

Education for ethnic-racial relations in the municipality of Macapá: legal framework and educational reality

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation and developments of affirmative action public policies targeting ethnic-racial relations in the municipality of Macapá, state of Amapá, in light of the legal and institutional frameworks established at the national level. Based on the theoretical framework of decolonial thought, the work adopts bibliographic and documentary research as its methodology, seeking to understand the local dynamics of implementing these policies. The results demonstrate that, although the last two decades have been marked by significant normative advances in the field of affirmative action, in the Macapá context, persistent structural and circumstantial challenges hinder their consolidation. Notable among these challenges are institutional fragility, the lack of specific investments, and the intensification of conservative political discourses and practices, which promote setbacks in addressing structural racism. These elements highlight the need for a critical in-depth analysis of the actual conditions under which anti-racist policies are implemented in peripheral contexts of the federation, such as the Brazilian Amazon.

Keywords: Ethnic-racial Education. Affirmative Actions. Decoloniality. Diversity.**A educação para as relações étnico-raciais no município de Macapá: marco legal e realidade educacional****Resumo**

Este estudo tem por objetivo analisar a implementação e os desdobramentos das políticas públicas afirmativas voltadas para as relações étnico-raciais no município de Macapá, estado do Amapá, à luz dos marcos legais e institucionais estabelecidos em âmbito nacional. Fundamentado no referencial teórico do pensamento decolonial, o trabalho adota como metodologia a pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, buscando compreender as dinâmicas locais de efetivação dessas políticas. Os resultados evidenciam que, embora as últimas duas décadas tenham sido marcadas por avanços normativos significativos no campo das ações afirmativas, observa-se, no contexto macapaense, a persistência de desafios estruturais e conjunturais que dificultam sua

consolidação. Entre esses desafios, destacam-se a fragilidade institucional, a escassez de investimentos específicos e a intensificação de discursos e práticas políticas de cunho conservador, que promovem retrocessos no enfrentamento do racismo estrutural. Tais elementos apontam para a necessidade de um aprofundamento crítico sobre as condições reais de aplicação das políticas antirracistas em contextos periféricos da federação, como a Amazônia brasileira. **Palavras-chave:** Educação Étnico-racial. Ações Afirmativas. Decolonialidade. Diversidade.

1 Introduction

In recent decades, Brazil has adopted a series of affirmative public policies aimed at addressing the historically structured racial inequalities in society. These policies have emerged in response to the struggles of Black movements for recognition and historical reparation, and have been formalized through legislation and programs that seek to promote equity in access to education, employment, and social representation. However, the implementation of these actions across the national territory has occurred unevenly, revealing significant disparities between regions and municipalities.

The fight against racism and the establishment of an anti-racist education and society must increasingly be problematized and understood as essential. Combating racism involves a continuous process of “decolonizing minds” (Gomes, 2021), as racism constitutes an organizing principle of sociability and of formative dimensions in both the public and private spheres of Brazilian society. It is also deeply embedded in our historical, political, economic, and cultural experience.

In the Amazonian context, particularly in the municipality of Macapá, capital of the state of Amapá, the implementation of affirmative policies faces specific challenges, marked by structural limitations, institutional fragility, and political and ideological resistance. Despite the existence of a consolidated legal framework in the field of promoting racial equality, a gap can be observed between legislation and practical reality, which undermines the effectiveness of these policies in the lives of the local Black population.

In light of this scenario, the present study aims to analyze the implementation and developments of affirmative public policies focused on ethnic-racial relations in the

municipality of Macapá, state of Amapá, in view of the legal and institutional frameworks established at the national level. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of decolonial thought, which enables an understanding of processes of subalternization and resistance in peripheral regions of the country, and it employs bibliographic and documentary analysis as its methodology. By addressing this topic, the study seeks to contribute to the debate on the concrete application of affirmative actions in Brazil, with an emphasis on the specificities of Amazonian territories. Understanding the effectiveness of these policies in specific contexts, therefore, requires an analysis that considers the local dynamics of racism.

Everyday racism, in its multiple dimensions, involves a constant scenario of tensions and conflicts (Foster; Custódio, 2024). In the educational and academic sphere, it is marked by the historical and epistemic erasure present in curricula, proposals, and educational practices, both in basic education and in higher education (Gomes, 2021). Therefore, it becomes necessary to problematize aspects of the anti-racist legislation developed over the past two decades in the Brazilian educational context, highlighting its impacts on the promotion of racial equality, the fight against racism, and the construction of an anti-racist society (Custódio; Foster, 2023).

Affirmative action policies, such as Law No. 10,639/2003, which amended the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) and introduced the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture in basic education schools, have had effective impacts on promoting racial equality and institutionalizing educational policies that guarantee access to the right to education for the Black population. However, the progress made in building racial equality policies has only partially addressed the “structural racism” present in the country (Almeida, 2019).

The methodological procedures used in this research were bibliographic and documentary research. The bibliographic research aimed to provide a theoretical foundation for the investigation, enabling dialogue with authors who critically address ethnic-racial issues and the power structures present in Brazilian society. In this regard, the research was particularly anchored in the decolonial approach, highlighting the

contributions of Walsh (2009), who discusses the processes of coloniality of knowledge and power, and Oliveira (2016), whose work contributes to understanding the resistance of racialized subjects in the face of coloniality. In addition, the study incorporated authors dedicated specifically to ethnic-racial relations in Brazil, such as Almeida (2019), with his analysis of racism as a systemic phenomenon, and Gomes (2018), who discusses public policies for promoting racial equality and valuing Black identity in education.

Documentary research, in turn, focused on analyzing institutional, legal, and normative sources related to affirmative public policies in the municipality of Macapá-AP. For this purpose, official documents were examined, such as municipal and federal laws, resolutions, decrees, education plans, as well as statutes such as the Statute of Racial Equality. These materials made it possible to identify the legal instruments underpinning policies aimed at ethnic-racial equity, as well as to assess their effectiveness, scope, and contradictions in the local context. The analysis of these documents was guided by a critical perspective, seeking to understand not only the normative content but also the silences, gaps, and disputes that permeate the formulation and implementation of these policies.

2 The Durban Conference and affirmative action policies in Brazil

To delve into the discussion of the legal instruments that make up Brazil's affirmative action policies, it is first necessary to understand the motivations and sociopolitical contexts that underpin them. The National Guidelines for Quilombola School Education (CNE Resolution No. 08/2012), as well as the Quota Law, Law No. 10,639/2003, the Statute of Racial Equality, among other legal measures aimed at the Black Brazilian population, are the result of struggles and demands from Black social movements in our country. These form a set of laws and regulations known as affirmative action policies, which aim to promote equal rights and opportunities, as well as equity and social integration for the Black Brazilian population, historically disadvantaged and marked by the horrors of slavery and the persistent racism in our society.

Such measures were adopted by the Brazilian government following the Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held from August 31 to September 8, 2001, in Durban, South Africa. The conference gathered 173 countries, 4,000 non-governmental organizations, and over 20,000 delegates from various nationalities and social groups. The "Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" came to be recognized as a historic milestone for a range of international advancements on ethnic-racial issues, particularly in the fight against racism and racial discrimination.

According to the final report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), published in 2001, the conference represented a civilizational landmark in the struggle of the international community and civil society for equality and social justice, for the deepening of democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law – all of which necessarily involve a determined fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and racial intolerance. From this perspective, the social and cultural diversity of African and Afro-descendant peoples, immersed in the African diaspora, must be recognized in their existence and human dignity, as bearers of valuable ancestral knowledge and wisdom.

Therefore, it is essential to break with the historical inequalities produced by the denial of social and economic rights, which have, for centuries, victimized people of African descent who have suffered under slavery and colonialism. Preventive actions and measures to combat racism and racial discrimination were proposed to be implemented at national, regional, and international levels, so as to enable real progress in the promotion of racial equality and the enforcement of human rights.

However, it is not possible to overcome these challenges without firm action by the State, through public policies and a set of anti-racist laws that must engage with educational, economic, and cultural dimensions. According to the UNFPA (2001), these measures must include an educational component that teaches the history of African ancestors, so that the processes of formation, reproduction, and impact of racism and racial discrimination can be properly understood, especially the historical aspects of slavery, the

trafficking of enslaved peoples, and the forms of colonialism still present in contemporary times.

According to Almeida (2019), understanding the logic of how racism is structured in Brazil requires a study of the process of our social formation as a nation-state, as well as of the multiple circumstances brought about by slavery. This allows for reframing the problem of racism as a multifaceted phenomenon, intertwined with the naturalization of historical forms of domination that established hierarchical patterns of subjugation of the Black population.

The imposition of captivity on the Black population "fossilized," according to Nabuco (2003), a slaveholding mindset in the country – one that would tend to persist even after the abolitionist process. Unless the national society develops a collective mentality and awareness that fighting for the freedom and the rights expropriated by the ideological and practical apparatuses of slavery is indispensable, the work will remain incomplete.

From the perspective of intellectual thought formation, the approach presented by Freyre (2003) in his work *Casa-Grande & Senzala* institutionalized the discourse that Brazil underwent a socially democratic formation. According to this view, European culture, in contact with Indigenous culture, had its extremes mediated by the presence of African culture, thus bridging cultural antagonisms and strangeness between whites and Amerindians.

In this narrative, it was the hybrid, harmonious, and balanced relationship between Europeans, Amerindians, and Africans that would have built the foundation of racial mixing ("mestiçagem"). Thus, Brazil's social formation is portrayed as welcoming to Portuguese, Indigenous, and African people, having created no obstacles to peaceful coexistence among such different cultures. The idea proposed by Freyre (2003) is grounded in the "myth of racial democracy," which presents racial relations in Brazil as harmonious and free from dominant ideological interests, thereby perpetuating racism.

This myth of racial democracy conceals the history of a society that was originally composed of Amerindians, the Indigenous peoples, who were subjected to an invasion process by European Portuguese, enduring genocides and ethnocides through violent

territorial occupation and Christianization. The Indigenous ethnic groups who inhabited this land, as well as the African people forcibly brought through the slave trade, had their bodies and cultures subjugated by the white/Portuguese/European colonial power. What formed was a hierarchical, conflict-ridden, and racist society, in which the dominant agent systematically denied the humanity of the dominated groups and cultures, treating them as inferior. In no way was our social, cultural, and political formation peaceful, harmonious, or democratic. On the contrary, it was forged through violent processes of land occupation, plundering of wealth, and authoritarianism.

According to Almeida (2019), this ideology or myth forms part of the social imaginary and shapes an interpretation of Brazil whose institutionalization took place in conjunction with the development of Brazilian industrial capitalism starting in the 1930s. In this context, the historical denial of a hierarchical and racist society is what ideologically sustains the “Brazilian-style racism”, a category theorized by DaMatta (1987).

Brazilian-style racism, intertwined with the myth of racial democracy and structural racism, produces numerous obstacles to public debate about our slaveholding legacy and racist mindset. As Almeida (2019, p. 111) states, “racism is an element of this game.” For these reasons, structural racism is a constitutive element of social, political, and economic relations, and the institutionalization of racial inequality takes place through the “domestication of bodies” within “capitalist sociability,” especially via the labor market, which is also hierarchical and functions based on a logic of domination and social inequality. Thus, the ideology of racial democracy legitimizes both the racist discourse and racial and social inequality.

The Durban Conference was a strategic and coordinated invitation to countries to develop actions and programs aimed at dismantling and eradicating, throughout the early decades of the 21st century, ethnic-racial discrimination, racial prejudice, and the multifaceted manifestations of racism. It was in this context of international and civil society struggles to overcome racism that Brazil began to coordinate, through the State and social movements, a strategic initiative aligned with the Durban agenda. In an effort to implement it, the Brazilian State, beginning in 2003, sought to establish a set of public policies aimed

at fulfilling the actions and directives defined at that conference. As such, 2003 became a landmark year in Brazil's policies to combat racism.

It was within this framework that, in 2005, the First National Conference for the Promotion of Racial Equality (CONAPIR) took place, coinciding with the celebration of the “National Year for the Promotion of Racial Equality” in Brazil (Ribeiro, 2009, p. 21). The National Plan for the Promotion of Racial Equality (Planapir) was created, aimed at strengthening democratic principles of gender, race, and ethnicity equality, citizenship, and human rights. The plan adopted a dialogical perspective, seeking to promote social inclusion and quality education.

Racial equality policies began to be decentralized, with particular emphasis on the Intergovernmental Forum for the Promotion of Racial Equality (Fipir), which aimed to coordinate federal structures with state and municipal governments. According to monitoring by the federal government, between 2005 and 2006, there was steady engagement by states and municipalities in the policies and actions for racial equality initiated by the federal government. Although the coordination and actions in this initial phase were still incipient, it is important to highlight, as Ribeiro (2009, p. 22) notes, that “the inclusion of activists with feminist and anti-racist agendas in governmental and decision-making spheres enables an immediate shift in the political discussion and vision, favoring agendas that are crucial to the advancement of these populations.”

It can be argued that the first phase of implementing public policies to promote racial equality, and, consequently, to guarantee the effectiveness of human rights, corresponded to the initial actions and programs that marked attempts to address the historical demands of the Black population for greater representation, participation, and protection of rights across the three branches of public power in the country, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Durban Conference.

According to Domingues (2003), among the affirmative action policies established in Brazil, the racial quota program sought to guarantee access to higher education for the Black population. The State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and the State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro (UENF) were pioneers in reserving 40% of their spots for Black

students – a policy that was later adopted by other public universities in the country, such as the University of Brasília (UnB). In this regard, the quota policy became a concrete instrument for combating racial inequalities and democratizing access to public higher education in Brazil.

Domingues (2003) points out that the controversies surrounding this affirmative action policy revealed the extent to which racism, prejudice, and racial discrimination remain serious obstacles to expanding access to education and ensuring historical reparation for the injustices and segregation suffered by the Black population in the country.

According to the same author, it was a significant advancement to include this demand, particularly from the Black social movement, on the agenda of the Brazilian State's affirmative action policies. The fight against racial and social inequality required confronting the racist and conservative mindset of a segment of society that denies the existence of racism and/or fails to understand the need to correct historical injustices against the Black population.

With racial quotas for Black students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), it was the first time the Brazilian State implemented a public policy that, in practice, proved to be effective and concrete in addressing the historical exclusion of the Black population from the right to higher education and, consequently, from improved access to the labor market. This is also accompanied by the acquisition of cultural capital and social empowerment.

The Statute of Racial Equality, enacted on July 20, 2010, guaranteed the Black population in Brazil equal opportunities, the protection of individual and collective ethnic rights, and the fight against various forms of ethnic intolerance. Article 1 and its sole paragraph define key concepts such as racial discrimination, racial inequality, Black population, and affirmative action policies.

Thus, racial or ethnic-racial discrimination is defined as any exclusion or restriction based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin that creates barriers or constraints to the enjoyment of equal conditions, fundamental freedoms, and human rights in both public and private spheres. In this context, racial inequality refers to unjustified

differentiations in access to services, goods, and opportunities based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin.

The Black population is defined based on self-identification by individuals who identify as Black or Brown, following the criteria of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and self-definition. Affirmative actions, in turn, include all programs and measures adopted by the State or private initiatives that aim to correct racial inequalities and promote equal opportunities.

Article 4 also establishes that the principles of equal conditions and opportunities must take into account that the State should promote: the adoption of measures, programs, and affirmative action policies; the modification of the State's institutional structures to properly confront and overcome ethnic inequalities resulting from prejudice and discrimination; the elimination of historical, sociocultural, and institutional barriers that hinder the representation of ethnic diversity in public and private spheres; and the implementation of affirmative action programs aimed at addressing ethnic inequalities in areas such as education, culture, sports and leisure, health, among others (Brazil, 2010).

Gomes (2018) states that, within this set of measures, the continuous journey toward the affirmation and achievement of rights and social justice has entered the field of political debate with new approaches to race, highlighting the historical impact of racism, the role of Black social movements, and the legislation enacted under affirmative action policies. At the same time, ethnic-racial issues have entered new discursive and symbolic spaces within official politics, the production of scientific knowledge, and society. According to the author, with the creation of legislation committed to the anti-racist struggle, Black youth have sought their own discursive and active space in the aesthetic field, in academic and social environments, especially in the peripheries, asserting their Black identity and their ongoing struggle for spaces that have historically been denied to them, such as public universities.

After two decades of affirmative action policies, new questions have emerged around ethnic-racial issues, the African diaspora, and discourses on racial standards in Brazil. In this way, the Black movement is situated within new, dynamic, and complex

frontiers, and is challenged daily to produce knowledge and ways of knowing grounded in resistance and emancipation, capable of mobilizing debate, especially in the field of education, where anti-racist legislation has proven to be extremely necessary and capable of promoting racial equality and inclusion.

Education has always been a matter of interest and criticism for Black social movements in Brazil, since, historically, it has always served the interests of the ruling classes and has been managed by and for the national white elite. In *Documentos de identidade*, Silva (2017) recalls that the education provided in Brazilian schools was never designed for workers, the poor, women, Black people, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA+ individuals, or people with disabilities, but rather for the white, Christian, heterosexual, wealthy elite, with the aim of securing their privileges and social advantages. Therefore, the Quilombola Resolution represents a process of subversion and resistance led by Black and Quilombola movements, as a means of ensuring free and quality education that responds to the needs and perspectives of these populations, rather than being a favor granted by the State.

3 The decolonial perspective and the 22 years of Law No. 10,639/2003

Mignolo (2005) argues that modernity is the result of a long process of colonial violence carried out by the European ruling classes, whose mechanisms of operation relied primarily on the discourse of reason and racial subalternization. In other words, modernity is not the result of a historical and cultural process of emancipation that emerged within the European continent from a rational paradigm, but rather an epistemic conquest grounded in ethnocentrism through contact with the peoples of the Americas. Within this framework, relations of domination developed based on ethnocentric values and practices, in which the criterion of racial classification was key to constructing the figure of the colonized – one that was not eliminated by independence or decolonization processes, but rather persists in the form of coloniality.

Thus, coloniality is a form of domination and power structured around the classification of racial, ethnic, and anthropological patterns to which colonized populations

were subjected through the dominant narrative of European reason. In this sense, “coloniality is constitutive of modernity” (Mignolo, 2005, p. 36). According to Mignolo (2005), “decolonial thought” is a theoretical/methodological/epistemological construction developed by Latin American intellectuals through transdisciplinary discussions. This group includes anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, linguists, and historians who were subalternized by capitalist European modernity. These intellectuals adopted an engaged and critical stance against colonial violence, directing their critique at the geopolitics of knowledge, as modern Western thought rendered invisible and silenced knowledge produced outside the European axis, knowledge considered peripheral, in order to assert itself as the dominant and universally valid paradigm. In this way, coloniality and modernity are considered synonymous.

The theoretical and political project of re-signifying modernity requires overcoming this “epistemic racism”, a category proposed by Mignolo (2005), as well as racism in general, which has been produced through the denial of the Other and of difference. According to Quijano (2005), in the course of Latin America’s domination, the construction of the biological idea of race functioned as a mediator of colonial rationality, encoding operators of difference and distinction that historically naturalized the discourse of inferiority applied to peoples and cultures outside the European sphere.

In analyzing the theoretical and methodological efforts of Decolonial Pedagogy, Oliveira (2016) argues that this pedagogy expresses the colonialism that produced the dehumanization directed at those subalternized by European modernity, and it proposes the possibility of a theoretical critique of the geopolitics of knowledge. This perspective is built on the idea of a political practice opposed to the hegemonic monocultural geopolitics. That is, Decolonial Pedagogy seeks to break with the colonial mindset and is not limited to the school or university setting: it is a political project that asserts itself within social movements, Indigenous communities, Black communities, and on the streets.

Walsh, Oliveira, and Candau (2018) propose that decolonial education also makes a significant contribution as a pedagogical and epistemological approach that questions the structures of power, knowledge, and cultural domination established by colonialism. It

proposes the decolonization of curricula, teaching methods, and educational relationships. This perspective seeks to value the knowledge and experiences of marginalized cultures, challenging the hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge and promoting a more plural and inclusive vision of education.

Law No. 10,639/2003 incorporated into the official curriculum of the school system the mandatory inclusion of topics on “Afro-Brazilian History and Culture.” Thus, public and private primary and secondary schools are required to address Afro-Brazilian history and culture within their curricula, particularly through subjects such as Art Education, Literature, and History. It was also established that November 20, a date commemorating the martyrdom of Quilombo leader Zumbi dos Palmares (1655–1695), would be dedicated to the “National Day of Black Consciousness.”

Following the enactment of Law No. 10,639/2003, the National Education Council (CNE) approved Opinion No. 03/2004 and Resolution No. 01/2004, which expanded the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations to all levels and types of education. In the same year, 2004, the Department of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (Secadi) was created within the structure of the Ministry of Education (MEC) (Gomes *et al.*, 2021).

The effort to promote racial equality through the implementation of affirmative action policies in the educational context has historically marked the struggle against racial inequality and against unequal access to public education in both basic and higher education. This was achieved alongside the approval of the Statute of Racial Equality. These efforts constitute profound experiences and knowledge grounded in the lived realities of the Black population, which began to access their rights not only in the field of education but also in cultural and political arenas (Gomes *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, we must empower them, as they have built a social and political legacy following long and arduous struggles for emancipatory political proposals in the realm of social rights, with the right to education and the fight against racial and social inequalities being the key hallmarks of recent memory in our society.

In this context, it becomes increasingly necessary to reflect on educational practices, affirmative action policies, and the models of intercultural relations that have been fostered. Decolonial pedagogy reminds us that the construction of more inclusive and egalitarian societies inevitably involves embracing the model of “critical interculturality” as a path to challenge established cultural hierarchies. Its contributions have significantly influenced intercultural studies and social movements that seek profound transformations in the relationships between different ethnic and cultural groups.

According to Walsh (2009), critical interculturality goes beyond the simple coexistence of different cultures. It proposes a deeper analysis of power relations, inequalities, and the historical processes that shape interactions among different cultural groups. Critical interculturality seeks to challenge the structures of domination and exclusion that have historically affected Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other ethnic minority communities. Thus, it is necessary to recognize and value the knowledge, practices, and worldviews (cosmovisions) of marginalized cultures, promoting a broader and more diverse understanding of social reality. Walsh (2009) states:

Starting from the structural-colonial-racial problem and moving toward the transformation of structures, institutions, and social relations and the construction of radically different conditions, critical interculturality – as a political practice – outlines a path that is very different from the one drawn by functional interculturality. However, this path is not limited to political, social, and cultural spheres; it also intersects with those of knowledge and being (Walsh, 2009, p. 13).

The notion of critical interculturality proposed by the author seeks to promote social justice, equity, and the transformation of oppressive structures that perpetuate ethnic-racial and cultural marginalization.

Accordingly, Black culture must be understood in relation to other cultures present in Brazil, be they Indigenous, Asian, or European, since it was built bilaterally, that is, through a constant process of creation and re-creation, signification and re-signification. This has enabled Black people to construct a historical and identity-based “we”, ensuring a sense of belonging and respect for diversity.

4 The Amapá Curriculum Framework (RCA) and the Municipal Education Network

According to Santos (2020), the normative text of the Amapá Curriculum Framework (RCA), approved by the State Education Council (CEE) through Resolution No. 15/2019, reproduced a large portion of the official national curriculum outlined in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), such that the specificities of the Amazon region were either suppressed, adapted to the BNCC content, or addressed only superficially. The RCA's focus was directed toward the logic of developing the general competencies of the BNCC, revealing a discourse of curricular construction autonomy.

The knowledge and understandings produced in the regional and local contexts were treated in a generic manner, without emphasis on specificities. As a result, teachers are left responsible for developing teaching strategies to incorporate these local elements, elements that are constrained by the BNCC itself, as reproduced in the RCA. In addition, teachers face limited time and space to plan and implement, in the classroom, these forms of knowledge that are so essential to students. In this way, the author argues:

The RCA replicates the conditions imposed by the BNCC that must be followed by schools in the Amapá region of the Amazon and does not advance the discussion on the specificities of education in the state of Amapá. In this sequence, it is understood that it fosters a curriculum policy aimed at creating a kind of educational uniformity in which the specificities of Amapá, the Amazon, and Brazil as a continental country will not be addressed. Thus, the goal is to establish a standardized model of education that does not concern itself with the educational inequalities present in our country (Santos, 2020, p. 103).

In this context, the construction of the RCA was heavily influenced by the national curriculum policy, which is embedded in the logic, vision, knowledge, and understandings of highly urbanized spaces with specific sociocultural and historical characteristics that do not align with the local reality, one marked by the presence of Black, Quilombola, and Indigenous populations, thereby hindering the overcoming of racial and social inequalities in the region.

The historical and sociocultural characteristics of Amapá should compel any basic education teacher to appropriate the knowledge and understandings that are intrinsic to

those who live in the Amapá Amazon. The rich sociocultural diversity present in the region's social formation process highlights how much is lost, from the standpoint of knowledge production and school-based learning, when this set of specificities is not properly addressed by the RCA. According to the most recent census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the population of Amapá, in comparison to the rest of the country, is represented as follows:

Table 01: IBGE 2022 Census (Indigenous, Black, and Quilombola Population)

Population Group	Brazil – Total (n and %)	Amapá – Total (n)	Amapá – Percentage of State Population
Indigenous People	1,693,535 (0,83%)	11,334; hose Indigenous ethnic groups include five: Wajãpi, Galibi Kalinã, Galibi Marworno, Karipuna, and Palikur.	1.55%
Black (Preta)	20,656,458	86,662	11.83%
Brown (Parda)	92,083,286	478,975	65.39%
Total – Black Population (black + brown)	112,739,744 (over 50%)	565,637	77.22%
Quilombola Communities	1,327,802 (0,65%)	12,524	1.71%

Source: IBGE (Brazil, 2022).

The latest population census by IBGE (Brazil, 2022) highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the sociodemographic characteristics that make up the diversity of the local population. This social diversity of the Amapá Amazon should not be neglected, silenced, or subalternized by the RCA; however, the document makes the harmful mistake of addressing in a generic way what constitutes us as a local society.

This reveals the urgent need to decolonize the curricula being produced, which places us before an ethical, political, and cultural commitment to overcome the educational obstacles engendered by the discourse, mindset, and praxis of coloniality, elements that still resist and persist in memory, in representations, in official discourse, and in the practices of local educational policy. This challenge implies the need to construct a pedagogy committed to the anti-racist struggle, as the development of an anti-racist

curriculum, education, and society requires overcoming the paradigm of coloniality and the epistemic racism present in educational policy.

Oliveira (2016) states that, in this regard, decolonial education proposes a deep reflection on the colonial legacy and its implications for contemporary educational structures, aiming to deconstruct historical narratives that attempt to justify the oppression and ethnic-racial marginalization. It also fosters critical reflection on the power relations present within the educational environment.

It becomes essential to challenge the prevailing Eurocentric perspective, which disregards or underestimates the knowledge, traditions, and perspectives of non-Western cultures. Based on this critique, decolonial education assumes the ethical and political commitment to promote a revision of school curricula, incorporating a wide range of cultural and historical references that reflect human diversity.

According to Oliveira's (2016) perspective, this implies rethinking not only curricular content but also teaching methods, the relationships between teachers and students, and institutional dynamics. At the same time, decolonial education seeks intercultural and interethnic dialogue, which is essential for valuing multiple forms of knowledge. Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of creating educational environments that respect and value cultural, ethnic, and social diversity, thus contributing to the construction of more just and inclusive societies.

Coelho (2023), in analyzing the development of the Municipal Education Plan, states that it was approved by Municipal Law No. 2178/2015, within the timeframe established by the National Education Plan (2014–2024). From the standpoint of social representation by sectors focused on promoting ethnic-racial equality, participants invited to contribute included the Afro-descendant Movement of Amapá – MOCAMBO, the National Coordination for the Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities – CONAQ/AP, and the Municipal Institute for Policies to Promote Racial Equality – IMPROIR. However, participation in the committees and technical working groups responsible for drafting the plan was hindered by the short five-month deadline for completion, which resulted in twenty goals and 267 strategies the municipality would adopt over the course of ten years.

In the final draft of the bill, the City Council made a significant change to a section that referenced the populations of the countryside, waters, and forests, that is, the traditional communities that are part of the region. In addition, it removed the section that referred to Quilombola, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ populations, replacing it with the extremely generic phrasing: “disadvantaged sectors and groups historically excluded from society” (Coelho, 2023, p. 105).

In other words, the wording of the law itself ended up reproducing the historical silencing and invisibilization of difference and of ethnic-racial diversity that constitute the region’s original population, thus becoming contradictory to its own approved guidelines, such as the sixth and eighth directives: “VI – Overcoming educational inequalities, with an emphasis on the promotion of citizenship and the eradication of all forms of discrimination; VIII – Promotion of the principles of respect for human rights, diversity, and socio-environmental sustainability” (Coelho, 2023, p. 105).

Within this set of guidelines and goals, the municipality committed to promoting an education focused on combating racism and fostering ethnic-racial relations, through the coordination of the Municipal Department of Education (SEMED). Following the approval of the Municipal Education Plan (PME), SEMED created the Ethnic-Racial Division, which, in 2020, changed its name to the Diversity Division (DIDI), and became responsible for Quilombola and Indigenous education as well.

However, Gomes and Videira (2022) argue that the existence of anti-racist legislation, a formally established municipal plan, and a division responsible for its implementation does not necessarily guarantee the effectiveness of Law No. 10,639/03. Among the many factors that negatively affect implementation, one of the main obstacles is SEMED’s lack of public funding allocation, in addition to the presence of institutional racism.

In light of this scenario, although educational policies and certain practices still echo the praxis of coloniality, Freire (2013) also reminds us of the need to nurture a “pedagogy of hope,” committed to a political and ethical project that values difference and local knowledge. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize that one of the tasks of education is to

provide students with the “critical understanding of how social conflicts occur” (Freire, 2013, p. 118) and, furthermore, how these conflicts are constructed and reproduced within a given reality, as well as the types of obstacles imposed to prevent their resolution.

Consequently, educational action, according to Freire (2013), must be an action of and for liberation, in which students and teachers are active subjects in this dialogical process. Thus, to consider education for ethnic-racial relations in the Amazonian context is to recognize, respect, and value the historical and cultural legacies of the ethnic groups that make up this region. Formal education must serve as a space of inclusion and a guarantee that ethnic identities are respected, principles upheld by the body of anti-racist legislation currently in force in Brazil. Ensuring this is the duty of public authorities at all levels.

5 Conclusion

The analysis conducted shows that, in the municipality of Macapá, the implementation of anti-racist public policies still faces deep structural challenges. The naturalization and denial of racism have historically built an *ethos* of indifference toward manifestations of structural and institutional racism, which hinders the consolidation of effective educational policies in this area. This indifference is grounded in the myth of racial democracy, which masks inequalities and makes it difficult to directly confront ethnic-racial asymmetries. Therefore, anti-racist and decolonial pedagogy can contribute both as a value and as an educational and epistemic practice.

The enactment of Law No. 10,639/2003 and related legislation undoubtedly represented a significant rupture within the Brazilian educational field. While it has fostered a paradigm shift by including ethnic-racial themes in school curricula and teacher training debates, its impacts on the daily life of schools and public policies remain partial. In Macapá, as observed, the implementation of these guidelines has been uneven, often limited by a lack of proper training for education professionals, a scarcity of contextualized

teaching materials, and weak institutional engagement by municipal and state education departments.

The Amapá Amazon, as a territory of great ethnic, cultural, and social diversity, presents specificities that demand educational policies attuned to its local realities. In this context, anti-racist and decolonial pedagogy emerges as a fundamental epistemological and practical proposal to deconstruct the Eurocentric imaginary and promote an education committed to equity. However, the effectiveness of this pedagogy requires the collective engagement of public administrators, teachers, training institutions, social movements, and school communities.

It is important, however, to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research was based primarily on documentary and bibliographic analysis, without conducting interviews or fieldwork in Macapá's schools. This limitation prevents a deeper understanding of how anti-racist policies have (or have not) been experienced in school routines and what their concrete effects are on the subjects involved. Furthermore, the research focused mainly on the educational dimension, without more broadly exploring other areas of affirmative public policy such as health, culture, or social assistance.

In light of this, future studies should include empirical research that involves listening to teachers, students, and school administrators in the municipality, in order to map ongoing anti-racist practices, identify challenges faced, and explore strategies of resistance. It is also relevant to expand the debate to other territories within the Legal Amazon, to understand how national affirmative policies are articulated with, or contradicted by, the local realities marked by the strong presence of Indigenous peoples, Quilombola communities, and other traditional groups.

In times of democratic backsliding and the rise of denialist discourses, decolonial education must be reaffirmed as an ethical and political horizon for social transformation. It not only challenges the foundations of colonial and racist education but also proposes new ways of being, knowing, and coexisting, rooted in plurality, justice, and the recognition of historically silenced memories and knowledge.

For these and other reasons, decolonial education represents an invitation to critical reflection on the foundations of current education, calling for an ongoing political and ethical commitment capable of breaking with the racist mindset and enabling deep transformations. These transformations involve the decolonization of knowledge, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the overcoming of historically rooted inequalities within both the educational system and society as a whole.

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Ad hoc experts: Maria de Lourdes Leoncio Macedo e Emilia Suitberta Oliveira Trigueiro.

How to cite this article (ABNT):

BEZERRA, Moisés de Jesus Prazeres dos Santos.; FOSTER, Eugénia da Luz Silva.; CUSTÓDIO, Elivaldo Serrão. Education for ethnic-racial relations in the municipality of Macapá: legal framework and educational reality. **Rev. Pemo**, Fortaleza, v. 7, e15621, 2025. Available at: <https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo/article/view/15621>

Received on May 28, 2025.

Accepted on August 17, 2025.

Published on September 24, 2025.