We are not Racists: The Denial of Racism in the Discourse of the Brazilian Corporate Media

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Abstract

This paper suggests a debate followed by an analysis of the racist discourse in the book Não somos racistas (We are not racists), by Ali Kamel (2006), Director of Journalism at Rede Globo in Brazil. This study is based on Critical Discourse Analysis, especially the works of Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk (2008a, 2009b, 2012c). The analysis showed that even denying racism in Brazilian society, the author himself has a racist speech, mainly by revealing the discourse of the whiteness, which shows ignorance toward the privileges of the white population over the black population in Brazil.

Keywords: Brazilian media; media; denial of racism; racism

1. Introduction

This paper aims to discuss the asymmetrical relations of power between black and white people in Brazilian society, focusing on the media's denial of racism. This is not a new debate; however, it is not a frequent topic addressed, especially when we consider the complexity of racism and its effects in the Brazilian society. Yes, we are racist. Even when racism is disguised and is not clearly noticed in social practices and, mainly, in the speech. Conceição (1996, 2006) has already disclosed how much the media of the largest black population in Brazil—the population in the state of Bahia—is racist; which can be observed in the representativeness of black people in the main newspaper in Bahia, *A tarde* (The Afternoon).

To build the debate, we first demonstrate the relations between discourse and power through the concepts of members resources in Fairclough (1989) and of mental models in Van Dijk (2012). Then we show how racism is now understood in Social Science and CDA. Following that we point out concepts of race and racism in the Brazilian society, and then we point out the denial of racism, which is the main strategy to protect the racist (Van Dijk, 2008; Goffman, 1974).Last, we analyze the book *Não somos racistas* (We are not racists) by Ali Kamel (2006), with intents ofpointing out the racist discourse in the very text. This paper is part of a wider project entitled *O racismo e o discurso da mídia online: entre a negação e a prática*(Racism and the online media's discourse: Between denial and practice), and currently developed at the *Universidade Federal da Bahia*with intents of analyzing the relationship between the online media and society through the former's discourse.

2. Discourse and power Maintenance

Fairclough (1989) emphasizes the internal and dialectical relationship between language and society. Language is part of society, i.e., linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena, and social phenomena *are* (in part) linguistic phenomena. Thus, it can be said that people incorporate that which is socially distributed and made available to them, through the *members resources* internalized to engage in social practices, which includes discourse. This incorporation of what is socially shared involves that which Fairclough (1989) named "social conditions of production and social conditions of interpretation". In other words, the author argues these social conditions shape the members resources, which consequently guide the way in which texts (or discourses) are produced and interpreted, ultimately guiding individual social practices. However, what often seems to be common sense may contain assumptions directly or indirectly supporting asymmetrical relations of power in society. These are naturalized practices that work ideologically, creating consensus that maintain the privileged groups of a society in control of the social practices.

Through the naturalization of their ideologies the dominant groups influence the population to unconsciously legitimize asymmetrical relations of power. The naturalization of ideologies through member's resources leads us to the concept of mental models as developed by Van Dijk (2012) in his debate concerning context models. Van Dijk argues context models are nothing other than mental models, which in turn can be defined as "construct of participants about the for-them-relevant properties of such a situation, that is, a mental model" (Van Dijk, 2012: 56). He further argues these mental models guide both production and understanding of the texts with which the interlocutor interacts. Van Dijk (2012) thus proposes a new approach to context design, not only referring to a kind of objective social situation but also to mental models.

Therefore, "the crucial thesis of mental model theory is that besides a representation of the meaning of a text, language users *also* construct mental models of the events texts are *about*, that is, the situation they denote or refer to" (Van Dijk, 2012:58). However, we must highlight that author's and reader's mental models are not always the same, it is very likely that their interpretation of the text is different. According to Van Dijk (2012), mental models are unique and subjective since they start from previous experiences and/or knowledge, and are influenced by the context in which they fit. Regarding racism, for instance, mental models will obviously be different if we consider white and black individuals, even if they are members of the same social group.

In addition, it is also true that mental models may be socially constructed through mass media vehicles. The authors of the news represent the world from a specific subjective mental model, which in turn may become the base of "construction of the semantic representation of the discourses about such events" (Van Dijk, 2012: 59), considering they are frequently repeated. The reach ofthe disclosure of a particular mental model can also effectively influence the construction of socially shared mental models, even individual ones.

In his researches on the hidden power relations in the discourse of the media, Fairclough (1989) also emphasizes the importance of repetition in these manipulative processes, since a single text is in fact insignificant, but the systematic reproduction of certain ideologies may influence in a subtle and powerful way the reader's thoughts and actions, and consequently, an entire community's. Referring himself to Foucault (2006), Fairclough asserts that the control over speech orders is a powerful mechanism for sustaining power.

Mental models are made up of representations of facts experienced by language users, but of their opinions and emotions alike; therefore, we have previously argued that mental models are subjective. Thus, personal evaluations of each fact also constitute mental models. And yet, personal experience and socio culturally shared knowledge also add up to the construction of mental models.

3. *Racism*

We have found in Social Science the meaning of racism, which is the central concept in this research. Cash more (2000) proposes that the term racism carries a lot of meanings and that by late 1960s this definition rested on the idea of *racial superiority* and was therefore understood as a doctrine or ideology. From that time, the term included the idea of *practices, attitudes and beliefs* which would result in racial disadvantages. The author also emphasizes the historical character of the term that shows how the understanding of the inferiority of the black people changed throughout time, according to the economic structure.

From a CDA point of view, Van Dijk (2008: 134) understands racism as a complex ethnic or "racially" based social system of domination, and its consequent inequality. Still according to Van Dijk, racism comprises two subsystems: a social and a cognitive one. The former refers to discriminatory social practices at the local level (micro) and the abuse of power (macro) practiced by dominant institutions in general; the later, on the other hand, refers to tendentious mental models based on racist prejudice and ideology, which can even generate involuntary racism, since it is possible to be reproduced from mental representations socially shared. It is important to emphasize, Van Dijksuggests, the role of discourse in the cognitive dimension of racism, since ideology and prejudice are acquired and learned—rather being innate—through communication mainly.

It should also be noted that the Brazilian Law addressing Racism (7,716/89) distinguishes between racism and racial abuse. Racism is understood as the denial of any citizen's right based on his/her ethnicity, while racial abuse refers to injurious treatment based on ethnicity. However, in Brazil the most popular term used to refer to insults regarding race is racism.

4. Race and racism in Brazil

According to anthropologist Lilia Schwarcz (2012: 20), the term *raça*—Portuguese word for *race*—in Brazil has never been neutral but rather swings back and forth between positive and negative meanings. An example of a negative concept of the term, Schwarcz suggests, is Nina Rodrigues's statement as a physician in the state of Bahia, in late nineteenth century: she said the extreme miscegenation was both indication of and the very condition of degeneration. While defending deterioration as a consequence of the mingling of races, Rodrigues emphasized the idea of racial differences by stating, for instance, that one cannot expect responsibility from races that are not responsible. Thus, Rodrigues questioned the Brazilian Criminal Code of 1894, which advocates for equality and free will, proposing the settlement of different codes for different races.

Rodrigues's ideas, according to Schwarcz (2012), were the basis for the adoption of Darwinism and racial determinism, nullifying individuality that would be, from this point of view, nothing but a consequence of the characteristics of the racial group of origin. One may argue that the racism still present in Brazilian society was "scientifically" explained by Rodrigues.

Such proposition, Schwarcz (2012) points out, is also present in literature, as noticed in Euclides da Cunha's *Os sertões*, published in 1902. In fact, Euclides da Cunha also thought extreme miscegenation to be a decline, a result from the mixing of very diverse races. He did, though, in other passages in the same work express that the mestizo, or *sertanejo*, was a strong man.

Schwarcz (2012) also mentions the scientist João Batista Lacerda and the anthropologist Roquete Pinto who defended the progressive extinction of the mestizos in Brazil. According to Roquete Pinto, for instance, it was expected that in 2012 our population would comprise 80% of white people and 20% of mestizos with no black nor native citizens (Schwarcz, 2012: 26).A very pessimistic hypothesis for the people who considered a century too long for the definitive whitening of the Brazilian population.

Finally, the author point's out the so called "the most romantic version of the group" (Schwarcz, 2012: 26): the assumption that the unique mix of people and colors would constitute the very definition of Brazil. To illustrate that she quotes Carl von Martius, a German scientist who used the metaphor of a river to explain the mixture in Brazilian population:

Three major rivers composed the same nation: a large and mighty one, formed by the white populations, one that was small and nourished by the indigenous, and another one even smaller of black people. There they would be together in harmony, coexisting peacefully, and their nature would only be known in Brazil (Schwarcz, 2012: 27 (our translation)).

However, the author highlights, harmony does not mean equality, and hierarchy among the races—or river, for this matter—is very clear in Von Martius's metaphor (Schwarcz, 2012: 27).It was only in the 1930s that the "redemption" of the mestizo happened, making them a national icon, a symbol of a syncretic identity, mainly based on the concept of "racial democracy" as supported by Gilberto Freyre in his work*Casa Grande & Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves) published in 1933. However, this "redemption"is solely verbal and not materialized in the daily life of Brazilian society.

In fact, racism in Brazil was, and still is, a taboo, according to Guimarães (2009), since we consider our country to be racially democratic. Still according to the author, this illusion comes from the use of the American model of research on race relations, which reveals that racism in Brazil is neither violent nor segregationist as in the United States. Brazilian racism is veiled, although complex, the Brazilian people act in"a fancy formality of social distancing and acute differentiation of status and of economic possibilities along with justice equity and formal indifference" (Guimarães, 2009: 41).

Guimarães (2009), argues racism in Brazil is based on social hierarchization, i.e., if the poor were poor because they were inferior, as the nineteenth-century liberal doctrine preached, accordingly the poor black and mestizos, formerly slaves, were also inferior. As it is today, the theory of white superiority coexists with a great social distance between the two races.

In addition, the idea of "color" in Brazil is quite peculiar, since it allows the "whitening" through education and the rise in the class structure. Therefore, mestizos and mulattos can be considered "white,"as long as they are literate and wealth, and then enjoy privileges reserved only to white people. And that is how the Brazilian racial democracy works.

Brazilian racism is, in fact, denied, since Brazilians call themselves anti-racist. In general, the Brazilian racists think the racists are the ones who separate people and the ones who deny them humanity (Guimarães, 2009: 60). The aforementioned illusion about Brazilian racial democracy allows that Brazilians assert what determines chances in life is social class rather than race. Thus, there is a widespread denial of Brazilian racism. Guimarães (2009: 65)wrote that, "among us there would be only 'prejudice,' that is, mistaken individual perceptions that would tend to be corrected in the continuity of social relations" (our translation).It is important to point out that in this research we are working with the social concept of race as proposed by Guimarães (2009) and mentioned above, along with Munanga (2003), which will be more detailed in the section *Definition of race*, through the analysis of our corpus.

5. *Denial of Racism*

Van Dijk (2008) indicates the denial of racism as one of the main characteristics of contemporary racism. The author highlights the strategy as a positive presentation of the members of a group, since it is socially accepted that discrimination and prejudice are reprehensible.The denial of racism can both be individual, especially in the everyday informal conversations, and social, in the public discourse such as in politics, media, corporations, etc. (Van Dijk, 2008). Since the public discourse has wider reach and is, therefore, more influential, it is through the denial of racism in this context that the dominant white consensus is constructed.

This positive self-presentation or preservation of the face (Goffman, 1974) is a strategy whose goal is to make an interlocutor construct a positive image of the person he/she interacts with. Face preservation may be related to a specific situation. But in general, people want to avoid a negative judgment about their personality as a whole. "To be categorized as 'racist' or even as 'intolerant' presupposes a more lasting personal trait, and hence a particularly threatening judgment of faces" (Van Dijk, 2008: 159 (our translation)).In the case of institutions, groups or entities, the denial of racism emerges as a shared opinion, revealing a consensus on the issue (Van Dijk, 2008). Thus, the face is preserved through a positive self-presentation in the public discourse of institutions and organizations, such as the media, for example. Such as the individual, institutions and organizations "do not want to be known as racists by their employees, among their clients or to the general public" (Van Dijk 2008: 166 (our translation)). Such a position also suggests social progress and modernity, which in turn, may suggest quality of products or services.For instance, the speech of journalist Míriam Leitão at the Seminar on Media and Racism, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2001: "My deep conviction is that, yes, the media is racist because the country is racist. The media always reflect the country" (Ramos, 2002: 42). Ignoring the power of influence of the media, she adds, "the press does not have the power to change society, it is part of society" (Ramos, 2002, 49). Leitão is, therefore, trying to protect the face of the media by strengthening the media-led consensus that the media is not racist.

According to Van Dijk (2008: 167),the white consensus that denies the existence of racism is a very powerful element for its reproduction, especially since successful resistance requires public attention, media coverage, and at least partial recognition of the claims. That is, the media and political leaders can prevent the change of public opinion and favor the remaining of relations of power as constituted by not recognizing the existence of racism and, thus, restricting its broad debate. Such a manipulation is only possible by repeatedly broadcasting certain mental models. Take, for instance, Rede Globo de Televisão, the largest Brazilian TV network and one of the largest in the world, the insistently reproduced mental models range from tele novelas with their black characters generally occupying subaltern positions in society, such as housekeepers and drivers, to the fact that black television hosts and hostesses are rare in a country where over 50% of the population is black. Moreover, issues related to the black people are rarely discussed on TV shows or even in the print media. But when that does happen the topic is not featured accordingly. It is, therefore, instilled in the population that the black people in fact are subordinate in society and, therefore, are of no importance.Given that, Van Dijk argues "denial is a central sociopolitical management strategy" (2008: 169) as it contributes to controlling the resistance and making political issues more manageable in an ethnic and racially plural society. In other words, this is a powerful strategy for the reproduction of hegemony (Van Dijk, 2008).With intents of demonstrating how the Brazilian corporate media strongly denies racism, we analyze the book *Não somos racistas: uma reação aos que querem nos transformar numa nação bicolor* (We Are Not Racists: A Reaction to Those Who Want to Transform us Into a Bicolor Nation) by Ali Kamel, published in 2006. Our analysis suggests, the denial of racism is followed by a racist discourse, as demonstrated bellow in the analysis of some excerpts from the book.

6. The racist discourse in the book "Não somos racistas" by Ali Kamel

The book *Não somos racistas: uma reação aos que querem nos transformar numa nação bicolor* by Ali Kamel, director of journalism at Rede Globo de Televisão, was published in 2006 in response to a discussion on the issue pertaining the quota system for the black population in Brazilian universities. As the title suggests, the author defends the thesis that Brazilian society is not racist. Our goal is, therefore, to show how Kamel's very book deliversa discourse marked by racism, following Van Dijk's (2008a, 2009b) guidelines and the Critical Discourse Analysis.

The book has thirteen chapters, the first of which, entitled *A gênese contemporânea da nação bicolor* (The Contemporary Genesis of the Bicolor Nation) is a general introduction to the topic. The following ones are articles originally published in the newspaper *O Globo* and rewritten, updated, and expanded, according to the author.

6.1. Definition of race

In the chapter debating the concept of race, *Raças não existem* (Races do not exist), Kamel asserts thatrace does not exist; furthermore, the very belief of the existence of races is the basis of racism, and that so far race has been a cultural and ideological construction so that ones are able to control others. He then wraps up arguing that discrimination would be racist only if its motivation were based on reality—the existence of human races—rather than on an irrational belief. (2006: 43-47) Karmel argues discriminations may be either "delirious" or "criminal," but they are never racist.Munanga (2003) explains that the concept of race was first used in Zoology and Botany and only then referred to as means of describing human descent. It is in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the term is used to distinguish social classes, nobles being more "pure" and therefore more apt to administer and dominate the plebs, which in turn were up to enslavement. Accordingly, power relations were legitimized without any biological difference to sustain or justify such inequality.

The concept of race and the classification of human diversity, Munanga (2003) argues, could be useful to organize the thoughts. What has come to support racism was the hierarchization of human races into better or more capable versus worse or incapable. According to Munanga, race as we use it today is not at all biological, which is endorsed by Cashmore (2000), who emphasizes the need to focus the debate on the discursive use of the term race, and that would modify its analysis.

Cash more argues "the mere mention of the word race entails our understanding of a permanent diversity and, consequently, a concept of 'diversity'." (2000: 452) Thus, the focus being on language understood as "a sign of cultural and biological diversity, and a way of maintaining the distance between sovereign and subordinate groups", i.e., Language also contributes to the social construction of the concept of race as understood by Social Science. According to Munanga (2003), the concept of race used nowadays is completely ideological, since it hides relations of power. And it is this very distinction of social races which reproduce and maintain racism. Brazilian racism, in turn, is based on phenotype. Those featuring thick lips and/or curly hair, for instance, are victims of potential racism, even if their skin is not black. Given that, the inclusion of black and brown in a research dealing with racism cannot be considered a trick to favor a particular thesis Kamel (2006) argues. Racism is a phenomenon affecting black and brown people indistinctly. Kamel (2006) proposes in his book to systematically deconstruct Sociology researches to reinforce his thesis that Brazil is not a racist country. This deconstruction of Sociology will be taken up in detail in a specific section of this paper.

6.2. Inter discourse: the whiteness

The inter discourse of the whiteness can be noticed in Kamel's discourse (2006), and it can be understood as follows: Whiteness is understood as a position in which subjects occupying this position were systematically privileged regarding access to material and symbolic resources, initially generated by colonialism and imperialism, and which are maintained and preserved in the contemporary world (SCHUCMAN, 2014: 84 (our translation)). Therefore, being white is more of a social place than the result of a genetic inheritance, as emphasized by Munanga (2003). Kamel states that "the people supporting the quota system for the black population say that the white people are 'only' 34.2% of the poor. Only? These 34.2% mean 19 million Brazilians, a huge contingent who will be left aside," (2006, p. 53 (our translation)) apparently demonstrating that they have no idea of "the symbolic and the material privileges that white people obtain in a racist structure" (Schucman, 2014, 84 (our translation)).

Still on the quota system issue regarding the black population and the universities, the idea of whiteness is once again clear in Kamel's book: "what UnB proposed was outrageous, from the standpoint of logic, ethics, and racial equality laws hitherto governing our country" (2006, 55 (our translation)). Kamel (2006: 39-40) also argues that in the post-abolitionist Brazil "there have never been institutional barriers against the rise of the black population in a country where access to public jobs and public education is only ensured by merit[emphasis added]." Specifically regarding education, it can be said that the history of education in Brazil ratifies the difficulty black people find in accessing formal education, which comes to show that it is not only merit which guarantees access to public university. The quota system seeks to adjust this distortion; however, it is known that we are still far from offering Brazilian black population equal access to all the citizen's rights. While discussing the conditions of the black population in the labor market, this concept emerges again when Kamel asserts that "our problem is not racism but poverty and the economic model that, over the years, only concentrated the income: those who were poor remained poor or became poorer; while those who were rich either remained rich or became richer" (2006, 78 (our translation)). Accordingly, he levels the white population and the black poor population, suggesting that the problem of the black people is poverty, rather than being black in a racist society as ours.

The discourse of the whiteness is also clear in the statement: "our legal-institutional framework definitively guarantees equality of rights for all citizens, regardless of color, religion or political belief" (Kamel, 2006: 85 (our translation)) In fact, this speech permeates the whole book and it can be said that the thesis defended in the book *Não somos racistas* rests precisely on a supposed equality of conditions between black and white people in Brazil, identified and systematically repeated by Kamel.

6.3. The denial of historical facts

In the first paragraph of the introduction, Kamel tells what he describes as a surprise by the "novelty": It was a slow move. It emerged at the academy among some sociologists in the 1950s, and gradually gained ground until it became an official government policy. (…) When we woke up, surprise. I was surprised. And, I imagine, many Brazilians must have been too: Does that mean we are racists? (Kamel, 2006: 18 (our translation)). Following this idea, Kamel begins his book disregarding important historical facts concerning Brazil. At various moments in our history reports show racist behaviors which also unveil the whiteness discourse behind Kamel's surprise.

The author goes on to say that the surprise comes from the idea that "we were proud of our miscegenation, of our so varied color gradient" (Kamel, 2006, 18 (our translation)). From there the author develops the whole introduction trying to demonstrate the misconceptions in considering Brazil a racist country. Idea which will be developed throughout the book. He supports his argument on a certain sociology that may have started dividing the country in white and black people. Among others, he discusses the works of sociologists Oracy Nogueira and Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Contradicting historical facts, Kamel (2006: 20) asserts that "here [in Brazil], after abolition, there were never institutional barriers holding back the black people or any other ethnic group." To demonstrate the weakness of this argument, we address the book *Brasil: uma biografia* (Brazil: a biography), which is the result of extensive research by the anthropologist Lilia H. Schwarcz and the historian Heloisa M. Starling, published in 2015.

Specifically about the moment after abolition the authors assert:

By the way, after the euphoria of the first moments of the *Lei Áurea*[1] of 1888, the fallacies and incompleteness of the measure became clear. Although it meant an end to the slave system, it did not propose social policies to include these groups in society, when they had little chance of competing on equal terms with other workers, mainly the white ones, either locals or immigrants. It seemed that it would be necessary to erase the "dark past," as Rio Branco, the Foreign Minister, would have said in a sort of parapraxis (Schwarcz and Starling, 2015: 342).

At that time, still according to Schwarcz and Starling (2015: 343), a "white and peaceful future, with black people and mestizos disappearing to give room to an orderly and increasingly bleached civilization" was expected. And it was believed, as already mentioned, that in 2012 the Brazilian population would comprise 80% of white people and 20% mestizos, without the black population and the indigenous.

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[1] Name given to the law signed by Princess Isabel, abolishing slavery in Brazil, in 1888. It translates as "The Golden Law".

The freedmen had to live with both the prejudice against the Brazilian slave-owning past and the prejudice of race itself. We may thus perceive our history of racial prejudice much older than Kamel (2006) suggests, making it strange to question whether we are a racist population. Yes, we are racists.

6.4. Delegitimization of social science

Besides contradicting historical facts, Kamel supports his argument on a certain sociology that would have started dividing Brazil between the white and the black population (2006: 20). Among others, he discusses the works of sociologists Oracy Nogueira and Fernando Henrique Cardoso who demonstrated, in the 1950s, that racism was indeed present in our society, preserving the enslaved order.

Sociologist Oracy Nogueira, in a research report published in 1955, distinguished between "mark prejudice" (determined by appearance) in Brazil and the "origin prejudice"(determined by descent) in the USA. His conclusion was that both countries are equally racist, statement rebutted by Kamel, who argues: "what makes us different is that here, there is certainly less racism and, whenever there is, it is shy for society, in general, condemns this behavior as hateful" (2006, p 23).

Sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso's work also confirms the existence of racism in Brazil, in addition to rejecting the hypothesis that prejudice is in fact against the poor in general, and not specifically against the black people. These ideas are supported in the book *Mobilidade social em Florianópolis* (Social Mobility in Florianópolis) written in 1960 with Octávio Ianni, and in the book *Capitalismo e escravidão no Brasil meridional* (Capitalism and Slavery in Southern Brazil), written in 1962, as Kamel (2006) points out. Kamel dubs Cardoso's thesis "sins of youth," but he also highlights that reading his books today "is key to understand why it was in Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government that the project of those who want to transform this into a bicolor nation took such a high flight" (2006: 27). Kamel was referring himself to the creation, in 1995, of the *Grupo de Trabalho Interministerial para a Valorização da População Negra,* whose main goal is explained in the very name of the Working Group: to value the black population.But he also meant the *Programa Nacional de Direitos Humanos*—known as PNDH, the Human Rights National Program was launchedin1996, with intents of fighting racism—and the establishment in 2002 of the *Programa Nacional de Ações Afirmativas* (National Affirmative Action Program), which, according to Kamel, can be understood as the first step towards the quota system for the black population in Brazilian universities.

Kamel asserts Fernando Henrique Cardoso"gave way to the institutionalization of the bicolor nation" (2006, 34). The author himself points out that although the FHC government did not propose the quota system for the black population in Brazilian universities, it contributed to changing the view of the population, and consequently to implementing the system. In the mid-2000s universities such as the State University of Rio de Janeiro, the University of Brasília, the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul, among others, began to adopt the system.

Thus, Kamel (2006) identifies whose responsibility it was for institutionalizing racism in Brazil, pointing out the date on which the racial division of the Brazilian nation took place: Fernando Henrique Cardoso. In addition, he argues former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva only followed a process of change already in progress when he created, in 2003, the *Secretaria Especial de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial*—the secretariat forracial equality—, sponsored the project that mandates the quota systemin federal universities (2004), and endorsed the Racial Equality Statute (2010) (Kamel, 2006, 39). The latter was intended to guarantee basic rights of black citizens, as well as to fight the discrimination and ethnic intolerance (Law No. 12,288 of July 20, 2010). The so-called Quotas Law came to be sanctioned by President Dilma Rousseff, in 2012 (Law No. 12,711), therefore, after the release of Kamel's book (2006).

Among the strategies used by Kamel to try to delegitimize social science, it is also important to highlight his lexical choices (Van Dijk, 2009), especially when referring to the sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso. As one might notice, Kamel uses Cardoso's studies to try andunveil his weaknesses. Thus, the researcher, as a rule, is identified either as "young sociologist" or as "young FH". In these cases, the use of the adjective young is a subtle way of emphasizing a supposed immaturity in Fernando Henrique Cardoso's research, which consequently denies him any authority or consistency in the subject, as when his work was dubbed "sins of youth".

In addition, when referring himself to the sociology researches developed in the 1950s, Kamel's lexical choiceslabels "methodology mistake" or "trick"the mingling of the black population and the mestizos in researches on racism "so that reality is more favorable to them" (2006: 49).

6.5. The victim's culpability

The aforementioned thesis of sociologist Oracy Nogueira is also used to justify the strategy of blaming the victim, a semantic movement of inversion. According to Van Dijk (2008), the tragic aspect in this"is that this sociology [as developed by Nogueira] gained space, grew stronger and (…) was fully embraced by the Black Movements in the late 1970s. Nowadays, it has gained the status of official truth" (Kamel, 2006: 24 (our translation)). That is, Kamel asserts the Black Movements have appropriated a mistaken thesis supporting Brazil is a racist country and, consequently, is responsible for the racism present in Brazilian society.

Kamel put it this way:

In the contemporary Brazilian society the Black Movements seem to have forgotten that and have relived race concept, intending to improve the living conditions of population groups. The strategy is bound to lead us to a situation we have never lived: racial hatred (2006: 24).In the chapter*Negros e brancos no mercado de trabalho* (The black and the white in the job market), the author also uses the victim's culpability strategy when stating:

IBGE [the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics], for instance. Pressed by the Black Movements, in 2004 it conducted a survey on employment and race.Based on it, the newspapers concluded that the data "proved"the black population (including the mestizos) are discriminated against in the job market (KAMEL, 2006: 77 (our translation)).Then, on the following page he continues:"those who see Brazil as a racist country want to take two steps back (…) they want us as a bicolor nation, only black and white people, the white ones oppressing the black population. It is sad" (KAMEL, 2006: 78 (our translation)). This is how he blames the pressure of the Black Movements on IBGE to support the Brazilian racism thesis. The IBGE research is presented to illustrate what would be a campaign "which does not rest".

Still in this chapter, Kamel (2006) repeats the mantra saying there is no racial hatred in Brazil. For example, when stating:"we have succeeded in building a country with, despite all the flaws, a great quality: absence of racial hatred" (2006, 76), and that the government, by not offering quality education to all the poor, either black or white, will unleash "I repeat, racial hatred, a feeling we have not known until now, and unanswerable demands" (2006: 77 (our translation)). In this case, the government is responsible for racism in Brazilian society. In 2006, when the book was launched, Brazil was governed by Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, in his first term.Kamel (2006, p. 92) further remarks in the chapter on quotas, "the great tragedy that preference and quota policies entail is the spread of conflict and, more intensely, spread of hatred. The feeling that merit does not matter rips the social fabric." That is, once again, throwing the responsibility toward the victims themselves.

6.6. We versus others

The dichotomy we/others (Van Dijk, 2008) are all through Kamel's entire book. Therefore, we will limit ourselves to a few examples only to explicit the strategy used by the author.In referring to the quota system in the first chapter, Kamel (2006: 23) asserts racism is not typical of the Brazilian people if compared to the North-American people, and argues that "what makes us different is that here, there is certainly less racism and, whenever there is, it is shy for society, in general, condemns this behavior as hateful".

The dichotomy we/others, highlights a positive aspect of his in-group (we) when he says that Brazilian racism is shy. Thus, it demonstrates an apparent empathy (Van Dijk, 2008) in relation to the out-group (others), since "it is clear that in the US racism is routinely harsher, more explicit, and more direct". (Kamel, 2006: 22) And, in comparison, Brazilian racism would be milder and more discreet.Later on, he argues "that this sociology [as developed by Nogueira] gained space, grew stronger and (…) was fully embraced by the Black Movements in the late 1970s. Nowadays, it has gained the status of official truth" (Kamel, 2006: 24 (our translation)). And it is obvious Kamel is supporting thein-group (we) to the detriment of the out-group of the black Brazilian population (others), since the author blames the Black Movements for the racial division in Brazil. It is further implied that Brazilian's consequent racism had its origin in this "act"of the Black Movements. Once again, one can emphasize the discourse of the whiteness, since the author of the book seems to ignore any reason for the existence of the Black Movements itself,which would be unnecessary if, in fact, we lived in a racial democracy.Other examples of the we/other dichotomy, now extracted from the chapter *Alhos e bugalhos*—equivalent expression in Portuguese for "apples and oranges"—in which Kamel (2006) takes up the criticism of what he called trick, a strategy already mentioned earlier in the concept of race. The trick, according to the author, would be to join black people and mestizos in the same group in a research, intendingto obtain results favoring the thesis that Brazil is a racist country.

Those proposing that white people oppress the black ones have been comparing apples and oranges (Kamel, 2006: 81). Where is racism? In the accounts of those who mistake apples for oranges. (Kamel, 2006: 83) The way supporters of the thesis that white people oppress the black ones in Brazil put it, one might be under the impression that there are no black students in our higher education system. But are the doors of higher education really closed to the black population? (Kamel, 2006: 85)In the three above-mentioned examples, the we/others dichotomy is very clearly reiterated by Kamel (2006). The others are the ones supporting the thesis that in Brazil white people oppress black people, i.e., they are the ones mistaking apples for oranges. In the third example, the discourse of the whiteness can be heard in between the lines, since the author once again claims there is equality between races in Brazil, more specifically regarding the access to higher education.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of Ali Kamel's book *Não somos racistas* (2006) shows us that, opposite to the title, the very author of the book reveals in his speech, if not racism, at least a remarkable unawareness of the situation of the black population in Brazilian society, highlighted by the interdiscourse of the whiteness frequently emerging in his work. We have demonstrated that, in fact in Brazil racism has not ended with abolition, and is still a behavior, since public inclusion policies are still necessary to guarantee the black population their basic rights.

Among the discursive strategies used to deny racism, we identified the we/other dichotomy and the victim's culpability, especially focused on the black movements; the interdiscourse of the whiteness revealed by an absence of awareness that in Brazil white citizens, only because they are white, get better chances than black citizens, regarding the access to education, the job market, wages, social acceptance, and all the basic citizen rights. Besides these strategies, we can also highlight a distortion in the understanding of race; the denial of historical facts; the delegitimization of social sciences and their researchers; the lexical choices.

Brazilian racism can be considered as a historical construct from the discovery of the country with the presence of slaves in large estates until the present date. And abolition of slavery in 1888 little or nothing changed the scenario. In fact, racism in Brazil remains a taboo. It can be said that from the 1990s, with Fernando Henrique Cardoso's, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's and Dilma Rousseff's governments we have taken the first steps toward what can be a more consistent change. However, discourses such as those in the corporate media and in books such as Kamel's (2006) reveal we are, in fact, still extremely racist.

8. Reference

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