Education, Racism, and the Pandemic:

a Pedagogical-Critical Analysis for Latin America

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Abstract:

The pandemic deepened social and educational inequality for Afro-descendants and indigenous people in Latin America and the Caribbean. A regional analytical overview with a focus on Brazil and on the social and educational challenges faced by these people and the epistemological, ontological, and pedagogical alternatives for the inclusion of racialized persons during the pandemic points to the need for and the viabililty of exploring innovative pedagogical paths for promoting ethnic-racial inclusion and an antiracist form of education that caters to our contemporary context.

Keywords: Education, Racism, Inequalities, COVID-19 pandemic, Latin America and the Caribbean

In the Orun, the Maroons' heaven

The stars are their eyes

watching us and they

will judge us afterwards

if we forget their legacy.

—Rogelio Martínez Furé, *Ojos vigilantes*

There are countless experiences, everyday stories, and research results that describe the particular impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable communities, those with predominantly black and indigenous populations. The manifesto *Crisis civilizatoria, pandemia y racismo* (Civilizational Crisis, Pandemic, and Racism) released by the Articulación Regional Afrodescendiente de las Américas y el Caribe (Regional Articulation of the Americas and the Caribbean—ARAAC) in 2020 declared that "racism and patriarchal violence have not been quarantined." The verbal and physical manifestations of racial violence increased, as did antiblack, anti-African, and anti-Asian racist ideologies, all of which revealed the pandemic as an exception and racism as the norm.

The social disadvantages encountered by Afro-descendants and indigenous people during the pandemic lie in areas such as health, education, employment, the economy, and housing, reflecting the gaps in social protection across Latin America and the Caribbean before the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, 2017; ECLAC et al., 2020; UNFPA, 2020). The past three years have brought a "possible deepening of poverty and extreme poverty concentration in childhood and adolescence" with a particular impact on "rural, indigenous,

and Afro-descendant populations, migrants, and persons with disabilities" (ECLAC and UNICEF, 2020: 4).

In Cuba, which is internationally known for its promotion of wide-access social policies, academic research has revealed that black women were vulnerable with regard to housing. The challenges posed by COVID-19, although they met with encouraging results when it came to the larger Cuban population, were marked by an increase in "forecasts on the deepening of inequalities and doubled those regarding the emergence of new gaps." Additionally, and in the context of the health contingency, "the budget allocated to housing policies was cut and construction plans were delayed given the lack of adequate resources" (Fundora et al., 2021: 1[3]).

In Brazil the negative effects of health restrictions have also had a particular impact on black women. During the pandemic, domestic workers and caregivers employed by the more privileged economic classes were plagued by job insecurity and exposure to contagion. It is no coincidence that Rosana Urbano, a black woman and domestic worker employed in an "aristocratic" neighborhood of São Paulo, was the first reported fatal victim of COVID-19 in Brazil in March 2020. Likewise, the first person to die in Rio de Janeiro was another black woman, this one employed as a domestic worker in the Leblon neighborhood. Ironically, she contracted the virus from her employer, who had returned from a tourist trip to Italy and survived the illness.[1]

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2020: 65) rightly points out that "pandemics do not kill as indiscriminately as we think." According to him there is a "cruel pedagogy" to the virus. The research report *Sem parar: O trabalho e a vida das mulheres na pandemia* (Nonstop: Women's Work and Life during the Pandemic) takes a look at some worrisome facets of the life of this part of the population. Women faced the greatest difficulties when it came to the payment of their basic utilities, rent, and access to food. In addition, the report states that "42 percent of

women responsible for caring for another person do so without support from people outside the family nucleus. Black women, who represented 54 percent of these cases, reported having less external support" (SOF, 2020: 31). Thus the living conditions of black women proved disadvantageous in resisting the onslaught of the pandemic.

Another severely affected sector in Latin America was Afro-descendant youth, who presented multiple vulnerabilities compared with their non-Afro-descendant peers. The report reveals "a situation that to this day determines . . . a position of greater disadvantage [because] they suffer the consequences of structural racism and the culture of privilege prevalent in the region" (UNFPA and ECLAC, 2021: 87). A survey by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, 2021) suggests that the structural inequalities to which people of African descent are exposed have a proportional effect on their physical and mental well-being. Health problems such as child mortality, unattended adolescents and youth, teenage pregnancy, violence, detrimental mental health, and chronic diseases are common in black people and lead to high rates of suicide, depression, and self-injurious behaviors and exposure to harassment and bullying.

The impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable population groups was the greater "given their increased risk of infection and death due primarily to the fact that they cannot work from home but was combined with overcrowded conditions, lack of access to water and sanitation, increased incidence of preexisting health conditions (such as pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases and diabetes), and barriers to accessing adequate medical care" (PAHO, 2021: 38). Before the pandemic, there were already educational gaps with regard to race, gender, ethnicity, social class and national, regional, and territorial origin. In structurally racialized societies, where racism and its consequences are endemic among black children, educational disadvantages deepened from the moment social isolation became a formula for

survival. We must necessarily problematize the immediate and subsequent effects of the "stay at home," "study any way you can," and "do what you can for yourself" approach.

Our research analyzes and assesses the ways in which the pandemic deepened social and educational inequality in Brazil, especially for Afro-descendants and indigenous people, with an emphasis on the 2020–2022 period. This contributes to our understanding of the intersecting educational challenges that arise from multiple forms of oppression: race, ethnicity, gender, and class. In line with this research, we also identify the historical foundations and epistemic options of resistance, emancipation, and antiracism, which in turn articulate with political-pedagogical experiences in academia, the community, and social organizations that offer educational alternatives for equity and ethnic-racial justice in Latin America.

Stay at Home and Study: Dystopia and Realities

What were the conditions for harmonious and efficient home study in Afro-descendant and indigenous homes? What could a child without a computer or cell phone or with little or no Internet access do to obtain study materials or educational interactivity platforms? What could a teenager who had to take care of other family members while his or her parents continued to engage in face-to-face work do? The social isolation conditions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic acquired dystopian overtones for black, indigenous, and other vulnerable communities. As we have seen, inequalities regarding economic power, access to health, territorial issues, and social and family infrastructure presented real challenges for them. Their access to education was likewise conditioned, and the analysis of this issue should be an essential part of an intersectoral articulation of public policies and social response networks.

The Durban World Conference in 2001 pointed to the fundamental importance of education in the fight to overcome racism and related forms of intolerance. The Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent in 2013 and its 2014 Program of Activities also insisted on the role played by education in the promotion of ethnic and racial

equality. Similarly, the SDG Target 4.7 of UNESCO's Agenda 2030 aims for educational inclusion via the promotion of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. However, according to UNFPA and ECLAC:

> the regional advance in terms of education during recent years have unfortunately failed to counteract the overrepresentation of people of African descent in the poverty percentile, nor have they put an end to ethnic-racial inequality and the concomitant exclusion. These groups continue to face greater difficulties when it comes to access, development, educational lag and permanence in the educational system compared to people who are neither indigenous nor Afro-descendants (2021: 59).

According to the researcher Jaqueline Romio (2021: 116), Brazilian public policies such as emergency aid and education in the home-office mode had a limited impact among black women students. Along with the overload of intense domestic and caregiving tasks within the family and the communal space, access to remote education "faces constant challenges in Brazil given that there is no free access to the Internet in the country and the equipment required to make use of these platforms is not easily accessible either." In this regard, a research report on the effects of the pandemic on black Brazilian girls (Carneiro et al., 2021) shows that these girls took on a bigger burden when it came to domestic responsibilities, given that the family breadwinners continued to engage in face-to-face work. The largest proportion of families without Internet access was black, and only 23.81 percent of black families had computers at home. (In contrast, 63.64 percent of white families had access to this equipment.) In addition, black girls had the least access to didactic-pedagogical materials, enjoyed fewer available hours for home study, and, as a result, engaged less in schoolwork (Carneiro et al., 2021: 108).

In 2020, there was intense public debate in Brazil regarding the postponement of the national exam for secondary education. The discussion ended with Congress's deciding to

postpone the test until 2021, but the arguments evidenced the gaps of all kinds that existed across different social sectors, especially for black adolescents living in the peripheries and in conditions of social and educational marginalization, and obstructed access to educational continuity in the midst of the pandemic. Research such as that of Venturini et al. (2020) warned that changing the date of the exam (the results of which facilitate access to university and/or technical careers) could impact the inclusion achieved after almost two decades of affirmative action across various universities. The data published by the *Brazilian Yearbook of Basic Education* (2021) are revealing in this regard: 77.5 percent of black 16-year-olds[2] had finished their basic education level compared with 87.3 percent of their white counterparts; 61.4 percent of 19-year-old black young people had completed the middle education level vis-à-vis 79.1 percent of white young people of the same age, and 77.2 percent of 19-year-olds in the Southeast had completed secondary education while only 58.3 percent had done so in the North.[3] The high dropout rates in the middle level are linked to conditions such as the lack of economic resources and family cultural capital that are reflected in the widening of social, economic, and symbolic gaps and deficits in the psychological well-being of black students.

For students belonging to the Emberá indigenous community in Colombia who are enrolled in Master's programs in distance education universities. For them, connectivity gaps and the geographical distance to access points present a constant challenge, complicating their progress. At the same time, collective strategies have been designed to overcome these issues. Synergies with educational institutions and community leaders to make use of institutional premises with Internet access have contributed to the successful completion of academic studies, especially during the pandemic.

A pedagogical exchange with an indigenous student belonging to the Pataxó people in Brazil shows the kinds of effects the pandemic has had on people who need decolonized, humanized, and innovative forms of education management. Morena had lost her brother to

COVID-19 and entered a phase of mourning that led to a long period of depression. Her school performance declined significantly. Upon the resumption of face-to-face classes, she had to remain at home engaged in domestic tasks, since traveling back and forth from school remained a challenge throughout the semester. After a follow-up process and pedagogical diagnosis, it was suggested to Morena that her final assignment in the educational psychology could be related to her life experience. It could include her indigenous culture and her view of psychology and its social role in relation to her ancestral knowledge. The power of the essay she wrote corroborates the need for transversal pedagogical spaces and school curricula—teaching imbued with the knowledge and cultural practices of native peoples. In her text, Morena highlighted the wisdom of her community's ancestors and their legacy of resistance during crises such as this:

> Having engaged in this intertwining with the psychological impact of the pandemic, I believe that fear, mixed with territorial vulnerability and the historical experience of older people with other diseases, best describes some of the feelings shared in my community. For me, strategies of resistance come from my elders and especially from my maternal matriarch. . . . She, with her lineage of *raizeiros* **[translate?]** and *benzedeiras* **[translate?]**, shared a lot of things with me: how this process was dealt with at the time of spotted fever, of the Spanish flu, leprosy, malaria and other moments of pandemic and historical epidemics. Knowledge of roots, along with "psychological adaptation" to this contemporary impact of the pandemic, is at the heart of the issue.

She went on to say, "It's not only a health issue but also a social and psychological issue, depending on each context. . . . Whether we like it or not, this has not only generated social isolation; I can also observe internal isolation, of people, of the self."

This testimony confirms the need for mental health follow-up and a psychosocial support system both during and after the pandemic, especially in the case of vulnerable ethnic-racial groups. This has been demonstrated by various studies on mental health problems across Latin America and the Caribbean. The results of an online questionnaire sent to health decision makers in 10 South American countries during the pandemic pointed to an emergency regarding states of anxiety, stress, fear, irritability, insomnia, sadness and loneliness, and domestic violence (Antiporta and Bruni, 2020). Parker and Alfaro's (2022: 51) research in the countries of the insular Caribbean concluded that

> efforts to maintain continuity of education through the pandemic, especially for the most marginalized and vulnerable students, must now be combined with [mental health and psychosocial support] and SEL **[please spell out]** delivery as both a COVID-19 response and a developmental component of standard education delivery. Integrating [mental health and psychosocial support] into systemwide frameworks will build flexibility, capability and resiliency in education sector professionals, students, families and communities, and help to build the institutional and social resiliency that will be necessary to face the development challenges of the future.

The importance of strengthening institutional mechanisms for mental health and psychosocial support with an emphasis on vulnerable communities is evident in Brazil, where the intersection of race, gender, and class affects the schooling trajectories of black girls and adolescents. According to research carried out by Carneiro et al. (2021), black students are subjected to stereotypical judgments on the part of teachers, who describe them as less disciplined, and this results in physical and mental overload. They are constantly called upon to "fight instead of crying," a dictum that affects their self-esteem and increases their suffering.

This evidences the importance of "social support for families in situations of social vulnerability, students, and education professionals" (Carneiro et al., 2021: 116).

Confluences and "Transfluences" for an (Other) Education during the Postpandemic

The postpandemic period provides a propitious context to rescue and readdress political-pedagogical projects that bring the schooling space closer to the family space, especially among peripheral and marginalized community enclaves. In this context, we must value the essential role of the teacher as an "influencer" in a kind of social education that promotes antiracism and inclusion, opposing educational ghettoization. The results, possibilities, limitations, and challenges to the advancement of a social perspective in education that contemplates ethnic-racial and antiracist, critical, decolonizing, pluriepistemic and cross-border relations can be assessed in the activities of a project of which one of us was the organizer entitled "Interrogating the Teaching of Ethnic-racial Relations in Brazil: Views, Translations, and Experiences with Améfrica Ladina).[4] The project, carried out between August and December 2020, was a response to the call for online action for the eradication of racism in higher education of the UNESCO Chair of Higher Education and Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples in Latin America and Argentina's Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero. It included teachers of basic education from the Nuclei on Ethnic-Racial Relations of the Belo Horizonte Secretariat of Education, university professors, graduate students, and researchers from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, representatives of the Museo de Quilombos e Favelas de Belo Horizonte, and organizers, guest activists, researchers, and teachers from other regions of Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Argentina, and the United States.

A preliminary assessment of the scope of the work carried out across the many spaces of the project supports the pedagogical and theoretical importance of the spaces and training processes required to foster antiracist education and ethnic-racial relations. As we have been insisting here, the implementation of educational policies of racial equality based on

emancipatory epistemological and methodological foundations enables combining knowledge and skills and rendering visible knowledge that was previously absent.

Policies built through practices of symmetrical, intercultural, and decolonizing dialogue have a potential multiplier effect, one that involves research, traditional and ancestral knowledge, and pedagogical experiences in different socio-educational spaces such as the university, the school, and the popular collective. Given our present social situation, which is characterized by a visible rearticulation of racism, educational spaces and their subjects must create strategies of resistance, knowledge, and a rationale that makes it clear that "racism is structural, not an isolated act by an individual or a group, which makes us even more responsible for combating racism and racists" (Almeida, 2019: 51–52).

We have an immense historical legacy regarding ways of acting, living, and surviving both in families and in communities that provides alternatives to ontological and epistemological servitude. An example of this is the resistance in Quilombo dos Palmares, the most important of Brazil's antislavery strategies. The *quilombos* were communities formed by enslaved black people (*aquilombadas*) who, like the Maroons, had escaped from the mills and hidden in relatively inaccessible places in the mountains. Much more than a territory of escaped slaves, however, a quilombo is a political-ontological response to an infamous form of oppression. According to the Afro-Brazilian historian Beatriz Nascimento (2021: 167), "It represents a vigorous instrument in the process of recognition of Brazilian black identity for greater ethnic and racial self-affirmation." For the black intellectual Abdias do Nascimento (2002: 272), "*Quilombo* means fraternal and free reunion, solidarity, coexistence, existential communion. We repeat that *quilombola* society represents a stage in human and sociopolitical progress as far as economic egalitarianism is concerned."

In this connection, the quilombola sage Antonio Bispo (2015) says that the strength and wisdom of the African and indigenous ancestral worldview allow for the organization of

various forms of community life that are expressed in the human relationship with the elements of nature. This natural interaction, which Bispo terms "biointeraction," is established through relationships of coexistence governed by laws of confluence and "transfluence." He points out that "reaching the level of wisdom and good living so many speak and dream of" requires that we "transform our divergences into diversities, and in diversity reach the confluence of all our experiences" (Bispo, 2015: 89–91). The political-pedagogical value of learning and teaching the differences between reality and appearance, the "organic" and the "synthetic," in our formal and informal educational environments is fundamental. The educational reality mediated by the virtuality of the Internet and the distortion of core human values requires the promotion of a common pedagogy of good living.

The postpandemic period will be one of obvious challenges but will provide the context in which to think about a pedagogical project in terms of decolonization, as posited by Agustín Laó-Montes (2020: 508):

> The project of liberating decolonization points to a path "towards the human", which necessarily implies the imperative to combat a network of oppressions involving class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race in its multiple facets and dimensions (the ecological, economic, epistemic, political, intimate and subjective). The figure of the human being, which brings together all these modes of subalternity and otherness, constitutes the new critical subject of a project of plural liberation in the key of Africanness.

It is into this complex and intersectional perspective of a decolonizing pedagogical project that we must channel educational practices of horizontality, antiracism, and critical interculturality. In addition to acknowledging difference, we must establish networks and bridges of communication. In view of the forced increase in migration due to COVID-19 and the increase

in the vulnerabilities of migrants, the decolonial pedagogical project must be characterized by a pluriversal and cross-border dialogue.

With Lélia Gonzalez (1988: 76), we must adopt an "Amefrican" epistemological perspective that provides ways of (re)thinking the space occupied by the black/African element in the American context. Ideally, the term will allow us to "go beyond territorial, linguistic, and ideological limitations, opening new perspectives for a deeper understanding of that part of the world" while incorporating a "whole historical process of intense cultural dynamics (adaptation, resistance, reinterpretation, and creation of new forms) that is Afrocentric." Laó-Montes (2020: 216) argues that "the interplay of differences within the African-American diaspora demands a policy of translation not only in the narrow linguistic sense but in terms of the need for political and cultural translations to facilitate communication and organization to create the minimum conditions needed to build the diaspora as a decolonial project."

According to the Brazilian black educator and antiracist activist Silvania Rosa (2020), education in times of pandemic and after it must reorganize ways of learning. The postpandemic period requires a definitive break with the "banking" approach to education (Freire, 1967). This will entail nurturing creativity and mobilizing knowledge and experiences that reside in the peripheries—in neighborhoods, quilombola territories, indigenous areas, and areas of immigrant settlements.That legacy has once again been tested by the challenges of COVID-19. This crisis, in allliance with structural injustice, has fostered inequality and threatened our mental and physical health. It has become (another) epidemic bane across our territories. Technologies cannot replace the commitment to the reading of a book or the transmission of stories, games, and *brincadeira* **[translate?]** in the courtyard, the *quintal* **[translate?]**, and the *terreiro* **[translate?]** of those houses that have not yet been consumed by the verticality of the city's urban "modernity." We must rescue these "street games" and recreate them in the (un)imagined spaces of the home.

We must expand and generate intersectoral public policies with regard to children's and young people's literature. Books, brochures, and other teaching materials must be designed, produced, and distributed free of charge to children with limited access to technology. This will provide an opportunity for a new, decolonized relationship with knowledge, art, literature, music, cinema, and family, local, and communal history. Transmitting the culinary, medicinal, and family-based farming culture of our "Amefrican" ancestors to children can become an instrument of educational continuity and decolonizing resistance (Silvania Rosa, inerview, May 29, 2020).

Teachers and educational managers need to think of the classroom as a laboratory for learning—for positive and negative experiences, stories, dialogues, and exchanges of knowledge that reveal lived experience, from trauma to hope, as an opportunity for spiritual and cognitive growth. At the same time, we should determine which technological platforms have proved the most viable and how to use them for teaching and for life rather than as instruments for trivializaton and fake news.

Social distancing undoubtedly also results in a certain affective distancing. It is therefore necessary, to the extent that the health emergency allows it, to hold hands, to press against each other in a conversation wheel, to create circles of inclusion and acknowledgment in which our gaze can be met by others. We agree with bell hooks (1988: 8 **[please list this reference]**) that "any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices."

Today and tomorrow, school must be a learning network. People learn best in an affective context. As we come out of social isolation, out of the stay-at-home mentality, we can acquire a better understanding of our own lives and feelings. This process will be interconnected with an explosion of popular culture, because we are in a moment of (re)creation and cultural manifestations will influence the academic space in a significant way. The classroom must

therefore privilege a dialogic/creative milieu where children can listen to their own knowledge as well as the knowledge of others. The rigid aesthetics of the often-limited curriculum must yield space for and privilege more circular and intercultural forms of knowledge.

To this extent, an ecology of educational knowledge/practices in classrooms and other educational areas will encourage us to value movement within diversity as opposed to a static universe—producing meanings so that peripheral, subaltern subjects can project an affirmative identity that preserves their mental and physical integrity. This ecology of the pedagogical is not made of mere words. It implies transformations that address new values, methods, attitudes, and contents, involving the emergence of people, stories, and experiences that have so far been excluded (Gomes, 2017; Sousa, 2018). The educational vision must adopt a transgressive and loving perspective that questions reality while pursuing effective, harmonious, balanced, and healthy solutions. With pedagogical, methodological, and motivational instruments and patience we can build formal and informal educational spaces for conflict mediation and inclusion—for promoting effective dialogue, the construction of consensus, and the transformation of divergences into the potentializing diversities that Bispo (2015) posits.

Here we have a whole world awaiting (re)discovery, one where we will all be explorers of our own subjectivity and that of the other in order to achieve a dialogue and establish a collaborative network of support, solidarity, and hope. This presents us with a social and educational challenge to question this hegemonic institution from inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives. We must address the intersectionality of race, class, and gender to open up school "walls."

The benefit will be greater knowledge of the cognitive, discursive, and axiological networks that are created in social relations and of the micropolitics that arises within schools and demands an articulated, coherent,and emancipatory response. In the words of hooks (1994: 10),

My pedagogical practices have emerged from the mutually illuminating interplay of anticolonial, critical, and feminist pedagogies. This complex and unique blending of multiple perspectives has been an engaging and powerful standpoint from which to work. Expanding beyond boundaries, it has made it possible for me to imagine and enact pedagogical practices that engage directly both the concern for interrogating biases in curricula that reinscribe systems of domination (such as racism and sexism) while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups of students.

Nature is suggesting that we should assign more value to people's lives and to animals and Mother Earth and preserve each moment in a special way. It is vital that we develop a more affective form of pedagogy, one focused less on consumption and work and more on establishing a harmonious balance with ourselves as well as with others. We need an education that privileges listening, understanding, and learning alongside others—one that assigns more value to time spent together, to sharing experiences, caring for each other, a social pedagogy of resistance. We must think together about the possibility of slowing down the maddening pace imposed on us by the market and imbuing our lives and those of others with affect.

Inferences for Continuation

On the basis of our research, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the deepening of social inequality gaps for vulnerable communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially for Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples, has been evident. It is the result of structural racism and the multiple forms of systemic oppression affecting these groups, among them inequality in access to health and to social and labor security, lack of psychosocial support, and limited access to the Internet and the technological equipment needed for quality online study.

2. Among Afro-descendant peoples, women and girls have been the most affected because the intersection of gender, race, and class oppression places them in even more disadvantageous conditions when it comes to meeting their educational goals. Additionally, they are the most affected by the overwork both outside and within the home, which significantly reduces their ability to study and do so successfully, thus feeding teachers' stereotypes such as the idea that black girls do not try to perform their school tasks.

3. The delay of the entrance exams for the higher education level in Brazil and the limitations involved in gaining access to quality remote study will have a negative impact on indigenous and Afro-descendant adolescents and young people. Academic failure, schooling lag, and dropout levels will increase; university access and persistence rates for this level will be reduced, and this decrease in representativeness could paradoxically lead to an increase in racist perceptions and imaginaries in the region's universities. Furthermore, this may affect the labor and professional mobility of Afro-descendant and indigenous youth and contribute to symbolic, cultural, and economic stratification within families.

4. Mental health problems during this period have had a substantial impact among the black population, especially women, who have suffered from an exponential increase in anxiety, stress, domestic violence, and sadness and loneliness. This has resulted in a drastic reduction of their academic skills and their chances of academic success, turning into yet another reason for frustration and low self-esteem. Therefore, state health policies and those of educational institutions must provide multidisciplinary, systematic, and intersectoral care to guarantee psychosocial support.

5. The postpandemic period requires complex and innovative analyses to inform the design of educational policies that promote ethnic-racial inclusion and the creation of spaces that can beneficially impact the academic trajectory of children, adolescents, and young people.

6. In this context, we must stress the importance of experience and a critical, decolonial, epistemic form of justice and an antiracist and pluriversal political-pedagogical field that enables the promotion of policies of ethnic-racial equality and antiracist education across Latin America. These should respond to the diversity and complexity of scenarios already generated by the pandemic and structural racism. Even in circumstances of structural and collective pain such as those caused by the pandemic, promoting an education of hope and social justice will manifest our Maroon-like conviction that we should never get used to death as a way of life.

Authors and Contributions:

Maikel Pons-Giralt is a visiting professor and researcher at the University of Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil, contributed the conceptual framework and led the analysis of the intersections between racism, education, and the pandemic response in Latin America, conceptualization, investigation, writing—review and editing. He is supported by a fellowship from the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES-Brazil), linked to Call 30/2022 PDPGE "Academic Solidarity" (E-mail: maikelpg79@gmail.com). Oscar Ulloa-Guerra is a professor and researcher at the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, Spain, provided empirical perspectives and data analysis on educational disparities across Latin America, investigation, conceptualization, writing—review and editing (E-mail: oscar.ulloa@unir.net). Ricel Martínez-Sierra is a professor and researcher at the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, contributed theoretical perspectives on social inequality and educational policy, investigation, writing—review and editing (E-mail: ricel.martinez@unir.net). Mirtha del Prado Morales is a professor and researcher at the Universidad Internacional de Valencia, Spain, supported the literature review and synthesis of findings related to indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, investigation, writing—review and editing (E-mail: mirtha.delprado@campusviu.es). Mariana Ortega-Breña, a

freelance translator based in Mexico City, translated the manuscript, ensuring that the analysis was accessible to a broader audience.

Notes

1. https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/equilibrioesaude/2022/03/ha-dois-anos-morria-a-primeira-vitima-da-covid-19-no-brasil.shtml; https://noticias.uol.com.br/saude/ultimas-noticias/redacao/2020/03/19/primeira-vitima-do-rj-era-domestica-e-pegou-coronavirus-da-patroa.htm.

2. According to statistics of identification by race and color in Brazil, approximately 54 percent of the population recognize themselves as black (black and brown), 45 percent as white, and 1 percent as indigenous.

3. Historically in Brazil, the Southeast region has been identified with high economic development while the North and Northeast are considered the least developed regions and have the highest concentrations of black and indigenous population.

4. For project details and results see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rts7IN_LBK0&t=2s; https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjUionfGX3iYefcWJovIGkA; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeFF4nAAXBA&t=6493s; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpzZQXn4J6Q&t=4503s; and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC9L67HWr9s&t=8s

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