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Intersections Between the Intercultural Education Ethos and the Integral Ecological Ethics for the Common Home

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Abstract: This study critically analyses the urgency of establishing an ethos of discourse and action for the realization of an integral planetary ethic that is capable of addressing the challenges of our time. To this end, this study seeks to systematize ethos propositions for the implementation of intercultural education based on integral ecological ethics, aligning with the concept of Common Home. The outputs indicate that integral ecological ethics serves as a teleological, epistemic, and methodological support for intercultural education, while also proposing concrete pathways for the application of the values articulated in the encyclical *Laudato si'* within educational contexts. The development of this study is guided by a qualitative research approach, integrating literature review and field study methodologies, which illuminate the perspectives of educators, students, and their families regarding well-being in both current and future contexts. The conclusions underscore the urgency of establishing an ethos of discourse and action in the implementation of integral planetary ethics, which relates to the integrative and dialogical propositions of intercultural education aimed at sustaining the integrity of both human and planetary dimensions.

Keywords: integral ecological ethics; intercultural education; *Laudato si'*; transformative education; Common Home



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1. Introduction

The contemporary context has been marked by polycrises, with the occurrence of multiple and simultaneous shocks that are profoundly interdependent and are taking place in an increasingly integrated world (UNICEF 2023, p. 6). Such a scenario leads to the need to reflect on ethical principles that can support human dignity in conjunction with planetary sustainability in order to develop integrative and dialogical proposals for intercultural education. Scenarios such as the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed the urgent need for a new universal pact for global sustainability, highlighting the fundamental interconnection between humanity and our Common Home. Nowadays, the magnitude of the interconnection between ecological and climate, social, cultural, and political issues that have clear systemic roots is becoming noticeable (Mendonça 2020, p. 20).

Recent post-pandemic expectations aspire to new, fairer, and more fraternal situations that are in line with sustainability perspectives. The encyclical *Laudato si'* emphasizes the urgent need for an ecological conversion that goes beyond individual actions and demands the reconfiguration of community and institutional structures. This theological framework posits that a genuine ecological approach invariably becomes a social approach, thus elucidating the intrinsic connection between environmental challenges and the social and ethical dimensions of coexistence (Francis 2015, §49).

These aspirations are strongly undermined by the contemporary global scenario, which is marked by wars, conflicts, extreme natural disasters, and growing inequality, poverty, and disrespect for all forms of life, enhancing an exclusionary ethos. This scenario corroborates Mendonça's finding (Mendonça 2020, p. 67) that the "[...] number of pandemics has grown and will grow, because our development models do not take into account the balance of ecosystems or respect for our Common Home" (Mendonça 2020, p. 67). Consequently, the imbalance and degradation of human and global ecologies is exacerbated "[...] nowadays, when utopias are thought of through a strategy of inversion that bears the fruit of famous dystopias" (Matos 2017, p. 41).

As an interpretative theological framework, the encyclical *Laudato si'* signals purposes and actions in various domains, including sustainable urban planning, circular economy, and environmental protection, highlighting the need for inter- and trans-disciplinary and sectoral responses. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among governments, civil society, and educational institutions in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach (Deane-Drummond and Deneulin 2021) to tackling ecological and social crises in a polyhedral way.

In the educational sphere, the call for an integral ecological ethic suggests that policies related to education should go beyond the mere transmission of technical knowledge to enable a cultural transformation that prepares individuals to assume co-responsibility for the care of the "Common Home". This approach advocates for a deep engagement with issues of power, privilege, and systemic injustice, encouraging individuals and communities to go beyond superficial understandings and actions and promoting a commitment to transformative justice and the common good. It aligns with UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education calls to empower students to engage and take active roles in addressing global challenges, fostering a sense of belonging to a common humanity (UNESCO 2015).

This vision is reinforced by the statement that education must aim to cultivate an "ecological citizenship" (Francis 2015, §211), whose perspective emphasizes the central role of educational institutions and public policies in promoting ethical principles, respect for diversity, equity, and global solidarity in the realization of effective sustainable practices.

There is, therefore, a critical need to examine ethical principles and their implications for education, particularly in safeguarding the right to intercultural education of current and future generations. To this end, intercultural pedagogy, based on integral ecological ethics, manifests the characteristics of a praxis that is capable of dialogically integrating knowledge, know-how, and values from different cultural practices, and is involved in the multidimensional sustainability of human-global ecology. The goal is an intercultural pedagogical praxis that can be closely aligned with the three principles articulated in *Laudato si'*: integral ecological ethics; stewardship of the "Common Home"; and the promotion of intra- and inter-social cooperation. Thus, intercultural education is based on the pillars that are detailed in *Laudato si'*, with a focus on the search for the realization of integral ecological ethics, which emphasizes alterity and dialogue, considering involvement with "the other" as a vital mechanism for promoting empathy, respect, and coexistence. Interculturality, as a pedagogy, mobilizes a methodology that not only honors cultural diversity, but also corresponds to the principles articulated in *Laudato si'*, highlighting the interconnectedness of all beings and the need for an inclusive dialogue aimed at nurturing planetary care and social justice.

Furthermore, intercultural pedagogy is conceived as a transformative practice that is capable of transcending inequalities and promoting inclusion, in line with the encyclical's call for an "ecological conversion" and structural transformations that facilitate sustainability and equity. In terms of theology, it resonates with *Laudato si'*, especially the emphasis on solidarity, the common good, and universal dignity.

This educational approach prioritizes holistic education, integrating cognitive, ethical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions to prepare learners to be conscious global citizens, and thus aligns with UNESCO's promotion of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4.7), encouraging learners to become active and responsible citizens of a just, peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable world. We thus have a perspective that encapsulates the ideal of an education that simultaneously addresses ecological and social challenges, as articulated in *Laudato si'*. Intercultural education emerges as an educational possibility that not only recognizes diversity, but also respects diversity, fights injustice, promotes sustainability, and acts locally and globally in promoting the establishment of a more equitable and sustainable society.

Thus, this study aims to systematize propositions for the implementation of intercultural education that are based on the principles of integral ecological ethics and which are capable of mobilizing knowledge, values, and cultural practices from different traditions, thus contributing to the multidimensional sustainability of human life.

With this in mind, this study highlights the importance of implementing an integral ethic through intercultural education and develops its methodological path using narrative literature review procedures that support the analysis and discussion of the results of the systematic review and empirical data, in which arguments that echo the epistemological and practical principles established in *Laudato si'* are scrutinized.

2. Results

The results are derived from search movements that integrate narrative and systematic literature review and empirical research procedures. The interpretative analysis of the literature and the analysis of the empirical data were guided by the research question: What are the intersections in the reconciliation of ethos in the co-responsible construction of an integral ecological ethic through intercultural education? Therefore, this section outlines the results of the two phases of the literature review, the narrative review and the integrative review. Subsequently, the results of a field study are presented, highlighting the relationships among the views of educators, students, and their families regarding well-being in current and future contexts, while applying the assumptions of integral ecological ethics and intercultural education.

2.1. Results of the Narrative Literature Review

In the narrative literature review procedure, a deliberate selection of theoretical and conceptual contributions was made with the aim of systematizing assumptions that contribute to a comprehensive and contemporary understanding of the dialogue between *Laudato si'* and education. Therefore, in the narrative review, the emphasis was directed towards the two thematic categories: integral ecological ethics and intercultural education. The reflection on ethics presented in this study through the lens of integral ecological ethics is informed by theological arguments presented in Francis' (2015) encyclical *Laudato si'*, in dialogue with "What it is to love a country" by Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça (2020) and "Ethics for dark times" by philosopher Markus Gabriel (2022). The second thematic category, intercultural education as a means of realizing an integral planetary ethic, is based on the work of Abdallah-Pretceille (1999, 2001), Berry (2006), Walsh (2010), Rego (2012), and Candau (2008, 2012, 2018). By establishing an educational ethos that reconciles integral ecological ethics with intercultural education, "[...] we are challenged to find and build intersections between the dystopian and utopian lines [...]" (Mendonça 2020, p. 110), through intercultural pedagogy. Thus, we seek contributions from theological, philosophical, sociological, and pedagogical studies that urge us to engage in collective co-responsibility to build this perspective in praxis.

2.1.1. Principles and Purposes of Integral Ecological Ethics

The integral ecology perspective proposes an ethic committed to the common good, providing a basis for establishing a just society based on human dignity, equality, and solidarity. Ethical conduct requires the pursuit of the common good, which entails defending individual and collective well-being, and thus promotes social justice and honoring diversity.

Thus, the intersections within a dialogical and systemic paradigm that integrates various analytical models support the development of an intercultural pedagogical ethic that is rooted in the perspective of a transnational ecological macroethics. This observation emphasizes that, although “[...] the human being is the starting point of ethics”; it is unsustainable for us to act in a morally object manner towards other species. These reflections elucidate the understanding that “[...] ethics transcends our species” (Gabriel 2022, p. 348).

To deconstruct the disruptive forces impacting various human and global dimensions, the formulation of a comprehensive ethical approach is increasingly recognized as a necessity. We find this approach in the integral ecological ethic formulated in *Laudato si’*, which supports a holistic vision that incorporates the environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions within a unified framework for the stewardship of our Common Home. Thus, integral ecological ethics transcends mere environmental conservation, requiring a moral and spiritual conversion that transforms social and cultural structures, and promoting a broader concept of collective co-responsibility.

The theoretical foundation of this theological perspective offers a robust basis for the development of public policies and social practices that recognize the interdependence between humanity and nature, based on the principles of dignity, solidarity, and the common good. This perspective is enriched by the theological interpretation provided by Celia Deane-Drummond (2018), who emphasizes the interconnections among theology, ecology, and social justice. She explores integral ecology as a bridge between theology, ethics, and public policy, and stresses the imperative of integrating cultural and educational dimensions in the transformation process, defending intercultural education as a vital means of promoting global awareness.

The author postulates that education must play a fundamental role in cultivating an “ecological wisdom” that unites scientific knowledge with cultural and spiritual values, allowing diverse cultural contexts to contribute to sustainable and inclusive solutions (Deane-Drummond 2018, p. 221).

Consequently, the co-responsible construction of an integral ecological ethic emerges as indispensable and urgent, as Francis emphasizes in highlighting the need for “[...] sustainable and integral development, requiring a new understanding of human beings in their relationship with the world” (Francis 2015, §50). This understanding implies not only structural reforms in public policies and economic frameworks, but also a reconfiguration of educational processes that is aimed at achieving global and intercultural ecological citizenship rooted in an awareness of care, justice, and co-responsibility for our Common Home. Global ecological citizenship, when deepened through critical intercultural dialogue and theological reflection, becomes a powerful framework for education. It challenges individuals and institutions to reimagine their place in the world not as consumers or passive observers, but as active participants in the healing of creation and the construction of a more fraternal humanity.

To this end, the construction of integral ecological ethics must incorporate contributions from all fields of human knowledge, ranging from scientific insights to ancestral wisdom and practice, encompassing “[...] religious wisdom with its own language” (Francis 2015, §50). Likewise, the pedagogy that supports the realization of integral ecological ethics is based on valuing the multiple languages of diverse knowledge, recognizing that

education for sustainability must transcend the transmission of technical knowledge to embrace cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions.

Global citizenship, when grounded in meaningful intercultural exchange and theological reflection, becomes more than a rhetorical construct—it is transformed into a way of living that is both prophetic and liberating (Freire 1970). It challenges individuals and institutions to move beyond consumerist and spectator roles, inviting them instead to participate actively in the healing of creation and the construction of a more just and fraternal world. This educational paradigm transcends superficial notions of tolerance or passive empathy. It demands a radical openness to vulnerability, the courage to engage differences with integrity, and a commitment to action shaped by love and justice (Andreotti 2011; Walsh 2009).

Such a foundation calls for an integration of contemplation and action, where solidarity is not grounded in charity but in humility and mutual recognition (Merton 1961; Nussbaum 1997). As Pope Francis articulates in *Fratelli Tutti*, the Church envisions a “universal fraternity” that responds to global injustices through a culture of encounter and care (Francis 2020). This vision resonates with the principles of critical intercultural education, which refuses to neutralize cultural difference or erase power asymmetries, and instead embraces plurality, historical consciousness, and epistemic justice (Candau 2012; Rego 2012).

When global citizenship is approached through this critical and theological lens, it is no longer simply a pedagogical strategy. It becomes a transformative vocation rooted in spiritual ethics, intercultural dialogue, and planetary responsibility—offering not only an alternative educational approach, but also a moral and theological imperative for shaping the future of our Common Home (Deane-Drummond 2018; Francis 2015).

In this context, Francis emphasizes the need to resort to “[...] the diverse cultural riches of peoples, to art, poetry, interior life and spirituality” (Francis 2015, §49), illuminating the significance of an educational approach that integrates various facets of human experience in order to nurture an integral ecological conscience. Intercultural education, therefore, emerges as a critical procedure for raising awareness of the interconnections between the human and planetary dimensions, linking subjects, their cultures, the environment, and spirituality, as pointed out by Deane-Drummond (2018), who advocates an “ecological wisdom” that links scientific knowledge to cultural and spiritual values, promoting sustainable and inclusive practices.

However, contemporary realities present substantial challenges to the implementation of this perspective, as dystopian and retro-topian narratives obscure a comprehensive understanding of the ecological crisis. These challenges are exacerbated by the rapid acceleration of technological and economic processes, which are often not aligned with the common good and sustainable, integral human development. In this regard, Francis warns that “[...] the objectives of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily oriented towards the common good and sustainable and integral human development” (Francis 2015, §17), necessitating a re-evaluation of the paradigms that govern contemporary society.

The prevalence of the technocratic paradigm, characterized by the excessive instrumentalization of technology and the subordination of ethics to material progress, presents a significant challenge for the formulation of an integral ecological ethic. As Francis observed, “[...] it is impossible to think that it is possible to sustain another cultural paradigm and use technology as a mere instrument, because today the technocratic paradigm has become so dominant that it is very difficult to do without its resources, and even more difficult to use its resources without being dominated by its logic” (Francis 2015, §84). This logic, which prioritizes economic efficiency over equity and sustainability, precipitates a global moral crisis, which manifests itself in the indiscriminate pursuit of power and resources, exacerbating social and environmental injustices. Gabriel states that “[...] the global accu-

mulation of morally abject actions, sometimes small, sometimes large, gradually leads to the self-extermination of humanity” (Gabriel 2022, pp. 359–60), emphasizing the pressing need for a fundamental ethical transformation.

In this context, Mendonça warns of the need for a conversion of purpose, arguing that contemporary societies are influenced by the “dogma of utilitarianism, which operates as a mass market and displays a dramatic disinvestment in humans (frequent victims of exclusion, indifference and discard)” (Mendonça 2020, pp. 67–68). The author states that this reductionist model must be supplanted by “a new wisdom, of more integrative models” that facilitate engagement with the totality of human experience and promote educational and social practices that recognize the complexity of life in its entirety. This mirrors Paulo Freire’s concept of dialogue as a horizontal relationship based on love, humility, and faith in people’s capacity to transform the world according to the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire 1970). Intercultural dialogue in this sense can be seen also theological: it expresses the logic of relationality, communion, and hospitality to “the other”. Consequently, the intercultural approach appears as a promising way to transcend exclusionary logics and defend ecological citizenship based on dialog, respect for diversity, and co-responsibility for the stewardship of our Common Home.

2.1.2. Critical Intercultural Education Operating Integral Ecological Ethics

Building an integral ecological ethic, as articulated in *Laudato si’*, requires an educational approach that integrates various forms of knowledge and everyday practices, thus fostering cultural re-signification and promoting a dynamic and participatory educational praxis. To this end, intercultural education is identified as a vital opportunity to achieve structural transformation and cultivate a global citizenship rooted in co-responsible stewardship of our Common Home.

It should be reaffirmed that the ethics articulated in *Laudato si’* transcends a simplistic environmental discourse, since it represents a call for ecological conversion that requires profound transformations, both in lifestyle and in the fundamental conception of existence. This conversion is not limited to the interaction between humans and nature; on the contrary, it extends to social and cultural dimensions, representing an integrated approach to all facets of life that is underpinned by the belief that “everything is intimately interrelated in the world” (Francis 2015, §16). The ecological conversion promoted by *Laudato si’* advocates a restructuring of production and consumption patterns, as well as a re-evaluation of humanity’s relationship with other living beings, particularly those who suffer the most.

Intercultural education, based on the principles of integral ecological ethics, can be considered essential for the advancement of more equitable, sustainable, and supportive societies. By promoting an ethos that emphasizes the interactive coexistence of cultural diversity and dialogue, education serves as a mechanism for social transformation, empowering individuals and distinct cultural communities to face the ecological and social challenges of today and the times to come. The interactions among ethics, education, and equity are established as a fundamental element in creating a world where diverse cultures can dialog and interact harmoniously within the shared space of the Common Home. The realization of integral ecological ethics is then facilitated by intercultural pedagogy, which urges us to “[...] conceive of the planet as our Common Home and humanity as a people inhabiting a shared house” (Francis 2015, §127), thus defending collective co-responsibility in its administration.

The successful implementation of this paradigm of care, which incorporates diverse systems of knowledge and everyday practices, requires a reframing of what is understood as coexisting culture and an emphasis on the formation of an educational ethos as praxis, conceived in its “living, dynamic and participatory sense to [...] rethink the relationship

between human beings and the environment” (Francis 2015, §112). As a reference point, the epistemological and methodological bases for intercultural education are identified here.

The transformative perspective inherent in integral ecological ethics requires a paradigm shift towards educational policies based on the ethical principles of intercultural education. Although retrograde groups persist, characterized by Bauman (2017) as entities based on conservative epistemological paradigms that defend cultural homogeneity, the “[...] impossibility of a social constitution formed by a single culture, language, religion or identity characterizing an entire population” is increasingly recognized (Berry 2006, p. 28). The interconnectedness of the globalized and interconnected world challenges homogenizing notions and demands a broader recognition of cultural diversity as an intrinsic aspect of plural societies. Thus, as Berry emphasizes, equity in difference should be understood as the recognition of cultural diversity within society, promoting interactive and inclusive coexistence.

However, it is important to establish that the conceptions of interculturality that circulate operate with different understandings and discursive strategies of power.

In this study, the analysis is focused on the intercultural view constructed from the perspective of Latin American thought, according to the contributions of Freire (1970, 1979, 2011), Quijano (2000), Mignolo (2017), which allows us to understand the paths of subjugation and oppression stemming from colonial modernity, as well as the challenges of overcoming oppressed social practices and subjectivities. Paulo Freire establishes the presuppositions of Latin American thought, seeking to free himself from the Eurocentric meanings and narratives emanating from the coloniality of knowledge, being, and power. His analysis of the implications of colonial precepts and values in educational thinking highlights conservative practices, safeguarded by a banking pedagogy, alerting and instigating the construction of a new pedagogical praxis centered on critical reflection for the development of citizen awareness. Citizenship presupposes critical awareness, or, “In other words, citizenship needs to exist as a daily mode of social relations in order to function as a mode of political relations”. (Quijano 2000, p. 75). In this direction “[...] Freirean thought is a pioneer in adopting a decolonizing and intercultural perspective in the philosophical approach to education, constituting a practice of ethno-knowledge and interculturality” (Severino 2019, p. 53).

The paths of subjugation, in the colonial scenario based on a monocultural conception that disregards cultural diversity, deeply rooted racism, subordination, objectification of bodies, produced by capitalist logic having human lives as disposable. Thus, “[...] it is a pattern of domination/exploitation/conflict, [from which] the inhabitants of such a space of domination are, of course, in relations of inequality with regard to control of the production resources and the institutions and mechanisms of authority, especially the mechanisms of violence” (Quijano 2000, p. 75).

In this way, the capital logic operates via “[...] frequent and violent ethnocides, economic extortion and political oppression, [positioned] colonized peripheral societies [which] also suffered the invalidation of their subjective production [...]” (Severino 2019, p. 55). Thus, colonial practices were “[...] hidden behind the rhetoric of modernity, [through] economic practices [that] dispensed with human lives, and knowledge justified racism and the inferiority of human lives, which were naturally considered dispensable” (Mignolo 2017, p. 4). From such strategies, coloniality “[...] was the emergence of a control structure and administration of authority, economy, subjectivity and gender and sexual norms and relations [...]” (Mignolo 2017, p. 4), which remain deeply rooted in Latin American social practices and subjectivities.

The challenges of overcoming the oppression of social practices and subjectivities, in other words, an alternative view of the imposed massification of Euro-centric thinking, can

be made possible through critical intercultural praxis, as Catherine Walsh points out, using as a reference Latin American decolonial studies.

In this sense, the proposal for a Common Home presented by *Laudato si'* (Francis 2015) offers an ethical perspective of coexistence that is in direct dialogue with the pedagogies of Paulo Freire and the critical interculturality proposed by Catherine Walsh. While Freire highlights praxis as a means of transforming oppressive structures through critical consciousness and collective action (Freire 1970), Walsh (2009, 2010) broadens this horizon by proposing a decolonial intercultural approach that values marginalized knowledge and challenges the hegemony of Eurocentric thinking. Both approaches meet in the defense of life and dignity, and the construction of collective meanings, aligning themselves with the idea of well-being as something that transcends the individual and is built in community and in harmony with nature. The ecological spirituality of *Laudato si'* reinforces this view by proposing an ecological conversion that articulates care for oneself, the other, and the planet—central elements in both Freirian pedagogy and critical interculturality. In this way, thinking about well-being and the Common Home from these perspectives allows us to break with colonial models and create new ethical and educational possibilities of coexistence and socio-environmental justice. However, this understanding requires a more critical and in-depth approach to how cultures coexist and cooperate, especially in contexts marked by historical inequalities and asymmetrical power structures.

Walsh's studies (Walsh 2010, pp. 77–79) help to elucidate the distinction among three perspectives on interculturality: functional interculturality, relational interculturality, and critical interculturality. The first two operate with conservative concepts, which conceive of the diversity of cultures as juxtaposed, or in a hierarchical relationship, without considering dialogue and integration between the different cultures that coexist in the same context.

The relational view, according to the author, refers to the most basic and general form of contact and exchange between cultures, or rather between people with different cultural practices, knowledge, values, and traditions, and these relationships take place under conditions of equality or inequality. This makes the conflicts and questions of power, domination, and subordination that occur in these relationships invisible. In this way, interculturality is limited to contact and relationships between people, often being understood only at the individual level, and disregards the social, political, economic, and epistemic structures of society, which position cultural difference in terms of superiority and inferiority. Thus, in relational interculturality, the assumption is made that interculturality is something that has always existed, because there has always been contact and relationship between peoples. The “problem with this perspective is that it usually hides or minimizes the conflict and the contexts of power, domination and continuous coloniality in which the relationship takes place” (Walsh 2010, p. 77).

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the other two understandings brought up by the author, the functional and critical perspectives, which “contextualize and signify the use of the word and the concept of interculturality in the current situation, at the same time as highlighting its meanings, uses, intentionalities and social and political implications” (Walsh 2010, p. 77). In this examination, it should be considered that the perspectives of functional interculturality and critical interculturality operate from opposing ethical, political, and epistemic assumptions.

On the one hand, functional interculturality “[...] is rooted in the recognition of diversity and cultural difference, with goals for their inclusion in the established social structure”, but in a way that maintains the asymmetries between cultures, does not make inclusion effective, and does not involve the recognition and participation of minority cultures, since it “does not touch on the causes of social and cultural asymmetry and inequality”, nor does it question the system of inequality and exclusion. It operates according to “[...] the new

multicultural logic of global capitalism', a logic that recognizes difference, sustaining its production and administration within the national order, neutralizing it, and emptying it of its effective meaning, making it functional to that order (Walsh 2010, pp. 77–78). In this way, functional interculturality becomes perfectly compatible with the logic of the existing neoliberal model, which is exercised vertically and maintains hierarchical subordination between groups, even if they cohabit the same space. Principles such as equity and fraternity are extinguished from this perspective.

On the other hand, critical interculturality, according to Walsh (2010, p. 78), "is understood as a tool, as a process and project that is built from the people up" and as a demand to overcome relations of subordination. Critical interculturality, therefore, goes beyond noting the existence of cultural diversity that is juxtaposed or in contact. Based on the principles of equity, solidarity, and social justice, it "supports and requires the transformation of structures, institutions and social relations, and the construction of conditions for being, being, thinking, knowing, learning, feeling and living differently" (Walsh 2010, p. 78). From this perspective, critical interculturality emerges as a vital mechanism for navigating the tensions intrinsic to multicultural societies, presenting a model of coexistence based on mutual respect, equity, and the recognition of diversity as a fundamental value in building fairer and more cohesive communities, in accordance with the principles of integral ecological ethics.

This is the same direction advocated for in *Laudato si'*, which reinforces the imperative of inclusion and solidarity by addressing cultural diversity, postulating that authentic human and ecological development can only be achieved through the acceptance and appreciation of cultural and environmental diversity. This promotes a genuine intercultural dialog that unites disparate social realities in the same space of coexistence. In this regard, Francis states that "there are no borders or political and social barriers that can isolate us; therefore, there is no room for the globalization of indifference" (Francis 2015, §52). Critical interculturality thus becomes aligned with the principles of integral ecological ethics, as it promotes equal dialogue between cultures, within a framework of co-responsible care for the space in which they cohabit, the Common Home, that is rooted in justice, dignity, and solidarity between peoples.

Critical interculturality, according to Walsh, establishes an intrinsic link between cultural perspectives and intercultural education, integrating them into a humanistic project aimed at rebuilding society. This approach seeks not only to challenge historically entrenched power asymmetries, but also to reframe cultural and educational practices, promoting equitable and inclusive participation among diverse social groups. In this context, critical interculturality aims to build a participatory pedagogy capable of deconstructing asymmetrical and exclusionary structures from the perspective of an integral ecological ethic.

Critical interculturality is thus conceptualized as a political-epistemological approach that advocates for the reformulation of power relations, fostering an educational and social paradigm based on equity and the recognition of cultural diversity. It is essential to understand the cultural dimensions in terms of their interrelationships with social, political, and economic structures, particularly in the contemporary context, which is marked by deepening inequalities and exclusions. As Candau emphasizes, "[...] cultural relations are constructed throughout history and are therefore permeated by issues of power, strongly hierarchical relations and prejudice and discrimination against certain groups" (Candau 2012, p. 51).

There is no doubt that the historical trajectory of humanity has been profoundly shaped by the denial of otherness, leading to the systemic exclusion of various oppressed social groups. Candau observes that "historical formation is marked by the physical elimination of the 'other', and its denial represents a violent form of rejection of alterity" (Candau 2018,

p. 21). In this sense, critical interculturality presents itself as a form of resistance and a possibility for transformation, promoting inclusion and social justice in collective spaces, especially within educational institutions and historically excluded cultural groups.

From the point of view of critical intercultural pedagogical praxis in the context of cultural diversity and considering the social relations between different groups, it becomes crucial to analyse how cultural elements are employed and manipulated in communication, interactions, and the structuring of everyday life (Abdallah-Pretceille 1999, p. 18). This observation presents a paradox: once the importance of cultural variables is recognized in society, it becomes necessary to transcend them. The focus, therefore, should not be on describing cultures in isolation, but on analysing the interactions between individuals or groups who identify with different cultures and reflecting on the social and communicational uses of cultures. As Abdallah-Pretceille states, “[...] the cultural variable plays a role in educational, social and political issues, but without predetermined paths, hence the need to address cultural phenomena rather than attributed or self-attributed characteristics” (Abdallah-Pretceille 1999, p. 19).

Building a genuinely intercultural and inclusive society is a complex, cross-cutting challenge that cuts across political, social, cultural, and religious dimensions. Facing this challenge means committing to ongoing processes of deconstructing deep-rooted prejudices and affirming a global citizenship guided by ethical values, in which diversity is recognized not only as a constitutive characteristic of contemporary societies but as an inalienable foundation of any global sustainability project.

In this sense, critical intercultural education emerges as an essential tool in the formation of individuals capable of engaging ethically and authentically in everyday life, as Rego argues when he states that education must “[...] teach individuals to relate to others in the ‘world of life’ and to encounter others in their most authentic and ethical sense” (Rego 2012, p. 38).

Achieving this goal requires investment in participatory methodologies that transcend conservative approaches—often rooted in competition and individualism—and which seek, as Rego states, “[...] to cultivate egocentric and ethnocentric attitudes” (Rego 2012, p. 39). Overcoming these limitations implies promoting collective learning spaces that facilitate dialog and encounter, allowing individuals to understand and appreciate others in their cultural integrity. From this perspective, recognizing otherness is fundamental; as Abdallah-Pretceille argues, “[...] it is not a question of knowing cultures, but of knowing the people who belong to those cultures” (Abdallah-Pretceille 2001, p. 17), which defines the essence of critical interculturality.

In this sense, critical intercultural education should be seen as a participatory, dynamic, and transformative process that promotes equitable social relations, deepens understanding of cultural identities, and combats exclusionary practices in order to establish a culture of respect, solidarity, and social justice.

Rego’s integration of intercultural education affirms that an inclusive pedagogical approach allows for the transcendence of conservative practices that restrict individual participation in the educational process, while Deane-Drummond’s theological vision reinforces that the incorporation of diverse voices and perspectives increases the sense of ecological responsibility and global ethics.

In this way, integrating the principles of *Laudato si’* integral ecological ethics with the guidelines of a critical intercultural approach in the formulation of public policies and participatory pedagogical practices represents a promising path towards the formation of an educational ethos that cultivates empathetic, supportive, and cooperative individuals capable of facing contemporary challenges in a critical, ethical, and co-responsible manner.

2.2. Results of the Systematic Literature Review on Intercultural Education and Planetary Ethics

In order to advance reflection on the application of the principles and assumptions of integral ecological ethics via critical intercultural education, we sought to identify the echoes of *Laudato si'* in scientific articles published after 2015. The systematic review was carried out by searching the *redalyc.org* database using the descriptors “intercultural education” and “planetary ethics”, which yielded 12 articles from the period from 2015 to 2024. The cutoff in 2015 was established to focus on articles published after the launch of the “Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*” and, from the abstracts and keywords, nine were selected (shown in Table 1).

Table 1. Review survey results.

Article Titles	Authors	Year/ Language	Journal/Country
1. Papa Francisco: del encuentro intercultural a una ecología integral planetaria	Fernando Antonio Zapata Murie	2024 Espanhol	Revista Producción + Limpia/España
2. Construir la Cosmópolis para formar la ciudadanía planetaria	Juan Martín López Calva	2023/ Espanhol	Sinéctica 60/México
3. Pensamiento complejo, ética planetaria y transformación social en la formación del profesorado	Juan Martín López Calva	2022 Espanhol	Revista Digital de Investigación en Docencia Universitaria/Peru
4. Marketing verde en la conformación de una ciudadanía planetaria en el ámbito educativo latinoamericano	Julio Juvenal Aldana Zavala; Félix Colina Ysea	2019 Espanhol	Revista San Gregorio/Ecuador
5. Antecedentes de la cosofía	Clara Inés Builes Cadavid; Luis Fernando Garcés Giraldo; Luz Eugenia Saldarriaga	2018 Espanhol	Revista Producción + Limpia/España
6. Educação Ambiental e suas Urgências: a constituição de uma ética planetária	Cleber Gibbon Ratto; Paula Corrêa Henning; Balduino Antonio Andreola	2017 Português	Educação & Realidade/Brasil
7. Desarrollo capitalista y la inviabilidad del planteamiento ecologista	Carlos Eduardo Cruz Meléndez	2017 Espanhol	Revista Economía y Sociedad/Costa Rica
8. Educar en la justicia social por ella y para esta: Una lucha ineludiblemente ética	Ileana Castillo-Cedeño	2015 Espanhol	Revista Electrónica Educare/Costa Rica
9. Direito, ambiente e emancipação social	Lidiane Eluizete de Carvalho	2015 Português	Direito & Práxis/Brasil

Source: prepared based on systematic review research.

Subsequently, the full texts were examined and, in accordance with the requirements of content analysis, the contributions of the articles relating to integral ecological ethics, interculturality, and intercultural education were thoroughly analysed (shown in Table 2). This review phase culminated in the exclusion of texts 6 and 7 as they did not address the issues in question in a way that was in line with the objectives of this study, while the remaining seven texts were selected for comprehensive analysis, with their arguments being included in the discussion.

Table 2. Incidence of descriptors of the texts selected in the review research.

Article Titles	Ethics/ Ecological Ethics	Intercultural Education/ Interculturality
1. Zapata Murie (2024)	15	8
2. López-Calva (2023)	16	2
3. López-Calva (2022)	11	0
4. Aldana Zavala and Colina Ysea (2019)	6	2
5. Builes Cadavid et al. (2018)	2	1
6. Ratto et al. (2017)	11	1
7. Cruz Meléndez (2017)	9	0
8. Castillo-Cedeño (2015)	13	1
9. Carvalho (2015)	0	6

Source: prepared based on systematic review research.

The contributions of the authors' arguments in relation to the two categories studied were extracted from the nine selected texts which, after analysis, constitute a component of the discussion.

2.3. Results of the Empirical Research: Perspectives on Well-Being

As mentioned, this study presents (Tables 3–5) the responses of students, education professionals, and students' families to three open questions: (1) What constitutes well-being, according to your understanding? (2) What criteria or measures should be considered to guarantee well-being today and in the future for all individuals? (3) What criteria or measures should be considered to guarantee well-being for future generations?

Table 3. Perceptions about what well-being is?

Grouped Responses	Students	Education Professional	Students' Families	Average
1. Individual perspective	75.6%	59.6%	68.1%	67.8
2. Socio-political perspective	7.4%	69%	6.9%	27.8
3. Integrated perspective	17%	33.5%	25%	25.2

Source: based on Eyng et al. (2023).

Table 4. Participants' responses varied according to their perspective.

Grouped Responses	Students	Education Professionals	Family Members of the Students	Average
1. Individual perspective.	43.5%	46.9%	35.2%	41.9
2. Socio-political perspective	27%	22%	28.2%	25.7
3. Integrated perspective	29.5%	31.1%	36.6%	32.4

Source: based on Eyng et al. (2023).

The answers were analysed using content analysis (Bardin 2016) and classified based on their orientation towards three interpretative perspectives on well-being. The first two perspectives correspond to the framework proposed by Sarmento (2010, pp. 185–86), of which the first includes answers that focus on the individual point of view, thus indicating a self-centered approach in which well-being is interpreted as the subject's personal comfort and balance (Sarmento 2010). The second perspective incorporates perceptions based on socio-political contexts and social inclusion, broadens the understanding of well-being to encompass the interpersonal dimension alongside the individual aspect, and encompasses

personal comfort and balance but also the comfort and balance of others and the collective (Sarmiento 2010).

Table 5. Criteria to ensure the well-being of future generations.

Grouped Responses	Students	Education Professionals	Family Members of the Students	Average
1. Individual perspective.	28.5%	45.2%	35.3%	36.3
2. Socio-political perspective	21.8%	15.5%	20.6%	19.3
3. Integrated perspective	49.7%	39.3%	44%	44.3

Source: based on Eyang et al. (2023).

In this direction, the first categorization (individual perspective) brings together responses that perceive well-being as the state of physical and psychological balance of the individual, understood as the satisfaction of fundamental survival needs, which encompasses the individual's perception of comfort and personal balance. The second category (socio-political perspective) introduces a socio-political notion of social inclusion, which emphasizes full access to personal, social, and collective rights. And the third category (integrated perspective) was systematized from the narrative review on integral ecological ethics, and integrates and crosses the previous two, proposing a holistic point of view that considers the interrelationships between individual, social, and planetary well-being. Thus, the integrated perspective encompasses responses that conceptualize well-being as a multidimensional balance of human and planetary sustainability requirements, recognizing the interdependence of individual, collective, and planetary ecosystem dimensions.

In summary, the perspectives on well-being cover the following perceptions: individual—personal comfort and balance; socio-political—access to personal, social, and collective rights; integrated—multidimensional balance of rights that fulfill the requirements of human and planetary sustainability. In Table 3, the answers to the first question are grouped according to the three perspectives, which explain the participants' understanding of well-being.

From the individual perspective, presented in the first grouping, the answers included statements such as: “Well-being is being physically well” (E.CO.001); “having basic needs met, such as food, housing and health” (P.BR.001); “A set of conditions and achievements that allow the individual to achieve personal, professional, emotional and financial satisfaction” (P.BR.018). They also included statements that reflected the need for basic needs to be met, such as: “education, health, food and leisure” (F.BR.003); “food, health, clothing, education, affection, recreation, access to culture and safety” (F.MX.008).

The perspective of the self-centered or individual view can emanate from different conditioning factors. The first can come from the extreme deprivation of the basic conditions of human existence, which are kidnapped by multidimensional poverty. And the second can come from the incorporation of subjectivities and representations resulting from the intersectional meanings of assumptions and values that stem from coloniality and neoliberalism, which are based on subalternity, individualism, and competition. Thus, the perceptions of the participants who connect with this perspective reflect the meanings attributed to the social worlds in which they move and the identities they project.

Participants with a socio-political perspective emphasized a broader understanding of well-being that encompassed collective well-being. The following are some examples of responses in this category, in which the respondents defined well-being “being well with oneself and with others” (E.BR.008); “being well with myself, with my surroundings

and with the people around me” (P.BR.006). There were also answers that point out the importance of conditions that guarantee the rights of all people, regardless of their age group (P.MX.002), and emphasize the need for social respect and education (E.BR.039). Further, this category includes answers that associate well-being with feelings of safety, comfort, and collective protection, stating that “everyone should feel protected” (E.CH.031) and that well-being includes “health, economic stability, happiness, freedom and peace” (E.MX.057).

The critical view shows progress on socio-political issues, towards acquiring the perspective of an integral ecological ethic, the assumptions, principles, and values of which have their essence centered on balance among the being, the other, and their territory of existence, which is in connection with the Common Home.

From an integrated perspective, the grouped answers take a holistic view, considering well-being as a state of harmony in multiple dimensions of life. In this category, well-being is described as “living with basic conditions of health, economic and social security in harmony with nature and emotional balance” (P.BR.003); “being well with myself, my surroundings and the people around me” (P.BR.006); achieving “peace within myself and my community” (F.BO.006); “being totally well in all aspects of life—personal, social and environmental” (F.MXGU.024).

In Table 4, the answers to the second question are grouped according to the three perspectives, which explain the participants’ understanding of the criteria or measures that should be taken into account to guarantee today’s and tomorrow’s well-being for all.

The responses from the socio-political perspective highlight the importance of fostering empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect, emphasizing the need for public policies that guarantee human rights and promote equity. Participants advocated for fair policies, the eradication of discrimination, and the promotion of a culture of peace and social justice. The responses highlighted that well-being can be achieved by “guaranteeing collective and individual rights” (P.BR.005); “developing policies that address physical and psychological health, education, culture and sport” (P.BR.018); “creating spaces for dialogue and citizen engagement” (P.MX.009); “a culture of peace and security in public spaces” (E.MX.106).

When asked “What criteria or measures should be considered to guarantee the well-being of future generations?”, the participants again expressed a variety of perspectives, emphasizing the need for intergenerational responsibility. The answers to this question are grouped and presented in Table 5, according to the three perspectives.

The answers categorized under the integrated perspective reflect the belief that well-being is a collective responsibility that requires sustainability and solidarity. Participants identified measures such as “respect for human rights, economic and social equality, gender equity and inclusion” (F.MX.016) and “promoting collective responsibility through environmental sustainability and social justice” (E.MX.024).

From an integrated perspective, the responses also highlight the need for long-term strategies that balance the economic, social, and environmental dimensions to ensure a sustainable future. Participants advocated for policies that promote sustainable development and foster ecological awareness to ensure that future generations inherit a world characterized by equity and respect for all forms of life.

Overall, the analysis of the empirical data highlights the need for a holistic approach to well-being that integrates the individual, collective, and planetary dimensions. The results suggest that comprehensive educational and policy interventions are needed to address well-being from a multidimensional perspective that promotes sustainability, social justice, and global solidarity.

The answers relating to the integrated perspective, aligning with the principles and practices of well-being supported in *Laudato si’*, encompass, in a balanced way, care

centered on the individual and the community, emphasizing fundamental human rights and essential needs: to provide “rights, food, housing, employment, education and respect” (E.BR.002); “each family having a home, people respecting each other and each individual’s rights being respected” (E.CH.003); “security, decent housing, work, food and non-violence” (P.BR.003); “access to quality public services, including housing, basic sanitation, leisure and health” (P.BR.004); “education, health and security as essential components to guarantee a good quality of life” (P.MX.004).

The broader socio-political perspective emphasizes the role of education and social values in promoting collective well-being. Participants stressed the importance of promoting respect and inclusion, suggesting that schools should “teach good teachers who don’t propagate harmful beliefs like machismo and homophobia and instead instill self-respect” (E.CH.011); that schools should teach “greater respect for sexuality, religion and other aspects of diversity” (E.BR.017). Values such as empathy, minimizing prejudice and inequality, and valuing life were highlighted as fundamental measures for improving well-being (P.BR.007). The importance of investing in “quality, humanized and emancipatory education” was also emphasized, with interviewees stating that education should provide students with the necessary conditions to actively and consciously participate in society to promote a more humane and inclusive vision (P.BR.018). In addition, some participants called for an education system that is accessible to all social levels, promoting values such as tolerance, honesty, and support for disadvantaged groups to guarantee their access to opportunities in areas such as food, work, and education (F.MX.002).

The responses related to the integrated perspective emphasized a holistic understanding of well-being, highlighting the interconnectedness of human and environmental sustainability. Participants expressed a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, emphasizing the need to “take good care of the places where we live so that future generations can also live well” (E.BR.021) and the importance of “preserving our planet” (E.BR.018). Environmental responsibility was seen as essential, with calls to “take care of our planet and show respect for others” (E.BR.061), as well as to “take care of the environment” (E.CO.001). Participants also emphasized the urgency of preserving natural resources, defending a long-term perspective that guarantees sustainable living conditions for future generations (E.MX.014). Recognizing climate change and the need for greater awareness were also highlighted as crucial factors in shaping sustainable practices (P.CH.004).

In addition, participants expressed the opinion that individuals should “take care of the environment and actively participate in social and political decision-making processes” (P.MX.002). The role of education in promoting ecological awareness was emphasized, with suggestions to “take care of the environment and educate our children” (F.BR.003), while mutual respect and social peace were seen as fundamental components of sustainable well-being (F.BR.002).

Thus, in the integrated perspective, participants articulated the need for a collective commitment to sustainability, emphasizing the fair distribution of goods and resources to ensure equitable access for all (F.BO.006). The criteria proposed for achieving well-being included “equity, social justice, humanistic, scientific, artistic and sporting education, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding and economic growth with respect for human dignity and ecology” (F.MX.004).

All the perceptions detailed here highlight the complexity of well-being, demonstrating that it encompasses not only individual and social dimensions, but also planetary concerns, highlighting the need for comprehensive educational and political strategies that integrate respect for human dignity, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

3. Materials and Methods

The development of this study is based on a qualitative research methodology (Bogdan and Biklen 1994), with the application of literature review protocols and field study procedures. The methodological structure, meticulously structured, through reflexive movements supported by the narrative and systematic literature review, as well as data from the empirical study, focuses on the description, analysis, and discussion of two main categories: ethics, particularly integral ecological ethics, and intercultural education, particularly critical intercultural education.

The narrative review procedure (Cordeiro et al. 2007) involved a deliberate selection of theoretical and conceptual references that underpin the discourse around the central categories of this study. According to Cordeiro et al. (2007, p. 429), a narrative literature review covers a broader thematic scope and, does not require a strict protocol for execution, and the search for sources does not remain predetermined. The chosen articles were selected based on the intent and focus of this study, in which *Laudato si'* (Francis 2015) is the basic document that provokes and guides the reflection carried out in that passes through Section 2.1 (results of the narrative literature review).

In Section 2.2 (results of the systematic literature review), the analysis aims to answer the question: do scientific articles published after 2015 echo the propositions of integral ecological ethics proposed in *Laudato si'* and consider intercultural education as a possibility? As outlined by Cordeiro et al. (2007, p. 429), a systematic review is a scientific research approach that aims to gather, critically evaluate, and synthesize the findings of several primary studies. This methodological procedure aspires is used to address a clearly formulated research question through systematic and explicit procedures that enhance the identification, selection, and evaluation of relevant studies, along with the collection and analysis of their data. The systematic review was carried out through searches on the Redalyc.org platform, using the descriptors “intercultural education” and “planetary ethics”, with the Boolean operator “AND”, and with the time filter 2015–2024. The results of this systematic review were organized through interpretative analysis, focusing on the contributions of primary studies related to ethics and intercultural education.

The empirical results presented in Section 2.3 emanate from an investigation that scrutinized the correlations between education and the safeguarding of rights in the collective construction of well-being in school and community contexts. The field research was conducted by the Public Policies, Human Rights and Teacher Training research group, with to which the authors are affiliated. The investigation covered 12 educational units (social schools), 4 of which were located in Brazil, 2 in Bolivia, 1 in Chile, 1 in Colombia, and 4 in Mexico. The field study, whose data is compiled in a 14-volume collection of reports, emphasized the perspectives of educators, students, and their families on well-being in current and future contexts, establishing dialogues with the perspective of integral ecological ethics. The data collected in the investigation, carried out in the second half of 2022 and systematized throughout 2023, includes responses from a total of 682 participants, made up of comprising 462 students, 125 education professionals, and 95 family members.

In this study, responses are presented from for three open questions: (1) What constitutes well-being, according to your understanding? (2) What criteria or measures should be considered to guarantee well-being today and in the future for all individuals? (3) What criteria or measures should be considered to guarantee well-being for future generations? Within this framework, well-being is understood as a teleological purpose, shaped by the pursuit of balance across intersecting dimensions. These dimensions reflect the interconnections among the individual's inner existence, their relationships with others, and their interaction with planetary ecosystems. Accordingly, the responses were categorized based on this multidimensional perspective and analysis as if they directly influence the

perception of one's ethos and relate to the perception of existing in the same space—in the Common Home.

This understanding aligns with [Villas Boas et al. \(2023\)](#), who propose that spirituality serves as a bridge that connecting self-care and care for the Common Home. They argue that adopting a lifestyle rooted in spiritual practices can foster an integral approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of personal well-being, social relationships, and environmental stewardship. This perspective underscores the importance of recognizing the complex web of factors that shape our existence and the ethical imperative to care for our shared environment.

Thus, perceptions of well-being are influenced by a complex web of interconnected factors that shape the existence, production, and meaning of identities and contexts. These factors include ancestry, life trajectories, intra- and interpersonal relationships, diverse forms of knowledge, belief systems, values, and ethical principles from which the participants' understandings of the participants of this study emerge. Recognizing these dimensions allows for a more inclusive and integrative perspective on well-being—one that embraces the plurality of human experiences while also affirming our shared responsibility for sustaining life in our Common Home.

The answers were analysed using content analysis ([Bardin 2016](#)) and classified based on their orientation towards three interpretative perspectives on well-being. The first two perspectives correspond to the framework proposed by [Sarmiento \(2010, pp. 185–86\)](#). The first perspective sees well-being as the individual's state of physical—psychological equilibrium, understood as the satisfaction of fundamental survival needs, which encompasses the individual's perception of comfort and personal equilibrium. The second perspective introduces a socio-political notion of social inclusion, emphasizing full access to personal and social rights. A third perspective, derived from the narrative review on integral ecological ethics, integrates and intersects the two previous ones, proposing representing a holistic point of view that considers the interrelationships between individual, social, and environmental well-being. In summary, the interpretation of the results outlines three perspectives on well-being: individual (personal comfort and balance), socio-political (social inclusion), and integrated (multidimensional balance of the requisites for well-being).

Through this methodological approach, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersections between integral ecological ethics and critical intercultural education, offering insights for the formulation of educational and social programs and policies that promote the well-being of present and future generations.

Thus, below, we present the results of this study, gathered in the course of the three research procedures, which elucidate intersections in the reconciliation of ethos in the co-responsible construction of an integral ecological ethic through intercultural education, requirements for human and planetary sustainability.

4. Discussion—Intersections of Ethos for the Effectiveness of Intercultural Education

The results presented herein highlight the convergences in the collaborative construction of an integral ecological ethic through intercultural education, with the aim of promoting the well-being of present and future generations.

The concept of integral ecological ethics, anchored in the teachings of *Laudato si'* ([Francis 2015](#)), is the core of the argument supported in this study, reverberating in the reflections on current ethical assumptions by [Mendonça \(2020\)](#), [Gabriel \(2022\)](#), and [Deane-Drummond \(2018\)](#), as well as in the considerations of [Abdallah-Pretceille \(1999, 2001\)](#), [Berry \(2006\)](#), [Walsh \(2010\)](#), [Rego \(2012\)](#), and [Candau \(2012, 2018\)](#), regarding critical intercultural pedagogy, which are part of the narrative literature review that was undertaken. The

results of the systematic review search found studies that dialogue with and reaffirm the urgency of achieving human and planetary sustainability in an inseparable way, which is also emphasized in the results of the systematic review search.

Considered together, the results converge in favor of integral ecological ethics, which defends the multidimensional balance that crosses human and planetary sustainability in an inseparable way, incorporating individual, collective, and ecological dimensions. Thus, the integrated perspective of well-being is aligned with an intersectional approach that harmonizes personal, social, and global imperatives within a unified framework.

The discussion that follows promotes a dialogical reflection on the aspects needed to sustain integral ecological ethics in intercultural pedagogical praxis, drawing insights from the results of the studies that were part of the literature review. The central issues to be constituted include: (1) the assumptions that underpin integral ecological ethics; (2) the prevailing challenges and opportunities in the education sector; (3) the significance and necessity of initial and continuing teacher training; (4) the multifaceted dimensions of polycrisis; and (5) criteria for the praxis of integral ecological ethics.

4.1. Assumptions That Underpin an Integral Ecological Ethic

The assumptions that underpin an integral ecological ethic are reaffirmed in the perspectives of the research subjects, emphasizing the need for co-responsibility in the care, preservation, and recovery of sustainability. These perspectives also emphasize that “[...] we must take care of the environment to preserve life on the planet and safeguard the natural resources we still have” (E.MX.014). The teleological aspects of integral ecological ethics are also highlighted, advocating for sustainability, responsibility, and solidarity, along with social justice through the “fair distribution of goods and resources, ensuring that everyone gets their fair share” (F.BO.006), and “respect for everyone’s rights” (P.MX.003). These voices advocate for a shared ethical commitment to planetary stewardship.

The academic literature reviewed herein corroborates these calls for engagement in integral ecological ethics. Zapata Murie (2024, pp. 6–7) states that the experience of integral ecology positions humans as caretakers of nature and its resources, emphasizing that integral ecological ethics is in a state of continuous evolution and improvement. Furthermore, the promotion of “care as a political action, a space for human construction in the encounter with others” in living together within the Common Home emphasizes the integrative dimension of ethics. As Ratto et al. (2017, p. 1029) state, “an ethic of care necessarily implies the creation of intersubjective spaces, which contemporary politics of fear tend to restrict”; as a result, they begin to convey retro-topias with regressive visions.

Critical interculturality emerges as a fundamental facilitator of these intersubjective encounters, promoting human connections across cultural boundaries. Zapata Murie (2024, pp. 5, 8) characterizes interculturality as being born from the human capacity to connect with others, generating bonds that provide a path to peace and social well-being from ecological, anthropological, socio-political, and religious perspectives.

The intersection of integral ecological ethics and critical interculturality is therefore conceptualized as a collective praxis that integrates theory and practice, because, as Castillo-Cedeño (2015, p. 477) postulates, “[...] Ethics is not just a discourse about what should be, but a way of existing that, in order to be liberating, must engage with creative beings inserted in cultures that seek alternative ways of thinking, perceiving and expressing thought”. Thus, integral ecological ethics is critical and conscious praxis.

This new way of existing respects and integrates diverse cultural references, encouraging the exploration of alternative ways of thinking, learning, and expressing values, knowledge, and wisdom. This approach can be achieved collectively through critical intercultural education with the aim of making integral ecological ethics a reality.

4.2. Challenges and Possibilities in the Field of Education

The field of education presents countless challenges and opportunities in advancing towards the effective realization of an integral ecological ethic in the care of humans and the Common Home. As [Ratto et al. \(2017, p. 1020\)](#) point out, “education must foster an ethic of planetary care, in which care becomes an ontological category capable of reconnecting us with the Earth and committing us to all living and non-living beings”. The importance of addressing educational access and equity is reflected in the challenge of “making education accessible to all social strata and promoting values such as tolerance, honesty and support for disadvantaged groups” (F.MX.002).

These challenges are exacerbated in societies marked by inequality and exclusion, in which vulnerable communities face precarious living conditions with insufficient access to sanitation, infrastructure and basic services. As [Castillo-Cedeño \(2015, p. 471\)](#) points out, “current economic policies and historical transformations highlight the fundamental role of education, culture, ideology and ethics in adopting a more inclusive worldview that goes beyond discourse to action in addressing human rights, equality and social justice”.

In such contexts, education represents a privileged space for political action, offering opportunities to resist contemporary forms of totalitarianism and reimagine relationships with others, the world, and the self ([Ratto et al. 2017, p. 1031](#)).

Educational processes must therefore be humanizing and transformative, incorporating interculturality, democracy, and inclusion at their core. Failure to do so can put humanity at risk (Gutiérrez 2008 apud [Castillo-Cedeño 2015, p. 476](#)). Thus, educational practices based on intercultural methodologies should emphasize ecological, intercultural, and interdisciplinary learning which allows learners to access and produce knowledge while developing critical thinking skills ([López-Calva 2023, p. 4](#)). A critical dimension of advancing education based on integral ecological ethics is understanding the need to transform educational systems to cultivate an active and co-responsible planetary citizenship that is committed to equity, justice, and sustainability ([López-Calva 2023, p. 6](#)). As [Aldana Zavala and Colina Ysea \(2019, p. 158\)](#) argue, the school-community nexus is fundamental, serving as the primary space where citizens are formed and where public policies aimed at sustainability must take root.

Intercultural dialog, as proposed by [Rego \(2012\)](#), can be strengthened in educational practices when it becomes part of everyday life at school, in the community, and in relations between different religious traditions. In the school environment, this means promoting respectful and listening relationships between students from different cultural backgrounds, revising curricula to reflect the diversity that exists in society, and training educators who are prepared to deal with these realities in an ethical and open manner. In this sense, the school ceases to be a neutral space and begins to take an active role in valuing cultural differences and building democratic coexistence ([Rego 2012](#)). This work gains strength when it extends to the community, involving families and local leaders in the educational process and recognizing popular knowledge and practices as part of collective learning. Similarly, dialog about/among religions and spiritual concepts can make a significant contribution to building a culture of peace in the school environment, especially when there is openness to mutual recognition and the encounter between different beliefs. As [Candau \(2012\)](#) points out, it is essential that education values the spiritual dimension as part of cultural identities and promotes respect for the various forms of spirituality that are present in society. This perspective is in line with what Francis proposes in *Fratelli Tutti* ([Francis 2020](#)), when he states that religions play an essential role in promoting fraternity and justice. In this direction, intercultural education becomes a necessary way of forming more aware citizens who are committed to dialogue, to recognizing diversity, and to a more socially and environmentally just future. The challenges highlight the urgent need for an

effective educational paradigm that is aligned with the principles of integral ecological ethics, promoting an educational ethos of intercultural co-responsibility when facing the complex challenges of contemporary society.

4.3. Importance and Need for Initial and Continuing Teacher Training

Initial and continuing teacher training plays a fundamental role in strengthening and broadening perspectives and actions in line with the principles of integral ecological ethics and critical intercultural education. The teachers who took part in this study emphasized the importance of “thinking long-term, being empathetic and acting with conscience to ensure that the next generation is able to live well” (P.BR.001); “becoming aware of climate change” (P.CH.004); and “caring for the environment and participating in my country’s social and political decisions” (P.MX.002). These testimonies highlight the need for educators who are trained to develop these values with their students and in their communities.

The realization of the values inherent in the construction of an interculturally situated integral ecological ethic requires a focus on the ethical training of educators. López-Calva (2022, p. 5) emphasizes that teacher training must respond to the “paradigm shift that integrates complex thinking, planetary ethics and social transformation as central axes of the teaching profession”. The author also states that the ethical training of teachers is an indispensable condition, as educators are “responsible for the holistic training of citizens, and ethical education is a fundamental dimension of this process” (López-Calva 2022, p. 2).

The importance of initial and continuing teacher training is particularly significant in contemporary contexts marked by polycrises—complex and interconnected crises involving multiple risks and almost simultaneous shocks in an increasingly integrated world (UNICEF 2023).

Ongoing teacher training plays a central role in promoting education that is committed to building critical, ethical, and supportive global citizenship. More than just transmitters of content, teachers act as cultural mediators (Rego 2012) and ethicists, directly influencing the way students understand and position themselves in the world. To enable them to play this role in a transformative way, it is essential that teacher training includes reflections on cultural diversity, social justice, and planetary responsibility. In this sense, Rego (2012) highlights the importance of preparing teachers to recognize cultural differences as pedagogical potential and not as an obstacle to learning. Similarly, Candau (2012) advocates for teacher training that promotes sensitive listening, openness to others, and valuing multiple forms of knowledge. Authors such as Vanessa Andreotti (2011) and Catherine Walsh (2009) emphasize the need for a critical approach that helps educators understand their own place of speech, confront structural inequalities, and build practices that are more consistent with the principles of justice and equity. In addition, the incorporation of global issues into everyday school life, through interdisciplinary and participatory methodologies, contributes to the development of essential skills for global citizenship (Nussbaum 1997; Tilbury 1995). Freire (1970), for his part, has already pointed out that educating is a political and ethical act, which requires a commitment to transforming reality. Finally, as Pope Francis proposes in the 2015 *Laudato si’*, training educators who are sensitive to integral ecology is essential to cultivating new generations who care for our Common Home and practice solidarity rooted in human dignity and the common good.

In this scenario, it is understood that teachers need to be prepared to face the ethical, social, and environmental challenges that characterize the current global landscape. In this way, they become an integral part of the educational ethos by accepting, understanding, and fostering a critical and co-responsible global citizenship. Initial and ongoing teacher training, therefore, becomes an essential and strategic element in shaping a generation of

global citizens who are capable of confronting these complex challenges and contributing to the co-responsible management of our Common Home.

4.4. *Multiple Dimensions of Ethical Challenges in the Face of Polycrises*

The current global scenario recognizes itself as part of a systemic crisis, but it is fundamentally recognized as a crisis of humanity that requires an ethical response for its resolution (López-Calva 2022, p. 13). It is understood that one of the main challenges arises from the neoliberal economic model, with its individualism, its exacerbated consumerism, and the institutionalized blindness of not being able to see “the other” as a human being worthy of their rights. This scenario requires a critical approach that examines the tensions and contradictions between the ethical theory of moral sentiment and the capitalist logic of wealth accumulation (Cruz Meléndez 2017, p. 12). Rooted in a utilitarian framework, this vision becomes the generator of profound contradictions within policies and programs aimed at achieving a truly integral ecological ethic. Utilitarian logic, often used to justify interventions in nature under the pretext of promoting human well-being, has promoted practices that result in serious and irreversible damage to the environment and human dignity. In contrast, integral ecological ethics and complex thinking advocate for a moral framework that mobilizes values of respect for natural entities, calling for a reconsideration of the prevailing economic logic (Builes Cadavid et al. 2018, p. 123).

At the global level, ecological programs often fail to challenge the underlying rationality of capital accumulation. Paradoxically, they tend to naturalize and legitimize the selfish and utilitarian behavior of homo economicus, thus perpetuating the exploitation of natural resources and human communities (Cruz Meléndez 2017, p. 10). Many of these programs are unfortunately funded by corporate entities with interests that prioritize profit over sustainability, resulting in the destruction of ecosystems and the erosion of human dignity.

However, the contemporary imperative for an integral ecological ethic—essential for human and planetary survival—is based on the belief that people can cultivate affective bonds that promote a healthy existence at the individual and collective levels. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to promote awareness through education and ethics, using critical and dialogical rationality to expose the harsh living conditions faced by large segments of the population, such as Latin Americans, for example, including poverty, inequality, and functional and emotional illiteracy, among other forms of deprivation. Castillo-Cedeño (2015, p. 470) emphasizes the urgency of validating alternative forms of communication and coexistence to address these pressing social challenges.

Echoing these concerns, Gabriel (2022, p. 361) emphasizes the need to interrupt the global production chains that perpetuate extreme poverty and environmental degradation. Such efforts must prioritize the protection of human beings and the environment, advocating for systemic transformation. In this sense, the author calls for the establishment of a sustainable and morally grounded economic order—one that systematically aligns the creation of economic surplus value with the ideal of moral progress for all humanity. This vision implies the development of a “moral and humane market economy that does not depend on infinite growth” (Gabriel 2022, p. 362).

These considerations highlight the urgent need to rethink ethical paradigms and economic models and to advocate for an education that promotes planetary responsibility, social justice, and sustainable development.

4.5. *Criteria for the Praxis of Integral Ecological Ethics*

The criteria for establishing and defending the rights of future generations, as highlighted by participants in this empirical study, emphasize essential ethical values such as equity, social justice, and holistic education that encompasses humanistic, scientific, artistic,

athletic, and spiritual dimensions. These criteria further underscore the importance of respecting diversity, fostering intercultural dialogue, aligning economic development with human dignity, and ensuring ecological sustainability. Additionally, participants stress the need to “care for the environment and participate in the social and political decisions of my country” (P.MX.002), reflecting a growing awareness of the interconnection between ecological and civic responsibilities.

The reviewed literature reinforces these perspectives by advocating for the co-responsible construction of an integral ecological ethic (Francis 2015), which requires the establishment of a moral and sustainable economic order (Gabriel 2022). Achieving these goals demands continuous struggle for utopian ideals, including the radical democratization of knowledge and the realization of an epistemology that fosters global ecological citizenship. Carvalho (2015, p. 667) asserts that this objective can only be attained “through the promotion of intercultural dialogue, both at the state and global levels”. Castillo-Cedeño (2015, p. 474) further warns against the monopoly of knowledge and the hierarchical ranking of values, arguing that such practices lead to violence rather than justice.

Mobilizing a broad coalition of collectives and individuals committed to building an integral ecological ethic requires heightened awareness fostered by critical intercultural dialogical engagement. This collective effort seeks to establish the epistemological and pedagogical foundations of a planetary citizenship shared by all. López-Calva (2023, p. 13) emphasizes the necessity of such a perspective, suggesting that grounding a global human identity must incorporate teaching methodologies that promote understanding and the pursuit of an ethics for the human race. This approach would enable citizens not only to grasp the objective knowledge of science and common sense but also to develop intersubjective knowledge that fosters empathy, compassion, and forgiveness—key elements in recognizing “the other”.

Despite all the differences between cultures, beliefs, values, and ways of life, it is essential to acknowledge that every person possesses inherent dignity, independent of their origin, social status, or religion. This dignity is the starting point for any genuine transformation in how peoples coexist. As Pope Francis states in *Laudato si'*, caring for the Common Home begins with caring for others—especially the most vulnerable—because everything is interconnected. When this vision is put into practice, it compels us to rethink not only how we treat our Common Home but also how we relate across cultures. To achieve this, it is necessary to challenge knowledge models that privilege certain forms of wisdom over others and create space for dialogue among diverse worldviews (Candau 2012; Rego 2012). Placing human dignity at the center means ensuring that all have the opportunity to live with justice, participate in communal life, and contribute their knowledge to a more sustainable and fraternal future (Deane-Drummond 2018; Walsh 2009).

While the vision of an integral ecological ethic may seem utopian, it is simultaneously an urgent and necessary endeavor to ensure the sustainability of the multiple, inseparable dimensions of human and global life. This effort requires deepening and expanding interdisciplinary studies that integrate various fields of knowledge and human action from an intergenerational perspective. The pursuit of this holistic approach to education and ethics is a critical step toward a more just and sustainable global future.

5. Integral Ecological Ethics and Education for the Common Home: A Perspective Inspired by *Laudato si'*

As already mentioned, the urgent polycrisis in environmental, political, economic, and social aspects calls for a profound change in educational values and policies that integrates ethics, sustainability, and cultural dialogue. The encyclical *Laudato si'* presents a

framework that closely aligns with critical intercultural education, emphasizing a cultural and spiritual transformation that extends beyond environmental concerns to address social justice, sustainability, and human dignity.

It is also extremely important to recognize the possible approaches, taking the integral ecological perspective, to the formulation of public education policies to address the ethical, social, and environmental challenges of our Common Home. These approaches identify that education must go beyond conventional methods and adopt a holistic framework that integrates scientific knowledge, ethical reflection, and cultural diversity.

The combination of integral ecological ethics and intercultural education presents a transformative educational ethos as a basis for tackling urgent global challenges. Intercultural education promotes a sense of shared responsibility by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into sustainability practices, reinforcing the principles emphasized in *Laudato si'*. The link between civic and moral responsibility for social justice becomes clearer when viewed through the lens of intercultural dialogue, which encourages individuals to see themselves as part of a broader human community and strengthens community ties by promoting more inclusive, empathetic, and supportive dialogical solutions to conflicts.

Francis warns that modern education is often dominated by a technocratic mentality (LS §203–204) that prioritizes consumerism and economic expansion over ethical and ecological values. He argues that this creates a disconnection between people and the Common Home, further widening social inequalities and accelerating environmental destruction. In this sense, *Laudato si'* calls for an educational transformation that promotes integral ecological ethical citizenship—combining scientific knowledge with ethical and spiritual reflection. It also highlights the role of institutions—families, schools, religious organizations, and governments—in promoting and transforming culture, emphasizing the need for an education that nurtures sustainability. In this respect, it aligns with critical intercultural education, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues in responding to global challenges.

Furthermore, the ethical and pedagogical links between *Laudato si'* and intercultural education can be seen in the emphasis on human dignity, the common good, and the need for integrated ethics. The encyclical calls for a re-evaluation of modern education, asking institutions to cultivate a global ecological consciousness that respects cultural diversity and promotes sustainability. From this perspective, it advocates an education that promotes global responsibility, incorporating ethical and ecological principles into curricula, being strengthened by intercultural dialogue as a tool for social and environmental justice, and promoting community-based learning that integrates local knowledge with sustainability systems and practices. It is an affirmation that ecological conversion cannot be separated from social justice. Through this transformative educational ethos, societies can cultivate citizens who see themselves as part of a broader human community—beyond national or local identities—and develop a sense of shared responsibility for global challenges and the well-being of all people (Nussbaum 1997; Appiah 2006). This perspective reflects the foundations of global citizenship, which calls for ethical awareness, empathy, and a commitment to justice that transcends borders (Andreotti 2011).

Critical intercultural education can be seen as a basis for meeting the demand for sustainable and inclusive education, representing the adoption of an intercultural approach that integrates ecological ethics into formal and informal educational systems. A fusion of environmental responsibility, cultural appreciation, and ethical awareness can form a new generation of integral ecological global citizens, ensuring that the principles of sustainability are incorporated into public policies at all levels of governance.

Although the implementation of these principles in educational policies requires systemic and structural changes, the following analysis, based on the results of the data

presented above. In Table 6 we have some basic ideas for aligning integral ecological ethics with critical intercultural education.

Table 6. Integration of intercultural education and integral ecology.

Policy Area	Actions
Curriculum Reform	Implement integral ecological education, integrating scientific knowledge, ethical reflection, and intercultural perspectives.
Teacher Training	Develop teacher education programs that integrate environmental responsibility, social justice, and cultural diversity.
Community Engagement	Promote collaboration between schools, families, and local communities to promote sustainable and ethical living practices.
Legislation & Policy	Enact laws that mandate ecological education, ensuring it is included in civic and ethical education programs.
Sustainable School Practices	Implement green school initiatives, reducing waste, promoting renewable energy, and integrating nature-based learning.

Source: prepared based on systematic review research.

6. Conclusions

This study organizes and proposes ways of building a transformative educational ethos that is strongly aligned with critical intercultural education and the precepts of integral ecological ethics, as guided by the encyclical *Laudato si'* (Francis 2015). This ethos starts from the recognition of human dignity as a non-negotiable foundation for coexistence between cultures and for caring for life in all its forms (Nussbaum 1997; Freire 1970). By integrating different forms of knowledge, including local knowledge and diverse cultural values, the educational proposal developed here positions the sustainability of human, social, and environmental ecologies as the structuring axis of an education guided by co-responsibility and socio-environmental justice (Deane-Drummond 2018; Rego 2012). In this sense, education is understood not only as a formal learning space, but as an ethical and relational practice which, by valuing diversity and promoting intercultural dialogue, contributes to a culture of peace, equity, and care for our Common Home (Candau 2008, 2012, 2018; Walsh 2009). The results emphasize that promoting a critical and transformative planetary consciousness requires an educational approach that recognizes and values cultural diversity as an essential element to achieving equitable and sustainable coexistence. They also point to the need to establish a co-responsible educational ethos that integrates intercultural education with comprehensive ecological ethics in order to guarantee the well-being of present and future generations.

The encyclical *Laudato si'* emphasizes the need for an educational approach that promotes “ecological citizenship” and a “new universal solidarity” as a response to the pressing challenges of environmental degradation and social exclusion (Francis 2015, § 14). Inspired by this vision, the integrated well-being perspective adopted in this study considers the intersection of the individual, collective, and global dimensions. This approach proposes a multidimensional balance that harmonizes human and environmental sustainability requirements in a mutually reinforcing way (Deane-Drummond 2018). Therefore, integral ecological ethics should be understood as a praxis that intertwines theory and action, contributing to the development of a new mode of existence—one that respects and integrates diverse cultural references and promotes alternative ways of thinking about, perceiving, and expressing knowledge and values (Castillo-Cedeño 2015; Zapata Murie 2024).

In addition, the current pressing environmental, political, and social crises demand a paradigm shift in educational policies and values. *Laudato si'* warns against the dominance of a technocratic mentality in modern education (LS §203–204) which prioritizes

consumerism and economic expansion over ethical and ecological awareness. This study asserts that the combination of integral ecological ethics and critical intercultural education provides a transformative educational ethos that promotes shared responsibility through the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives into sustainability practices. The ethical and pedagogical links between *Laudato si'* and critical intercultural education highlight the need for a holistic educational framework that integrates scientific knowledge, ethical reflection, and cultural dialogue.

To implement this vision, educational policies must incorporate critical intercultural education as a basis for sustainable development, integrating ecological ethics into formal and informal educational systems. This requires a multidimensional approach that encompasses curriculum reform, teacher training, community involvement, legislative support, and sustainable school practices. A transformative educational ethos, rooted in integral ecological ethics, envisages a shift beyond traditional educational models to one that guarantees ethical responsibility, ecological sustainability, and intercultural dialogue. This approach, reinforced by inclusive policies and community involvement, aims to cultivate responsible and engaged global citizens who are capable of tackling contemporary global challenges while promoting social justice and planetary well-being.

Integral ecological ethics advocates for a multidimensional balance that intersects human and planetary sustainability in an inseparable way, incorporating individual, collective, and ecological dimensions. Thus, the integrated perspective of well-being aligns with an intersectional approach that harmonizes personal, social, and planetary imperatives within a unified framework. In summary, the results emphasize the urgency of enacting educational policies that conform to the principles of critical interculturality, intercultural education, and integral ecological ethics. The aim is to nurture a critical, active, and co-responsible global citizenship. The establishment of a transformative educational ethos, as evidenced throughout this study, represents a promising method of tackling the multiple crises facing the contemporary world. This approach seeks to promote socio-environmental justice, respect for cultural diversity, and responsible stewardship of our Common Home, reinforcing the vision articulated in *Laudato si'* and the broader framework of intercultural education for sustainability.

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