

## Introduction

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This issue, entitled “Education, Racism, and Interculturality”, is directed at inviting readers to “think through conversation” about the kaleidoscopic relationship between certain phenomena: education as one of the institutions that was configured by the political and racial project of *mestizaje* (racial mixing), on the one hand, and on the other, education as a complex epicenter in which intercultural practices as well as racist dynamics converge. It is in response to this racial project that initiatives have emerged with the goal of fighting for cognitive justice through the creation of an appropriate education. In this sense, racism in this issue is analyzed as a practice of biased oppression that generates exclusion for some and privileges for others. These oppressive practices may base discrimination not only on appearance and skin color, but also on language and culture. Thus racism is not only inscribed on bodies, it also implies epistemic exclusion and the invisibilization of knowledges and skills which have been racialized. In this vein scholastic space is scrutinized in this issue as a field where power is structured in hierarchies and as a place from which actions that challenge the monocultural visions of education are developed.

These hierarchies have been the subject of concern and scrutiny in a plethora of places. The research carried out by PERLA (The Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America<sup>1</sup>) in 2010 is particularly noteworthy, as it provides evidence that average years of schooling vary according to students’ identity and skin color: whilst the average years of schooling for a person identifying as Indigenous is 5.6 years, the same for non-Indigenous (perhaps Mestizo?) is 8.9 years. And if skin color is factored in, those with darker skin average 7 years, while those with lighter skin average 9 years of schooling. That is to say, identities and skin color are determinants in access to education, with non-Indigenous and light-skinned children being the most privileged. In other words, racism structures the social life of certain people and thus marks educational and life trajectories.

In this context the Network of Interdisciplinary Research on Identities, Racism, and Xenophobia in Latin America (*Red Integra*) took on the task of creating a synergy project which will bring together researchers, members of non-profits, activists, and students interested in addressing racism and its multiple intersections. This issue is a contribution to that effort. We thus congratulate the University of Guadalajara review *Diálogos sobre educación* for creating the space to bring this topic to the debate table and for carrying out the work of soliciting and selecting texts.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information go to: <https://perla.princeton.edu>

While the reader will find a myriad of perspectives, it is important to mention, as many times as necessary, that although races don't exist, racism does, and it is more present than we think. In this vein the issue opens with a text by Cristina Verónica Masferrer entitled, "I'm not Sitting Next to You", which clarifies how racism is understood, the difference between discriminating and racializing, and how speaking in terms of races reproduces stereotypes and racist prejudices. Through observations of elementary schools with Afro-Mexican students in the Costa Chica of Oaxaca, her text invites the reader to reflect on the importance of generating grammars and vocabularies for understanding human interactions in terms other than race.

The article by Elizabeth Castillo Guzmán and José Antonio Caicedo helps us comprehend that racism doesn't spring from human nature, but rather is constituted by a system of oppression with clear historic roots that have anti-Black as well as anti-Indigenous components. Through an analysis of representations of Afro-Colombian identities in educational texts, the authors show us that we live in an adult-centric, racialized world where structures have contributed to what they call reductive visibility, that is to say, stereotype. By the same token, Margarita Gutiérrez explains clearly that racism is a system of domination that privileges some and harms others. This is reflected in the dispute for university space between Mestizo and Indigenous students. The arrival of Indigenous students to institutions of higher education such as UNACH threatens or challenges the privilege of Mestizo students, as is shown by Gutiérrez's interviews. The growing phenomenon of Indigenous access to monocultural educational spaces can't be understood outside of a racial framework, something that is shown in Cynthia Astudillo Ventura's text. Nonetheless, one of the challenges for the discussion of racism in Mexico and Latin America is how to identify genealogies of racism and education that aren't couched in Eurocentric perspectives, but rather that allow us to problematize the historic context of our continent. Rodrigo Zárate Moedano makes a contribution to the discussion of the featured triad by giving us methodological tools for its analysis, an important task given that even though we know that these elements exist and can identify them, we still don't have clear methodological strategies with which to approach them. Zárate's article thus is a welcome contribution. Similarly, Maike Kreisel shows us the political, communicative, and epistemic effort to fight for "cognitive justice" in Indigenous middle school classrooms in Oaxaca. In this sense, Kreisel's text is key in understanding one of the most important dimensions of racism: the epistemological. As Kreisel indicates, these processes aren't free of contradictions. For example, in the collective text entitled, "'Interculturality for All' in Urban Schools, a Proposal Against Eurocentrism in Schools", the reader will be able to see how Intercultural Bilingual Education, in the specific context of the city of Morelia, Michoacan, continues to be couched in Eurocentric curricula and content. This situation not only impedes an understanding of diversity beyond its folkloric aspects, but also creates the erroneous idea that interculturality belongs exclusively to Indigenous groups. We can even affirm that Indigenous groups have always been intercultural, since, as shown in Mayorga and Vergara's text, Indigenous Wixaritari teaching candidates have had to learn the

language of the Mestizo world. Nonetheless, although institutions reproduce their own logic, this doesn't impede teachers from exercising agency and achieving the articulation of new intercultural proposals in education, as is shown in the article, "Teaching Practice and Cultural Diversity". Here interculturality is understood as a complex phenomenon that is not always harmonious. This is supported in a text by Alejandro Martínez Canales which proposes an analysis of interculturality not only based on the experience of ethnicity, but also as a wider experience of subaltern social status.

The text, "Between Two Worlds: Processes of Adaptation, Interculturality, and Aspirations in Children of Mexican Immigrants in the United States", features an analysis of the diverse factors that come into play when children of immigrants in the United States gain access to education and how these contribute to processes of cultural adaptation. The debate here invites us to reflect on the crucial role that education plays in the reproduction of racism. Saúl Velasco Cruz and Bruno Barronet invite us to the possibility of openly recognizing and declaring that Mexico is indeed a racist country. After pinpointing the different dimensions of racism in the educational process (curricula, policies, daily interactions), this text is one of the few that tries to turn our gaze towards the hidden face of racism, that is, towards certain areas of "comfort" or privilege. With this analysis this issue intends to orient a discussion of racism in education which, beyond emphasizing that races don't exist, pushes us to avoid reductionist explanations that erase the complexity of the problem. As is indicated in this last text, it is essential that official, popular, or autonomous educations revolve around policies of inclusion and an antiracist lens that might help disentangle the racial logics of the project of *Mestizaje* and lead to a redistribution of knowledge.

Lastly, the issue includes 5 reviews that cover the discussion of the construction of otherness and its role in the reproduction of racism. This is the theme of the review of the doctoral thesis, "Raza, racismo y educación escolar en México", presented by Diego Morales Esquivel. In another review, Jesús Segura De la merced invites to take a closer look at the book, *Racismo e infancia: aproximaciones a un debate en el decenio de los pueblos negros afrodescendientes*. Fortino Domínguez Rueda contributes a review entitled, "Maps of Multiculturalism and Interculturality". In Ruth Belinda Bustos Córdova's review, entitled "Research on the Border Between School and Community: An Intersection of Anthropology and Education", we can see how the field of education is a relevant space for an analysis of power relations. Finally, Gisela Carlos Fregoso, in her review *Inmigración y racismo. Contribuciones a la historia de los extranjeros en México*, coordinated by Pablo Yankelevich, calls on us to reflect not only on racism but also on the persistent issue of xenophobia in Mexico.

We thank the review for giving us the space to discuss this phenomenon.