

# About the Catastrophic Forecasts, Coming from the West, About the Behavior of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa

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**Abstract:** In this work, we took on the task of addressing the issue of the pandemic in Africa and in Angola in particular. To do this, we used bibliographic research and participant observation. In it, we begin by going through the history of the West's relations with Africa, which we characterize as perverse, in order to deal with the proposal arising from the first that the second should become a testing ground for COVID-19 and the catastrophic predictions about the pandemic in the second context. Then, we address some of the recent studies on the subject that had Africa as their object, to demonstrate that, contrary to catastrophic predictions, Africa has not been punished by COVID-19 which has manifested itself in a mild way, compared to other continents. And if, initially, African leaders treated the pandemic based on externally oriented global solutions, they gradually began to take decisions autonomously according to their own reality and based on internal resources and knowledge. We conclude by stating that one of the interim lessons that the pandemic made possible for Africa was the demonstration that there are no global solutions to local problems and that it is necessary for Africa to respond to its problems with its own resources and not with formulas that have proven effective in other contexts but which in Africa may not serve. Another temporary lesson is that the effective process of liberating Africa and Africans still depends on being able, in this context, to despise the narrative of the West when it takes them as objects, as this tends to place it and Africans in a position of less value which coincides neither with the being of Africa nor with the being of Africans.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Africa, Western, Decolonial Perspective

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## 1. Introduction

In this work, we address the topic of the pandemic in Africa. For it, used up authors from the fields of anthropology, psychology, sociology and psychoanalysis and participant observation will be used. The script of participant observation covered topics, the behavior of African leaders and the cure of COVID-19 through local resources.

We decided, in relation to the issue of the pandemic in Africa, to start the approach to the subject from the catastrophic predictions of the West about this continent and the proposal also from the West that Africa should become the testing ground of COVID-19. According to the West, the pandemic would reach catastrophic proportions on this continent, which would justify the interest of Africa to receive assistance from the West, becoming the testing ground for the vaccine, as it would be completely deprived of resources to respond to this situation. The logic is as follows,

if the West (which is clearly superior in every respect to Africa) was not able to cope... imagine Africa.

The most serious thing is that these proposals take place at a time when there were almost no deaths in Africa and when there was already talk of deaths in very high numbers in the West.

For some, such predictions would be based only on the precariousness and well-known vulnerabilities of the African continent, but for scholars of relations between the West and black ethnopsychology, this explanation becomes too superficial to explain this phenomenon. For scholars on the relations between the West and Africa (as is the author of this text) the basis of these predictions and proposals is found in a structure of relations, between the West and Africa, which we will call perverse. This structure is the one that has at its origin a utilitarian vision of Africa and which has an

underlying ideology of racism and white supremacy [4].

## 2. History of Perverse Relations Between the West and Africa: The Origin of the Concept of Race and Europhilia

Since the middle of the century. XIX that the concept of race ceased to be considered a scientific fact to be considered an ideological artifact [13]. Authors who studied the phenomenon of ideology, such as the Algerian Louis Althusser, also contributed to this desire.

Karl Marx had already characterized ideology as a system of distorting reality [9]. According to these authors, this distortion of reality would aim at the implementation and maintenance of power relations, the domination of one caste over other castes.

Louis Althusser. [1] starts from the same preposition of Marx and Engels to define ideology as "...a system of ideas, of representations that dominates the spirit of a man or a social group".

It is this ideology, says Althusser, that this distorted representation of reality, transposed to the material conditions of existence, serves the exploitation of peoples.

[...] Imaginary transposition of real conditions of existence: this cause is the existence of a small group of cynical men who base their domination and their exploitation of "the people" on a falsified representation of the world by them to subjugate the spirits by domination of his imagination.[1].

Through ideology, the dominant group creates a series of pseudo realities that will serve their interests and that are intended to cover up the true reality, and events are interpreted in terms of what ideology (false reality) affirms.

According to Baptista. [2] Ideology is unconsciously inherited from the environment and the period in which the subject is structured and, therefore, it determines with great depth the behaviors and attitudes of people who were born and developed in its midst and by this, for this author, must be understood, "as a set of inherited and unproblematic knowledge that veils reality, legitimizes attitudes and tends to stabilize the bases of a power".

One of the formulas to bring down the false realities produced by the ruling classes is to free ourselves from the fictions imposed on us by them. To be able to recognize their ruses, their ruses, and to get rid of them, is one of the formulas, the specialists in revolution, Marx and Engels. [8], tell us.

Let us free them, therefore, from the brain's fictions, from ideas, which wither away. Let us rebel against the domination of ideas. Let us educate humanity to replace its fantasies with thoughts befitting the essence of man, says someone; to behave critically in front of them, says another; to expel them from the brain, says a third – and the existing reality will collapse (our italics).

It is necessary to have a critical attitude towards ideological systems, to study them and to be able to unveil

the gears through which power relations are established, as well as the strategies through which they are maintained, as, achieving these goals is the first step in bringing down the ideological system itself.

Studies on racial violence have already taken this step, denouncing the notion of race as a product of the ideology of slaveholders with the purpose of perpetuating, establishing and maintaining the exploitation of black people. Denouncing the origin of the reductive vision of the African and the realities of African peoples, as ideological, has been an inexhaustible task of a diversity of theorists. This task resulted in the discrediting of these ideological artifacts (previously considered scientific, such as the concept of race) "of researchers who became colonial employees", as he states [12]. And this task has had the effect, too, of a gradual disentanglement of these beliefs over the centuries.

According to Guimarães [6]:

"In the last century there was no doubt that races were subdivisions of the human species, roughly identified with native populations from different continents, characterized by morphological particularities, such as skin color, nose shape, hair texture and cranial shape. To such physical peculiarities were added the moral, psychological, and intellectual characteristics that were supposed to define the differential potential of races for civilization."

## 3. Destroying Masks, Based on the Construction of Endogenous Narratives About the Being of Africa and Africans

During this period, the concept of race considered scientific and naturalized was not at all questioned, as stated by Rodrigues [13].

"until the 19 th century, the concept of race was not questioned" throughout the 19th century [...] almost the entire American and European scientific community was not concerned with the issue because they assumed that there really were differences between races that would be inferior to the others".

Our thesis is that this racist ideology remains within the West to victimize Africa and it forms the basis of catastrophic predictions and immoral proposals made to Africans in times of pandemic.

The history of relations in Africa should indeed be described as perverse, because it is a story in which Africa is plundered, its lands are stolen, and even its being kidnapped is narrated by the colonizer. The text the Mascara [7] de Grada Kilomba demonstrates well how this artifact placed on the slave's face prevented him from claiming what was his. In this false reality invented by the executioner, the colonizer, to savagely appropriate the natural resources of Africa, black people are characterized by being more manual than rational (in a context in which rationality is equivalent to man himself, this brings black people closer to the non-human, makes him less of a man), the black is ugly, the black smells

bad, the lazy black only works if whipped. In contrast, white becomes, as Costa shows, "a synonym for artistic purity, aesthetic nobility, moral majesty, scientific wisdom, etc. The beautiful, the good, the fair and the true are white. White is, was and continues to be the manifestation of the Spirit, of the idea, of reason. White, white, are the only artisans and legitimate heirs to the progress and development of man. They are culture, civilization, in a word "humanity" [3]. What is intriguing is how these false images remain, even in the face of facts that contradict them. After all, what humanity can we find in the subjugation and enslavement of peoples, or even in the holocaust? Is what history witnesses not more barbarism than humanity? And how dare we place black people and Africa on the margins of development, if the cradle of civilization is located in Africa and if a large part of what we know as our world was raised by the hands, enslaved, of black people?

This ideology is also the cause of Europhilia [15], which is nothing more than a kind of deification of everything that concerns the European to the detriment of their own culture.

Therefore, it is necessary to know that the savages are not the Africans, but the colonizers and that the path to the true liberation of the black is to get rid of these images, these narratives of the West about Africa and the African so that this position can teach lessons to the West and the first lesson is that white supremacy is an ideological artifact and not a reality. The second lesson is that the West must learn to establish more ethical, less toxic relationships with other peoples. For ideologies are not harmless, they kill. Racism kills blacks, when we say that a woman is less rational than a man (in a context where rationality is equivalent to rationality itself, we are saying that women are less than men and that is machismo and machismo is not Machismo kills women When we build a wall to separate first world citizens from second class citizens, we are producing xenophobia, and xenophobia kills foreigners.

You might ask me, but no other evil ails Africa than this story of colonization and slavery. Africa does not have any other problems besides this one. We will answer that it does have domestic problems, such as the problem of corruption. But historians show that the region lacked the vulnerability it has today before the advent of colonization. Among the internal problems facing Africa, the biggest one is corruption. We believe that this problem can only be solved with an educational system capable of building just men, the only ones capable of building just societies. Because from the path at the various levels of the educational system, it is expected that the individual will gradually abandon positions based on ideology and start to base their positions on scientific bases, this means, for example, that they stop being sexist, racist, xenophobic, among others.

In our opinion, the education system has not fulfilled this role in most countries. The election of Donald Trump in the United States of America and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil reflects this statement, since the majority (who elected them) identify with the characteristics of these two presidents, which are characteristics that may be adjectives of non-

progressive, reactionaries, etc. So with regard to an educational system capable of training righteous men, there is still work to be done in most of the world, in Africa it is no different.

As for the pandemic, what is the reality in Africa? Reality outside the fantasies of the West? The reality is that Africa is not being affected by the pandemic with the force with which it has affected other contexts. For this, some reasons have been pointed out, among them, the good performance of African leaders, who on time, in most African countries, adopted the measures guided by the WHO: they closed the borders, decreed the mandatory use of masks, they organized sanitary fences, guided the confinement, in contrast to leaders of great nations such as Trump and Bolsonaro who even encouraged the non-use of masks. Given that African leaders tend to be severely criticized, as if they were the only ones who made mistakes in the world, it is important that they are praised for the way most of them behaved in relation to dealing with the pandemic. Some other factors are still pointed out, such as those that may be the basis for the gentleness with which the coronavirus has been acting in Africa, the main one being the climate [8]. The presence of the sun would be related to the elevation of vitamin D levels in the body, which would increase the immunity of Africans, the climate would also allow the presence of ultraviolet rays to which the virus is sensitive, in addition to heat [11].

We also verified that if Africa initially fought the pandemic with external solutions, coming from abroad, over time it began to use its own resources to combat it. That is why, today, in addition to the resources of modern medicine, Africa has fought the pandemic with internal resources such as teas and sweats (a procedure in which the individual is placed next to a container of freshly boiled water (which may also contain leaves) and if you cover it with a blanket, you let it inhale that hot air - which attacks the virus whose free point is not to survive high temperatures). This procedure has already been used to combat other diseases. In Angola, the *zungueiras* (street vendors) already sell the so-called COVID-19 kit, made up of used leaves, to make teas that fight disease and also sweat. The first person who appeared on Angolan television and explained how he had survived the virus said: "I sweated and took paracetamol" (an anti-thermal). Africa has been fighting the corona virus with sweat, hot teas, antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, and antipyretics. This shows that the way forward is to be able to respond to problems from internal resources, since there are no global solutions for local problems and solutions that may be effective in certain contexts may not be effective in others.

I finish this text by leaving some questions. Could it be that the West has nothing to learn from Africa, regarding the pandemic and beyond? Can the West not learn from Africa (from the criticisms of African intellectuals) to improve its being, become less reactionary, renounce necropolitics [10]. that plays with its greed and predatory ideologies?

Fanon argues, "for humanity, it is necessary to change procedures, develop a new thought, try to put a new man in feet" [5]. This is the task that Fanon recommends to Africans,

that of producing a world, a reality better than the one the West has been playing. This is Fanon's hope... the path he pointed to Africans. Africa and Africans, will they manage not to disappoint Fanon?

## 4. To Complete

Africa has withstood the turmoil that has been its history, due to the greed for its natural wealth that led to the expropriation of its lands, its assets and the kidnapping of its people. These same wealth and the young population that it possesses are also the factors pointed out, by the diversity of theorists, that could make Africa the land of the future.

But which way to build this future for Africa? How to rewrite its history in order to achieve this result? Pursuing these paths means answering the question - how to resist the appropriation and subordination of black power (its aesthetics, its knowledge, its culture, its being, its currency, its identity, its value, among infinite others wealth) perpetuated by the neocolonial system. We believe that one of the means is to build an endogenous narrative about Africa, stripped of the deforming gaze of the foreigner.

In this work we want to demonstrate that, in the context of the pandemic resulting from coronavirus infection, the proposal that Africa should become a testing ground (when there were practically no deaths in Africa and there was already talk of deaths in high numbers in the West) has based on the history of the perverse relations of the West with Africa, from antiquity to contemporaneity. We take up this history of relations to show that the concept of race, as well as the supremacy white, as well as Europhilia, originate from the ideology of racism built by the colonizer and which must be deconstructed and fought, not only by blacks but by the whole being enlightened human [14].

In it, we support two main theses. The first is that there are no global solutions for local problems and that Africa must build solutions adapted to its reality and not imported from abroad, as what often serves one reality does not serve others and the pandemic is no different.

The second thesis argues that for the liberation of Africa and Africans to be effective, it is necessary that Africa and Africans free themselves from the West's narrative about both and that they build a narrative about themselves, from endogenous knowledge, that is, stripped of view of the West that tends to place them always in a position of less value, which is not consistent with the being of Africa or with the being of Africans.

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