



Afro-Colombian Resistance to Structural Racism in the Context of the Black Lives Matter Movement (2020–2024)

Raynathan Heskia Mamahit

Student at Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia

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Abstract

In recent years, Afro-Colombians have been changing the way they fight against deep-rooted racism. This shift gained momentum particularly after the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement became globally recognized in 2020. This study looks at data from DANE and the Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV 2023), along with academic works, to understand the effects of racial inequality and how communities push back against it. The study uses George Lipsitz's theory of structural racism and focuses on three important areas: where people live and the financial challenges they face; eight key signs of structural inequality, such as education, health, housing, and overall well-being; and how BLM drives local action through media, cultural activities, and grassroots movements. The results show that in Colombia, structural racism is well established due to historical and policy issues. In this scenario, BLM serves as more than just a symbol. It acts as an international force uniting people. It also offers Afro-Colombian communities a strategic platform to demand justice and inclusion. Through BLM, these communities can advocate for fair treatment and equal opportunities, connecting their local struggles to a global stage. This highlights the need for change and supports efforts to address enduring inequalities.

Keywords: *Afro-Colombian; Structural Racism; Black Lives Matter; Colombia*

Introduction

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement began in the United States in 2013. Over time, it has expanded and become an important global movement. BLM plays a big role in shaping discussions and actions against racism in many parts of the world, such as Latin America (Rickford, 2016). In 2020, when George Floyd died, it led to many big protests all over the world. People from many countries joined together to show their support against racism that is built into society. This was a very important time, as it brought global attention to the fight against racial injustice (Badran & Lusk, 2024). The BLM movement made people everywhere think about racial unfairness and deeply affected how Afro-Colombian communities stand up against constant discrimination after 2020. Studies show that Afro-Latinx communities see BLM as part of their own fight. This links their local efforts to global experiences in fighting racism, showing that their struggles are connected across the world (Clealand, 2022). This change shows that social movements can reach across countries. They start important conversations about race, who we are, and the rights of all people.

Colombia is known for having many cultures, yet racism has been around for a long time and still impacts Afro-Colombian communities today. Although the 1991 Constitution officially grants rights to various ethnic and racial groups, these rights frequently aren't applied effectively (Cárdenas, 2012). A report reveals that structural racism in Colombia is making it difficult for Afro-Colombian communities to access education, health services, and legal protection. This situation adds to the social and economic challenges these communities are already dealing with, making their conditions even tougher (UNDP, 2021). A recent article highlights that despite policy changes since 1991, weak implementation remains a major challenge for these communities (Rodrigues, 2024).

Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has been very important in highlighting the issue of racism built into the systems in Colombia. According to Clealand (2022), protests in various Latin American countries, including Colombia, were not only a form of solidarity with the US but also a response to the realities of racism and violence experienced by black communities in their own countries. In Colombia, there were large protests after Anderson Arboleda, who was Afro-Colombian, died due to police brutality. His death occurred only six days before the death of George Floyd in the U.S. These events sparked significant protests in major Colombian cities, including Cali and Bogota, where many people gathered to express their anger and demand change in how the police treat citizens. These events underscore that structural racism in Latin America is not only a result of colonialism, but is also maintained by non-inclusive state policies (Clealand, 2022).

Afro-Colombian communities have a number of major challenges that they need to deal with. These challenges are not only about understanding political issues or taking part in social movements. A significant hurdle includes how discussions about race are framed in political and educational settings. Restrepo (2021) highlights how the term “Afrodescendiente” has replaced the term “Negro” in academic and political discourse in Colombia, with the aim of reducing the negative connotations associated with colonialism. However, this shift in terminology has also led to debates about its effectiveness in fighting for racial justice in real terms (Restrepo, 2021). In the context of BLM, the way the story has changed is tied to the movement's influence on encouraging discussions against racism in policies around the world.

BLM has influenced Afro-Colombians in three important ways: First, more people now understand the deep and long-lasting racism that exists in society. Second, Afro-Colombian communities have changed the way they organize and protest to make their voices heard. Third, political and academic discussions about what it means to be racially identified have evolved because of this influence (Clealand, 2022). Rickford (2016) explains that Black Lives Matter (BLM) goes beyond being just a social movement. It's a way to develop a shared political awareness that has the power to bring about major changes in society. This awareness is important for Afro-Colombian communities as it helps them to strengthen their movements and pursue true and lasting social justice.

The study looks at the effects of the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement on Afro-Colombian efforts to fight against structural racism from 2020 to 2024. It combines global and local viewpoints, using Lipsitz's theory to explain how inequality works and how Afro-Colombian communities adjust their resistance strategies. The research is important for international cooperation discussions and provides useful ideas for including racial issues in public policies. This aims to create more inclusive government systems that better serve diverse populations.

Methodology

This study looks at how Afro-Colombians resist structural racism during the Black Lives Matter movement, focusing on the years 2020 to 2024. It carefully picks information from various sources. These include official reports such as DANE and ECV, writings from civil society groups, trusted academic journal articles, and media stories (Babbie, 2013). The study examined data by focusing on key themes, particularly using George Lipsitz's concept of structural racism. This method helped identify common problems that many people face. These problems include being kept out of certain areas, not having equal chances to earn money, and dealing with resistance to their cultural practices. Such issues are clearly seen in cities like Bogotá.

The analysis examined how discussions around the world about Black Lives Matter affected local organizing efforts and stories focusing on race. This highlights the global perspective of the study, showing how events in one part of the world can influence actions and narratives in another. To enhance trust in the findings, multiple sources were used to cross-check the information. However, the study acknowledges methodological limitations, including the absence of primary data such as interviews or ethnographic fieldwork, and the potential bias inherent in media representations (Silverman, 2013).

Result and Discussions

A. Spatial Concentration and Structural Inequality in Afro-Colombian Communities

Afro-Colombian communities can be found in key areas along both the Pacific coast and the Caribbean. These communities are mainly located in regions such as Valle del Cauca, Bolívar, Nariño, and Chocó, where they have a strong presence. According to the 2023 Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida (ECV), approximately 3.98 million individuals (7.6% of the national population) identify as negra, afrodescendiente, raizal, or palenquera (DANE, 2024). However, these spatial patterns cannot be understood apart from the historical context of colonialism that brought Afro-populations in for forced labor and structurally placed them in territories that now experience systemic marginalization.

This geography is compounded by regional segregation that affects access to public services. Data shows that Afro-Colombian communities in rural areas experience significant inequalities in access to clean water, internet, gas, and sanitation compared to urban communities. Internet access, for example, is only available to 30.4% of Afro households in rural areas, well below the national average (DANE, 2024). This reflects a tangible form of "geographical apartheid" as described by Lipsitz (1998), where the control of space becomes an instrument of structural racism.

This inequality is also reflected in socioeconomic indicators. The poverty rate of Afro-Colombian communities reaches 45.5%, higher than that of non-Afro groups (33.6%) (Secretaría Distrital de Planeación, 2022). In these communities, people face many challenges when it comes to education and jobs. The schools around them are often not of high quality, which makes it difficult for them to get a good education and improve their lives. When looking for work, most of the available jobs are informal and do not offer any form of social protection or job security. Additionally, many families live in areas that are not officially recognized, making them at risk of being forced out of their homes.

These conditions confirm that structural racism in Colombia is not only manifested in legal policies, but also in ongoing spatial control and economic exclusion. By linking empirical data and theories of structural racism, it appears that the inequalities experienced by Afro-Colombian communities are the result of a colonial legacy that continues to be reproduced through non-inclusive state policies.

B. Dimensions of Structural Racism in the Daily Life of the Afro-Colombian Community

Structural racism is a term that explains how unfair treatment is built into our society's systems. These systems include government, businesses, and schools. They treat people unfairly because of their race. Structural racism is not just a matter of individual actions, but rather a network of social policies, norms and practices that maintain the superiority of one racial group over another (Lipsitz, 1998). In this situation, discrimination doesn't have to be obvious. It happens when some people control access to resources like education, jobs, housing, and political representation. Structural racism is what causes and keeps inequalities between racial groups by using methods that seem fair but aren't.

Afro-Colombians experience structural racism through ongoing problems with where they live, their economic status, and their social opportunities. Even though the law declares everyone is equal, Afro-Colombians continue to face many barriers in almost every part of daily life. They find it difficult to get a good education and better jobs, which makes their problems worse. It's also hard for them to find safe and affordable places to live. In politics, Afro-Colombians often lack enough representation, so their issues are not always heard or solved. Every day, the system creates many obstacles for Afro-Colombians. This inequality isn't due to luck or personal failure. It's because of the lasting impacts of colonialism, which have turned into modern-day injustices.

To grasp the challenges Afro-Colombian communities face, we need to examine how structural racism affects their daily lives. This includes discrimination, limited access to services, and social exclusion. The high levels of racial discrimination these communities face are clear signs of structural racism. This discrimination isn't just about personal prejudice; it's about an unfair system. In this system, racial identity can limit people's opportunities in life. To better understand how structural racism operates in Colombia, it's crucial to study data on racial discrimination as a starting point.

Level of Racial Discrimination

Table 1. Ethnic Composition of the Colombian Population (2023)

Ethnic-Racial Group	National Total		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	Person	%	Person	%	Person	%
Black, mulato/a, afrodescendiente, afrocolombiano/a	3.918	7,5	2.562	6,4	1.356	11,0
Raizal (San Andrés, Providencia, Santa Catalina)	37	0,1	34	0,1	3*	0,0
Palenquero/a (San Basilio)	21*	0,00*	15*	0,0*	6*	0,1*
TOTAL Afrodescendiente (Combined)	3.976	7,6	2.611	6,5	1.365	11,1
Indígena (Native)	2.121	4,1	526	1,3	1.594	13,0
Gitano/a (Romani)	6*	0,0*	5*	0,0*	1*	0,0*
Did Not Identify with Any Ethnic Group	46.212	88,3	36.871	92,1	9.340	75,9
TOTAL	52.314	100,0	40.014	100,0	12.300	100,0

Note. Adapted from: Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023, by DANE, 2024 (p.3)

(*) High Variability Estimate; interpret with caution

Oranges row indicates the total for all Afro-descendant groups

Data from the 2021 Encuesta Multipropósito, published in *Caracterización de la Población Afrodescendiente en Bogotá* shows that 20.5% of the NARP (Negros, Afro-Colombian, Raizales, and Palenqueros) community in Bogotá experienced discrimination based on race or ethnic origin. This figure is much higher than the 0.6% discrimination experienced by the general population in Bogotá. This high percentage of racial discrimination against Afro Colombian indicates the existence of deep structural barriers in Colombian society, where specific ethnic identity remains a determinant factor in access to social and economic rights. The racial discrimination experienced by the NARP community is also partly to blame (DANE, 2024, p. 18). Systemic social inequality, which affects their opportunities in education, employment and political participation.

These experiences of racial exclusion are often internalized, reinforcing collective feelings of marginalization and limiting self-perceived opportunities for social advancement (Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021). Over the years, feeling left out becomes a common experience for people in marginalized groups. It changes how they see their value, abilities, and roles in society. This doesn't just affect what they dream of achieving personally. It also helps maintain larger unfair systems in place, as these barriers are not questioned or challenged. Daily interactions and the way things are routinely done in institutions make these barriers seem normal and acceptable.

This phenomenon of discrimination can be understood within the framework of structural racism theory as proposed by Lipsitz (1998), where discrimination is not just the result of individual actions, but is rooted in institutions and social norms. Racial discrimination against Afro people in Bogotá highlights how society continues to create inequality. This happens through actions and symbols that push Afro people to the edges of society, both in ideas and in real-life situations. It shows how deep-rooted these practices are in the social system. The high experience of discrimination also reinforces patterns of spatial segregation and economic exclusion that have been inherited since the colonial era. Addressing these inequalities therefore requires an affirmative policy approach that not only targets the reduction of individual discrimination, but also structural reforms in education, employment, and political representation for Afro-Colombian communities

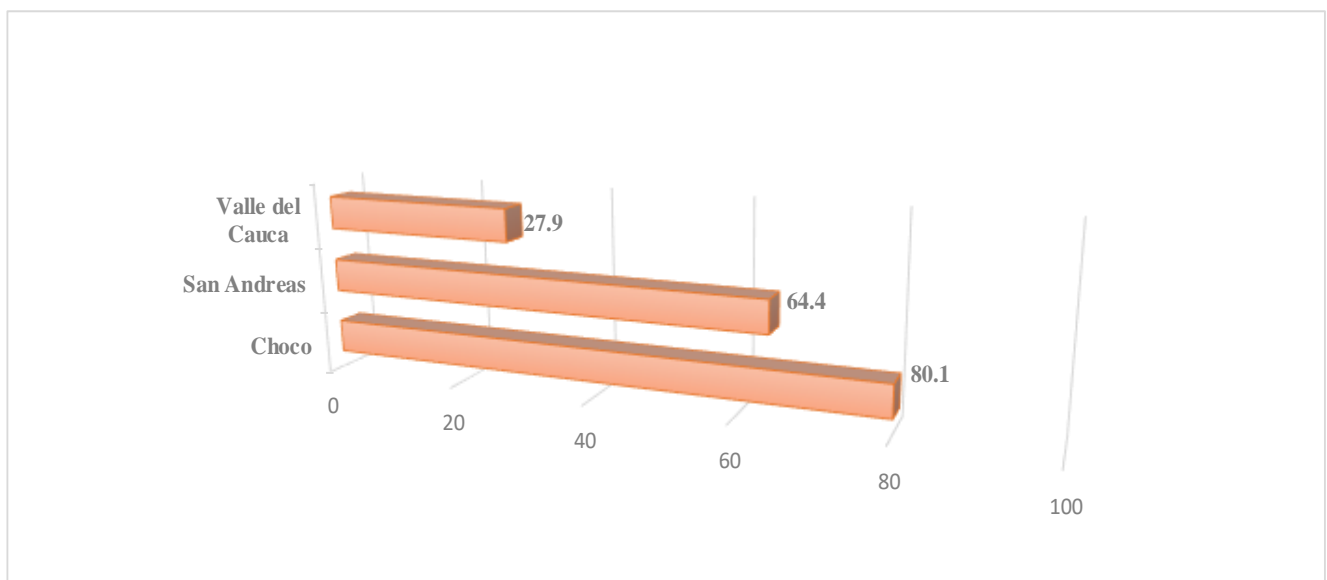


Figure 1. Percentage of People Self-Identifying as Afro-Colombians by Department (2023)
 Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 4

Figure 1 shows the highest concentrations of Afro-Colombian populations are found in departments such as Chocó (80.1%), San Andrés (64.4%), and Valle del Cauca (27.9%), regions

historically associated with slavery, colonial marginalization, and contemporary neglect. This uneven distribution of resources shows that structural racism also affects geography. Many regions with large Afro-descendant communities often lack investment in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and public services. This neglect highlights a long-standing pattern of racial exclusion. Although there are many Afro-Colombians, they still do not receive fair access to government resources. As a result, geography itself becomes a tool for discrimination. It reinforces negative views about these areas and keeps Afro-descendant communities in Colombia stuck in cycles of poverty, social invisibility, and political exclusion.

Access to Education and Social Mobility

Table 2. School Attendance of Afro-Colombian Youth by Age Group (2023)

Age Group	2022 (%)	2023 (%)
Total	80.4	79.2
6 to 10 years	94.7	97.6
11 to 14 years	95.8	94.4
15 to 16 years	86.9	86.5
17 to 21 years	47.4	43.8

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 18

Table 2 shows the school enrollment rates of communities that identify as negra, afrodescendiente, raizal or palenquera in Colombia in the 6 to 21 age group. The data shows that access to primary education (6-11 years old) is almost universal, with percentages close to 100%. However, as age increases, there is a significant decline in participation rates, particularly in the 17-21 age group (DANE, 2024. p. 18). This situation reveals that many obstacles make it difficult for students to continue their education, especially when transitioning to secondary school and college. Issues such as lack of financial resources, the necessity to work, discrimination, and the absence of quality schools in Afro-Colombian areas lead to high dropout rates. Even though more children now attend elementary school, accessing higher education is still challenging because of these barriers. This maintains the ongoing cycle of poverty and inequality that Afro-Colombian communities have dealt with for a long time.

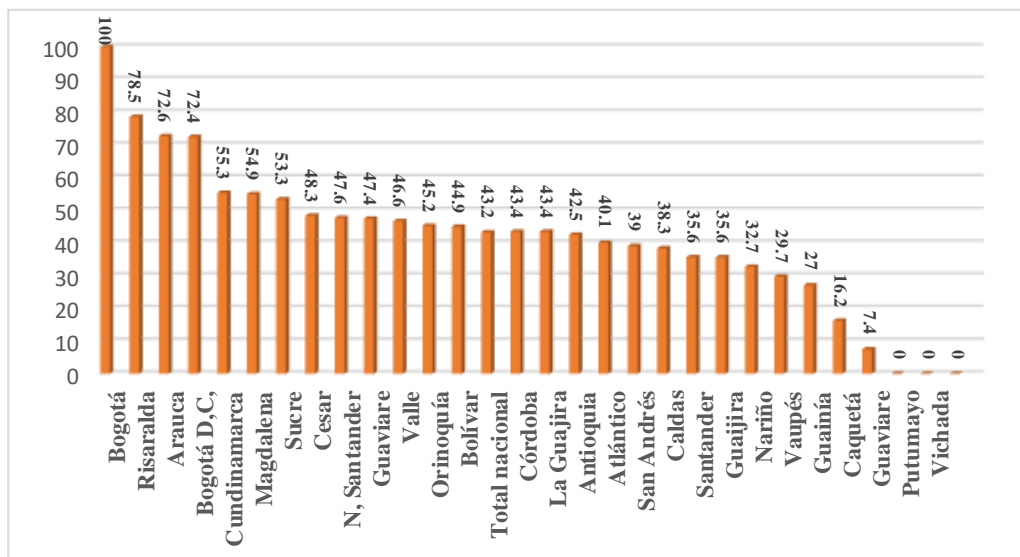


Figure 2. Drop in School Participation among Afro-Colombians Aged 17-21 (2023)

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 19

Figure 2 highlights the drastic drop in school enrollment rates among Afro-Colombian communities in the 17-21 age group. In an age range that should be a period of transition to higher

education or professional training, only a small percentage of Afro-Colombians remain in formal education (DANE, 2024, p. 19) This highlights the inability of the national education system to sustain the engagement of this group in higher education pathways, which cannot be separated from structural factors such as poverty, racial discrimination, geographical access limitations, as well as the economic burden of the household that requires many Afro youth to work early. This graph highlights how structural racism impacts the Afro-Colombian ability to improve their social standing through education in Colombia. Opportunities are limited, making it difficult for people in this community to climb the social ladder. This situation continues the cycle of social exclusion and unfair treatment from one generation to another. When children in the Afro-Colombian miss out on a strong education at a key age, they struggle to find high-paying jobs later on. This lack of access to better jobs increases the income gap between Afro-Colombians and other larger groups.

Table 3. Highest Level of Education Achieved by Afro-Colombians

Age Range	2022 %					2023%				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
Total	6.4	31.0	19.4	25.7	17.5	7.0	29.6	19.1	26.9	17.4
6 to 10 years	9.0	89.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	12.1	86.4	1.6	0.0	0.0
11 to 14 years	0.5	33.2	65.0	1.3*	0.0*	0.7*	32.0	66.6	0.8*	0.0*
15 to 16 years	1.4*	6.2*	60.1	31.1	0.6	1.5*	6.8*	55.3	35.9	0.5*
17 to 21 years	1.6*	7.5	19.0	46.2	25.7	1.4*	5.9	24.3	45.7	22.8
22 years and over	7.8	26.9	13.6	29.4	22.4	8.0	25.5	13.5	30.9	22.2

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 20

*A: None; B: Primary; C: Lower Secondary; D: Upper Secondary; E: Higher

Table above presents the highest level of education attained by Afro-Colombian individuals aged six years and older, revealing that most of this population only completed primary or secondary education, with a very low percentage in higher education. This data reflects that, despite relatively widespread access to basic education, Afro-Colombians continue to experience systemic barriers in achieving higher levels of education. Contributing factors include economic inequality, institutional discrimination, lack of scholarships or affirmative programs, as well as a lack of Afro representation in elite educational settings. Conceptually, this confirms the role of education as a reproductive field of structural racism: a system that appears formally neutral, but in practice prevents Afro groups from achieving higher social and economic positions. Therefore, the low attainment of higher education within the Afro-Colombians is not just a reflection of individual limitations, but evidence of the continuation of structural injustices that hinder social transformation in Colombia.

Food Insecurity as a Manifestation of Structural Racism

Table 4. Prevalence of Food Insecurity among Afro-Colombians

Area	Percentage (%)
National Total	39.7 %
Urban (Cabecera)	38.1 %
Populated Centers and Rural Dispersed	42.8%

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 15

Table 4 displays the prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity experienced by Afro-Colombian households, with notably higher percentages compared to the general population. This information shows that Afro-Colombians often face more challenges in getting enough food. These difficulties are tied to unfair economic conditions, low wages, and limited opportunities to access markets

or receive help from social programs. The serious issue of food insecurity in these communities isn't just bad luck. It stems from a history of racial discrimination that has limited their chances for good employment and financial security. The food insecurity experienced by Afro-Colombian communities must therefore be understood as one of the real dimensions of structural racism, where inequalities in basic rights - such as access to nutritious food - deepen social exclusion and exacerbate cycles of poverty that are passed down between generations.

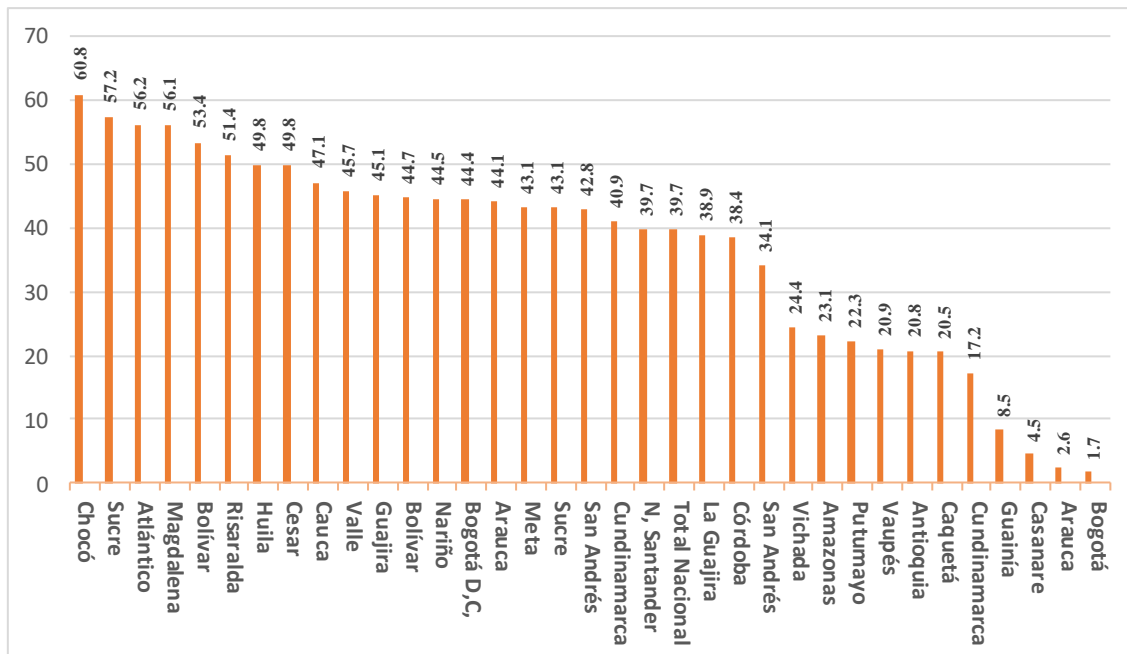


Figure 3. Food Insecurity Rates

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 16

Figure above visually illustrates the high prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity among Afro-Colombian communities, making clear patterns of inequality that are not only widespread but also deep. In terms of food insecurity, Chocó recorded the highest percentage at 60.8%, followed by Sucre (57.2%) and Atlántico (56.2%). Conversely, Afro-Colombians in Bogotá (1.7%), Boyacá (2.6%), and Amazonas (4.5%) reported the lowest levels of food-related vulnerability, reflecting geographic inequalities in access to basic necessities. This graphical representation shows that Afro-communities experience food insecurity in a systemic rather than sporadic or situational way. It reinforces the narrative that high food insecurity is the result of structural injustice, where certain racial groups - in this case Afro-Colombians - experience multiple barriers to accessing basic needs. From the perspective of structural racism, this food insecurity demonstrates how social and economic systems actively maintain inequality, creating conditions in which the survival of Afro-Colombians is made more vulnerable compared to the rest of the population. As such, Graph 10 provides strong visual evidence of the interconnections between racism, social injustice and violations of the right to adequate food.

Multidimensional Poverty

Income deprivation, but also in many fundamental aspects of life. Levels of access to formal education, decent housing conditions, as well as security of basic needs such as food and other basic services, consistently show deep inequalities between Afro-Colombians and the rest of the population. Data shows that most Afro-Colombians live in inadequate housing conditions and have limited access to basic amenities such as clean water and sanitation (DANE, 2024). In addition, low formal educational

attainment narrows their opportunities to improve their socio-economic conditions, exacerbating the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Within the framework of structural racism, this multidimensional poverty is clear evidence that racial discrimination does not limit only one aspect of life, but extends to various important dimensions that mutually reinforce social injustice. Similarly, racial inequality in Latin America, including Colombia, has led to disparities in human development indicators (UNDP, 2021). Thus, the multidimensional poverty of Afro-Colombian communities exposes the complexity and depth of the systemic racism they face in their daily lives.

Subjective Perception of Poverty

Table 5. Subjective Poverty Perception among Afro-Colombian Heads of Household

Area	2022 (%)	2023%
National Total	68.8	71.0
Urban (Cabecera)	60.7	64.5
Populated Centers and Rural Dispersed	84.6	83.4

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2024). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 22

Table above reveals that a significant proportion of Afro-Colombian household heads identify themselves as poor. This figure shows how structural inequalities not only impact objective living conditions, but also shape the social consciousness of affected communities. These perceptions can be understood as the result of ongoing experiences of economic discrimination, limited access to public services, and job insecurity. The high level of subjective perceptions of poverty indicates that Afro-Colombians experience a double psychosocial burden: in addition to facing material deprivation, they also internalize structural injustice as part of their social identity. From the perspective of structural racism, these data suggest that discrimination not only creates material inequalities, but also reinforces inherited narratives of powerlessness in Afro-Colombian communities.

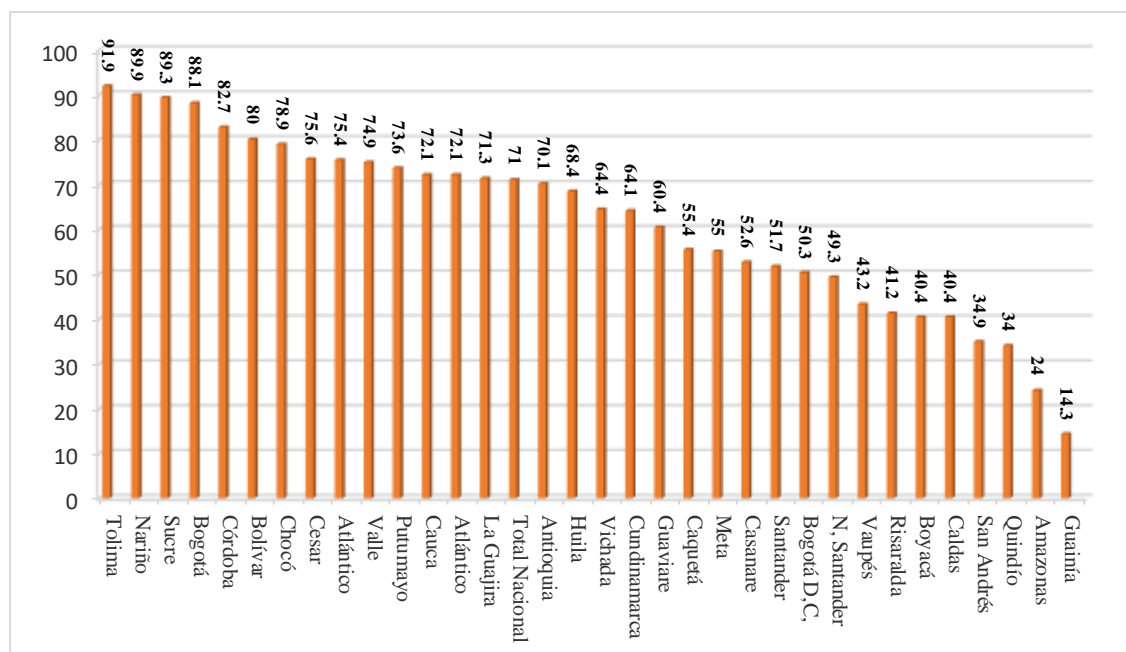


Figure 4. Self-Perceived Poverty

Note. Adapted from: DANE. (2023). Boletín NARP – Encuesta de Calidad de Vida (ECV) 2023. p. 22

Figure 4 visually clarifies the high prevalence of perceptions of poverty among Afro-Colombian households, with a distribution that shows the majority consider themselves to be in the poor or near-poor category. According to ECV 2023, Tolima had the highest rate of self-perceived poverty among Afro-Colombians, reaching 91.9%, followed by Nariño (89.9%) and Sucre (89.3%). On the lower end, departments such as Guainía (14.3%), Amazonas (24.0%), and Quindío (34.0%) reflected the least perceived poverty, showing striking disparities in economic self-assessment. This information shows that Afro-Colombians often face more challenges in getting enough food. These difficulties are tied to unfair economic conditions, low wages, and limited opportunities to access markets or receive help from social programs. The serious issue of food insecurity in these communities isn't just bad luck. It stems from a history of racial discrimination that has limited their chances for good employment and financial security.

C. Resonance of the Black Lives Matter Movement in Resistance to Structural Racism in Colombia

The Influence of Global Solidarity and Cross-Border Movements

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has sparked a new wave of consciousness in different parts of the world, including in Colombia, where Afro-Colombians are responding to cases of racial violence with unprecedented forms of social mobilization. A significant event was when Anderson Arboleda, a young man from the Afro-Colombian community, died due to police violence. This tragic incident occurred just six days before the death of George Floyd in the United States. These events triggered massive demonstrations in cities such as Cali, Bogotá, and Medellín, in solidarity with and rejection of the structural racism faced by black communities in Colombia (Cleland, 2022). These mobilizations were not only reactive, but also marked an increase in the organizational capacity of Afro-Colombians to hold state institutions accountable for systemic violence and discrimination.

In addition to direct street actions, forms of collective resistance were also reflected in social media campaigns that raised hashtags such as #LasVidasNegrasImportan and #JusticiaParaAnderson, reflecting the adoption of digital strategies from the BLM movement in the United States. In this situation, the role of BLM was very important. It acted like a push or a spark that helped Afro-Colombian communities improve their ability to come together and organize. This organization was focused on resisting challenges they face and making stronger demands for policies that are fairer and include them more. By doing this, they could work better as a group to create changes that benefit their communities and ensure their voices were heard (Rickford, 2016). This situation reveals how people from different countries can unite and offer each other support in practical and meaningful ways. By sharing ideas and stories, they can work together to bring about changes in society. This type of support emphasizes the common challenges people face and strengthens their connections. It helps unite efforts to fight against problems like colonialism and racial inequality in various parts of the world (Shahin et al., 2024).

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement had a big effect around the world, but it also faced some political resistance, especially in the United States. After the protests in 2020, some local governments either thought about cutting or actually cut the budgets allocated to the police. This decision was part of a broader debate on how to address issues related to law enforcement and community safety. Yet, in many cases these efforts were later reversed, and funding or law enforcement even increased in response to public and political pressure (Ebbinghaus et al., 2024). This illustrates that while BLM served as a catalyst for transnational solidarity and mobilization, its implementation and outcomes vary greatly depending on national political dynamics.

The Role of Cultural Expression and Media in Social Resistance

In addition to forms of resistance in public spaces, Afro-Colombian communities also seize cultural and media spaces as fields of symbolic struggle. Mural art, Afro music, poetry, and other visual works are important instruments for articulating experiences of racism and voicing collective identities that have been excluded from the dominant narrative. In the post-2020 context, many Afro artists created

works that not only responded to the Anderson Arboleda and George Floyd cases, but also told local stories of eviction, poverty, and marginalization in regions such as Chocó and Buenaventura (Mourão & Brown, 2022). Social media became an extension of these cultural expressions, enabling the rapid spread of anti-racist messages and community empowerment through visual and audio campaigns.

As Mourão and Brown (2022) argue, digital media platforms not only disseminate resistance narratives but also shape how these narratives are framed, contested, and internalized by broader publics. These platforms serve two main roles: they amplify certain voices and decide which ones get less attention in social and political conversations. The way these platforms are designed sometimes highlights dramatic or divisive content, which might change how we understand resistance movements and support existing power structures. Digital media allows people to create meanings together, which can bring different communities closer or, depending on the situation and how well users understand media, increase differences in opinions.

These cultural expressions have played a big role in making young Afro-Colombians more politically aware. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement's use of digital media has been important for marginalized communities. They are now changing how they talk about injustice. Instead of just expressing dissatisfaction, they are actively telling stories. These stories demand that people pay attention and push for real changes in the system.

(Mourão & Brown, 2022). In Colombia, a form of resistance comes from people working together. Local artists join forces with activists to put on street performances and community art exhibitions. They also create educational materials to highlight systemic racism. This demonstrates that culture goes beyond being art; it's a powerful political tool used to challenge and push back against unfair and oppressive systems (Bolsover, 2020).

Changes in Political and Social Discourse Post-2020

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement had a strong effect. It changed how people participate in social movements, especially in Colombia. BLM made Colombians rethink their views on race and politics. It also helped people understand and build their own identities related to race and political beliefs. One striking change is the shift in the use of the term in public and academic discourse from "negro" to "afrodescendiente" as a form of deconstruction of colonial legacies and recognition of the historical origins of Afro-Colombians (Restrepo, 2021). This change is not just about words; it shows that people want more understanding and respect for different cultures. It also fights against using words that keep racial stereotypes alive. By making this shift, there is a push for everyone to be more aware of how language can affect others and to promote equality and fairness.

This aligns with Hooker's (2005) argument that true multicultural citizenship requires not only symbolic inclusion but also substantive redistribution of political and institutional power. Showing diverse people in media or using inclusive words in policies isn't enough. Real change is necessary in how rights, resources, and decisions are managed. Without fixing the big, deep-rooted inequalities in our institutions, attempts at inclusion might just seem like performative acts. This could keep existing unfair structures in place. A truly inclusive democratic society needs to face and reshape these long-standing systems of privilege. These systems determine who holds power and whose interests are prioritized in politics and society.

This transformation of discourse is also evident in the increased political participation of Afro-Colombian individuals and the emergence of public figures who openly advocate for racial justice issues (Primbs et al., 2024). The influence of BLM sparked a revitalization of the collective identity and struggle strategies of the Afro-Colombian community from being mere recipients of state aid to active actors challenging power structures. This change in the way people talk is really important for challenging the

existing system. It calls for more than just letting different groups speak up; it also seeks a fair sharing of power and justice for everyone in society (Hooker, 2005).

Afro-Latinx people often go through similar racial violence, linking them through shared experiences of discrimination. This happens no matter their country of origin. Those in power usually focus more on skin color than on ethnic differences. Because of this, Afro-Latinx communities feel united in their fight against racial oppression, even if they come from different cultures or backgrounds. It shows how skin color can be more important than ethnic identity when dealing with authority figures. This insight is why the Black Lives Matter movement is significant for Afro-Colombians populations in Latin America, including Colombia. It recognizes their experiences with racism and helps build a shared sense of identity and struggle across borders (Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021).

Conclusion

This study shows that racism against Afro-Colombian communities isn't accidental. It's deeply tied to Colombia's history and institutions. Lipsitz's theory says the effects of colonial times are still visible today. Afro-Colombians often face segregation, economic difficulties, and systemic discrimination. The global Black Lives Matter movement has inspired Afro-Colombians to speak out more. This inspiration has led to increased political awareness, richer cultural expression, and more community organizing. These developments are crucial as Afro-Colombian communities are now actively demanding justice and reforms, instead of being overlooked by the government.

The study uses existing data but emphasizes the importance of more research through interviews and community studies. This would provide deeper insights into resistance and everyday experiences of inequality. The study highlights the need to include racial perspectives in public policies. Tackling structural racism is more than legal changes; it requires transforming state institutions to achieve fairness, representation, and accountability. Only by committing to these changes can Colombia become a more equitable and just society for Afro-Colombian populations. Hearing what Afro-Colombians have to say is important, it's not only a way to show that we stand with them, but it is also necessary for building a society where everyone feels included and respected.

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