RACISM AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND AFRO-DESCENDANTS IN SWEDEN, BRAZIL, AND MEXICO

Cristina Gomes[1]

ABSTRACT

This article explores how racism and stigmatizing discourses and practices are articulated and normalized in colonizer and colonized countries. The research compares the cases of Sweden, Brazil, and Mexico from a combination of frameworks -- the Critical Race Theory (Walton, 2019; Ansley, 1997), the neo-Marxist concept of institutional racism and racialization (Cole, 2016 and 2020), and a decolonial framework and methodology (Fanon, 1968; Tynan and Bishop, 2022). Racism has been structural and systemic in Latin American societies since colonization when religious and royal authorities legitimated Indigenous and African slavery in the colonies. After independence, modern free republics converted religious legitimation of racism in pseudoscientific Eugenics and the invention of human races and racism continue oppressing Indigenous and African descendants. Currently structural racism continues to be the normal behavior in Western societies, not an exception. The objective of this research is to identify and compare racism reveled in behaviors and the speeches behind them in two colonized societies – Brazil and Mexico – and Sweden, a colonizing society. The question orienting the comparative research is how and in which ways racism and stigmatizing discourses and practices are articulated and normalized in colonizer and colonized countries. Understanding the main persistent trends in these societies on eugenic somatic characteristics such as hair type, body part sizes (e.g. head), as well as other collective social and religious symbols, behaviors, attitudes and cultural customs, used as discriminatory markers. The qualitative methodology includes 69 interviews and six focus groups in the three countries. Results were analyzed form a critical reflexivity about how colonialism and eugenics impact the lived experiences and realities of both groups in colonized and colonizer countries, through historic and current practices. racism has the same routes of functioning, structuring unequal relationships, distortions in the perception of the other, marginalization and suffering.

Keywords: Racism. Eugenics. Decolonization. Indigenous. Afro-Descendants. Sweden. Brazil. Mexico.

[1] Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, FLACSO Mexico
E-mail: cristinagomesmx@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The main approaches adopted in this research are Critical Race Theory (Walton, 2019; Ansley, 1997), and the neo-Marxist concept of structural racism and racialization (Cole, 2016 and 2020), questioning colonial, patriarchal and racist legacy reproduced from the medieval Christian religions until eugenics in modern states – as a pseudoscience. The article adopts also a decolonial framework and methodology (Fanon, 1968; Tynan and Bishop, 2022).

Colonialism and racism have persisted jointly for centuries, from the medieval religious and royal legacy of no-European people as colonized, without souls and non-human. In the modern era, this divine inferior classification changed to a pseudoscientific concept of races, based on the biological, moral and cognitive inferiority of non-European people, in contrast with the White or European "supremacy".

Eugenics justified oppression, exploitation and slavery of inferiorized groups and colonized spaces, based on their supposed immorality and incapacity for self-rule. For more than five centuries, based on subsequential religious and pseudoscientific explanations, the combination of colonialism, slavery and racism has been a long-term project of power, which reproduces structural and systemically social, economic, political, racial and ethnic inequalities and domination through establishing social hierarchies. Non-white people are likely to be suspected of criminal behavior; victims of police violence, and lethal force, accusations, conviction, imprisonment, stereotyping, micro-aggression, segregation, poverty, and receiving fewer or inferior public and private services. "Problematic" sub-human groups need to be catechized, civilized and controlled by the colonizers. Explicit and subtle practices of racism and unfair treatment in both public and private spheres have reproduced inequalities in all social and economic spheres for centuries. This research tries to explain how racism is the "normal" behavior in Western colonizing and colonized societies, not an exception.

Structural racism, according to the MacPherson report, means the "collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be detected in processes, attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people". (MacPherson, 1999). This

concept has been extended and developed by Racism Critical Theory and Marxist approaches.

Racialization recognizes a historical process of legitimizing and universalizing racism to understand the complexities of groups that are racialized through colonization and slavery (Ashe and McGeever, 2011), but also through land occupation in modern societies.

> "This racialization process is not limited to skin color and can be color-coded, non-color-coded or hybridist, and must be referred to economic and political factors related to developments and changes, historically and contemporaneously, in national, continent-wide and global capitalism" (Cole, 2020).

The concepts of structural racism and racialization have been discussed to articulate the analysis on racism and discrimination against the Indigenous, Afro descendants and other historically discriminated people from Western European colonization until eugenics hegemony and today.

Even considering their economic and social disparities, both colonizers and colonized populations had one common and universal trait that frames the racialized system of inequalities from the first years of colonization in all continents: structural racism and racialization were made universal through Christian religions from the 16th to 18th centuries, followed by its subsequent legitimation by science from modernity to the present day. This universal framework is analyzed in this article, comparing racism against Indigenous and Afro descendant people in one colonizer and two colonized countries, searching for racism continuities and specificities in extremely diverse economic, social, cultural and historical societies.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted as a reflexive process, situated within socio-historical, cultural, and political contexts, opened to ancestral or cultural wisdom, deep listening and engagement, and the analysis took time to integrate the lessons offered within the decolonizing literature and interviews, establishing relational interactions between the researchers with others' worldviews present in communal conversations deepen our individual and collective understanding. (de Leeuw, 2012).

This study applied interviews and focus groups on Sweden, Brazil, and Mexico to explore experiences, behaviours, and motivations on racism and discrimination. Focus groups explore collective experiences between research participants, exchanging and

commenting on each other's experiences, generating consensus and divergences through group interaction.

Face-to-face interviews and focus groups were unstructured, starting with a simple question about racism and following up with questions to promote discussion; they were audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants, who were previously were informed and agreed to participate voluntarily, and to be recorded.

In each country Indigenous and Afro-descendant participants were selected using the snow-bow method in localities previously selected due to the high concentration of Indigenous and Afro descendants.

Interviewers were self-identified themselves as Indigenous and Afro descendants, anti-racism activists who were trained in qualitative techniques and ethical protocol.

In Sweden, ten Sami Indigenous people and ten Afro-Swedes were interviewed, as well as fifteen Indigenous and fifteen Afro-descendants in Mexico, four Indigenous and fifteen Afro-descendants in Brazil. In each country a focus group was organized, one with Indigenous people and one with Afro-descendants.

Ethical procedures included information and oral agreement to interview, record and publish, protecting identification.

RESULTS

SWEDEN

Lutheran church has shaped values, beliefs and influencing the Nordic universalism, welfare state and social democracy in Nordic countries. (Markkola, 2015). The ideological core of Swedish Social Democracy remained reformist and universalistic but linked to an industrial democracy and an exclusionist concept of social welfare, considered a reformist socialism oriented by the values of productivity, social efficiency, and a healthy society. At the same time, the legitimacy of rising social expenditure justifies the exclusionist eugenic policies, or social eugenics — a welfare community for 'the fittest,' legitimatized by biological, scientific, and social concepts. This kind of Social Democracy ensures an amalgam of support for social policies with which even members of the right-wing could identify. (Spektorowski and Mizrachi, 2004).

And it is also the base of the Lagom culture of egalitarianism — the Nordic exceptionalism, meaning just the right amount for all, the non-written Swedish mild-mannered culture and rules that are muted. Exceptionalism establishes a Nordic difference

compared to other Europeans on white colonialism, supremacy and anti-black racism, and presupposes a culture of egalitarianism based on tolerance, never hating anyone, acceptance and support for refugees, humanitarian efforts, policies to build an egalitarian multiculturalism, and a political culture for equality as sameness that also includes a racism-sexism denial or an anti-racist intellectualism.

Swedish exceptionalism also includes welcoming refugees and providing asylum. However, during the refugee crisis of 2015, the massive Syrian immigration created fears of a "system collapse" (Elmilsson, 2019) and the revival of extreme right wings movements with so many members exhibiting explicit racism and xenophobia (Tomsom, 2020).

indigenous in sweden, the samis

In contrast to Muslims, the Sami Indigenous people and African diaspora have been neglected in literature, data, registers, communication media, and policies.

The Sami are Indigenous groups who have been living in the north for thousands of years, fishing, hunting, and mainly caring for land and reindeer, environment, as part of their history and identity.

The total number of Indigenous Sami people is estimated at between 75,000 and 120,000 leaving in the Northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. (Young and Bjerregaard, 2019). Sami population data is non-existent today, and they are invisible in official statistics (Axelsson et al. 2011). In Sweden there are around 20,000 Sami People living in permanent conflict against the Swedish State, due to historical occupations and the exploitation of Sami lands, in mines, industry, energy, infrastructure, promoting Sami's permanent displacement to the extreme north, in the hardest climate conditions.

In 1977, the Sami people were recognized as an Indigenous people with a specific culture and rights. They elected a Sami Parliament and approved the use of Sami languages at school (13 languages), as well as environment program, the right of self-determination, land, and water.

The leader interviewed in the Sami Parliament and in the municipalities in the north clearly identify structural racism in the history of eugenics and land occupation, and they are internationally articulated with the movements in defense of the Indigenous rights.

> "Racism is structural, the State displaces us from our lands, they support mining companies occupying and exploring for minerals in our lands" (Sami man 1)

> "In 1922, the State Institute for Racial Biology was created to study our bodies and genetics, the size of our head, arms, legs. They have Sami's body remains, which must be returned to their family, their village and lands, their descendants deserve respect and justice" (Sami woman 2)

Artisans are organized in cooperatives and promote Sami culture around the country, in scientific environment to empower themselves to register the Sami history and cosmovision from their own perspective.

> "We have cooperatives, artisans, artists, researchers. We are writing our history, about our culture… we are able to talk about ourselves, about who we are". (Sami woman 2)

Other family groups promote Sami's cosmovision by reproducing their ancient practices in small communities where they promote environmental tourism based on Sami practices of agriculture, food, family collective sharing and welfare.

> "Here we produce our vegetables, we care for our reindeer, we make exchanges with the community, we care for the environment, we are entrepreneurs. My wife was a manager in a hotel close to here, she promoted our culture of sustainability and attracted clients, we were developing our community. However, she was substituted by a foreign manager, not a Sami". (focus group 1)

Sami people relate experiences of racism when working with some non-indigenous entrepreneurs. They perceive that their work can be used in a process of cultural appropriation, so, they try to be organized to continue reproducing their activities in organized groups, to protect Sami identity, legacy and history.

However, most of those interviewed had difficulty to talk about individual experiences of daily racism.

Most of them are conscientious about colonialism, eugenics and the concept of race inferiority, but this perception is more oriented towards land rights and caring for reindeer, and against the governmental support to development projects that occupy their land or destroy the environment, affecting their way of life, family members and animals. In this sense, they are conscientious about structural racism perpetuating racism, even in post-modern states and social democratic societies.

When asked about experiences of racism and traumas since childhood, it is difficult for the Sami to retrace memories and express themselves.

This forgetfulness cannot be related to alienation, but speeches show a mix of respect for maintaining their culture and image with pride, preservation of identity and self-esteem, and a sense of moving towards the future assertively, overcoming obstacles.

A Sami woman invited me to visit her house and introduced me to her entire family, invited me to her room, showed her Sami clothes and talked about Sami life, culture, differences compared to non-indigenous Swedish people.

> "Look to my house and garden, and to my neighbor's houses and gardens. Can you see the difference? They are very organized, but I have all the things I need outside, for my family and grandchildren use. They see our house as a mess. You can see you are in a typical Sami house: everything is outside, in the garden, we don't want a perfect garden, we have a useful garden, we are not concerned about how it looks like, it is the Sami life". (Sami woman 2)

I was invited to eat, to have a coffee, and the interview was transformed into a friendly visit.

The same experience in another Sami house in the border with Finland: I was invited to eat with all the family members and neighbors living around. I received a book on Sami food preparation, written and published by one member of the Sami community, I was invited to swim in the lake and to enjoy the environment, to walk around and to know the village, to know their handcraft and the wooden tents built with the Sami architecture.

The collective Sami way of life, values, relationships, exchanges and practices are an essential component of Sami culture, and they fight to preserve the right to continue reproducing their culture, self-identity and collective values.

A sense of self-preservation is clear when a man talked about a very suffering experiences of racism. Only two Sami people were able to talk about these experiences, remembering and identifying them only from their childhood. And it took a long time to talk about it, first they denied having some experience, but they subtly remembered one traumatic episode and were not able to control their emotions.

"I was a child, at school, other boys called me a devil" ... (Sami adult man 1, crying).

"At school they called me those names… I cannot tell you the names, it hurts me until now" (Sami young woman 1)

To understand why this word had hurt him so hardly, the young woman stopped the interview and left the place, but the men answered me:

"At that time, the worst thing to call a Swede was a "devil", and Sami people were named "devils". "But today, the worst thing to call a Swede is a racist"

To have the perspective of no Indigenous Swede, I tried to interview two women in two different localities where Sami people live, and I asked them about racism in Sweden.

One woman explicitly referred to Sami people as a trouble: "If I am driving and I hurt a reindeer, I have to pay for that, it is an absurd, Sami people have so many privileges" (no Indigenous woman 1).

Another woman, wearing Sami clothes, simply denied racism in Sweden, reaffirming the Lagom culture and denying Sami culture. This process of appropriation of using Sami clothes to pretend to be a Sami looks like a cultural appropriation process by some middle-class women living in a municipality known as a Sami town, where a Sami museum, cooperatives of art and handcrafts, and organized groups of Indigenous people are relevant to the local economy and tourism.

"There is no racism here, I live in a perfect country" (White Swedish woman 2, wearing Sami clothes, not self-identified as a Sami).

This individualistic and idealized point of view is clearly in contrast and opposition with the collective and realistic speech and customs observed in the interviews with real Indigenous people.

afro sweden

From the 1970s immigration from Africa increased due to civil wars (from 596 in 1960 to 103,077 in 2009). Today there are around 250,000 African and African descendants living in Sweden. (Statista, 2022).

Censuses and registers of population in Sweden do not ask about ethnic or race self-identification. The only way to identify the African diaspora is through the question about the country of origin.

"Children born in Sweden receive the same citizenship as the parents. If the child's parents are citizens of a country outside the EU, the parents must apply for a residence permit for the child." (Migrationsverket, 2024).

Today's immigrants are perceived as a problem for Sweden democracy and welfare state. Although Muslims are the most perceived as a trait, Afro-descendants experience a specific kind of racism, based on eugenic approach. The racist construction about the

African body, inferior and dangerous moral behavior and inferior cognitive and intellectual capacities was identified by the African-Swedish interviewed:

> "They think they have the right to touch my hair and to make comments about it. Can you imagine if I touch their hair? They say it is only curiosity, but it is my body, my hair, and it is supposed that Swedes consider touching another body as a disrespect. However, my hair is an exception, to be touched, to satisfy their curiosity". (Young African Swede 2)

> "They ask us to dance for them, please, dance, dance for us, and laugh. They never ask Swedes to do it" (Young Afridan-Swede3)

> "Teachers never gives as an "A", only "C", we make a lot of effort, but it doesn't matter, we will always have a "C" level. (Teens, focus group 2)

> "He asked me not to touch his car. He believed that my black hand is dirty". (Adult African-Sweden)
> "A White woman refused to be attended by me, she does not like Black people. So, to prevent conflicts, my boss moved me to another position" (African-Sweden man)

> "Employment, even if he has a higher level of education and experience, they put my son-in law in a lower position, not correspondent with his ability." (African-Sweden men, father, and son)

> "In the clinic, they did not give medical attention to my daughter, the attendant gave me dipyrone, she ignored the emergency and my exasperation. Next day my girl was terrible, much higher fever, I came back calling for a doctor to examine my daughter… she had pneumonia, she could have died without attention and the correct medication. I had to fight for that" (African-Sweden, woman)

> "At school, a new worker, a White woman, told me directly: ´I don't like you, I don't like Black people". I had to talk to the director, but he put me on suspension for a week, ´to relax´. He didn't put her on suspension to think about her attitude, it was me who had to be out school for one week" (African-Sweden, woman, teacher).

The eugenics approach is predominant in all the speeches. Moreover, during my period of research, I have observed situations of exclusion and discrimination of African students in social and religious events. And an attack against an Afro-Swedish old men, who was thrown onto the train tracks by a white woman. When she was arrested, in her defense she used the argument: "but he is Black".

Violence based in race supremacy violence in general is invisible and denied in multicultural policies, while the narrative criminalizing non-White migrants increases, and interviews with members of the diaspora are clearly showing racism sin the same way they happen in non-Nordic countries.

Black and Indigenous People Alterities are defined in eugenics as inferior cultures, moral and rights. Racism stigmatizes these non-European populations based on the myth of the lazy, ignorant, dirty, corrupt native Indigenous or Afro descendants. Afro-Swedish are

more conscious about daily racism, compared to Sami people. It would be due to Afro-Swedish been the first, second or third generation living in a racist environment, while Sami have been historically discriminated against for centuries, and developed a kind of resilience against racism.

Youth Black women, children of the first generation of the African diaspora can identify several experiences of explicit racism in Sweden:

> "In the shopping center, I paid in cash, and the cashier gave me no change, she told me there was no change, but there was, fifty euros. So, how could I prove that I gave more money to her? She took my money, but she is White, it is my word against her word. It is a very frequent situation; it has happened with all of us". (Focus group of female teens)

> "In the street, a woman was aggressive touching my arm, I asked her for an excuse, that is the normal behavior in Sweden, an excuse. But she called the police and accused me of being violent, of doing what she did against me. I learned I will never be recognized as the victim, it doesn´t matter to ask for police or other support, I will always be the layer, the aggressor, the robber" (African-Swedish young woman, student)

McEachrane (2014) identifies a new racism in Sweden, that incorporates a common-sense of "raciology" – reflection and government – accentuating culture rather than politics. As Sweden is considered a non-racist society, racism has never been an object of governmental intervention or policies.

However, the results confirm that both, Black and Indigenous people alterities have been perceived and treated as having inferior cultures, morals and intellectual capacities, and multicultural policy is not enough to achieve real equality and rights as assumed in the Swedish exceptionalism and multiculturalism.

COLONIZED COUNTRIES, BRAZIL AND MEXICO, SPECIFIC HISTORIES AND RACIST SOCIETIES

Both, Brazil and Mexico, experienced slavery and the genocide of Indigenous peoples and Africans and their descendants.

Brazil is a colonized country characterized by the predominance of the oligarchic elites of slave-farming landowners and the emergence of an urban merchant and finance elite enriched by human trafficking of Africans and an agricultural monoculture of exportation. (Ribeiro, 1976; Freire and Penna, 2001; Carvalho, 2003; Fernandes, 2008; Codato, 2015)

Sequential coups d'état led to authoritarian regimes and dictatorships with only short years of democracy, interrupted rapidly by another coup d'état. After a military dictatorship from 1964 to 1988, there were three elected presidents, and another coup d'état, lawfare and persecution of the party and candidates removed by force from the power, and a recent restoration. (Missiato, 2011).

In Brazil, Indigenous peoples were around three million of inhabitants, who fought and resisted. In 2022 the self-declared Indigenous population decreased to 1.7 million (IBGE, 2023), 305 ethnic groups speaking 274 different languages (FUNAI, 2022).

Brazil is the country that received the most Afro-descended people, while Mexico ranked in third place in the number of enslaved Africans in the population – 500,000. Brazil was also the last country in Latin America to abolish the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, in 1888 (Ribeiro, 1976; Carvalho, 2003; Fernandes, 2008), while in Mexico the abolition took place more than 70 years earlier, during the independency wars.

the indigenous in brazil

In Brazil, Salvador is the city with the largest African diaspora (826,000) (IBGE, 2022). From 2003, Brazil has regulated and implemented anti-racist and inclusive laws and policies such as quotas at universities and public services (Silva Filho, 2008). However, there are challenges about unbuild racism inside schools, universities, and other public spaces.

Interviews show that, assuming Indigenous and Afro-identity and inclusion in new spaces revels old and new conflicts and harassment in both, public and private spaces.

Interviews with Indigenous students in Brazil reinforce the need to build antiracist environments inside the public spaces where they are starting to participate. The first challenge is the need the non-indigenous recognition of the right the Indigenous people to freely self-declare their identity and to access daily activities at the university in equal conditions.

> "At school, I felt like I was in the rubbish, I suffered so much, it is not a little thing to feel alone. People say: 'Oh, you are an Indigenous intercultural actor, who was the first group there' (at the University). I started to feel welcomed. But those issues were not in the debates. There is a fracture there."

> "When we enter the affirmative action policy, it is our duty to talk about where we come from, why am I here, right? When I introduced myself, I felt very scared,

because they asked: 'What is she doing here?' In Brazil, people only identify as Indian people living in the Amazon, not in the Northeast. They think we do not exist in the Northeast. And then they spoke between the lines, as if it is not the place for me … as the law is not for me. They decide whether an Indigenous is an Indigenous or not. That marked me deeply. This structural racism is in all of them. That is painful for me."

"You start to feel discriminations and racism when you are outside your group, leaving your Indigenous community. At the University, when I identify myself as Indigenous, people say that I do not look like an Indian. In the city, in the church, frequently they say the same… Why do people think they know more than I know about my origin?" (Young woman studying Psychology)

"There is racism, even in tourism, commerce, right? My mother and I were selling handcrafts. If I introduced myself as an Indigenous person, they say I am only a descendant, not Indigenous. How so many people questioned it. So, I stopped explaining myself. (Young woman)"

afro brazilians

Black adolescents who enter the university by quotas start to participate in black movements and assume the Afro-descendant identity, cultural symbols of African culture, changes that create new conflicts with their relatives, who only aspired to social ascension for their children entering university, but they didn't expect identity changes in their children.

Therefore, the new challenge for inclusive policies is how to universalize antiracist policies among the population, particularly the poorest and, at the same time, to promote antiracist reactions when interacting with these new groups in spaces never previously occupied by them.

Those who assume their Afro identity suffer bullying due to expressing themselves, acting, wearing, using hairstyle as a symbol of Afro-descendant, from the family to the neighbourhoods, schools, and public spaces. Prejudices, fear, aggression at work, health systems, family, and confrontation with the security forces are a norm in Brazil, even for youth included at the university through quotas.

They suffer discrimination in their places of residence and have conflicts with family ascendants, for whom racist culture has not changed, and they suffer humiliation for assuming their Afro-descendant identity. This happen even in communities where Afro-descendant population is the majority.

However, some Afro descendants living in the poorest neighbourhoods have a lack of awareness about the need for an anti-racist political struggle.

During interview with an adult man, a gardener it was possible to observe how he related two silly situations of racism, and one was interpreted as a "joke", which is very common among Brazilians, to transform suffering, prejudices, xenophobia, misogyny,

racism and all kinds of discriminations into jokes or to revert interpretations of realities against the victims, laughing and bullying.

People resist talking about racism in the family. ... It is easier to talk on the street, shops. But school is second hardest place to talk about it, followed by family, where people never discuss racism. Contradictorily, a frequent topic in interviews was interracial dating and racism in family.

"My father is a Black, my mother is White. I have a dark skin and my brother is White. He was once helping my father at work when someone asked my brother if he was my father's son, and he jokingly replied: 'Me?! A White like me couldn't be a son of that black guy'. My father didn't like it, they fought and later my brother apologized, but my father didn't forgive him, and until today they don't get along. I think my father is being racist for not forgiving his own son!" (Security Guard. Camaçari-BA)

"My grandmother is white, she raised me, I live with her, she always makes fun of me for my hair. But I don't care, she's racist, she admits it, I don't care, I let it go, I live in her house". (Young merchant. Rio)

"I was dating a white guy, and his mom hated that I was dating him, I wasn't good enough for her son because of my skin color. One day, she accused me of having stolen dishes from her house. The worst pain was that my boyfriend believed her. Well, my relationship ended and later she found out that her eldest daughter who arrived from Europe had stolen her dishes. (Young Black woman, a nurse, Rio).

Affection and jokes are used to justify racist expressions: "Bombril's hair", that means "hair made with steel wool", but in general people perceive it as just kidding.

"I knew a bandit based on the person's face (a bandit's face)" (White man, a doctor, Camaçari, Bahia).

"Do you think that blacks are more aggressive than whites?" "Yes, since the world has existed, we have known that Black people are angry because of slavery and so on. So, they want to take it out on everything they see ahead, including us White people as if we were responsible for all their suffering. This thing about shifting blame just shows that in a way we are superior to them... look, don't confuse this with racism. I'm not racist!" (White man, Coordinator of Health Service, Camaçari, Bahia)

"The majority of the population that turns to crime are black people, so there had to be no racism, if that is the condition they chose, a way to live. White man, a doctor at the hospital"

Denying the skin colour and African ancestry is indispensable to aspiring to and achieving social mobility. All the Black women interviewed had the experience of having been forced by their mothers, since they were small children, to use chemical products to change their hair, to be socially accepted.

> "My teacher told me to use a Black hairstyle for a competition, my friend did it, I felt so beautiful… But when I left home, all the people in the street were laughing of my hair… everyone, I was so humiliated, in public, in my small town… I have never used it anymore". (young woman, University student).

> "With a lot of effort, I put my daughter in a private school. I just didn't know she would suffer so much... One day the teacher ordered my 10 years old daughter to clean the floor of the classroom." (Black woman, nurse).

Eugenics orientation is more evident when talking about violence, related to Afro descendants. Security forces, police, communications media, and citizens in general treat African descendants as a threat of aggression and crime.

Police and other private systems of surveillance and punishment, use to arrest Afro descendants in supermarkets and shopping centers, suspecting they have committed some crime. Personnel like guards in commerce, supermarkets, shopping centres, receive trainings to act in accordance with racist guidelines, applying violence, beatings and even assassinations, accusing the victims of robbery and violence.

Imprisonment and police violence are more frequent among Black men, who are most imprisoned people. Social networks and media, TV, movies, videogames, football, reproduce explicit racism daily.

In conclusion, the Racial Democracy hypothesis is not only non-existent, but also an excuse to perpetuate racism in its explicit form, in a continuous process of social and individual alienation.

MEXICO

Mexico colonization started with a 52 years' war against the Spanish Empire, until the defeat of the Aztec empire which were decimated by the war, conflicts between Spanish forced work and slavery, and the destruction of infrastructure, social, political and economic structures of Indigenous society, as well as epidemics. The 1574 census of tributaries reported around two million taxpayers, corresponding to 8 to 10 million Indigenous people in Mesoamerica). (Livi-Bacci, 2006).

Indigenous people actively participated in the wars for independence and in the Mexican Revolution in 1910, resulting in the agrarian reform, collective land, Indigenous rights, and the constitution that remains in force up until today. However, occupations of Indigenous lands for mining and other development projects revived until today. (del Val, 2010; León-Portilla, 2010; Ávila and Salmerón, 2015)

indigenous in mexico

Today the self-declared Indigenous peoples represent 19% of the population, or twenty three million of inhabitants, and 7 million of them speak one of the sixty-eight Indigenous languages (INEGI, 2020).

Racism is present in the relationships with non-Indigenous people, particularly in the city, where they are a minority.

> "They are Indigenous because they speak their own languages. But there is racism. So, in the city they do not say anything anymore, or speak in their language, so, people do not know what they are saying. And when they answer them in Indigenous language, they get angrier."

> "When I studied a master's degree, there was a teacher who was always acting in a derogatory way towards me, because I had come out of a program of Indigenous women, he was saying: 'Oh, you always play the victims role.' He did not support me, even though he was my thesis advisor."

> "I came to occupy a position of decision, however, there was no recognition of my work, because I was Indigenous, young, short, I did not have a partner… I was working in Justice and Dialogue, and people treated me like 'so what is she able to mediate'? What is she know about? I even came to think of resigning because it was very heavy, not recognized."

afro mexicans

In Mexico, in 2020, there were more than 2 million people who identified themselves as Afro-descendants, representing 2% of the total population. Afro Mexicans are concentrated in small villages in some states like in the Costa Chica of the State of Guerrero, . In these communities, they are integrated with the communities of Indigenous people, and their culture is valued and enjoyed by most of the populations. Afro Mexicans have been denied as part of the population, and only in 2020, for the first time, did the censuses ask about Afro descendants in Mexico, generating strong racist reactions in a part of the society, who prefer to continue being considered only by their Indigenous and European ancestry.

> "At primary school, White teachers and pupils rejected me. It was a prestigious public school. The teachers believed I could not be among the good ones. They said: how? Why does she get a ten? The teachers were white. 'No, … you were looking closely and copied the exam. Surely you were copying this, surely.' … so, they (teachers) separated me. They separated me, I did not understand, I was in the first year."

Suddenly they moved me to second grade. And they (White students) went to third grade. It did not matter if I studied or not, so I left school, because I did not like what they said to me, for me it was an aggression. Well, I did not want to go to school anymore."

"She had to study another master's degree, but they made her doubt about her ability. Because she was Black and, yes, because she was a woman, she felt this. This is still there, even after having done the master's degree … how to take this rejection towards….

Afro Mexicans relate experiences of racism in their childhood.

"At school, everyone was bullying me because of my skin colour. They said they are better than us, because they are White, and we are dark. I felt unbelievably bad, I returned home to my village. I was ashamed, I no longer wanted to go to school. Because every day my classmates made fun of me. You know that everyone laughs, they all laughed at me.
The teacher does not say anything to him. She just told him to shut up. Then they kept laughing. The next day, he continued. But we beat him up because they were against me. I just hit the kid, and he sent his mom to school.
The group insulted me because of him. He did not insult but they yelled things at me. I should leave that school because every day I had that mockery. For how much longer? As soon as class started, they were already there, to throw papers (on me) … and I was on the point of hitting him because I was tired."

"I do not want to be at school, I really did not want to go to class for the same reason, because they said ugly things to me. I failed, I did not go, because of the bullying. They stayed there. I did not go, I lost, that is why I failed."

"The ugly name, I tried the first and second time. But my heart had left there. I am already tired. I do not get angry because I am Black. I do not think about it. Not anymore. I do not even pay attention to it.

DISCUSSION

INTERGENERATIONAL RACISM IN INTERRACIAL FAMILIES

An Imperial and colonial Europe country like Sweden, based on its culture of egalitarianism and universal welfare, shows patterns of denial, delusion and defensiveness, linked with the history and memory of Nazism, the legacy that leads to multicultural policies. A process of amnesia or alienation promotes an "active forgetting", a political, social and psychological denial of the imperial past, colonization and the corresponding eugenics and racism.

The great denial of racism leads to a collective self-delusion that race is irrelevant, that racism does not exist. That is why Sweden has no laws or data on Afro descendant or Indigenous people. What you can't see, or measure doesn't exist. Although there are some

interracial marriages, it is rare and can generate conflicts inside families and in public spaces. (my friend with a son married with an African woman)

In colonized countries like Brazil the society forges a "White" identity through interracial marriage, however, racism is explicit and violent even inside the family, even between parents and children. A white mother and her mixed son who denies his Black father are an example. Another example is a brown boy with a black brother, the grandmother treats him with a racist attitude.

In Mexico, mestizo children who are Afro descendant suffer the same kind of racism in the public spaces, but it seems to be more protected inside their family.

Interracial marriage reproduces submission and humiliation of Blacks in family members between generations, denial of children with darker skin and curlier hair.

Racism operates in the three countries with violence, in the form of ironies or oral aggression (son denies father, another boy asks his mother not to invite Black people to his birthday party.

HOW RACISM IS REPRODUCED IN SOCIETY AND PUBLIC SPACES.

Racism in Sweden is hidden through the concepts of multiculturalism and migration exceptionalism, although racism is manifested through attitudes of isolation and segregation of Africans and Indigenous since childhood, mainly at school and public spaces. Racism is officially denied, although it exists. There are no affirmative policies, only a multicultural policy based on egalitarian values that don't matter for the Sami and African-Swedish.

In Brazil it is explicit, with violent attitudes and often hidden in the form of jokes that are not perceived as racism, in all areas and spaces, including the family and friends, in all public and private spaces. It is the most difficult context to talk about racism. Affirmative policies include Black and Indigenous people at the university and in the middle class, however, it is not enough, since racism is structural and reproduced even in presence of social mobility.

In Mexico racism hides behind jokes and nicknames, and it also segregates Indigenous and Afro descendant people from childhood, at school and public spaces. Mexico applied integration policies for the Indigenous, but not for Afro-Mexicans, never recognized as part of the population until 2015. Even with integration policies Indigenous

people are discriminated against at school and in other social positions, mainly due to their language, clothes and behaviors.

Colonialism perpetuation reproduces structural racism through land occupation by force in the three countries. National states force Indigenous displacement from their lands to promote mining companies of old colonizer countries.

Eugenics perpetuation is also common in the three countries with the same inferiorization of Indigenous and Afro descendants: criminalization of Afro-descendants and a new legacy to exercise explicit violence against Africans and Afro descendants. Eugenics legitimizations justify land occupation.

Structural racism perpetuates violence and bullying whitening and between generations at school and universities, in all the public spaces and, in Brazil, also among family members, producing psychological exhaustion, self-exclusion and, as a result, an inferior level and quality of education for Indigenous, African, and Afro descendants.

Affirmative policies should develop new strategies against colonialism, structural racism, and eugenics perpetuation.

Multicultural policies should include an antiracism approach, as well as measures to make it visible (what you do not name, does not exist) and to be effective.

Structural racism against Afro descendants is present in multiracial families in Brazil. Special actions are necessary to mitigate not only "racial democracy," but mainly "whitening aspirations" in the collective imaginary.

Colonization and enslavement of Indigenous peoples and Africans and their descendants in both countries in the last centuries and, as a result, up until today there is social inequalities, discrimination, and racism.

REFERENCES

1. Ansley, F. L. (1997). White Supremacy (And What We Should Do about It). In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (pp. 592–655). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

2. Ashe, S. D., & McGeever, B. (2011). Marxism, racism and the construction of 'race' as a social and political relation: an interview with Professor Robert Miles. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34*(12), 2009–2026. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.595808

3. Ávila, F. A., & Salmerón, P. (2015). *Historia breve de la Revolución Mexicana*. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

4. Axelsson, P. (2011). In the National Registry, all people are equal': Sami in Swedish statistical sources. In *Indigenous peoples and demography: the complex relation between identity and statistics* (pp. 117–133). Oxford & New York: Berghahn Books.

5. Brännlund, I., & Axelsson, P. (2011). Reindeer management during the colonization of Sami lands: A long-term perspective of vulnerability and adaptation strategies. *Global Environmental Change, 21*(3), 1095–1105.

6. Carvalho, J. M. (2003). *Os Bestializados—O Rio de Janeiro e a República que não foi*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

7. Codato, A. (2015). Estado Novo no Brasil: Um Estudo da Dinâmica das Elites Políticas Regionais em Contexto Autoritário. *DADOS: Revista de Ciências Sociais*, *58*(2).

8. Cole, M. (2016). *Racism: A Critical Analysis*. Pluto Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18gzdjq

9. Cole, M. (2020). A Marxist critique of Sean Walton's defence of the Critical Race Theory concept of 'White supremacy' as explaining all forms of racism, and some comments on Critical Race Theory, Black Radical and socialist futures. *Power and Education, 12*(1), 95–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757743819871318

10. de Leeuw, S., Cameron, E., & Greenwood, M. (2012). Participatory and community-based research, Indigenous geographies, and the spaces of friendship: A critical engagement. *Canadian Geographer, 56*, 180–194. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.2012.00434.x

11. del Val, J. M. (2010). Los pueblos indios en la historia nacional, 1810–1910–2010. In A. León-Portilla & A. Mayer (Eds.), *Los indígenas en la independencia y en la Revolución mexicana*. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia - INAH, UNAM-IIH.

12. Cole, D. (2020). *The Skin We're In: A Year of Resistance and Power*. New York: Doubleday.

13. Drugge, A.-L. (2016). How can we do it right? Ethical uncertainty in Swedish Sami research. *Journal of Academic Ethics*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-016-9265-7

14. Emilsson, H. (2019). Continuity or Change? The Impact of the Refugee Crisis on Swedish Political Parties' Migration Policy Preferences. In M. Fingerle & R. Wink (Eds.), *Forced Migration and Resilience: Conceptual Issues and Empirical Results* (pp. 99–121). Wiesbaden: Springer.

15. Fanon, F. (1968). *Black Skins, White Masks* (C. L. Markman, Ed.). New York.

16. Fernandes, F. (2008). *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes: O legado da "raça branca"* (Vol. 1, 5th ed.). São Paulo: Globo.

17. Freire, A., & Penna, L. (2001). Primeira República: Os Estados Unidos do Brasil. In P. R. Pereira (Ed.), *Brasiliana da Biblioteca Nacional* (pp. 285–296). Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Nova Fronteira.

18. FUNAI. (2022). Brasil registra 274 línguas indígenas diferentes faladas por 305 etnias. *Funai*. https://www.gov.br/funai/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2022-02/brasil-registra-274-linguas-indigenas-diferentes-faladas-por-305-etnias

19. IBGE. (2023). Brasil tem 1,7 milhão de indígenas e mais da metade deles vive na Amazônia Legal. *Censo 2022*. https://censo2022.ibge.gov.br/noticias-por-estado/37565-brasil-tem-1-7-milhao-de-indigenas-e-mais-da-metade-deles-vive-na-amazonia-legal

20. INEGI. (2020). Descubre las personas de tu país. *INEGI*. https://beta.cuentame.inegi.org.mx/explora/default.html#poblacion

21. Last, J. (2021). Church of Sweden apologizes, embarks on reconciliation with Indigenous Sámi people. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/church-of-sweden-sami-indigenous-1.6263595

22. León-Portilla, M. (2010). Los pueblos originarios en la guerra de Independência y en la revolución de 1910. In A. León-Portilla & A. Mayer (Eds.), *Los indígenas en la independencia y en la Revolución mexicana*. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia - INAH, UNAM-IIH.

23. Livi-Bacci, M. (2006). The Depopulation of Hispanic America after the Conquest. *Population and Development Review, 32*(2), 199–232. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20058872

24. Markkola, P. (2015). The long history of Lutheranism in Scandinavia. From state religion to the people's church. *Perichoresis, 13*(2), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1515/perc-2015-0007

25. McEachrane, M. (2014). *Afro-Nordic landscapes: Equality and race in Northern Europe*. Routledge.

26. MacPherson, L. (1999). *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* (Independent report, Ref: Cm. 4262). London: Stationery Office. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c2af540f0b645ba3c7202/4262.pdf

27. Migrationsverket. (2024). Residence permit for children: Children born in Sweden. *Migrationsverket*. https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Moving-to-someone-in-Sweden/Residence-permit-for-children/Children-born-in-Sweden.html

28. Nelson, R. H. (2017). *Lutheranism and the Nordic spirit of social democracy: A different Protestant ethic*. Aarhus University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv62hgm7

29. Gill, P., & Baillie, J. (2018). Interviews and focus groups in qualitative research: An update for the digital age. *British Dental Journal, 225*, 668–672.

30. Ribeiro, D. (1976). Tipología política latinoamericana. El fascismo en América. *Nueva Política, 1*, 85–106.

31. Shaw, I. J. (2019). Presbyterians in Britain and Europe. In G. S. Smith & P. C. Kemeny (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Presbyterianism* (pp. 116–139). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190608392.013.12

32. Spektorowski, A., & Mizrachi, E. (2004). Eugenics and the welfare state in Sweden: The politics of social margins and the idea of a productive society. *Journal of Contemporary History, 39*(3), 333–352. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180732

33. Statista. (2022). Sweden: Number of African immigrants by country of birth. *Statista*. https://www.statista.com/statistics/525889/sweden-number-of-african-immigrants-by-country-of-birth/

34. Ashe, S. D., & McGeever, B. (2011). Marxism, racism and the construction of 'race' as a social and political relation: An interview with Professor Robert Miles. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34*(12), 2009–2026. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.595808

35. Sweden Government. (2024). Sweden and migration: Sweden has a long history of migration. *Sweden.se*. https://sweden.se/migration/

36. Tomsom, D. L. (2020). The rise of Sweden Democrats: Islam, populism, and the end of Swedish exceptionalism. *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-rise-of-sweden-democrats-and-the-end-of-swedish-exceptionalism/

37. Tynan, L., & Bishop, M. (2023). Decolonizing the literature review: A relational approach. *Qualitative Inquiry, 29*(3–4), 498–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004221101594

38. Walton, S. (2019). Why the critical race theory concept of 'White supremacy' should not be dismissed by neo-Marxists: Lessons from contemporary Black radicalism. *Power and Education, 12*(1), 78–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757743819871316

39. Weinstock, J. (2013). Assimilation of the Sámi: Its unforeseen effects on the majority populations of Scandinavia. *Scandinavian Studies, 85*(4), 411–430. https://doi.org/10.5406/scanstud.85.4.0411

40. Widén, P. (2011). National museums in Sweden: A history of denied empire and a neutral state. In P. Aronsson & G. Elgenius (Eds.), *Building national museums in Europe 1750–2010* (EuNaMus Report No. 1). Linköping University Electronic Press. http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp_home/index.en.aspx?issue=064

41. Young, T. K., & Bjerregaard, P. (2019). Towards estimating the Indigenous population in circumpolar regions. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health, 78*(1), 1653749. https://doi.org/10.1080/22423982.2019.1653749