



Editorial

Identity and Otherness: Images and Representations in History Teaching Materials in Portuguese-speaking countries

Sérgio Neto and Clara Isabel Serrano

Práticas da História, n.º 17 (2023): 17-24

www.praticasdahistoria.pt

This journal is funded by National funds through FCT — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the projects UID/HIS/04666/2013, UID/HIS/04666/2019, UIDB/04666/2020, UIDP/04666/2020, UIDB/04209/2020, UIDP/04209/2020 and LA/P/0132/2020.

Editorial

Identity and Otherness: Images and Representations in History Teaching Materials in Portuguese-speaking countries

Sérgio Neto* and Clara Isabel Serrano**

At the end of the Second World War, the legacy of nationalism led some authors, such as Georg Eckert, to analyse Nazi Germany's school textbooks and their importance in the essentialist and racist construction on which the ideology of the Third Reich was based.¹ Since then, particularly since the 1970s, the revival of this field of study has been accompanied by the creation of repositories, aimed at preserving the memory of textbooks and providing spaces for research. Hence, and despite the interest it has aroused in Portugal, at least since the late 1980s,² the fact is that the country still does not have a repository equivalent to the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eck-

* Sérgio Neto (sgdneto@gmail.com). Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto – Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto; ; CITCEM – Centre for Transdisciplinary Research, Culture, Space and Memory, Via Panorâmica Edgar Cardoso, s/n, 4150-564 Porto, Portugal.

** Clara Isabel Serrano (claraisabelmeloserra@gmail.com). Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Universidade de Coimbra – Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Coimbra (CEIS20 | UC), Rua Augusto Filipe Simões, n.º 33, 3000-457 Coimbra, Portugal.

1 Eckhardt Fuchs and Kathrin Henne Fuchs “History of Textbook Research”, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Annkatrin Bock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 25-56.

2 See, for example, Sérgio Campos Matos, “Heróis e anti-heróis de uma memória histórica. Para a caracterização dos paradigmas de heroísmo nos manuais escolares (1895-1939),” *Clio. Revista do Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa* 6 (1987-1988): 39-77; Luís Reis Torgal, *História e ideologia* (Coimbra: Minerva Editora, 1989); José Amado Mendes, “Identidade nacional e ideologia através dos manuais de História”, in *Manuais Escolares: Status, Functions, History*, ed. Rui Vieira Castro, Angelina Rodrigues and José Luís Silva (Braga: Universidade do Minho, 1999), 343-364.

ert Institute; to IARTEM – International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media; or to MANES, which later led to the creation of the database of the same name, at Facultad de Educación da Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia-UNED, in Madrid, to name but a few of the most well-known repositories.

In any case, recent years have been punctuated by a renewed discussion around school syllabuses, in particular with regard to the subject of History, and the implementation thereof in programmes, textbooks and other educational materials used by pupils and teachers. Sensitive knowledge par excellence, History, besides addressing structural elements (politics, economics, society, culture, religion, and art, among others), does not lose sight of the issues of identity and otherness, moving in a space mediated by both tradition and innovation. One recalls the recent debate about the use of terms and concepts such as “slave” and “enslaved”; “discoveries” and “expansion”; “decolonisation” and “returnees”; or “third world”. So too do we recall the controversial historical re-enactments, when colonised people, in depictions designed for such purpose, seem to temper the European occupation.³

In scientific papers,⁴ press articles,⁵ in blogs⁶ and even based on the performing arts – such as the performance *Descobri-quê?*⁷ –, several authors agree with the opinion of Eduardo Lourenço, in times of dictatorship, about a “hypertrophy” of national identity. However, it should be noted that the “provocative mythology of ultra-colonialism”,⁸ as the philosopher referred to Luso-tropicalism at the time, continues to permeate much of today’s discourse, with a particular focus on learning tools.

3 Cristina Roldão, “Porto Editora, descolonize-se” *Público*, 2 March 2023, <https://www.publico.pt/2023/03/02/opiniao/opiniao/porto-editora-descolonizese-2040778>.

4 Marta Araújo and Silvia Rodríguez Maeso, “Explorando o eurocentrismo nos manuais portugueses de História,” *Estudos de Sociologia* 15, no 28 (2010): 239-270.

5 Cristina Roldão, “‘Descobrimo’ o manual colonial,” *Público*, 3 March 2022, <https://www.publico.pt/2022/03/03/opiniao/opiniao/descobrimo-manual-colonial-1997399/amp>.

6 Sofia Craveiro, “A descolonização dos manuais de História continua por fazer”, *Gerador*, 15 September 2023, <https://gerador.eu/a-descolonizacao-dos-manuais-de-historia-continua-por-concretizar/>.

7 For more information about the performance *Descobri-quê?* and the parallel training activities, see <https://estrutura.pt/laboratorio-descobriquem-escolas/>.

8 Eduardo Lourenço, *Situação africana e consciência nacional* (Amadora: Bertrand, 1976), 34.

In fact, the first textbooks released on the Carnation Revolution, as early as 1975, sought to balance the mantra of the “great enterprise of the Discoveries [which] was attributable to one man: Prince Henry the Navigator”⁹ with a new messianic breath, when they stated that the country’s future was bright “with a view to constructing Portuguese socialism between the capitalist world [...] and the Third World [...] in the shared task of rebuilding itself from the ruins of fascism”.¹⁰ In the decades that followed, as has been demonstrated, programmes and textbooks tended to reduce the more “revolutionary” passages, pointing out the European “fate” of Portugal, while still highlighting figures and elements of the “great enterprise”.

Furthermore, more recent legislation, such as Law No. 93/2017 of 23 August 2017, “establish[ing] the legal framework for preventing, prohibiting and combating discrimination”, and the 2021-2025 National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination, noting that this “combat” is a “pressing challenge in Portuguese society”,¹¹ leave no doubt as to the need to “decolonise” a certain view of the past. The current president of the History Teachers’ Association (APH – Associação de Professores de História) was of the same opinion, stating that it is necessary to “dispel stereotypes and complexify the romanticised view of the ‘Discoveries’ and what followed them”.¹² Because, ultimately, the place of the Other, yesterday and today, must be re-evaluated and re-centred when some exclusionary policies, combined with populist discourse, seek to consign them to the fringes.

And what of other Portuguese-speaking countries, each with their own idiosyncrasies, problems, and concerns?

Whereas, in Brazil, the existence of repositories, such as the University of São Paulo’s Laboratory of Teaching and Educational Materials, has raised the issue of the importance of this source, since “a textbook

9 António do Carmo Reis, *Compêndio de História. 2.º ano do liceu* (Lisboa: Edições Asa, 1975), 67.

10 António do Carmo Reis, *Compêndio de História. 3.º ano do liceu* (Lisboa: Edições Asa, 1975), 107.

11 *Plano Nacional de Combate ao Racismo e à Discriminação 2021-2025* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2021), 10.

12 Miguel Monteiro de Barros, “Direito de resposta,” *Diário de Notícias*, 28 April 2021, <https://www.dn.pt/opiniao/direito-de-resposta-13622115.html>.

does not constitute scientific literature, but is rather a product of scientific quality and accuracy”,¹³ the fact is Law No. 11.645 of 10 March 2008 made the study of history and of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian cultures compulsory in primary and secondary schools, postulating a new understanding of the (post-)colonial dimension. In any case, new bibliography has highlighted the persistence of a Eurocentric narrative.¹⁴ Within this framework, schools, programmes, and textbooks have shown more consideration towards “retrieving heritage”, with the aim of identifying the “cultural aspects that have helped shape Brazilian culture”, while at the same time seeking to “encourage an appreciation of the cultural elements of Africans that are part of Brazilian culture today”.¹⁵

As regards Portuguese-speaking African countries, despite the diverse landscape, there are still many “traces of coloniality”, as stated by Sabino Tobata Intanquê. According to the author, who analyses the case of Guinea-Bissau, the “political and government upheavals and instabilities made it impossible and still make it impossible to make progress in the education system”, which is why it is important to overcome them in order to “enable the reshaping of school curricula and the implementation of a state funding policy for the production of textbooks”.¹⁶ In Cape Verde, as recent studies¹⁷ and civic movements have shown, the debate has focused on questioning the “narrative of colonial glorification and the romanticising of the various irreconcilable and mutually adversarial clashes that shaped Cape Verdean society”.¹⁸

13 Clara Isabel Serrano and Sérgio Neto, “De Clio a Cassandra. Percepções da União Europeia nos manuais de História portugueses,” *Revista de História das Ideias* 40, no 2 (2022): 328.

14 Ana Paula dos Santos de Sá, “Descolonizar a educação é preciso. Significados de uma perspectiva pós-colonial de educação a partir do contexto brasileiro”, *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas* 1 (2019): 131-148.

15 Cleusa Teixeira Sousa, “Ensino de História: a descolonização dos currículos, a formação docente e a ênfase à memória, história e identidade dos africanos e afro-brasileiros”, *Intellèctus* 20, n.º 1 (2021): 248-264.

16 Sabino Tobata Intanquê, “Challenges of Education in Guiné-Bissau: Analysis of Educational History and Geography Books in Year Nine of Basic Education, from the Perspective of Decolonisation” (Dissert. Postgraduate Programme in Education, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, 2022), 109.

17 Miguel Cardina and Inês Nascimento Rodrigues, ed., *Remembering the Liberation Struggles in Cape Verde. A Mnemohistory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022).

18 “Descolonizar Cabo Verde – Para além da remoção das estátuas. É preciso questionar o

Other examples could be provided, hence the pertinence of demonstrating the importance of measuring the different realities, without losing sight of the tensions between colonial/post-colonial national narratives and ways of overcoming them to achieve transnational goals.

Aware of this understanding, this special issue is largely the result of a process of discussion by the International Network for the History of Pedagogies, Cultural Heritage, and Teaching Materials in Portuguese, created in February 2023. Bringing together researchers from various Portuguese, Brazilian and Cape Verdean universities and centres, the objectives are to, *inter alia*: 1) further reflect on and systematise contemporary problems and debates involving the teaching of history, the material construction of knowledge in Portuguese, and the production and circulation of educational, learning and teaching materials, based on the dialogue between connected temporalities and geographies; 2) promote the identification of collection points and the creation of collections of educational, learning and teaching materials printed in Portuguese, process them and make them available (physically and digitally) so as to create an observatory of school textbooks/teaching materials; 3) stimulate dialogue between teachers, researchers, research centres, NGOs, and other institutions and organisations from Portuguese-speaking countries, in order to share ideas and information and to formalise bases for high-quality, socially relevant research and knowledge transfer.

The special issue “Identity and Otherness: Images and Representations in History Teaching Materials in Portuguese-Speaking Countries” comprises six papers and an interview. The first paper, by Julião Soares Sousa, “The Image and Representation of Colonialism in the 1974 PAIGC History Textbook”, begins by situating the way in which the problem of education was approached during the National Liberation Struggle carried out by the movement led by Amílcar Cabral. Also, during the conflict, the PAIGC set up so-called “bush schools” and made efforts to design and produce school materials. Julião Soares

Sousa's text presents the outcome of these attempts, analysing the textbook *História da Guiné e Ilhas de Cabo Verde* [History of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands], published in 1974. The volume, whose reach has sought to transcend school use, begins by reviewing the (pre-)history of Africa, over a long span of time that characterises the “colonial yoke”¹⁹ and the secular resistance to the occupation of Guinea, paying no less attention to the process(es) of independence. The textbook's penultimate chapter, entitled *The Anti-Imperialist Struggle and the Future of Humanity* [A luta anti-imperialista e o futuro da humanidade], as Julião Soares Sousa points out, is symptomatic of the *zeitgeist*.

The second text, by Francisco Osvaldino Nascimento Monteiro, “Representações de Portugal nos manuais de ensino primário cabo-verdiano (1975-1990)”, focuses on the period between independence and the first years after the establishment of the multi-party system, by which the archipelago is governed. Marked by profound changes, including with regard to the representations held in collective memory, the paper reviews the Cape Verdean educational landscape of the 1st Cycle. The author concludes that the political and institutional rapprochement between Cape Verde and Portugal (and Europe) dictated a metamorphosis of textbooks. With this in mind, after an initial phase focused on the figures of the PAIGC, the rejection of colonialism, and the need to build bridges between peoples in Africa and the world, a second phase followed marked by the predominance of European environments and imagery. Despite his collecting of information and reflection, Francisco Osvaldino Nascimento Monteiro believes that more studies are needed, especially in view of the first decades of the 21st century.

The paper by Sarah Luna de Oliveira, “O ‘descobrimento’ do Brasil nos manuais escolares de leitura adotados em Angola e Moçambique (1960-1970)”, analyses a set of nine textbooks for primary and elementary schools in Angola and Mozambique, published between the 1960s and 1970s, to reflect on the idea of the “Discoveries” in general and

19 PAIGC, *História da Guiné e Ilhas de Cabo Verde* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1974), 117.

the “Discovery of Brazil” in particular.²⁰ Given the influence of colonial ideology and “official historiography” on school publications in the last decades of the regime, the author discusses the Eurocentric view of history and the world conveyed by textbooks, seeking to compare and dispel the myth of “nationalist and imperial evocation” that persists and continues to be replicated in Portuguese textbooks.

In turn, the paper by Andréa Borges Leão and Alcides André de Amaral, “Manuais de história em Moçambique: circulação de modelos e práticas do conhecimento”, highlights recent material written during the COVID-19 pandemic. After a lengthy overview of the conditions that govern both the development of “learning objects” and the particular case of Mozambique, this study asserts its originality by analysing a workbook, viewed as complementary material for teachers and pupils and which, in reality, is not always considered by researchers.

The fifth paper in the special issue, “Narrar, questionar e reimaginar o passado pelas imagens dos livros didáticos”, by Ana Paula Caldeira, focuses firstly on the issues raised by some Brazilian artists of the imagery conveyed and maintained over decades in school textbooks. The author also explores how the questions raised have made it possible to monitor and understand the struggles against racism and disputes concerning Brazilian politics and memory with the return of democracy. Ana Paula Caldeira then looks at and discusses how, in recent years, textbooks, particularly history and art history textbooks, have been reproducing works by contemporary artists and the significance and importance thereof.

The paper by Gisella de Amorim Serrano and Débora Dias, “Media Culture and School Textbooks: The Place of Brazilian and Portuguese History Magazines”, in turn, uses a comparative methodology to analyse the educational scope of scientific journals on topics related to history, in particular, four Portuguese publications: *Visão História*,

²⁰ In addition to the “beginnings” of the “discovery” of Brazil, it is worth understanding how the process of Brazilian independence has been approached in Portuguese school textbooks. See Sérgio Neto, Clara Isabel Serrano and Sarah Luna de Oliveira, ““Um adeus português?” Uma leitura da independência do Brasil nos manuais escolares lusos de História,” *Estudos Ibero-Americanos* 48, no 1 (2022): 1-16.

História National Geographic Portugal, *JN História*, and *Super Interessante História*; and three Brazilian publications: *Desvendando a História*, *Revista de História da Biblioteca Nacional*, and *Leituras da História*. This analysis, covering the beginning of the 21st century to the present day, shows how these journals provide insight into processes, events, and historical figures. At the same time, however, the paper also notes the use of commercial strategies to encourage the purchase of these products, and the historical exaltation of a certain collective memory that continues to enthrall a wide audience.

Finally, in the interview “*Não sei se sou chave ou cadeado...*”: (pós-)memórias, educação e alfabetização na Guiné-Bissau. Uma conversa com Mário Cabral e Pansau Cabral”, Mélanie Toulhoat speaks with Mário Cabral, a PAIGC militant and leader during the liberation struggles and Guinea-Bissau’s Minister of National Education in the post-independence period, and his son, Pansau Cabral. The latter helps to weave together the threads of his father’s memory, somewhat unravelled by the passage of time. During the interview, in addition to his life journey, Mário Cabral also recalls the importance of education as an integral part of the struggle for the formal and real independence of Guinea, as well as the educational programme outlined for the country in the post-independence period. This period, as we know, was marked by the proposals of Paulo Freire, a thinker and educator who was invited to develop the adult literacy project. Incidentally, the intense exchange of correspondence between the two was collated in 1977 in the second part of Paulo Freire’s book *Cartas à Guiné-Bissau*.

Referência para citação:

Neto, Sérgio, e Clara Serrano. “Identity and Otherness: Images and Representations in History Teaching Materials in Portuguese-speaking countries”. *Práticas da História, Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past*, n.º 17 (2023): 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.48487/pdh.2023.n17.34375>.