial equality as priority items on the national political agenda. Also on a regional level, the creation of the Strategic Afro-Latin American and Caribbean Alliance Pro-Third World Conference Against Racism played an important role in the preparatory phase of the Durban Conference. It was this alliance that, together with other organisations, led to the Citizens' Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance and Discrimination, held in Santiago, Chile in December 2000.

However, when the manner in which national and regional agendas were included in the international Durban agenda is investigated, the complexity of international consensus on the theme of racism becomes apparent.

Albuquerque (2008) explains that the work of the UN Secretary who prepared the international meetings seemed to be guided by the criterion to avoid dealing with issues with major potential to stir controversy. In addition, referring to the 'explosive load' of the Durban conference, Carneiro (2002, p. 211) writes:

In many ways [] we can speak of the 'Battle of Durban'. The ethnic/racial problem surfaced in every dimension in the international arena, leading to the almost impossibility of reaching the minimum of consensus among nations to face it. What seemed to be anti-racist activist rhetoric was manifested in Durban: the ethnic, racial, cultural and religious issues, and all the problems in which they unfold – racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion and social marginalisation of a large contingent of humans considered 'different' – have the potential to polarise the contemporary world.⁷

Carneiro (2002) explains that, underlying these controversial issues, was another element, not directly expressed, that characterized the (non) participation⁸ of the Western countries in the Conference. She states:

Beyond the objective of preventing the approval of any proposal that would open loopholes for reparations, they [delegations from Western countries] also fought to impede the condemnation of the colonial past, especially because this would signify questioning and criticising the grounds that justified colonisation and the economic expansion of the West (p. 212)

It is a fact that in relation to certain specific issues, such as Afro-descendants of the Americas and particularly Afro-Brazilians, the final Durban Declaration and Plan of Action can be considered a victory (see Albuquerque 2008). However, when one wonders in which specific manner the Durban Conference influenced policymaking on national and regional scales, it can be argued that the conference and its Declaration and Plan of Action in itself have exerted little direct influence on the shaping of public education policies in Brazil. As is confirmed by the concluding statement of the Civil Society Conference of the Americas held in June 2008 with the purpose of assessing compliance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action:

Seven years after the approval of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, despite the efforts of civil society and some states in the region, there is still not enough institutionally nor the necessary financial resources for implementing the initiatives established to combat racism and all forms of discrimination (Sociedad Civil de las Américas 2008, p. 1)

Similar conclusions can be drawn in relation to the role of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank in agenda-setting on race in education. When examining the role the World Bank played with regard to these developments, it can indeed be perceived that, while it played a significant role in spreading a neoliberal agenda around the world in the 1990s, this agency began in the same decade to express a growing interest in and emphasis on implementing focused or compensatory policies for certain excluded groups in society (Burity 2006; Rocha 2006; Almeida 2008). Whereas multilateral agencies in this sense helped promote discussion on issues such as racism and ethnic/racial inequality in some contexts, the frameworks and rationale this focus was based on was distinct from those of the social movements that campaigned for the issues in the first place. By way of example, we briefly discuss two World Bank documents below.

Inclusion of the issue of racial inequality can be recognized in World Bank documents such as *The Costs of Discrimination in Latin America* (1994) and *Brasil: Justo, Competitivo e Sustentável* (2002). In the latter document, the World Bank acknowledges the existence of racism in Brazilian society and formulates recommendations in relation to this type of exclusion. Consequently, the statement cited below even seems to point to a dialogue with (ideas expressed by) the BBM, as the World Bank here openly criticizes the idea of Brazil being a racial democracy:

Racial heterogeneity, combined with diffuse limits existing between racial groups, has induced many people to label Brazil a 'racial democracy'. However, there is no doubt that in the country race plays a significant role in determining opportunities in employment, education, housing and other areas, something that is increasingly recognised in public discourse. [...] [T]here is evidence that social mobility is lower among black people, in control of education and other characteristics. This latter observation suggests that an unnoticed characteristic may be less compensated for by Brazilian markets: racial discrimination is the most probable explanation (p. 89)

While recognising the fact that, since the mid-1990s, a concern with ethnicity/race issues has been increasingly incorporated into the agenda of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the dominant economic-oriented focus on 'investment' still remains. Issues such as those related to (inequality in) education are not discussed with reference to rights in the first instance, but with reference to investment: education for all should generate human and social capital. As such, in the discourse of these entities, ethnicity/race issues are also often incorporated into overall discussions on development and poverty (reduction) (see also Rocha 2006; Almeida 2008), and considered 'a loss of human capital' rather than a crime (for example, see also Patrinos 1994, p. 20). The 'costs of discrimination to society' (Patrinos 1994) is then often the fundamental concern of

multilateral agencies in relation to ethnic racial inequalities. This argument, in the view of these agencies, is especially valid for Brazil, where non-white people account for at least half the population and, as such, discrimination would clearly harm the country's economic growth. Not surprisingly, then, in the case of Brazil, the World Bank identifies the issue as being 'clearly a priority research area' (1994, p. 20). As such, when recognising the fact that agencies like the World Bank may have played a role in placing race on the agenda, the rationale and frameworks used are very different to those brought forward by actors such as the BBM. The fact that this has direct policy implications becomes clear on analysing the same documents referred to above and comparing these with education policies developed in Brazil at the time. In these documents, even when it is stated that mere 'investment' in (universal) education policies would not be sufficient to eradicate racial exclusion in Brazil (Patrinos 1994, pp. 5 and 18) – an argument implying that affirmative policies could be necessary – policies and policy recommendations are formulated against quota policies (for example, see World Bank 2002, p. 90).

Several studies show (e.g. Moehlecke 2002; Rocha 2006; Almeida 2008) how in the same period, influential parties in the Brazilian government, such as the Minister for Education, positioned themselves against affirmative action policies, using similar arguments to those used by agencies such as the World Bank. Despite the international trend to discuss ethnic/racial inequalities and consider them as problematic, in line with discourses of agencies such as the World Bank, the dominant argument at the time in the Brazilian government and mass media was that the problem of racial inequalities in education should be combated through policies designed to improve public sector education in general and not through policies such as quotas. This is confirmed by Almeida (2008) in her study on the development of the Brazilian Government Diversity in the University Programme at the beginning of this century, a programme financed by the Inter-American Development Bank. Her study illustrates how this programme, while it played an important role in the development of the discussion on racial and ethnic diversity in Brazil, represented a 'compromise' of government between claims for affirmative action policies – expressed by the BBM and in the Durban process and its outcomes such as the Plan of Action – on the one hand, and the strong resistance still present in society, government and international entities against these types of policies on the other. This led to the fact that, besides financing already existent – mostly Black Movement linked – NGO initiatives like the aforementioned university admission preparatory courses, the programme did not at the time lead to the design and implementation of new anti-racist education policies that would transform the education institutions, processes and contents in a more structural manner.

This first analysis of the global agenda on the theme of racial inequality and education shows that global mobilisation did indeed grow around the

Durban Conference in 2001 and that the recognition of racial inequality and racism has been increasingly present in documents produced by multi-lateral agencies since the beginning of the 1990s. The inclusion of ethnicity/race issues on the national agenda should, then, without a doubt, be understood in the context of mounting international tension around the issue, wherein these organisations, like nation states, were obliged to position themselves in one way or another. However, we argue that the agendas coming from these 'global dynamics' rarely consider (solutions in relation to) the root causes of this type of exclusion. Contrary to the frameworks used by the BBM, the frameworks that dominate in global contexts do not include critical reflection on processes that contribute(d) to race becoming a structuring principle in many contemporary societies, such as the history of colonisation and the economic expansion of the West in the first place. The central question in the dominant global discourse remains to be: To what extent do these 'social issues' interfere with or obstruct development? This approach clearly does not involve a rethinking of what is (or could be) development *starting from* reflection on these social issues.

While global processes and actors in some cases seem to fulfil a bureaucratic role (for example, by financing or coordinating programmes and events) in relation to initiatives that aim to foster the inclusion of race issues on the agenda, they do not play a political protagonist role. It would be inaccurate to claim, then, that tensions on the global political agenda have determined the emergence of policies to combat racism and racial inequalities in education in Brazil. One might say that global processes helped to provide opportunities, as seen for example in the case of the Durban Conference, that were taken advantage of by social movement activism, in the BBM in this case. In endeavouring to understand the complex multi- and inter-scalar process surrounding agenda-setting and the inclusion of race issues in education in Brazil, we therefore observe that the decisive role does not seem to lie on the international, but much more on the local/municipal, regional/state and national scale, in a process stimulated primarily by actions of the BBM.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show that the emergence of race as a foundation for public policies in Brazil, in particular in the field of education, is the fruit of a complex process involving conditions, opportunities and advocacy on different scales. By examining the ensuing debate, reflecting on the complexity of multi-scalar processes in setting agendas, and rethinking the concept of scale itself and relations between scales of politics, three distinct rationales can be identified when considering scales and the action of social movements.

First, the global (global actors and interests) conditions the local: from this perspective, racial/ethnicity agendas are the result of an imperialism related to the 'neoliberal wave' in which multilateral agencies are the heralds or protagonists. This rationale is the basis for a series of interpretations of the construction of education policies in the 1990s in Brazil (and in Latin America), in which multiculturalism, respect for diversity and greater value placed on issues and policies of identity and race are the fruit of a wave coming from elsewhere (both outside and within, global and national, with many different opposing parties appearing.)

Secondly, the movement implements its agenda by manipulating the construction of political agendas and processes on different scales; in other words, the movement operates a 'politics of scales'. This interpretation points to the centrality of the movement's advocacy in constructing education agendas.

Thirdly, the local benefits from a global context. This perspective states that the movement is a key actor in constructing the anti-racist education agenda, but the effective construction of policies only becomes possible within a global context that strengthens the movement in its struggle. In other words, policies are not constructed exclusively by the movement, and if it were not for the global context and actors, the movement would perhaps not be able to place race issues on the education policy agenda.

We advocate an understanding that incorporates aspects of the second and third premises described above. It would be insufficient to state that the global conditions the local, that race-based policies are the fruit of 'imperialism' or a result of an importation or copying of a global agenda. In this chapter, we argue that the Brazilian movement uses a 'politics of scale', taking advantage of opportunities opened up by global processes; it harnesses global instruments (multilateral agencies, conventions and international law, events, international political processes, etc.) to exert pressure on the state in order to construct policies. In this interpretation, the relationship between 'national/local' and 'global' processes is not a one-way street, nor something which is disassociated, as in 'levels', but an intertwining of tensions between agencies of political struggle, where the simultaneity of processes lends extra complexity to outcomes on different scales. It therefore becomes difficult to speak of a process of successive facts, in which a domestic process of construction influences a global process, or vice versa. Instead, multi- and international processes are ongoing, unfolding simultaneously on various scales.

Moreover, it has also been shown that the use of multi-scalarity in understanding processes linked to the Brazilian Black Movement does not only refer to national and global processes, but also to local and regional (intra-national) ones – all scales and arenas in which the movement participates. Therefore recognising the organisational complexity of the social movement revealed in this chapter is the only way of understanding this multi-scalarity.

Notes

- 1 To facilitate reading we will mostly employ the concept race (race-based policies, racial inequality, race issues, race relations) instead of concepts of both ethnicity and race. However, we do understand that often these concepts are interrelated. The ethnicity component then serves to indicate that the tense relations, due to differences in skin colour and other physical characteristics, also exist due to differences in culture expressed in different world visions, values and principles (see Brasil 2005 p. 13).
- 2 'Boomerang effect' or 'indirect pressure' are concepts Keck *et al.* (1998, in Smith 2005) use when referring to the situation in which groups within a repressive political context forge alliances with transnational actors that can exert pressure on that state through international institutions.
- 3 Anti-racist policies were developed in sectors such as health, human rights, the labour market, urban planning and heritage preservation.
- 4 The first paragraph of article 242 states: 'The teaching of Brazilian history shall take into consideration the contributions of different cultures and ethnicities to the formation of the Brazilian people.' (Senado Federal Governo do Brasil 1988, p. 151)
- 5 These often even become four, five or even six levels, for example, through local coordination entities and micro-, meso- and macro-regional planning organisations.
- 6 We therefore disagree with the views expressed by other authors that there are 'black movements' in Brazil.
- 7 Conflict surged especially around the situation in the Middle East, the legacy of colonialism and slavery and the claim for reparations by certain groups, and agreement on the definition of the list of victims of racism and different sources of discrimination (Carneiro 2002; Albuquerque 2008).
- 8 In protest at debates regarding the Israeli state and the situation in the Middle East, the European Union delegation threatened to leave the Conference, and Canada, the US and Israel did in fact leave before it concluded, without signing the declaration (Albuquerque 2008).

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