

Cristina MASFERRER LEON

Cristina Masferrer León obtained a Bachelors degree in Ethnohistory from Mexico's National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) and has studied as well Psychology at Mexico's National University (UNAM). Her thesis won the National Prize Francisco Javier Clavijero INAH 2010 which is given to the best thesis in history and ethnohistory at the undergraduate level.

Her research so far has focused on children slaves in Colonial Mexico and other aspects of slavery in New Spain. She is interested in childhood with an anthropological, psychological and historical perspective, as well as the presence of Africans and their descendants in Mexico. She is currently a lecturer at ENAH where she is in charge of a Formative Research Project on history and anthropology of children and adolescents. Cristina is also working at the International Project AFRODESC (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement). She is the presenter of the radio program "Historia de la vida cotidiana en México", directed by Pilar Gonzalbo, transmitting every week on several radio stations of the Mexican Institute of Radio since January 2010.

"Teaching About Slavery, Africans and Their Descendants in Mexican Elementary and Junior High Education."

The textbooks edited by the Mexican Ministry of Education (SEP, for its name in Spanish) for students of elementary and junior high education have several mentions of slavery, Africans and their descendants. However, there is not enough information or activities to explain its complexity and importance. Slavery is associated to indigenous people, Africans and their descendants but its magnitude and influence are diminished. Slaves are shown as chained black Africans, while Africans are presented as poor people of foreign origin. By doing so, children and teenagers are given scarce opportunities to understand the diversity and importance of Africans and other people who have been –or still are– enslaved, as well as to be sensitive on its consequences or the strategies for fighting against it.

Using content analysis of the depiction of Africans and slavery in elementary and junior high education text books edited by the SEP, this paper shows the official representation of these. In addition, material from interviews to Mexican children and teenagers about these topics, as well as some teachers' experiences, show evidence of how the content of textbooks is translated into everyday life.