

# Cultural Diversity: Inclusion and Integration Through Education

Dalila Figueroa Castellanos<sup>1\*</sup>, C Doris Virgilio Licea Milan<sup>2</sup>, Omara Frómata Masó<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alberto Fernandez Basic Secondary School Montes de Oca.

<sup>2</sup>University of the East

\*Corresponding Author: Dalila Figueroa Castellanos, Alberto Fernandez Basic Secondary School Montes de Oca.

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## Abstract

Society as a whole is complex and contradictory, as is man himself, and it will be vital for the purposes of achieving true inclusion through education to address those problems that constitute discriminatory treatment in different social spaces, such as valuing individuals by the color of their skin. From these perspectives, the objective of the research is to promote anti-racist education by incorporating the historical approach, scientific culture and real humanism as theoretical and practical premises, since in its dialectical unity anti-racism emerges as a value, a purpose of great interest for the Caribbean region, where still in different degrees of intensity there is a tendency to divide society between whites, mestizos and blacks and even non-whites marked by many years of discrimination remain in the lower levels of society.

**Keywords:** historical approach; scientific culture; real humanism; anti-racist education; value

## Introduction

Everything would be very easy for the region if cultural processes were linear; if there were a strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood between peoples and governments; if the negative elements confronted in the history of society were left behind; if prejudices and sociocultural stereotypes were erased from the minds of men; but reality is not like that.

Society as a whole is complex and contradictory, just like man himself, and it will be vital for the purposes being pursued to have crystal-clear clarity of the factors, processes, phenomena, ideologies and individuals that present themselves with their negative influences and actions, objectively and subjectively influencing the behavior of communities, raising contradictions, promoting the forgetting of history, strengthening culture that comes from outside, erasing traditions and, if necessary, reducing their brothers to violent beings, bearers of anti-values, which weaken the very existence of society.

For these reasons, delving into a cultural phenomenon that includes how to address anti-racist education in current times requires, above all, a clear conception of its historical roots, of understanding the contexts in which these discriminatory relationships have been promoted and the way in which attempts have been made to justify this inhuman treatment, even resorting to pseudoscientific concepts to maintain, first, slaves in an inferior position and then all those who, because of their skin color, were not considered white.

Furthermore, with this educational intention, emphasis is placed on developing a scientific cultural vision that promotes insight into the contributions of science in contemporary times in relation to the characteristics of the human species, demonstrating with arguments its

unique origin, with subsequent transformations in its adaptation to different geographic and environmental contexts, throughout history.

In parallel with educational actions related to racial issues, it is essential, for an effective understanding, to reveal how, in social development in different regions, countries and even in localities, personalities have been projected up to the present day who have founded a conception of a real humanism that contemplates coexistence without discrimination of any kind and from these perspectives an anti-racist culture will be promoted.

## Development

The racial problem is present with a certain intensity in different regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, generally linked to skin color and other characteristics that lead to considering a physical and intellectual superiority of some supposed races over others. Regarding the study presented, it is framed in the Caribbean as a cultural space characterized by a historical, economic and social existence with a high predominance of slave labor.

From this perspective, James J. (2018:100) insisted that: "When we talk about the Caribbean, we are not referring, of course, to a strictly geographical reference; we understand that this term can and should be used with full relevance, in every area of this hemisphere where production was organized with the purpose of being realized in the world market, with slave labor, all of which entails a process of cultural formulation with very diverse colors."

This assertion leads to the phenomenon going beyond the Caribbean Sea, reaching areas of the Central American Pacific, northeastern Brazil, southern United States, among others. This conception is shared by the authors, who recognize differences in the way this phenomenon has been conceptualized;

but at the same time there are points of contact in the scientific, methodological and educational tools that can be applied in certain contexts to promote anti-racist behaviors that contribute to the cultural integration of these peoples.

Certainly, in order to achieve the transformation that is required in this area, educators and individuals in general must penetrate into the particular problems of peoples and communities, provoke a change in mentalities, a different interaction between educators, families and community factors, since it demands moving from a sometimes veiled relationship of discrimination to a culture that elevates the values of men for their attitude, behavior and social commitment, not one that considers skin color or other discriminatory traits as determinants. Therefore, it is essential to reveal cultural and educational practices from the sciences in favor of achieving societies free of racist conceptions and consequently of racial discrimination.

### **Historical approach to the educational treatment of the racial problem**

Since ancient times, differences have been expressed between men based on skin color, even more recently, in the 19th century, there were interpretations of the Bible with a racist intention to justify the differences that had been occurring due to skin color, others in defense of a reactionary ideology sought justification in social Darwinism, speaking of races: white, Mongolian yellow and black (Carrazana, 2023). In the Caribbean area, the process of conquest and colonization was outlining the exploitation of the aborigines first and of the African blacks as the former were decreasing for different reasons.

The need to significantly increase the use of these Africans for different tasks led representatives of nascent capitalism to seek pseudo-scientific explanations to justify the inhuman treatment to which they were subjected during long working days. In addition to the deplorable social situation, Africans and their descendants were discriminated against because of the pigmentation of their skin.

In accordance with this logic, we must look to the past and understand that the phenomenon of racial discrimination, due to its historical nature, was promoted by men themselves at times when it was necessary to justify the excessive exploitation of human groups that were differentiated by skin color and who were often classified as inferior beings, seen as different from their exploiters, which was accompanied by philosophical discourses that justified such behavior.

This discrimination extended to different fields of culture understood in its broadest conception, as well as “Western philosophy ignores other universals created by itself, such as the content encompassed by the concept of “blackness” - which refers to a subordinate, crushed, denied reality condemned to mimesis; a world buried in front of another: the world of whiteness...” (Valdés, F. 2017. 18)

From these perspectives it is clear that in contemporary times it is very difficult to find a society that is free from these actions, because social and cultural differences persist and become more acute as crises of all kinds increase and last over time interacting with natural phenomena that together make the already critical living conditions of many groups and nations in the world more deplorable. It is rightly stated that “racism can be greatly reinforced if social inequalities become more acute, due to the tendency for there to be social strata and groups that participate less in wealth and are less socially favored, people and groups that can be placed in terms of behavior...” (Martínez, F. 2015. 20)

Those affected by these circumstances have not always remained passive in the face of such discriminatory behavior. Black men and many vigilante whites have not remained calm either, as these trends have been the subject of many clashes of facts and thoughts that make this phenomenon a history

that has not remained in the past. Although in social practice the behavior has other nuances, the truth is that frankly racist attitudes have not disappeared, which sometimes lead to physical disappearance in some countries, such as the United States itself.

Nor can the revolutionary exploits of Haitian slaves be forgotten, consequently: “It is necessary to do epistemic justice to complete the independence processes initiated more than two hundred years ago in Haiti and to accept the knowledge of those who have always been excluded, discriminated against for their “race”, denied and silenced, both in the indigenous American and Caribbean world, beyond the traditions of the academies and the narrow disciplinary forms of organizing knowledge (Valdés, F. 2017. 17).

In the Cuban case, as in other Caribbean countries, it is clear that the racial problem has been present due to the existence of a plantation economy that was based on slave labor and that its influence did not end with the abolition of slavery, because in the later stage and mainly in the neocolonial years, this feeling of social differences, going so far as to divide society between whites, mestizos and blacks and even going so far as to barbarize by murdering thousands of the latter two for demanding their rights, left deep marks on society; however, many with more diplomatic and underhanded methods continued to discriminate and seek alternatives to maintain and foster hatred between brothers and frequently turn the claim of these individuals into accusations to sustain the fear of blacks, a phenomenon that had already caused so much damage in previous years.

### **The need for scientific culture to address anti-racism in education**

“Perhaps one day the human being will finally understand his inhuman background and banish it, as he should banish war and violence in general. But all this happens because man is a complex creature. Five dimensions coexist in the same organism: he is a biological, psychological, cultural, social and environmental being. His first dimension, of course, is biological, as a living being... the psychological, makes him a thinking or rational being... because then he conceives the other three: he is a cultural being... he creates a material or tangible culture and another immaterial, intangible or spiritual one. He is a social being because he lives in society, that is, he consciously builds his coexistence... and finally, an environmental being because he interacts with ecosystems and the environment in general. That is the complexity of the human being” (Rensoli, R. 2021. 10).

Precisely in view of this complexity, education aims to form man and culture in their dialectical interrelation; a man who thinks, who feels, who values what he does, who is capable of creating and loving, preparing him for life and work, which constitute the very essence of the educational process; developing his critical conscience and forming his creativity, making him the protagonist of his historical moment with a great sense of human solidarity. A man who projects himself for his own improvement and that of society, who lives in a collective and who does not discriminate against his fellow man for his wealth or lack thereof, or for the color of his skin, who admires others for their behavior in society.

In this process of human formation, many factors interact, some for good and others against it; but in the positive sense, there is a strengthening of the identity as an individual, of his historical and collective memory, of moral values in accordance with the social system that acquires greater relevance if it is related and argued as an act proper to men in a given context, in the manner of Martí's criteria, which recognizes and bets on the man who does good in society, the one who is interested in daily enrichment, in an integral culture, who is an ally of science, who promotes creativity and artistic culture, in short, human improvement.

To elevate human behavior to that dimension it is necessary to have the full conviction that “The world is two-dimensional: natural and cultural. Nature is objective, it is not created by man and exists outside and independent of his will. Culture is everything material and spiritual that man creates by representing, reproducing or transforming nature. Nature and culture should go hand in hand. Science is part of culture and what science validates should be irreversibly assumed by man's culture, but this is not always the case” (Rensoli, R. 2021. 9).

For this approach to be valid in the educational process, professionals in this area of knowledge must be aware that the appropriation of human culture occurs through activity, a category explained from Marxist philosophy, arguing its origin, types and evolution; which mediates the relationship between man and objective reality; historical culture as part of human culture contains the origins of acquired knowledge, interweaving all the elements of the social superstructure in a given context and its relationship with others.

From these perspectives, a scientific analysis of this procedure is taking place, which at the same time becomes part of man's own culture. Culture develops in a historical-social process, each historical moment of society has its expressions, traditional culture: family, religious, popular and community. This understanding of the actions of men in certain contexts leads to the distinction that discrimination based on skin colour as a historical phenomenon was imposed by man and that therefore the actions of other generations empowered by an anti-racist scientific culture can manifest themselves free of such discrimination.

Contemporary scientific studies carried out in the social sphere as part of scientific culture focus on the specific historical moment, the ideology and society of those who carry them out, while representing the culture of individuals. This approach raises the need to prioritize certain processes that act in an integrated manner in a given context, so that knowledge of historical phenomena is closely related to education in values, attributing a vital character to human life, as is the case with the research of carrying out a historical- cultural approach to the phenomenon of racism and racial discrimination, to demonstrate in the educational process, its origin from the interests of dominant classes to justify their inferiority.

Precisely when one delves into the history of such behaviors “ This biological theory of differentiation of human beings by race was ideologically used in the stage of decomposition of feudalism and its transition to capitalist relations of production to justify an entire theory without scientific basis of the superiority of some races over others and of the white race over the rest, the so-called “White Supremacy”, without biological support since no one ever demonstrated that biologically some human beings were more intelligent and capable than others... It is not that we are racially different men, but that we all have the same origin and there are no races among human beings” (Rensoli, R. 2021. 12) .

This conception, as research and consequently knowledge about social development advance, presided over by the impetuous advance of the scientific-technical revolution on the one hand and great differences between human beings on the other hand, determines great changes in the scientific-cultural field and imposes certain challenges to education, which cannot be marginalized from the reality of a world characterized by an acute ideological struggle, and by constant and accelerated social transformations.

Although the achievements made by some countries in the region in the educational sphere are undeniable, this does not mean that these results fully correspond to the demands that society makes for its improvement, at a time when many behaviors are expressed in manifestations of discrimination based on skin color.

In short, we must move forward quickly to promote and consolidate scientific, historical and integral culture, because as Torres Cuevas (2017. 5) has expressed, “...deculturizing and erasing historical memory, and excluding the art of thinking constitute today central elements in a globalizing offensive that requires these absences for a non-conventional or traditional domination”, therefore, in the face of this phenomenon, we must count on the educational reinforcement of the new generations that implicitly includes cultural diversity and the existence of anti-racist thought with systematic practice.

### **Practicing real humanism for anti-racist education**

The preparation of man for life that Martí conceived through education also came close to producing what society needed; it was to have a work and practical base, since he considered this to be edifying from a physical, moral and intellectual point of view, and in this last aspect he insisted on scientific education both in its content and in the teaching method. In this conception his highest effort was in his humanist character, in his love for man whatever his social condition, since he believed in human improvement, in patriotism, in reaching higher levels of spirituality in love for the family and for all human work, in always doing good.

In this sense, “Practical humanism is that which does not limit itself to simply identifying with the hardship of men in certain circumstances of slavery, exploitation or discrimination, but rather indicates the ways and instruments to effectively achieve the elimination of such forms of alienation, and also experiences it through heroic personal example” (Guadarrama, 2015.319) and in his considerations, this same author when referring to Martí's practical humanism stated that “It is not a matter of simple philanthropy or mercy that animates his practical humanism, but the firm conviction that man must have, by his own right, a fully dignified existence, as Martí demanded at other times and planned to achieve in the future Cuban republic, a principle that presides over the Constitution and the sociopolitical praxis of today's Cuba” (234).

Martí (1975) insisted on the mixed-race condition of the peoples of our America and from that perspective he imposed an education that enriched identity, he insisted on highlighting everything that led to unity, to the things that make people similar and, on the contrary, opposing hatred between brothers, the divisions of groups and people for reasons of creed, skin color or for other formal reasons, which distanced men from their human essence.

In education, it finds support in its commitment to the freedom of its country, in the formation of feelings and consequently the growth of individuals with culture, it is the conception of uniting the cognitive with the axiological, therefore it is the bearer of a philosophical foundation, which has at its center man as a human being, where all appear equal in their physical integrity and there is no reason for discrimination because of their skin color, it will be their own formation and their daily practice before society that can incorporate differences between men, hence the importance that it conceived to form in them the humanistic sense of their existence.

There were tasks that in his time were accomplished by his own personal example and the effectiveness of his thought and action, others "such as the defense of the sovereignty of Latin American countries against Yankee imperialist domination, agrarian reform, mass literacy, the dignification of the Indian, the black and the woman; the vindication of the cultural values of the Latin American peoples, among others - were postponed for the new generations of intellectuals and politicians" (Guadarrama, 2015.321)

This means that the practice of real humanism, in the current conditions of the countries of the Caribbean region, must be accompanied by an educational treatment of its peoples that allows them to transform their own vision and value their potential as individuals, regardless of their skin color,

that is, that they raise their self-esteem and project themselves and propose transformations by facing discriminatory positions and conceptions of inferiority related to poverty. It is essential to promote, with its particularities, human development in these countries.

This human development approach takes into account the expansion of people's opinions, since not only material wealth and income are taken into account, it extends to other needs such as the approach to human resources, basic needs and in general the well-being of human life, understood as "the expansion of opportunities for individuals, social groups and territorially organized communities, of small and medium scale, as well as the mobilization of capacities and resources for an equitable common benefit, which takes into account gender equity in economic, social and political terms, evaluated from human development" (Dubois, 2019. 214).

This definition could be expanded if we aim for complete human well-being, with the non-existence of discrimination based on skin colour, religious beliefs and other ways of dividing society. Educating from these perspectives of understanding real humanism constitutes a procedure that contributes to an anti-racist culture and social equity in the formation of individuals.

### **Racial issues in the Caribbean: educational reflections to transform social practices**

The complexity of the problems addressed justifies Martí's concern since the 19th century when he warned: "One should not be careless in the things that involve the life of men. Human life is a science; and one must study the root and the special data of each aspect of it. It is not enough to be generous to be a reformer. It is essential not to be ignorant. The generous incites; but only the wise resolve. The best wise man is the one who knows the facts." (Martí 1975. 250/251)

This reflection leads to having appropriate knowledge of the situation in the region so that the projected proposals have an objective basis. It is common in the Caribbean that the racial problem is linked to poverty and the real situation of needs of many of its inhabitants; the wealth that moves in certain scenarios is not proportional to the poverty that surrounds them (many jurisdictions with international financial centers - off-shore banking centers are located in this region). In addition, there is a behavior that maintains among many inhabitants the dominant idea of "races", of social differentiation, of discrimination by skin color.

Historically, the area became the scene of imperial appetites, leaving a linguistic and cultural heritage, different metropolitan links, being very close, sharing references and traditions sometimes distant, faced with similar problems, the Antillean was forced to speak metropolitan languages, to hide the blackness of his skin, to look like the European man "... black is detested and for the collective unconscious, black is immoral... it is drawn as wild, lacking in finesse, incestuous, phallic and an uncontrollable sensuality. White is its opposite, it is synonymous with beauty and virtue..." (Valdés, F, 2010:254)

In parallel, as in a dialectical unit, there are conditions that privilege the identity of these peoples, of particular incidence is that related to their imprint (of the slaves), who strongly resisted not only the regime of forced labor, but also the values and beliefs that the white man tried to impose on them, in this process, both their physical and cultural strength, was affirmed by African folklore that has been fundamentally preserved in religious survivals, practiced by the African-American masses (Santería, Voodoo and Candomblé), it was a moral code that ordered the lives of its followers.

In this folklore, the forms maintain their African character, but the content already includes the new reality of the slave: plantation, forced submission, pain, rupture (manifestations of rebellion in dances and stories). All this as a

whole has been incorporated into the population, mostly black and mixed race, over the centuries, constituting a cultural unit with great strength.

Considering these characteristics, the education of individuals today must be projected into the necessary reflections on the issue of resistance to the neoliberal model and, in particular, promote the anti-racist approach, the fight against poverty, marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion.

It is considered important to rescue the historical memory and value the existence of personalities who have faced this type of discrimination in the Caribbean, from a perspective of unity, identity, and their own values, such as the Haitian Jean Price-Mars, the Dominican Aimé Césaire, the Cubans Fernando Ortiz and Alejo Carpentier, the Trinidadian Eric Williams, among others, who have in their essential content the complex Caribbean reality, racial problems, the slave trade, the dominance of European symbols and ideals; but before these realities there is the perspective of human emancipation, the overcoming of schemes and norms, and the value of science to eliminate prejudices.

Furthermore, awareness and practical educational, political and governmental actions are required, as well as a true integration free of the constraints of hegemonic power groups. From these perspectives, Cuba's contributions in various areas to achieve true social inclusion are valuable, as manifested in its actions in most Caribbean countries through systematic collaboration.

It may also be interesting to briefly review how Cuba has assessed this problem and the way in which it reflects and plans theoretical and practical actions that have an impact on the growth of an anti-racist culture. For these purposes, there is the National Program against Racism and Racial Discrimination and its Executive Coordinating Group.

The premise has been to recognize the subjective problems that are related to the presence of historically inherited patterns, prejudices and distorted perceptions about ethnic reality, poor perception of the existence of the problem, the cultural drag of "races", expressions of inferiority towards non-whites, disqualification of African cultural traditions, among others.

Objectively, historically accumulated disadvantages have been identified: in education, culture, economics, living conditions, the breadth of knowledge, lack of research on the subject, and even a lack of recognition of the African historical-cultural legacy, among other considerations.

Based on these reflections, the following actions could be developed:

- "Articulate scientific-social research programs that thoroughly study the problem
- Continue to advance in the introduction of understanding of the subject in school...
- Maintain a systematic and balanced presence of the promotion of the Cuban ethno-nation and anti-racist education in the media...
- Articulate the struggle for the promotion of an anti-racist consciousness in our society with that of other peoples, such as the cases of the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean..." (Rojas et al. 2022. 103/104).

Undoubtedly, the Caribbean, due to the history of its peoples, largely made up of large masses of slaves, and the process of transculturation, has suffered racism and racial discrimination, with all its cultural consequences, the marginalization of individuals due to the color of their skin, maximum exploitation and the justification of their inferiority, all of which has permeated current generations, so that in the presence of many of these problems, it is necessary to turn to education as an important weapon, among others, to confront this unnatural and ethically repugnant construction.



## Conclusions

The incorporation of the historical approach, scientific culture and real humanism in dialectical interaction in the educational treatment of the racial problem promotes anti-racist culture and consequently contributes to the formation of anti-racism as a value, an extremely necessary aspiration in the current conditions of the Caribbean peoples who are heirs of several centuries of slavery and neocolonialism, which is also to say racial discrimination.

Non-white individuals marked by racism and racial discrimination have historically been relegated to the lower levels of society; however, the confrontations of intellectuals with their humanistic conceptions and inclusive social practices have not been sufficient to eradicate them to date, so this negative balance must continue to be faced, counting among its alternatives the elevation of culture through inclusive education, which definitively promotes the value of men for their social behavior, their humanism, their commitment to society and their solidarity actions, regardless of their color.

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