Racism and the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil: confrontation according to different ethnicities

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Abstract

Data from the latest Brazilian demographic census uncover that the black and brown population in Brazil represent 55.6% of the total population. Nevertheless, this does not guarantee access to a fairer income distribution and access to health and quality education. The objective of this article is to evaluate the individual differences and psychological suffering resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic among indigenous and Afro-descendants compared to other ethnic groups. Participated in this study 1,914 individuals (22.3% men and 77.7% women), with age between 14 and 86 (average = 34.88 SD = 13.61), from 24 Brazilian states and the Federal District that answered the instruments online through googleforms. The results have shown significant differences in age, income and occupation according to ethnic group, with self-declared black and indigenous groups in more vulnerable conditions than other ethnic groups. In comparison with the other ethnic groups, Asians had significantly lower scores in extroversion while Blacks had significantly higher scores in openness. The data demonstrate that racism has continued in Brazil despite inclusion policies as well as the intensification and invisibilization of certain ethnic groups with the pandemic

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1. Introduction

Racism in Brazil is structural, and it has relegated millions of Brazilians to live in situations of extreme poverty and insecurity at all levels, whether food, physical or political. This article intends to contribute to the theoretical and empirical discussion about racism and its different instances in Brazilian society in light of the intersections caused by social inequalities and the level of access to health in situations provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Historical foundations of Brazilian Racism
Since the beginning of the Brazilian territory occupation in the 16th century, the State has been an instrument to promote exclusion and reaffirm racism by endorsing the segregation of Brazilian blacks and indigenous peoples. This aspect can be observed both in the Portuguese State in the colonial period, as well as in the Brazilian State since independence in 1822.

Indigenous people were segregated through the adoption of the village policy that was both idealized and organized by the Jesuits shortly after the arrival of six of their representatives in the country who accompanied Brazil's first General Governor, the Portuguese Tomé de Sousa, back in 1549. The Jesuit order was the first to disembark in Brazil, followed by the Benedictines in 1583, the Franciscans in 1585 and the Carmelites in 1589. The Jesuit hegemony in the colonizing project, however, was notable. Among its actions were the conversion and struggle against the enslavement of the indigenous, the creation of three colleges, one in Salvador and the other two in both Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo, also the establishment of a policy of appropriation of the indigenous languages, with a view to their use in favor of the colonial aims and the management of the villages or settlements (Palacin, 1981, Nazareno, 2019a).

The settlements policy would extend, in different ways, until the nineteenth century and was basically to bring together the indigenous people in certain localities, the villages, in order to catechize and convert them into the Portuguese crown subjects. Along with their presence and strong political influence in all the captaincies existing in Brazil at that time, they embodied a kind of unitary consciousness for the Portuguese colonization project

(Palacin, 1981, Monteiro, 2001, Milanez et al, 2019). On the contrary to what until recently was described by Western historiography, there was much resistance to the settlements and the colonizing project on the part of the indigenous peoples. This was one of the causes for the failure of the village policy throughout the colonization process (Almeida, 2010, 2017; Nascimento, 2019). There were about 1,300 indigenous peoples in Brazil at the time of the Portuguese' arrival in 1500, which would correspond to some five million individuals. After 520 years, there are just over 305 peoples and around 780,000 indigenous people left. Indigenous slavery would soon be joined by the slavery of African blacks as of 1550 (Alencastro, 2018).

From 1550 to 1850, 4 million 800 thousand Africans landed in Brazil. The country was the largest importer of African slaves from the Americas (Alencastro, 2018). Even after the country's independence in 1822, the slave trade continued intensively. This may explain, according to Alencastro (2018), the longevity of slavery in Brazil, one of the last countries to abolish it in 1888. As for the Portuguese, 750,000 individuals arrived in Brazil. This means that "of every 100 people landed in Brazil during this period, 86 were African slaves and 14 were Portuguese settlers and immigrants" (Alencastro, 2018, p. 4). At the same time that African slavery established in Brazil, resistance to it by newly arrived Africans is also reestablished. The main strategy of resistance used was escape and the formation of quilombos.

These were organized by fugitive slaves generally in areas of difficult access in the interior of Brazil, with the clear purpose of preventing them from being found by their pursuers. Despite different denominations, palenques, cimarrones, maroons, it was a recurring phenomenon throughout America (Araújo & Nazareno, 2013). The repression against this kind of initiative was brutal, subjecting those who resorted to it with punishments ranging from limb amputation to death and dismemberment in a public square (Araújo & Nazareno, 2013). Howbeit, centuries of repression were not enough to restrain the attempts of the quilombola populations to remain in their quilombos in nearly all Brazilian territory (Silva, 2015, Nazareno, Herbetta & Araújo, 2018).

Thus, this whole process of violence that is constitutive in the formation of the Brazilian nation has gone through different stages without its structural bases being substantially altered. Conversely, these structures seem to be being strengthened in recent years. The level of violence and racism against black and indigenous populations has increased alarmingly. The myth of racial democracy in Brazil is heir to the revolution of 1930, when some sectors of the Brazilian elites made a commitment to modernize the country (Fausto, 1981). In this sense, what was seen before as an obstacle to achieving the Western civilization ideal, so characteristic in the 19th and early 20th centuries, which is the undesired presence of Blacks in the formation of Brazil, is now one of the elements of the Brazilian nation through the idea of miscegenation.

1.2 Legal milestones in the fight against Brazilian racism

Over the past 40 years, Brazil has undergone an important process of redemocratization through which there was an intense process of popular mobilization that claimed, among other things, the reparation of the evils caused by centuries of social exclusion in relation to indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, indigenous and Afro-descendants conceived important political organizations, National Indigenous Union (UNI), founded in 1980 and the Unified Black Movement (MNU), founded in 1978, which exerted enormous political and social pressure to that their claims were heard and solved. All this mobilization became an extraordinary mechanism of pressure on the constituent process that started in 1986 and ended with the promulgation of the Constitution in 1988. Due to social mobilizations and the performance of organized sectors of Brazilian society, political parties, unions and other organizations, the 1988 Constitution recognized Brazil for the first time in its history, as a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country. In fact, in Brazil there were seven constitutions (1824, 1891, 1934, 1937, 1946, 1967 and 1988), the latter being the only one that recognizes the country as multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, demonstrating, initially, a paradigm shift.

As a result of this recognition and as new legal frameworks, the 1988 Constitution in its article 5, item XLVII, regulated, for the first time in Brazilian history, racism as a non-bailable and imprescriptible crime (Batista, 2018). Another very important legal framework in relation to people of African descent was Article 68 of the Acts of Transitional Constitutional Provisions (ADCT) of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which provided that "The remainder of quilombo communities that are occupying their lands is recognized as definitive property, and the State must issue them their respective titles" (Brasil, 1988). This article would be regulated only in 2003, through Presidential Decree number 4,887 (Brasil, 2003, Silva, 2015).

With regard to indigenous peoples, the Constitution in its Chapter VIII recognizes their social organizations, customs and languages, beliefs and traditions, as well as assuring them the original right over the lands they traditionally occupy and supporting access to and strengthening of their own processes of learning (Silva, Lima, Nazareno, 2020). It is clear that the mobilizations of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples throughout Brazilian history and, especially in the decades before the promulgation of the Federal Constitution in 1988, produced actual concrete effects in terms of legal advances and in the recognition of the historical debts that Brazilian society with these two segments. Considering the long racist and exclusive tradition of this society, this aspect is especially relevant. Yet, because of bureaucratic issues, resistance from the more conservative sectors

and the lack of political initiative, most of these recognitions and legal advances would be effectively implemented only in the decades following the promulgation of the Constitution and not immediately during its promulgation as expected.

Another not less important development was the establishment of a racial quota policy for blacks, browns and indigenous people. Public policy that also began only in the 2000s (Silva, Tobias, 2016). In recent years, especially since 2016, a strong reaction in relation to public policies such as the recognition of indigenous and quilombola lands and the quota policy for blacks, browns and indigenous people have been severely attacked and dismantled. The racial quota policy since the beginning has been the subject of a heated discussion, including in the Brazilian academic environment, in view of the assertiveness or not of the adoption of public policies that are based on the concept of race, as well as the concrete effects that such measures can lead to a possible increase in racism in Brazil (Hofbauer, 2006; Guarnieri & Melo-Silva, 2017).

Police violence against people of African descent on the outskirts of large Brazilian cities has grown exponentially. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in the study Social Inequalities by Color or Race in Brazil, between 2012 and 2017 there was an increase in the homicide rate per 100 thousand inhabitants of the black and brown population, jumping from 37.2 to 43.4. For the same period, in relation to the white population, the index remained at 16 for every 100 thousand inhabitants (IBGE, 2018). Demonstrations of racism against indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants are more and more frequent. With the advent of the Covid Pandemic 19, this situation became even worse, depicting the enormous fragility, precariousness and lack of assistance from the Brazilian State to which these populations are exposed.

1.3 Persistence and new forms of racism in Brazil

Recent studies on racism and its new forms of manifestation in Brazil have shown that there is a clear process of regression in relation to the achievements accomplished in the last decades (Macedo, Roso & Lara, 2015; Müller, 2015; Silva & Tobias, 2016; Batista & Mastrodi, 2018; Lages, Silva & Ribeiro, 2019, Milanez et al 2019).

In consonance with the latest Brazilian demographic census, the black and brown population in Brazil corresponds to 55.6% of the total Brazilian population (Batista & Mastrodi, 2019). On the other hand, this majority in absolute terms has no correspondence when it comes to access to income distribution and other public policies such as health and education.

On this matter, the aim of this article is to assess individual differences and psychological suffering resulting from facing the Covid-19 pandemic between indigenous and Afro-descendants compared to other ethnic groups.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participated in this study 1,914 individuals (22.3% men and 77.7% women), with age between 14 and 86 (average = 34.88 SD = 13.61), from 24 Brazilian states and the Federal District that answered the instruments online. In relation to the ethnic group, 61.8% declared themselves white, 30.1% brown, 6.5% black, 1.3% Asian and 0.3% indigenous. The level of education varied, however, most of the sample (40.2%) reported having completed postgraduate education, 9% incomplete postgraduate education, 17.8% complete higher education, 26.6% incomplete higher education, 5.1% complete high school, 0.8% incomplete high school, and 0.4% of the respondents reported having completed elementary education.

 The inclusion criteria were: accepting to be part of the study through the acceptance of the Term of Free and Informed Consent, as well as completing the responses to the instrument.

2.2. Instruments
2.2.1 Sociodemographic and social isolation questionnaire

For this study, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate socio-demographic data such as age, gender, marital status, family income level, etc. Questions were also developed regarding adherence to social isolation, motivation for adherence to social isolation, existence of people defined as risk groups and family grouping children in social isolation, level of activity during social isolation, etc.

2.2.2 Reduced Personality Markers

Originally the markers for personality evaluation in the big five model were developed by Hutz et al. (1998). It is an instrument composed of 64 adjectives divided into five sub-scales, which complement the statement "I am a person...". The answer scale is Likert of five points, with the following extremes 1 = I totally disagree and 5 = I totally agree. Later, Hauck Filho, Machado, Teixeira and Bandeira (2012) developed a reduced version with 25 adjectives whose response procedures obey those of the original scale. The authors reported satisfactory evidence of validity and reliability rates by means of Cronbach's alpha between 0.61 (for opening) and 0.83 (for extroversion).

2.2.3 Stress Mindset Scale (SMM)

Developed by Crum, Salovey and Achor (2013) SMM evaluates the beliefs that the person presents about the consequences that stress can have on their performance and growth. The scale has 8 items, four positive (e.g. the effects of stress are positive and can be useful) and four negative (e.g. experiencing stress exhausts my health and vitality), answered by five-point Likert scale, in which the answers range from 0 = I strongly disagree to 4 = I strongly agree.

A study of adaptation and evaluation of evidence of SMM validity for the Brazilian context demonstrated the adequacy of unifactorial structure, as well as good indicators of reliability, Crobach's alpha equal to 0.868 and McDonald's Omega equal to 0.869 (Peixoto et al., 2019). Aiming to compose the final stress mentality score the negative items must be inverted and all items added, higher values of these scores indicate higher levels of positive mentality.

2.2.4 Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

Originally developed by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988), PANAS evaluates the emotional components of subjective well-being through positive (PA) and negative (NA) affect. The scale is composed by 20 words that express emotions, being 10 relative to positive affects and 10 relative to negative affects that are answered through a Likert scale of 5 points (1 = not at all and 5 = very much). In Brazil, the scale was adapted by Zanon and Hutz in 2014, presenting studies that demonstrate good reliability, evidence of factorial validity and preliminary norms (Zanon, & Hutz, 2014).

2.2.5 Life Satisfaction Scale (ESV)

Elaborated by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985), ESV evaluates cognitive aspects of subjective well-being and is considered the gold standard for construction evaluation (Diener, 2000). This scale has five self-reported items that evaluate the level of satisfaction with the respondent's life through a 7-point Likert response scale. The Brazilian version was adapted and validated by Zanon et al. (2014) and their adaptation studies demonstrate great evidence of accuracy and validity and also preliminary norms (Hutz, Zanon, & Bardagi, 2014).

2.2.6 Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

The translation and adaptation of the K10 scale for the evaluation of distress (psychological distress) in the Brazilian population that presented a unifactorial structure with Cronbach's alpha reliability index equal to 0.90 was performed. This instrument has 10 self-reported items that evaluate the level of emotional distress related to the experience of stress in the last 30 days. The items are answered from a Likert scale of five points (1 = none of time to 5 = all of the time). Higher scores mean higher level of psychological distress and psychic suffering (Andrews & Slade, 2001).

2.3. Procedures

The participants were recruited through advertisements in media and social networks (Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram etc.). The invitation for voluntary participation should be attested through the acceptance of the Term of Free and Informed Consent, which guarantees anonymity, the possibility of quitting at any stage of the research without cost to the participant, as well as allowing contact with the researchers for more information about the study or if there was any intercurrence derived from participation in the research.

Participants responded to the tools virtually (online), through GoogleForms software. All responses were registered between April 4th and 17th, 2020, which is approximately one month after the beginning of the pandemic in Brazil.

2.3.1 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to the aims of this study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used with the help of the statistical software SPSS 26.0. The description of the sociodemographic profile was done by means of contingency tables according to the ethnic group.

Categorical variables were presented by means of absolute frequency (n) and relative frequency (%) while continuous variables were presented by means and standard deviation. The normality of the data was verified using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The comparison of categorical exploratory variables with the ethnic group was performed using Pearson's Chi-square and Post-hoc Chi-square tests with Bonferroni correction when significant differences were found in contingencies greater than 2x2, as suggested by MacDonald and Robert (2000). The comparison of continuous exploratory variables with the ethnic group was performed using the Mann-Whitney test. In order to isolate the effect of the ethnic group on well-being, sense of life, distress and personality, Covariance Analysis was performed using as covariables those that showed significance / effect on

isolation in previous analysis (age, profession and income). In all analyzes, the 95% confidence interval (p <0.05) was adopted.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the sample characterization data according to self-declared ethnic groups at the time of data collection. Significant differences (p = 0.02) are observed in the age of participants in the self-styled white group (m = 37.76, SD = 14.16) compared to blacks (m = 31.84, SD = 11.49). Still, self-declared whites report, to a greater extent (23.1%) than other ethnic groups, being wage earners in the private sector (p < 0.001). Also the self-styled whites and Asians report significantly more than the other ethnic groups have an income between 10 and 20 minimum wages (19.9 and 37.5, for whites and Asians respectively). The self-styled whites still report to a greater extent than the others receive more than 20 minimum wages (10.0%).

In contrast, the group that name itself black reports significantly, more than other ethnic groups, receive less than a minimum wage (17.6%). Furthermore, the group that name itself indigenous reports significantly more another type of employment relationship when compared to other ethnic groups. It should be noted that although the number is low among the five indigenous people surveyed, three did not refer to a category of work as described in the instrument.

One data draws attention, though. Despite it is not the aim of the present study, it was observed that self-declared Asians have a higher concentration of income than other ethnic groups between 10 and 20 minimum wages (37.5%). Moreover, if analyzed together, the percentage of Asians with an income above 10 minimum wages amount to 54.2%. Representing an even higher index than that reported by the self-styled white group when considering the two categories, that is, an income above 10 minimum wages (29.9%). Besides, there is no record of self-styled Asian people in this sample with an income below the minimum wage.

On the subject of gender, marital status and schooling, no significant differences are observed between ethnic groups, demonstrating that despite the difference of ethnic groups in participation (greater participation of the self-styled white group), this is not reflected in the level of education, sex or status civil rights.

Table 2 depicts the comparison of personality measures (big five personality), subjective well-being (PANASs), life satisfaction, Stress Mindset and psychological distress (k10) according to the self-reported ethnic group. For these analyzes, age, profession and income were used as a co-variable in order to control the effect of the ethnic group on the analysis variables.

The data point to similar rates of socialization, neuroticism and conscientiousness for different ethnic groups. However, for extroversion there is a significant difference between the indices of the Asian self-reported and the other ethnic groups, with the Asians presenting significantly lower levels of extroversion than the other ethnic groups.

In relation to the openness, the significant difference found refers to the self-styled white groups compared to the black ones. The black self-denominated group has higher openness rates compared to the white self-denominated groups. It should be perceived that the indigenous self-denominated group has higher rates of openness. Nonetheless, it is hypothesized that, due to the low sample number of this group, these differences were identified as significant.

The same can be observed while analyzing positive affect related to subjective well-being. The analyses present significant differences between the different ethnic groups, yet the post-hoc cannot locate these differences between the means of the participants. Regarding positive affect, the indigenous people present significantly higher averages than the other ethnic groups.

As for stress mindset, it is white people who reveal significantly more perceive stress as positive when compared to browns. Still, again, there are differences in the relevant averages (especially among Asians) that were not detected as significant in the post hoc analysis.

No significant differences between groups for negative affect, life satisfaction and distress were observed. This data demonstrates, in principle, that different ethnic groups experience negative effects and distress due to the pandemic and present an assessment of the life satisfaction in a similar way.

Table 1. Characterization of the sample's sociodemographic profile according to ethnic group.

	Self-declared ethnic group					p
	White	Brown	Black	Asian	Indigenous	
Age (Average ± DP)	**37.76 ± 14.16**[a]	33.78 ± 12.76	**31.84 ± 11.49**[b]	34.12± 12.73	31.80 ± 14.20	**0.02***
Gender						
Female	922 (77.9)	450(78.0)	93 (74.4)	18(75)	4(80)	0.91
Male	261 (22.1)	127(22.0)	32 (25.6)	6(25)	1(20)	
Marital Status						
Single	572(48.4)	305(52.9)	77(61.6)	16(66.7)	4(80)	
Married	388(32.8)	163(28.2)	25(20.0)	5(20.8)	0(0.0)	
Stable Relationship	100(8.5)	51(8.8)	8(6.4)	1(4.2)	1(20)	0.10
Divorced	97(8.2)	41(7.1)	12(9.6)	2(8.3)	0(0.0)	
Widow	13(1.1)	7(1.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	
Others	13(1.1)	10(1.7)	3(2.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	
Profession						
Public sector employee	268(22.7)	162(28.1)	40(32.0)	4(16.7)	0(0.0)	
Private sector employee	**273(23.1)**[a]	88(15.3)[b]	18(14.4)[b]	7(29.2)[b]	0(0.0)[b]	
Self-employed	211(17.8)	84(14.6)	14(11.2)	2(8.3)	1(20)	**<0.001**
Retired	52(4.4)	27(4.7)	3(2.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	
Unemployed	300(25.4)	176(30.5)	44(35.2)	10(41.7)	1(20)	
Others	79(6.7)[b]	40(6.9)[b]	6(4.8)[b]	1(4.2)[b]	3(60.0)[a]	
Schooling						
Elementary School	4(0.3)	5(0.9)	1(0.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	
High School	61(5.2)	42(7.3)	8(6.4)	1(4.2)	1(20)	0.40
Higher Education	509(43.0)	26(45.8)	61(48.8)	12(50.0)	3(60)	
Post-graduation	609(51.5)	266(46.1)	55(44.0)	11(45.8)	1(20)	
Family Income						
Up to one	31(2.6)[b]	56(9.7)[b]	**22(17.6)**[a]	0(0.0)[b]	1(20)[b]	
Between 1 and 3	201(17.0)	159(27.6)	37(29.6)	3(12.5)	4(80)	
Between 3 and 5	266(22.5)	142(24.6)	20(16.0)	3(12.5)	0(0.0)	
Between 5 and 10	332(28.1)	122(21.1)	28(22.4)	5(20.8)	0(0.0)	**<0.001**
Up to 20	**235(19.9)**[a]	67(11.6)[b]	16(12.8)[b]	**9(37.5)**[a]	0(0.0)[b]	
Up to 20	**118(10.0)**[a]	31(5.4)[b]	2(1.6)[b]	4(16.7)[b]	0(0.0)[b]	

Note: *Kruskal-Wallis; **Qui-squared; †Qui-squared *Post-hoc.*
The different over-written represent significant differences.
Note: different overwritten means difference between average.

Table2. Individual differences and psychological distress according to ethnic groups

	Self-declared ethnic group					p
	White	Brown	Black	Asian	Indigenous	
Big Five						
Socialization	20.20 ± 2.97	20.05 ± 2.96	19.78 ± 2.95	19.88 ± 2.51	20.00 ± 3.67	0.66
Neuroticism	14.79 ± 4.39	14.89 ± 4.68	15.03 ± 4.60	16.25 ± 3.80	15.60 ± 6.47	0.55
Extroversion	17.13 ± 4.00^{b}	16.92 ± 3.77^{b}	16.98 ± 3.98^{b}	13.21 ± 3.81^{a}	20.00 ± 2.35^{b}	**<0.001**
Openness	15.37 ± 3.69^{b}	15.50 ± 3.88	16.24 ± 3.82^{a}	15.21 ± 3.66	19.00 ± 3.67	**0.02**
Conscientiousness	20.74 ± 3.13	20.55 ± 3.08	20.26 ± 3.14	19.96 ± 2.93	20.80 ± 2.59	0.61
PANAS						
Positive affects	29.18 ± 7.88	29.70 ± 7.78	29.38 ± 7.82	25.96 ± 7.35	35.40 ± 7.83	**0.02**
Negative affects	27.99 ± 8.84	28.11 ± 9.31	28.88 ± 9.40	29.46 ± 9.27	27.00 ± 12.79	0.94
Life Satisfaction						
Total Score	22.41 ± 6.69	21.17 ± 6.83	20.81 ± 6.54	21.67 ± 7.38	20.60 ± 6.62	0.47
Stress mindset						
Score	9.82 ± 6.35^{a}	8.79 ± 6.01^{b}	9.14 ± 6.22	12.00 ± 7.31	6.20 ± 4.66	**0.01**
K-10						
Total Score	25.35 ± 8.55	25.54 ± 8.57	26.51 ± 9.81	25.67 ± 9.01	26.00 ± 13.49	0.96

Note: ANCOVA (covariables: Age, profession, income).

The different over-written represent significant differences.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to assess individual differences and psychological distress resulting from facing the Covid-19 pandemic among indigenous and Afro-descendants compared to other ethnic groups.

Due to the time of the pandemic, data collection was performed online using the googleforms form. The instruments were made available on the researchers' social networks and sent by email to the contacts requesting wide dissemination. In the meantime, studies show that the relationships established in social networks tend to preserve the social circle in which the person is inserted (Lehdonvirta, Oksanen, Räsänen, & Blank, 2020). This data can be observed through the sample characteristics obtained. As the authors of the study are university professors at the postgraduate level, there is a higher incidence of higher education and postgraduate students in the sample. Thus, it can be hypothesized that this data collection procedure may have influenced the data obtained, bringing a bias in the sample.

This aspect points to at least three important issues evidenced indirectly in this study and which deserve to be analyzed: 1) it points to the need to be careful with studies developed via the internet and social networks and the possible sample bias triggered by the "bubble" effect (Nikolov, Oliveira, Flammini & Menczer, 2015). In this sense, researchers must also be careful with generalizations resulting from their studies depending on the sample to which they had access.

2) the possible effect of studies in times of pandemic. In times of pandemic and with the restrictions of social contacts, many research and studies at the graduate level have migrated to the online modality. This aspect can interfere with the results found (as previously pointed out) and produce an increase in the exclusion of minority groups that can "disappear" or even be invisible from the data produced in this period (Santos et al., 2020). Such reservations become even more relevant since these minority groups are precisely those with the least economic possibilities, who live in more populated areas and with a larger number of people in their homes, and therefore are those who find it more difficult to uptake distance guidelines and are more likely to be exposed to the virus (CDC, 2020).

3) Finally, the effect of this data collection procedure shows, albeit indirectly, the level of participation of different ethnicities in higher education and access to the internet. Actually, the majority of the sample (40.2%) reported having completed postgraduate studies if we add to this number those who reported having incomplete postgraduate courses and higher education (complete or incomplete), we observed that 93.6% of the sample was concentrated at higher educational levels. When we cross this information with the self-declared ethnicity, although there are no statistical differences, the descriptive data show that the majority of the sample composed of students or professionals with complete higher education is white (61.8%), and brown (30.1%). All together these make up 91.8% of the sample in this study. When we cross this information with the self-declared ethnicity, although there are no statistical differences, the descriptive data show that the majority of the sample composed of students or professionals with complete higher education is white (61.8%), and brown (30.1%). Together these make up 91.8% of the sample in this study. These data corroborate the persistence of racism in today's

society. Affirmative policies, including those of Afro-descendants and indigenous people, were not sufficient to reduce the social gap between them and the white population. Despite representing, according to IBGE 55.6 of the Brazilian population, Afro-descendants continue to be a minority in the occupation of influential positions and jobs. Only 17% of this population belong to the group of the richest 1% in Brazil (Batista & Mastrodi, 2018). Although statistically the difference in sample distribution is significant and the interest groups have low representativity, this study opted not only to preserve the discrepancies and control them through statistical techniques, but also to highlight them through the resulting discussions. This procedure focused on highlighting the persistent inequalities in Brazilian society in relation to ethnic differences and shed light on the new forms of racism experienced. It seems that the legacy caused by centuries of sedimentation of racism in Brazilian society, in which despite the struggles and changes in relation to legal frameworks, is still alive.

This is quite noticeable in aspects such as the unequal distribution of income, the increase in violence rates and the demonstrations of racism noticeble in Brazilian society. Because of structural racism, this picture tends to get even worse in situations such as that caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, generating a perverse interconnection between structural racism, deepening of social inequalities, and consequently more precarious public health (Egede & Walker, 2020).

Elseways, the data collected in this study indicate that the self-styled black group presents higher scores in the openness personality trait. This trait is characterized by interest in different areas and ideas, trends to originality and search for novelties (Zanon, Bastianello, Pacico, & Hutz, 2013). One can postulate that the very condition of ethnic minority and the demand for adaptation to various situations in which they are not represented can demand from this group the exercise and development of this personality trait (openness).

This aspect is especially interesting if we consider that the majority of the researched group has higher education (complete or incomplete) or postgraduate (complete or incomplete). In this context, the presence of ethnic diversity is even less. Likewise, it can be postulated that the minority group of blacks who can access higher education has higher rates of openness and originality to face a challenging context and more restricted to their identity group.

Differently, indigenous people have significantly more positive affects than other ethnic groups. This aspect is corroborated by studies in the area that show that community life as well as the cosmovision that this group presents could explain a vision and confrontation of life different from the others (Herbetta & Nazareno, 2020).

The indigenous peoples of Brazil throughout the colonization process have developed various coping strategies that have allowed them to survive in many situations. Clear examples of this are the resistance to the villages, several epidemics and attempts of assimilation and integration of which they were victims (Almeida, 2010, 2017).

This aspect of different perceptions of the world according to ethnicity can also be hypothesized based on the data found regarding the difference in perceived stress among self-styled white groups. According to the data, the self-styled white group tends to see the experience of stress as something more positive than other ethnic groups. In fact, the self-declared indigenous are those with the lowest rates of stress mentality. In this sense, it can be said that the self-declared indigenous people tend to evaluate facing problems as a problem effectively.

Finally, in relation to the experience of negative and psychological distress due to the pandemic, no significant differences were observed between different ethnic groups. Demonstrating that, at least with regard to the first month of the pandemic in Brazil, and in a group mostly of higher education and above, there is no difference in the psychological suffering of the different ethnic groups.

As a conclusion, the relevance and empirical character of this research should be highlighted, given that important theoretical debates have been held nationally (Santos et al., 2020) and internationally (Egede & Walker, 2020).

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