

**Present Pasts:  
Memory of Slavery and Politics of Reparation  
in Brazilian Public Policies on Education**

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Bilateral Cooperation between FAPERJ and the Association of Columbia Global Center/  
Rio de Janeiro

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## **CONTENTS**

**Summary**

**Introduction**

**Relevance**

**Experience of Team Members**

**Rationale**

**Objectives**

**Methods**

**Expected Results**

**Schedule (\*)**

**Work Plan of Project Participants (\*)**

**Bibliographic References**

**(\*) The schedule and work plan for the researchers of the projects are incorporated**

**into the relevant sections.**

## **Summary**

The proposed collaborative research project aims to evaluate the impact of Law 10.639 which made it mandatory to teach African history and Afro-Brazilian culture in Brazilian elementary, middle, and high schools and which was intended as a form of political repair for the Brazilian slave past. The project also proposes concrete interventions to help teachers incorporate other experiences of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic into their lessons, in particular the histories of the Caribbean and the United States.

We hope to deepen an ongoing international conversation among scholars of slavery and the memory of slavery, about connections between different experiences of enslavement and also about contemporary claims for public policies of reparation for the history of slavery.

For many years, the memory of slavery and its racial consequences in contemporary Brazil were neglected themes in public education policy, overpowered by a myth about Brazilian racial democracy. In the last 20 years, however, the most important initiatives in reparations for slavery have taken place in the field of education. For example, social and racial quotas that are meant to facilitate more Afro-Brazilians accessing Brazilian public universities, and Law 10.639, signed in 2003, which made it mandatory to teach African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture in Brazilian elementary, middle, and high schools.

The project is headed by Hebe Mattos (History, Federal Fluminense University, UFF) and David Scott (Anthropology, Columbia University), who will lead an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional team in Rio de Janeiro (History and Education Departments at UFF, UNIRIO, and UFRJ). The team also includes historians Christopher

Brown and Natasha Lightfoot from the Digital Black Atlantic Project at Columbia University, as well as the support of Eric Foner, one of the most important historians of slavery and emancipation in the United States, who recently won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Abraham Lincoln.

The team of scholars from Brazil and the U.S. will undertake research with two primary aims:

to evaluate the impact of Law 106.39 on:

the ways in which demands for reparation are being articulated in relation to the history of slavery in Brazil;

the ways that the history of Africa and the African diaspora in the Atlantic world are being taught in Brazil;

history textbooks written in the past 10 years;

how students from primary schools in Rio de Janeiro perceive Africa, slavery and Afro-Brazilian culture;

the development of academic research in Brazil on Africa and Afro-Brazilian history and culture;

the ways in which teachers at primary, middle, and high school levels are being trained to address these topics in their classes.

to create two digital platforms, in Portuguese and English, for computers and tablets in order to expand the reach of the law by providing classroom resources for teachers in Brazil generally, and in Rio de Janeiro in particular. *Places of Memory of Africans and their Descendants in Rio de Janeiro*, a website and an app, will locate and provide information about historical sites related to the presence of enslaved Africans in Rio de Janeiro. *Detectives of the Past*, also a website and an app, will offer educational activities on slavery in the Atlantic World developed especially for middle and high school

students. Both platforms will be accessible to English speakers, particularly in the Caribbean and the United States, connecting the history of Afro-Brazilian Culture with the history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic.

## **Introduction**

This project seeks to contribute to an ongoing debate about reparations for New World slavery. We aim to deepen the conversation between scholars of the history and the memory of slavery in Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States, in particular about different experiences of slavery and contemporary demands for public policies on reparation.

The question of slavery in present-day debate is especially (and sometimes increasingly) a question of justice, a discussion about reparations for past crimes. The emergence of discussions about reparatory justice, as part of a larger debate about the historical injustices of collective crimes such as genocide, torture, and ethnic cleansing, renewed the discussion about slavery in the Americas that goes beyond current approaches to diaspora, racism, memory, and identity. The fundamental question of the possibility of reparation – moral, political, cultural, as well as economic – is relevant for “systemic” instances of historical injustice, such as the capture and enslavement of Africans in Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States. This was an institution of injustice perpetrated and enjoyed not simply by individuals or even a state over the course of decades, but rather over centuries by a great number of European and American states that claimed to be based on liberal constitutions. And it was an institution that helped create the wealth that led to the founding structures of the contemporary world. In this sense, working as an international team is fundamental to enhance, from a truly Atlantic perspective, our understanding of the different ways in which the past – especially the past of injustice – lives on in the present and can be redressed.

The idea for this project came originally from a meeting between Hebe Mattos,

Professor of History at the UFF in Brazil and the Dr. Ruth Cardoso Visiting Chair Professor at Columbia University (CAPES/Fulbright) in 2013-14, and David Scott, Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University, who invited Prof. Mattos to participate in a broader project about slavery and reparation in the Atlantic world. They met through the “Digital Black Atlantic Project” at Columbia University, a working group that includes historians Christopher Brown and Natasha Lightfoot, and that is devoted to developing digital platforms related to the research and teaching of the black diaspora in the Atlantic. These discussions soon began to integrate historians from Rio de Janeiro who were already working on this topic with Prof. Mattos, Martha Abreu (UFF) and Keila Grinberg (Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, UNIRIO).

While a visiting professor at Columbia, Hebe Mattos was also in contact with Eric Foner, whom she had met in Brazil in 1988, and who is one of the most important historians on post-emancipation societies in the Americas, with an emphasis on the post-Civil War era in the United States. In March 2014, Martha Abreu visited Columbia University to participate in a round table (Contemporary Debates on Race in Brazil), organized by the Institute of Latin American Studies. On this occasion, Profs. Abreu and Mattos interviewed Eric Foner for a future issue of the Brazilian Journal of the National History Association (*Revista Brasileira de História da Associação Nacional de História*, ANPUH) about his experience as a public historian on slavery and post-emancipation societies, and his work as a curator of exhibits and author of educational materials in the United States. Eric Foner will serve as special consultant on this project.

The other members of the Brazilian team were incorporated into the proposal based on their work together with Prof. Mattos on the assessment of Law 106.39 and the implementation of projects that broaden the possibilities for reparative justice supported by the law. Together, this team of scholars from Rio de Janeiro and Columbia University defined the specific terms of the project.

Over the past 20 years, the most important measures for reparation policies

regarding slavery and the consequences of racial inequality in Brazil have been implemented in the field of education. In particular, we can point to the adoption of social and racial quotas for admission into public universities, and the approval of Law 10.639/2003 which made it mandatory to teach African history and Afro-Brazilian culture in Brazilian elementary, middle and high schools.

Since the late 1990s, notions of culture and cultural identity as well as questions of identity and ethnic-racial relations began to find presence in the guidelines established by the Ministry of Education and Culture that regulate instruction in elementary, middle, and high schools, particularly in the area of history. This did not happen by coincidence. It is actually one of the most significant signs of a new political and social position achieved by so-called black and anti-racist movements in the Brazilian political process, in particular in the field of education, and in their demands for reparation.

In 1996, the Ministry of Education (MEC) approved National Curriculum Standards (NCS) that included African History as part of the curriculum content and instituted a “Cross Cultural Theme” on “Cultural Pluralities,” which targeted all elementary grades. Without a doubt, these standards preceded and paved the way for Law 10.639 of 2003 and subsequently, the opinion and the resolution that established the “National Curriculum Guidelines” for the instruction of Ethnic-Racial Relations and the History of Afro-Brazilian and African Culture approved by the National Council of Education (NCE) in March 2004 and approved in June by the Ministry of Education. The resolution was a result of CNE/CP 3/2004 and was brought forth by council member Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva from the Board of Education of the NCE. The connections between the Standards and the Guidelines, produced by governing bodies of very different political orientations, illustrates how this type of intervention resulted primarily from the growth of the political force of black movements in post-democratization Brazil and from the development of a new consensus in the field of education, away from the so-called “myth of racial democracy” in Brazil.



Already in the NCS, albeit without a specific proposal, the question of education in the field of ethnic-racial relations formed an important part of the backdrop for the understanding of cultural plurality. This question became a central focus of Law 10.639/2003 and of the opinion approved in the “Guidelines,” but in the context of the politics of reparation and affirmative action for those of African descent. The “Guidelines” brought schools into the scope of this discussion for the first time, putting education in the forefront for issues of race relations and the combatting of racism in Brazil, topics that until then had been silenced or viewed as separate from assessments of whether Brazil is constituted as a racial democracy.

Beginning in the 1930s and 40s, the idea of racial democracy in Brazil was constructed in contrast to earlier racist theories and competing ideas that preached the “whitening” the Brazilian population (Guimarães, 2002: chapter 3). Despite this, the relative consistency between the ideology of whitening and the notion of racial democracy, especially its effect of erasing different ethnicities and cultures in Brazilian society, meant that, in particular since the 1960s, this approach was increasingly seen as an important foundational myth of nationality still marked by racism (Fernandes, 1978: 249-269). The so-called “myth of racial democracy” is one of the central themes addressed and denounced by the “Guidelines,” which seek, “among other things, to offer a response in the area of education to demands by those of African descent for a politics of affirmative action, meaning a politics of reparation, or recognition and appreciation for their history, culture, and identity.”

## **Relevance**

Historically and culturally, there are many Africas as there are many Americas. How to teach about African or Afro-Brazilian culture? How to think about African heritage in the Americas? To what extent did Africans in the New World create new cultures that felt more (or even much more) of the Americas than it did African? How can

recognition and appreciation of the history, culture, and identity of those from African descent be configured as a politics of reparation for the historical injustice of Atlantic slavery?

These are the challenges faced by historians and educators who intend to implement Law 10.639 and its “Guidelines.” To suggest that one Afro-Brazilian culture emerged from the remains of the African presence can lead, on the one hand, to simplistic accounts about the resistance to the violence of slavery, and on the other hand, neglect the potential for creativity and transformation of the enslaved and their descendants.

When one breaks away from an essentialist perspective about the connections between identity and culture, it follows that any consideration of the ambiguities of black identity in Brazil is inseparable from understanding the experience of modern slavery and the racial heritage that spread across the Atlantic world. This process was similar in Brazil, even if it developed in a particular way. The construction of black identity in the Americas did not develop from the existence or even the “survival” of African cultural practices on the continent, but rather as a response to racism and its diffusion in American societies.

According to Stuart Hall, “the essentializing moment is weak because it naturalizes and de-historicizes difference, mistaking what is historical and cultural for what is natural and biological and genetic. The moment the signifier 'black' is ripped from its historical, cultural, and political context and lodged in a biologically constructed racial category, we value, by its inversion, the very basis of racism that we are trying to deconstruct” (Hall, 2003: 345).

How to articulate policies to combat racism, particularly in schools, without falling into cultural essentialism? As suggested by Hall, one hopeful possibility is by directing “our creative attention to the diversity and not the homogeneity of the black experience,” despite the apparent similarity of a set of historically black experiences (Hall, 2003: 346), such as the diaspora and slavery.

And this is what prompted us to propose this project. Thinking about black cultures and identities from the Atlantic perspective shows how important it is to avoid the risks inherent in an essentialist view of identity politics, and yet in a way that doesn't diminish their demands for reparative justice.

### **Experience of Team Members**

David Scott is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. Since publishing "Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality" (1999) and "Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment" (2004), his work has been concerned with the way we think about the story of the colonial past in the post-colonial present, which is the theme of his latest book "Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice" (2014). He is currently finishing a book about the English theorist Stuart Hall and starting research for "Slavery and Repair," with a focus on the Atlantic world.

In Brazil, a team of scholars has been working together for many years in both multidisciplinary (history, education) and inter-institutional (UFF, UNIRIO, UFRJ) ways. The coordinator, Hebe Mattos (CNE-FAPERJ and 1A researcher from CNPq) was the Dr. Cardoso Visiting Chair Professor at Columbia University at the time of preparing this proposal, and at that time was participating in discussions of the *Digital Black Atlantic Project*. She is currently finishing a book on black identity and the memory of slavery in Brazil. She has extensive experience in collaborative research projects, especially developing digital platforms, both nationally and internationally. She was part of *The Identities of Rio* project, supported by FAPERJ ([www.pensario.uff.br](http://www.pensario.uff.br)) and the International Festival of Research Films ([www.labhoi.uff.br/rff](http://www.labhoi.uff.br/rff)), developed in collaboration with research institutions in France and Canada. In Rio, Mattos works closely with Martha Abreu (also CNE-1 researcher FAPERJ and CNPq) in LABHOI-UFF; with Elaine Monteiro on a project about the Culture of Jongo and Caxambu; with

Keila Grinberg and Mariana Muaze (UNIRIO) on the creation of digital platforms for teaching social history of slavery and post-abolitionism (with the support of the Center for Documentation, History, and Memory at UNIRIO); with Giovana Xavier, Amilcar Pereira, and Monica Lima (UFRJ) in the Working Group at ANPUH on Emancipations and Post-Abolition in the Atlantic World. These on-going conversations have been vital in assembling the Brazilian project team.

Eric Foner is one of the most influential historians in the United States on the post-abolition period in Brazil. DeWitt Clinton Professor at Columbia University, he specializes in the history of the United States during the Civil War and Reconstruction. His most recent book, a biography of Abraham Lincoln (2011) won the Pulitzer, Bancroft and Lincoln prizes. He pioneered the comparative approach to post-abolition studies in the Atlantic, and produced both cutting edge research and public history projects on this subject, including textbooks and curated exhibitions.

Christopher Brown and Natasha Lightfoot, historians of slavery (and its ethical implications for the Western world) at Columbia University who are both interested in building digital platforms as tools for public memory projects and for teaching the history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic, complete the project team.

## **Objectives**

The proposed collaborative research project aims to evaluate the impact of Law 10.639 which made it mandatory to teach African history and Afro-Brazilian culture in Brazilian elementary, middle, and high schools and which was intended as a form of political reparation for the Brazilian slave past. Further, it aims to create a transnational network of research on the topic of reparations in response to New World slavery. The project also proposes concrete interventions to empower teachers to incorporate other experiences of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic into their lessons, in particular the histories of the Caribbean and the United States. A primary objective of the proposal is to

deepen an ongoing international conversation among scholars of slavery and the memory of slavery, in the fields of history, education, and cultural studies. In particular, the team will consider the connections between different experiences of enslavement and the narrative implications – both of the content and of the forms of circulation – on present day claims for public reparation.

The project thus has the following specific objectives:

- to evaluate the impact of Law 10.639 on how demands for reparation in relation to the legacy of slavery are articulated and the consequences in the field of education,
- in the ways that the history of Africa and the African Diaspora in the Atlantic are being taught in Rio de Janeiro;
- in history textbooks written in the last 10 years in Brazil;
- in the perceptions of elementary, middle, and high school students in Rio de Janeiro on Africa, slavery, and Afro-Brazilian culture;
- in the development of academic research in African history and the history of Afro-Brazilian culture in the country;
- in the ways in which teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools are being trained to address these topics in the classroom.

By problematizing the strong Eurocentric character of the field of history in Brazil and making possible a more complex curriculum with the inclusion of different histories and cultures in daily lessons at levels K-12, the implementation of Law 10.639/03 has the potential to promote teaching practices that challenge preconceptions and are guided by principles of cultural diversity and respect for differences. To do so requires effectively incorporating new content, narratives, and teaching strategies for schools and teachers. How and to what extent has this taken place? This question is an important focus of research that is currently being conducted by various members of the Brazilian project team.

We take the classroom to be a place for the construction of knowledge. In the teaching-learning relationship, what new knowledge on this topic has come out of the classroom by both teachers and students as a result of the new law? How have notions of identity and cultural pluralism been addressed in public schools in Rio de Janeiro? And further, how have narratives on the history of slavery been transformed (or not) by new fields of research that have been developed in response to the law, and also, of course, how is this reflected in the production of educational materials available for schools.

As we discuss in more detail in the section on methodology, the work of this team of scholars – previous work as well current research – is made stronger when the research is connected, from the point of view both of the quantitative and qualitative results obtained through the research, and of the theoretical findings from the social and philosophical implications of new narratives of slavery, memory, justice, and identity in post-colonial studies.

to create two digital platforms, in Portuguese and English, for computers and tablets with the specific aim of expanding the reach of the law by providing classroom resources for teachers in Brazil in a general sense, and in Rio de Janeiro in particular. The two platforms will be accessible also for English speakers, particularly in the Caribbean and the United States, connecting the history of Afro-Brazilian Culture with the history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic.

*Places of Memory of Africans and their descendants in Rio de Janeiro:* a webpage and an app to locate and give information about historical sites related to the presence of enslaved Africans in Rio de Janeiro.

*Detectives of the Past:* a website and an app in the form of a game, about slavery in the Atlantic World in the nineteenth century, specifically developed for middle and high school students

Both platforms are directly related to the production of new narratives about the history of slavery as a form of reparation for the historical injustice of slavery in the New World.

Brazil, the last country to abolish slavery in the Americas, received more than four million enslaved Africans over four centuries. It is estimated that in the nineteenth century alone, two and a half million Africans landed in the country. Most of them arrived in Rio de Janeiro, or in Cais do Valongo, and later in clandestine ports of the Fluminense coast, and then lived the rest of their lives in the coffee plantations in the Paraíba Valley and the city of Rio de Janeiro. As is well known, enslaved Africans and their descendants left numerous traces and made many contributions to Brazilian culture and society. The Jongo and the Capoeira, part of the intangible cultural heritage of Brazil, have their birthplace in the Atlantic slave trade to Rio de Janeiro. The remaining quilombo communities, which also make up the intangible cultural heritage of the country, are directly linked to traditions of enslaved Africans. Making the past part of the present and contributing to the preservation of our intangible heritage speaks to the obligation of remembering the victims of the tragedy of the slave trade and their cultural heritage. It is one of the objectives of this project.

Remaining communities of the quilombo, the Jongo, and the Capoeira were listed as cultural traces of the African presence in the “Inventory of Places of Memory of the Atlantic Slave Trade and of the History of Enslaved Africans in Brazil,” conducted under the coordination of Martha Abreu, Hebe Mattos, and Milton Guran with support from the UNESCO Project *Slave Route: Resistance, Heritage, and Freedom*. The list of nominated sites can be found at [HYPERLINK "http://www.labhoi.uff.br/node/1507"](http://www.labhoi.uff.br/node/1507) <http://www.labhoi.uff.br/node/1507>. Each of the one hundred sites catalogued has an article written by an expert on the entry. Dozens of historians, anthropologists, and geographers, from throughout Brazil, participated in the compilation of these entries. The inventory is being prepared for bilingual publication.

The *Places of Memory* platform will be developed using the entries from this Inventory. It will provide images and references to the places of memory of the slave trade and of the experience of Africans in Rio de Janeiro, as well as the locations of remaining quilombos, jongo groups, and the main capoeira groups in the state. The entries will show in an integrated way the parallel processes of the African Diaspora throughout the Atlantic (for example, the parallelism of jongo with American Ring Shout,

the importance of quilombos in the Caribbean, or the globalization of the capoeira, whose oldest living Brazilian master is based in New York). From the content based on the site and the database, the platform will interface with an app for tablets with GPS, so as to encourage and facilitate visits by schools and the general public interested in culture and tourism of memory.

The second proposed platform, *Detectives of the Past*, already exists in an experimental form in Portuguese, with narratives about slavery in nineteenth century Brazil (see [HYPERLINK "http://www.historiaunirio.com.br/numem/detetivesdopassado"](http://www.historiaunirio.com.br/numem/detetivesdopassado) [www.historiaunirio.com.br/numem/detetivesdopassado](http://www.historiaunirio.com.br/numem/detetivesdopassado)). Our intention is to expand the current cases, including narratives from the post-abolition period in Brazil, and also cases that allow for reflection on the shared history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the United States. We believe that a bilingual site, built on this model and aimed at high school students and teachers, can encourage reflection on the common experience of the African diaspora in the Atlantic, despite the demographic and juridical differences, which will also be analyzed through selected cases. We also plan to upgrade the current technology used on the website in order to make it compatible with all computer operating systems and available on tablets as an app.

## **Methods**

The principal question at the foundation of this project is how theoretical reflection on constructing new narratives about the history of slavery is a way to respond to the challenges of restorative justice for the historical injustice of Atlantic slavery. The principal methodological tool, therefore, is the creation of an interdisciplinary and international network of discussion among researchers.

The discussion will be around a specific case – Law 10.639 of 2003 and its implementation – especially in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Over the next two years, we will meet and discuss together the results of ongoing research in Rio de Janeiro on the topic, with the expectation of consolidating results at the end of the first work year, at which point we will also host the first seminar planned in the project schedule.



In 2013, a series of seminars on the tenth anniversary of Law 10.639 took place in Brazil, one organized by Monica Lima e Souza at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Prof. Lima e Souza was one of the main educators involved in several initiatives to produce teaching materials and teacher training programs to implement the law. Her contribution to this project will be to assess the progress that has taken place in the past year, as well the growth in the area of African history in Brazil since the adoption of Law 10.639. Her position as Professor of African History at UFRJ and coordinator of LEAFRICA, one of the most active research laboratories in history that has emerged in Brazilian universities since 2003, puts her in an especially good position to gather data in these two areas. This research will result in a database about the project available to other scholars, and a personal reflection on the common theme of the research, the possible (and desirable) emergence of new narratives about the past of slavery in post-colonialism.

Simultaneously, the results of ongoing research at the “Laboratory for the Study and Research of the Teaching of History” (Lepéh) at the Department of Education at UFRJ will be integrated into the project. That research team includes Amilcar Araujo Pereira and Giovana Xavier, who just succeeded in getting an Emergent Group project at the FAPERJ. One of the proposals of that project is to create a digital collection of interviews with teachers and students from primary schools about their views on the teaching of African history and Afro-Brazilian culture. These interviews would be available to view, and would provide new narratives and thinking about the classroom as an alternative place of knowledge production.

In order to meet these goals, we will have both quantitative and qualitative procedures. Qualitatively, we will discuss a set of interviews and video recordings produced by Amilcar Araujo Pereira in different schools in Rio de Janeiro. In the quantitative analysis, we will consider questionnaires on the implementation of Law 10.639/03 to be created at LAPEH and given to staff and teachers of various public schools in the capital and throughout the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, we will also include the analysis of the impact of Law 10.639 on the production of textbooks in the last 10 years, from the doctoral research of Cecilia Guimarães, under the guidance of Keila Grinberg.

A first assessment of all the results will be released in a specific site in both Brazil and English, and analyzed in a joint seminar during David Scott's first project visit to Brazil. Hebe Mattos, Martha Abreu, Keila Grinberg, and Mariana Muaze will each present on the question of the narrative of slavery and post-abolition Brazil in the digital age. Eric Foner, Christopher Brown, and Natasha Lightfoot, historians of slavery and post-emancipation in the Atlantic world, will act as discussants of specific papers, in person or over the internet.

In the second year of the project, we will implement the two bilingual digital platforms. Both are thought of as bridges between the knowledge produced in the university and in schools, with the historian directly involved in thinking about the possible forms of public acquisition of knowledge produced by one's own research.

The digital platform *Places of Memory of the African Diaspora in Rio de Janeiro* will be created from the implementation of a reference center of the State Intangible Heritage of African Descendants at LABHOI / UFF in the form of a database with data on people and groups practicing cultural manifestations related to the legacy of the experience of enslaved Africans in Rio de Janeiro (Jongo groups, remnants of Quilombo communities, Wheels of Capoeira), plus the information produced by *the Inventory of Places of Memory of the Atlantic Slave Trade and of the History of Enslaved Africans in Brazil* in the UNESCO project: Slave Route Project: Resistance, Freedom, and Heritage. During a research trip included in this proposal, Hebe Mattos will work directly with the team at Columbia on formatting the Atlantic and comparative dimensions of entries on Rio de Janeiro, which will be available in bilingual form on the website and the app.

The second proposed platform, *Detectives from the Past*, will build on our previous experience with a current site (<http://www.historiaunirio.com.br/numem/detetivesdopassado/>). The site will be expanded with the aim, on the one hand, to disseminate recent research in history and equally important, to function as a tool to "learn to investigate." The methodology is inspired Carlo Ginzburg's notion of the evidentiary paradigm (or the method of clues) as laid out in *Myths, Emblems, Clues* (GINZBURG, 1990, p. 143-179). Working as a detective, the goal is to show how historical knowledge is – necessarily – the result of investigative work. The ultimate goal,

however, is that students exercise autonomy through the exercises, and they are thus led into navigating the huge collection of information - including historical - that the Internet makes available, but with their own eyes.

Each investigation is built from a basic scheme: the case, the task, the guidelines, and the solution. After the introduction of the “case,” the student consults “clues” (research sources), which are offered with guidelines that help to realize the proposed task. The student learns the “solution” - linked to the actual outcome of the core document on which the investigation was based - only after working through the clues. The idea is to reverse the common logic that grounds most history textbooks, so that the student does not use sources only as illustration, or consult them once she or he already knows the outcome, as a complement. Rather, the main objective is to encourage the students to understand that the sources are essential to the whole activity. There are therefore no basic or explanatory texts on the topic, but rather just the investigative cases themselves.

Through this project, we propose to expand the platform by seeking new cases in which students are invited to participate, either as individuals close to the case or as the protagonist of the story itself, as a slave, a descendant, or a free person. The goal is for students to consider stories that show the diversity of experiences of slaves, free persons, and their descendants in nineteenth century and post-abolition Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States, even if all these experiences are interconnected in one way or another, whether by the mark of captivity or the memory of post-emancipation. In addition, we intend to create situations in which students experience being in the place of real people and their actual circumstances in order to expand their understandings, to internalize experiences of oppression, but also of tolerance, and to understand how all people, even victims of mass violence such as enslavement, still are present as subjects of their own history. Keila Grinberg, coordinator of the original *Detective of the Pasts* platform, will work directly with the Columbia team during a research trip to New York to produce new cases.

Alongside the methodological work to implement these platforms, we will continue to reflect on the core of the project, in particular with a second workshop to

discuss final papers from all participants that will be published as a bilingual e-book, with the working title: “Atlantic Slavery, Public History, and Reparative Justice: The Case of Law 10.639 in Brazil.”

### **Justification**

The teaching of history has undergone major revisions in recent years, especially in incorporating new themes and approaches – the contents proposed by the “Guidelines” is a good example. The revisions have primarily resulted in improved textbooks and other teaching materials available to primary teachers in both the public and private schools throughout the country. They have not, however, had a major influence on the methodologies of teaching as a discipline. Even including new themes and approaches currently being studied in Brazilian historiography, these contents are often presented to students in the same fashion, that is, through lectures, albeit aided and illustrated by new technology (videos, CD-ROMs, Internet, etc.).

In fact, one of the great difficulties in teaching history today, especially in middle schools and high schools, has been the inadequacy of methodologies resulting from recent academic research about activities in the classroom. Although the National Curriculum Standards point to solutions in this direction, mainly based on flexibility of the curriculum, some problems remain, such as how to establish a two-way exchange between the knowledge produced in universities and in schools.

Referred to as the “the black box of the future” long before online entertainment and e-commerce even existed, the Internet was immediately seen as a potential for revising teaching methods. The expression itself came from President Bill Clinton’s Secretary of Education in 1996, on the occasion of connecting, by landline, classrooms in California to the Internet (Briggs & Burke, 2006: 303). The idea of relating advances in technology and communication with new forms of education had been seducing teachers and universities since at least the 1960s, with the creation of the first Open Universities in Europe, dedicated to distance learning. This was more or less the same time that the language of education began to change, and the term “learning” became more prominent than the outmoded “education” (Briggs & Burke, 2006: 307-308).

As Guimaraães Camila Dantas (2008) has noted, the first historians using the Internet were amateurs, and they were then followed by universities and memory institutions. At present, projects that disseminate historical knowledge on the Internet, the majority of which are located in the United States, fit into broader thinking about documents produced in digital media and new ways of conducting academic research, such as the Digital History Project (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/>) developed by Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig at George Mason University, perhaps the first to address both professional and amateur historians. At Columbia University, the Digital Black Atlantic Project ( [HYPERLINK "http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/projects/digital-black-atlantic"](http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/projects/digital-black-atlantic) <http://socialdifference.columbia.edu/projects/digital-black-atlantic>) is perhaps the group giving these matters the most consideration.

Today, the majority of activity of historians on the Internet is related to the digitization of documents and institutional collections, both to preserve them and to make them accessible to researchers and others for whom access can be difficult. In Brazil – in addition to government initiatives such as Project Rescue ([http://www.cmd.unb.br/resgate\\_index.php](http://www.cmd.unb.br/resgate_index.php)) that, in an unprecedented effort, scanned approximately 150,000 documents (around 1.5 million manuscript pages) from the collection of the Overseas Historical Archive in Lisbon, and the work of institutions such as the National Library and the National Archives – the work of individual research groups in developing digitization projects is of fundamental importance. They are making available online documents that are otherwise largely inaccessible to researchers. One of these groups is the Laboratory of Oral History and Images (LABHOI) at UFF which, through both collective and individual projects, has become dedicated to digitalizing documents, including collections from other countries such as Cuba and Angola, as well as creating audiovisual collections of their oral history projects ( [HYPERLINK "http://www.labhoi.uff.br"](http://www.labhoi.uff.br) [www.labhoi.uff.br](http://www.labhoi.uff.br)).

Several decades have passed since the invention of the “black box of the future,” and yet despite several important initiatives which help to show the wealth of possibilities in the area – such as the The National Archives of Luso-Brazilian History, which make

documents from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries available for research and for the classroom ( HYPERLINK "http://www.historiacolonial.arquivonacional.gov.br/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm?sid=13" <http://www.historiacolonial.arquivonacional.gov.br/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm?sid=13>), or the portal “Teaching History,” at George Mason University (<http://teachinghistory.org/>), and our own experiences in the course NUMEM-UNRIO, to be expanded in this project – the educational uses of the Internet still seem quite modest.

In Brazil, although the field has grown considerably in recent years, there are still relatively few historians who devote themselves to thinking about how history is taught in schools. The recent creation of the Professional Masters in Teaching History of CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, the Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education), which involved the three institutions of Rio de Janeiro participating in this project, might be an auspicious sign that this trend in the field is reversing. Moreover, the teaching of the history of slavery involves the important dimension of producing of new narratives about that past, as well as transnational dimensions and ethical ramifications for discussions of restorative justice. Our proposal to create virtual platforms in both Portuguese and English for teaching as well as for the general public, with content produced by scholars doing cutting edge research on the topic, seeks to make a contribution on both of these fronts.

In an increasingly globalized world, the exchanges between experts in the history of Brazil, the United States, and the Caribbean, emphasizing the connections between different experiences of enslavement and the narrative implications of contemporary public demands for reparation policies is the most important contribution, both theoretically and practically, of the project.

### **Expected Results**

To contribute to reconceptualizing the ways of narrating the history of slavery in

the post-colonial present of the Atlantic world, starting with the exchanges between project scholars in the fields of history, education, and cultural studies.

To assess the impact of Law 10.639 in regards to demands for reparations for the slave past, and publish research results (in working papers, journal articles, book chapters, theses, and dissertations) on:

the ways in which the history of Africa and the African Diaspora in the Atlantic are being taught in Rio de Janeiro;

the perceptions of students in elementary, middle and high schools in Rio de Janeiro on Africa, slavery, and Afro-Brazilian culture;

the development of academic research in African history and the history of Afro-Brazilian culture in the country;

history textbooks that have been written in Brazil in the past ten years;

the development of narratives of slavery and post-colonialism in Brazil.

A project website which will include a digital collection of interviews with teachers and students from primary schools in Rio de Janeiro, databases created from survey data, and a bilingual e-book with the final results of the collective research.

The bilingual digital platform *Places of Memory of the African Diaspora in Rio de Janeiro*, a website and app to locate and give information about historical sites that are important for the collective memory in Brazilian society about enslaved Africans in Rio de Janeiro, based on the research of historians participating in the project.

The bilingual digital platform *Detectives from the Past*, a website and app in the form of a game based on the experiences from the African diaspora in the Atlantic world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, developed especially for high school students, based on the research of historians participating in the project.

A conference mid-way through the project: “Narratives of Slavery and Abolition in the Post-digital Era.”

Final conference of the project: “Atlantic Slavery, Public History, and Reparative Justice: The Case of Law 10.639 in Brazil.”

An e-book with bilingual versions of all papers from the final conference, “Atlantic Slavery, Public History, and Reparative Justice: The Case of Law 10.639 in Brazil.”

On March 10, 2008, the President of the Republic pronounced Law 11.645, which modified Law 10.639/2003 and changed yet again one of the articles of the Directives and Bases of National Education (Law 9394 of 1996), in order to incorporate – in an obligatory manner - the history and culture of the indigenous population in the official curriculum of Brazilian education (elementary and secondary, public and private). Complementing Law 10.639, the law of 2008 also stated that the “syllabus” should include “various aspects of history and culture that characterize the formation of the Brazilian population.” The law determined, therefore, that the history of Africa and Africans, the struggles of blacks and indigenous people in Brazil, black culture, and indigenous Brazilian culture, and blacks, and Indians be included in the study of the formation of national society. It proposed to “rescue their contributions in the social, economic, and political arenas as relevant to Brazilian history” in various curricular opportunities, “particularly in the areas of the arts and Brazilian literature and history.” The new law was not only about the inclusion of indigenous history, and yet it is in this field that it had the greatest impact. It once again stimulates the emergence of new narratives about the colonial past, integrating African and indigenous experience – narratives that can become part of the policies to redress historical injustices. The most recent historical research on indigenous history and on the history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic converge in this direction and have become increasingly connected. They historicize the question of ethnicity and the problem of race in the colonial world and



connect them to the moral and legal foundations of Atlantic slavery. In this sense, reflecting theoretically on the meanings of Law 10.639, we expect that the project could also lead to possible ideas for the implementation of Law 11.645, although here we also come up to the limits of empirical research. Certainly, making it mandatory to teach the history and culture of indigenous people seeks to repair a huge hole when it comes to their right to have their past and their identity included in the official curricula of schools in Brazil. Evaluating the impacts of this expansion in history teaching is not among the objectives of this project, even though they already are felt especially in relation to indigenous schools and the recognition of linguistic plurality in Brazil.

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