Dossier: New perspectives on gender in geography

revista
geo USP
espaço e tempo
Volume 29 • nº 2 (2025)
ISSN 2179-0892

"When the black woman moves, the entire structure of society moves with her": An essay on black feminism and approaches to geographic thinking in research and teaching

Lorena Francisco de Souza[1]
[1]Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, GO, Brasil
lorena.souza@ufg.br
0000-0002-5300-5046

Fabiana Leonel de Castro[2]
[2]Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal
bialeonel@gmail.com
0000-0003-2404-2849

How to cite this article:
SOUZA, L.F.; CASTRO, F.L. "When the black woman moves, the entire structure of society moves with her": An essay on black feminism and approaches to geographic thinking in research and teaching. **Geousp**, v. 29, n. 2, e-231598,sep./dec. 2025. ISSN 2179-0892. Available at: https://www.revistas.usp.br/geousp/article/view/231598. doi: https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2179-0892.geousp.2025.231598.en.

"When the black woman moves, the entire structure of society moves with her": An essay on black feminism and approaches to geographic thinking in research and teaching

Abstract

This article presents a discussion on the potential of black feminist political theories for the development of geographic analyzes and studies. When considering the intersectional perspective in the construction of geographic thinking, the experiences of subjects in space differ according to their corporeality and markers of differences. Such elements are important points for understanding the social and epistemic inequality that plagues the reality of black women. Our reflections are anchored in bibliographical research and the state of knowledge on the topic of gender and race in the human sciences, particularly Geography. By highlighting the gaps in the production of geographic knowledge that makes the reality of black women visible, we reflect on the importance of fostering this debate in the epistemic field, through research and teaching.

Keywords: black women, black feminism, feminist geographies

"Quando a mulher negra se movimenta, toda a estrutura da sociedade se movimenta com ela": um ensaio sobre o feminismo negro e abordagens para o pensamento geográfico na pesquisa e no ensino

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta uma discussão sobre as potencialidades das teorias políticas do feminismo negro para o desenvolvimento de análises e estudos geográficos. Ao considerar a perspectiva interseccional na construção do pensamento geográfico, as experiências dos sujeitos no espaço se diferem de acordo com sua corporeidade e marcadores de diferenças. Tais elementos são importantes pontos para o entendimento da desigualdade social e epistêmica que assola a realidade das mulheres negras.

Nossas reflexões ancoram-se na pesquisa bibliográfica e no estado do conhecimento sobre a temática de gênero e raça nas ciências humanas, em destaque, para a Geografia. Ao evidenciarmos as lacunas sobre a produção do conhecimento geográfico que visibiliza a realidade das mulheres negras, refletimos sobre a importância de fomentar este debate no campo epistêmico, através da pesquisa e do ensino.

Palavras-chave: mulheres negras, feminismo negro, geografias feministas

« Quand la femme noire bouge, toute la structure de la société bouge avec elle » : essai sur le féminisme noir et approches de la pensée géographique dans la recherche et l'enseignement

Résumé

Cet article présente une discussion sur le potentiel des théories politiques féministes noires pour le développement d'analyses et d'études géographiques. Lorsqu'on considère la perspective intersectionnelle dans la construction de la pensée géographique, les expériences des sujets dans l'espace diffèrent selon leur corporéité et leurs marqueurs de différences. De tels éléments sont des points importants pour comprendre les inégalités sociales et épistémiques qui gangrènent la réalité des femmes noires. Nos réflexions s'ancrent dans la recherche bibliographique et l'état des connaissances sur la thématique du genre et de la race dans les sciences humaines, notamment la Géographie. En soulignant les lacunes dans la production de connaissances géographiques qui rendent visible la réalité des femmes noires, nous réfléchissons à l'importance de nourrir ce débat dans le champ épistémique, à travers la recherche et l'enseignement.

Mots-clés : femmes noires, féminisme noir, géographies féministes

Introduction

This article aims to explore how gender and race are incorporated into Geography by analyzing debates from feminist geographies and Black feminist thought, presenting an intersectional perspective within geographical studies. We recognize the importance of considering race, gender, and sexualities as essential factors in geographical analysis, beyond just class, especially when examining the experiences of Black women—a social group often constrained by controlling images that diminish their social roles and limit their opportunities for intellectual growth, knowledge creation, and social mobility (Collins, 2019).

Recognizing Black feminist agendas in scientific and academic production constitutes an important mechanism for fostering reflection on the "place" of Black women and on the resistance embedded in doing what is "not expected" of them (Collins, 2019, p. 181). By occupying these spaces, Black women not only introduce new perspectives into academic debates but also reformulate the very practice of scientific inquiry. universalisthallenging the universalist assumptions that so often overlook intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 2002). Such epistemological insurgency denounces the supposed neutrality of science and contests postures that have traditionally excluded or silenced the perspectives of subalternized groups (Spivak, 2010). The voices and writing of Black women within academia reaffirm their presence by rethinking power and hegemony, the objectification of their bodies, and the matrices of domination that also reverberate within scientific practice. Thus, the intellectual contributions of Black women go beyond symbolic inclusion in the academic field; they reflect a transformation in how knowledge is conceived, produced, and disseminated.

As Curiel (2007) reminds us, the paradigms adopted in academia are sustained by masculine, classist, racist, and sexist logics. Although postcolonial and decolonial studies have foregrounded the reflections of silenced voices and the production of alternative epistemes, this author questions whether these perspectives decenter the so-called subject of knowledge or, rather, serve as tools for some Western, white intellectuals to incorporate the "different" into their critical and situated productions for the sake of legitimization. Hence, the academic writing and production of Black and Indigenous women underscore the need to question the androcentric and white bias that persists across research in all fields of knowledge—and especially here, in geographical science and the humanities more broadly.

This article thus refers to a theoretical construction born of the concerns raised throughout our scientific practice, shaped by academic and activist trajectories that have always guided us to problematize the place of Black women in academic and/or intellectual writing and teaching. We take on, here, the exercise of reflecting on how the theoretical and political contributions of Black feminisms can enrich scientific practice in the humanities, with emphasis on Geography, by questioning the absence of studies that make visible the spatialities of Black women as lived in their social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Gender and race discussions as a starting point

When we propose to foreground the debate on Black women from a humanities perspective, it is important to consider the possibilities opened by discussions on the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, as developed by Quijano (2007) and other "southern" authors, to reflect on sociopolitical, economic, cultural realities and the construction of subjectivities. Santos (2017), in addressing the decolonization of Geography teaching, argues that the decolonial perspective enables a revision of concepts, contents, and representations in knowledge construction. In this sense, it intervenes in the discourse of modern sciences to highlight other spaces and social groups that produce knowledge. According to Quijano (2005), the coloniality of power refers to a "[...] mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and that since then permeates the most important dimensions of world power, including its specific rationality, Eurocentrism" (p. 227-228).

As part of the ideological and political construction of the modern system of commodity production, coloniality underpins ways of being and existing in the world, relegating subalternized groups (Spivak, 2010) to silence, epistemicide, and invisibility. While the concept of coloniality is essential for understanding the capitalist colonial system of domination that reverberates through social, bodily, gendered, racial, and sexual structures, it is important to recall that racialized, Afro-descendant, and Indigenous feminists have long examined the combined oppressions faced by women's bodies, beginning in the 1960s and intensifying throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as we see in the writings of Gonzalez (1984, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c) and Crenshaw (2002).

Feminist theories within the humanities gained greater visibility in the 1980s and 1990s, bringing significant transformations to the theoretical and methodological approaches in these fields, including geography. Butler's (2003) contribution on gender and sexuality performativity expanded into a spatial dimension, showing how gender identities and sexualities are social constructions reiterated by discursive and embodied practices. Haraway's (1995) critique of universalist perspectives on subjects and realities problematizes the notion of a neutral scientific subject and challenges epistemological hegemonies that disregard differences of race, gender, and historical location. Analyses of bodies and corporealities by Foucault (1985) likewise grounded critical approaches in feminist geographies, offering tools to investigate how power is inscribed in space and bodies, shaping inequalities and exclusions. These are among the important starting points for theoretical and methodological production within feminist geographies.

When we look for contributions by Black women, whether academics or not, to debates advanced by feminist geographies, we still find few figures who provide the foundations for what might be considered Black feminist thought in Geography, as we have argued in earlier work (Souza; Castro, 2023). Although not a geographer, one figure who has become a key reference for Black feminist studies from a geographical perspective is bell hooks. Among her most important legacies for women in general, and for Black feminist women in particular, hooks connected everyday situations with her way of thinking and theorizing about the reality of Black women, highlighting an agenda that centers Black women for Black women. As she states:

> (...) we are taught that women are "natural" enemies, that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another. We have learned these lessons well. We must unlearn them if we are to build a sustained feminist movement. We must learn to live and work in solidarity. We must learn the true meaning and value of Sisterhood. (hooks, 2019a, p. 79).

Hooks calls attention to the necessity of forging connections between theory, politics, activism, and sisterhood, strengthening the possibilities of addressing racial and gender issues in the humanities. For Geography, this represents the possibility of feminist theories aligning with spatial readings and analyses, given that space is a central category of geographical science. For us, space is a crucial category for understanding the processes that have produced and continue to produce unequal opportunities and rigid representations of women and men, Black and white (Souza *et al.*, 2020). The intersections of gender with other sociospatial markers of difference, such as race, ethnicity, and class, also appear in the writings of Lélia Gonzalez and Beatriz do Nascimento (Ratts, 2016), Sueli Carneiro, and other intellectuals who contribute Black women's theoretical perspectives within feminist geographies and Black feminism, such as Gloria Anzaldúa (2000) and Audre Lorde (2003). As we argue:

> (...) beyond a geopolitics of knowledge at international levels, through the reflections of these Black feminists, it becomes possible to think about the power relations and representational fields that delimit only a few identity subjects as knowledge producers and only certain directions of thought as constitutive of epistemologies. Beyond questioning the hegemonies of production centers in core countries or hegemonic universities within the country, these geographies contained in Black feminist thought have helped highlight the absence of feminist voices that interweave gender with other markers of difference and corporeality. (Souza *et al*., 2020, p. 50).

The academic reality also reflects social, racial, and gender inequalities. Silva and Souza (2021) highlights that the majority of renowned and frequently cited scientists, researchers, and knowledge producers are overwhelmingly white men. In Geography, this has also been observed by Monk and Hanson (1982, *apud* Silva; Souza 2021), who pointed to the invisibility of gender. We would add that this extends to a racialized invisibility, considering the very limited presence of Black women in higher education, both in terms of access and persistence as students and as educators.

Geography has not yet fostered a dense dialogue with black feminism and decolonial feminisms to drive discussions about gender and sexualities. We also argue that Black women researching gender, sexualities, or race are "*outsiders within*," echoing Dias (2019), who draws on the idea that Black women have historically participated in the intimate secrets of white society and are therefore *insiders* within a perversely racist and sexist structure. By stating that Black women are considered "almost part of the family"—a dynamic that also permeates the academic sphere—Dias (2019) goes further to assert that Black women are "*insiders within*," meaning they exist marginally inside the academic structure.

Faced with this reality, we affirm the importance of building an academic agenda in teaching, research, and outreach that engages in dialogue with Black communities, feminist movements, and Black feminists within the social sciences and humanities. This must stand as a principle for advancing equity in universities, in knowledge production, and in the recognition of Black women's corporeal presence. The political stance of Black feminist women demanding an urgent intersectional approach in geographical science reflects the recognition that racial and gender differences delineate spatialities and shape social realities. (Borges, 2009).

Expanding the Debate: Thinking the Body and Embodiment of Black Women

The body as a concept becomes central in this article, as we understand it as something beyond its biological dimension, involving symbolic, political, and spatial aspects. Embodiment, as both the material and immaterial expression of existence, is deeply tied to the idea of territory—constantly contested and controlled. The discussion of body and embodiment holds a strategic place in debates on autonomy and gender, as the body appears as the first marker of representation. Not only in what it explicitly declares, but also in what is implied, since "gender is a field of structured and structuring difference, in which the tonalities of extreme location, of the intimately personal and individualized body, vibrate in the same field with the global emissions of high voltage" (Haraway, 1995, p. 29).

For Black women, the body has historically been reduced to a "set of signs" (Inocêncio, 2001), saturated with dehumanizing meanings that intersect race, gender, class, and sexuality. These signs reinforce stereotypes that, as products of colonialism and scientific racism, continue to shape contemporary social perceptions. The reading of Black women's bodies as sites of uncontrolled, instinctive sexuality reflects a historical construction used to justify practices such as sexual objectification. Bodies continue to be read in differentiated and unequal ways, depending on race, gender, generation, region, and economic position.

The stereotype that situates Black women where the body eclipses the intellect extends beyond what is evident in this discourse. When their sexuality is described as uncontrollable, they are indirectly assigned a non-human predicate, since in the Western imagination, only animals are assumed to have instinctive, uncontrollable sex drives. This "animalization" of Black women is not merely a residue of colonial times but an active discourse that persists today. This process connects directly with Michel Foucault's (1985) concept of the dispositif of sexuality, which analyzes how modern societies developed mechanisms to control, normalize, and hierarchize sexualities. Yet, as Sueli Carneiro (2005) points out, Foucault's writings leave a gap when it comes to the intersection of sexuality and raciality. Black women are doubly marked: their sexuality is not only controlled but racialized, reinforcing their marginal position within the social system. While it is possible to identify exploitation of women's bodies in general, this exploitation is differentiated: whereas white women's bodies may be objectified, Black women's bodies are also ascribed animalistic predicates (Inocêncio, 2001).

Decolonial feminism, as articulated by Françoise Vergès (2020), emphasizes that coloniality has not only shaped global economic and political systems but has also produced racialized and sexualized bodies. This process was particularly intense in Brazil, where the myth of the "sensual mulata" consolidated a narrative of exoticization and subordination of Black women. Vergès argues that during slavery, Black women's wombs were transformed into capital, tied directly to the expansion of enslaved labor. This colonial logic persists today in practices such as precarious labor conditions and reproductive control, which disproportionately affect Black women. These dynamics highlight the urgency of analyzing the intersection of race, gender, and class when studying territories. Although Black women's bodies have been historically marked by violence and exploitation, they are also sites of resistance and social transformation. Within decolonial feminism, the body is reclaimed as a territory of struggle, challenging colonial and patriarchal structures that attempt to control it. As Vergès (2020) insists, in reclaiming their bodies, Black women not only reclaim their humanity but also question the foundations of racial capitalism. In Brazil, this resistance is visible in Black feminist movements that use embodiment as a tool to reconfigure narratives and make visible the struggles of Black women.

Counter-hegemonic forces always pulse within oppressive structures. One cannot speak of racism without speaking of Black revolts, nor of stereotypes about Black women without recognizing the academic works, texts, and activist actions that have questioned such constructs and proposed other interpretations. The writings of Black women play a dual role: they are both data and theory, embodying what bell hooks (1995) described as "bearing witness to one's history," since they reflect critically on their condition in the world. Chronologically, Lélia Gonzalez was among the first Black women in Brazil to theorize the specificity of being a Black woman in both Brazil and Latin America. She also wrote about being Black in the feminist movement and being a woman in the Black movement. In her essay Racismo e Sexismo na Cultura Brasileira (1984), she addresses the stereotypes of race and gender that "produce violent effects particularly on Black women". As she states:

> We feel the need to deepen our reflection, instead of continuing to reproduce and repeat the models offered to us [...]. The texts only spoke of Black women from a socio-economic perspective that elucidated a series of problems proposed by racial relations. But there remained (and there will always remain) a residue that defies explanation. (Gonzalez, 1984, p. 225).

Lelia Gonzalez observes that there is a significant gap in historical accounts regarding the complexity of Black women's experiences in the writings of major theorists of Brazilian formation. Studies addressing the subjectivities of Black women have contributed to narrowing this gap. In this effort, she foregrounds the figure of the mulata in the debate. "Her reasoning indicates that in 'creating' this figure she 'constructs Blackness as an object,' making the mulata and the crioula—Black women born in Brazil, regardless of distinctions based on skin tone—as emblematic representations of the race–gender nexus in the country" (Gonzalez, 1984, p. 228). This expands the studies of the multiple lived experiences that shape the lives of these women, frequently framed in opposition to the legacies of slavery and Brazilian racism. Sueli Carneiro (2003) underscores how this legacy of slavery:

> […] keeps Black women imprisoned by stereotypes constructed during the colonial period by the dominant gender: historians, novelists, poets most often portrayed Black women either as workers suited for degrading tasks or as lascivious and promiscuous women. (Carneiro, 2003, p. 286).

The intellectual labor of Black women over the decades has directly confronted such colonial stereotypes. These works are marked by a political positioning of the subjects within the contexts they seek to address—an element often dismissed as a disqualifying feature of their analyses. Yet, Black women's voices have multiplied and diversified beyond theorists and academics. The expansion of digital platforms has fostered a polyphony in Black women's discourses, marking a significant transformation in the diffusion of Black feminism in Brazil over the past decade. Perhaps it is more precise to speak of the expansion of Black women's thought, since even Black feminisms are no longer sufficient to capture the autonomy of Black women's intellectual and political production. This expansion reflects the growing diversity of Black women dedicated to reflecting on their own realities in Brazil.

Social networks and digital media play a crucial role in this reconfiguration, where what can be called digital activism has become the primary vehicle for disseminating the thoughts of women with diverse political identifications. The landscape of thematic and identity-based publications (tied to markers of difference) has also expanded. Some elements are crucial to understanding this current configuration of discourses and challenges concerning Black women. A national context shaped by affirmative action policies has also significantly impacted the presence of Black people in universities—especially Black women. This shift explains why today it is possible to observe a larger number of Black professionals and academics across multiple fields of knowledge.

Foundations of Black Feminism for Geographical Thought in Research and Teaching

Feminist theories presuppose critical reflection on the condition of women in societies shaped by heteropatriarchy (Akotirene, 2018). Examining this condition and linking subject and space provides fertile ground for geography, a discipline concerned with understanding power relations and the mediations between everyday life, subjectivity, and spatiality. With the early contributions of Anglo-American feminist geographies, Brazilian geographers have increasingly sought to analyze space as a category through which to understand the power relations that shape the lived experiences of social groups along markers of difference (Silva; Silva, 2018).

The delayed engagement of Brazilian geography with variables such as gender, race, and sexualities as constitutive of subjectivities and spatial experiences stemmed from a tradition of knowledge production marked by androcentrism and universalist assumptions. As Silva, César and Pinto (2015) note, feminist geographies are nearly as old as critical geography itself. Yet, the mere inclusion of white women, Black men and women, and LGBTQIAPN+ communities in knowledge production does not suffice to transform hegemonic geography. The field must be confronted and reshaped to build knowledge produced by and through these subjects, dismantling the neutralizing and universalizing vision of the "abstract subject" that still dominates geographical thought.

To address Black women and Black feminist thought, it is crucial to reflect on the social representation of their corporeality, as well as on the epistemological constructions and social practices that aim to overcome stereotypes produced by racism and sexism. We see the production of scientific knowledge in any discipline as one such mechanism of overcoming, positioning Black women as thinkers of their realities and as producers of critique and reflection that translate into civic practices—whether through research and political activism, community engagement, or teaching programs designed to foreground how this social group positions itself and experiences the world.

As Gonzalez (1984) underscores, the legacy of slavery determined not only racial and gendered roles but also social positions and spatialities for white and Black subjects in unequal and discriminatory ways. Referencing the importance of geographical analyses that address and emerge from the spatialities of social groups therefore means problematizing the existence of racially stratified social spaces and disrupting the dichotomies of public and private space—where the former was historically reserved for men and the latter for women—since Black women have always occupied public space, whether as enslaved or as free women. Gonzalez already highlighted the racial division of space when she wrote:

> (...) The natural place of the dominant white group is healthy housing, located in the most beautiful corners of the city or countryside and duly protected by various forms of policing—from overseers, slavecatchers, and hired thugs to the formally constituted police. From the plantation "big house" and the townhouse to today's elegant buildings and residences, the criteria have been the same. The natural place of Black people, by contrast, has been the opposite: from the slave quarters to today's favelas, tenements, squatter settlements, flood zones, and public housing projects, the criteria have been symmetrically the same: the racial division of space (...) For the dominated group, what we see are entire families crammed into cubicles under the most precarious conditions of health and hygiene. Moreover, here too the police are present—but not to protect, rather to repress, violate, and intimidate. This explains why the other 'natural place' of Black people is prison. Systematic police repression, racist in nature, seeks above all to impose submission... (Gonzalez, 1979, *apud* Gonzalez, 1984, p. 232).

This socio-spatial and racial reading leads us to affirm that racism assigns social places based on phenotype and ethnic-racial belonging. When we bring this assertion into the reality of Black women, it becomes evident that there exists a racial and sexual division of labor that delegates them to underemployment, to low-paid jobs requiring little education, and/or to *care* work (Hirata, 2014), restricting them to positions of inferiority and subjugation.

Alongside this concern, we engage with the reflections of Lopes (2008) in research on domestic workers, who found that the majority are Black women who also experience socio-spatial segregation and restricted mobility in city centers, in addition to the racial stereotypes attached to their corporeality. For many Black women, domestic work became both a source of income and a point of entry into the labor market. Thus, the body and corporeality are constitutive elements of space and social relations, inscribing the experiences of these subjects in their multiple identities and belongings.

In this sense, an intersectional reading is fundamental for understanding the realities of marginalized social groups within geographic studies, as it exposes the universalization of the category "woman" and the privileges of class, race, ethnicity, generation, and sexuality—inseparable within the racist, capitalist, and cis-heteropatriarchal structure (Akotirene, 2018). The way Black women experience gender is particular, since the intersection of social markers creates arrangements that place them in situations of vulnerability.

From the perspective of Black feminist thought, we reiterate the need for bodily and intellectual autonomy for Black women, particularly as a condition for experiencing spatialities and social places both individually and collectively. We understand gender–space relations as essential to social equity, as emphasized by feminist geographers (Machado, 2016; Silva, 2010), especially when reflecting on the social places occupied by Black women and the spatial dimension of their lived experiences.

Despite Brazilian geography remains shaped by colonial subjectivity and a Eurocentric epistemic legacy (Silva, 2020), we recognize advances made by feminist geographers who have challenged the production of geographic knowledge from an intersectional perspective. Machado (2016), for instance, situates feminist methodological proposals for working with women and their relation to everyday space, such as the one developed by Rodó-de-Zárate (*apud* Machado, 2016), which highlights the importance of space for studies of power relations and the value of intersectionality as a concept for understanding spatial experiences. She uses maps as a tool to show the inequalities embedded in the different places traversed by women in their everyday lives. This represents a way of conceiving research and cartography through the lens of marginalized social groups, challenging the masculine inheritance of geographic themes and the modern-colonial legacy of geographic thought, which historically positioned subordinated groups as research objects rather than as subjects capable of reflecting on their trajectories and producing theoretically dense analyses of difference from a geographic standpoint.

It is important to recall that the recognition of other epistemologies in Brazilian geography—consolidated since the early 2000s—has been constructed by networks of Black geographers who demand recognition of scholars seeking to trace theoretical pathways within geography through Black perspectives. According to the manifesto "*Por uma geografia negra*" (For a Black Geography), written during the XIII National Meeting of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Geography (ANPEGE) in 2019, Milton Santos had already offered important reflections on racial relations and Black issues in the 1990s, particularly through the notions of "corporeality" and "mutilated citizenships," which became references for studies on race and geographic analysis. As the manifesto affirms, raciality constitutes space in the shaping of social relations and practices across territories and places. Intersectionality must therefore appear in analyses of urban space—highlighting aspects of segregation, the spatialities of social movements, and more—as well as in studies of rural space, with attention to land, quilombos, and Black peasant communities; in population studies, education, environment, and the collective and individual trajectories of Black men and women. From this perspective, geographic analysis must consider subjects as plural beings, constituted by gender, race, sexuality, and other markers of difference.

It is also important to note that as early as the 1980s, Lélia Gonzalez discussed the intersections of race and gender in public and private spaces. This underscores the fact that she and other Black Brazilian intellectuals—such as Sueli Carneiro, Beatriz Nascimento, and Luiza Bairros—remain references for the construction of Black geographies through the lens of Black women, reinforcing the interdisciplinary character of intersectional analysis within geography.

When it comes to research on Black women in geography, the 2000s saw significant contributions such as Garcia's (2006) study, which analyzed Salvador from the perspective of women living in the periphery—triply discriminated against by class, race, and gender relations—while aiming to combat discrimination and racism in neighborhood associations and movements. Another example is Souza (2007) research, which brought together race, gender, and urban space to examine the socio-spatial trajectories of Black women teachers in Goiânia and its metropolitan region; as well as Lopes's (2008) study, which analyzed the socio-spatial trajectories of Black women domestic workers in the Goiânia Metropolitan Region, recounting life histories marked by the intersections of gender, race, and class. We are aware of other important works within feminist and Black geographies that we do not mention here, since we chose to highlight these particular studies for being carried out by Black women reflecting on the lived realities of Black women.

Souza and Ratts (2009) developed a discussion on the categories of gender, race, space, and power in the reality of social relations. According to them, power manifests both visibly and invisibly, depending on the strategies of the groups that hold it. In the name of political, economic, and cultural power, the colonial slaveholding legacy ensured higher rates of unemployment and underemployment for the Black population in the labor market. It is within this structure of power that Santos (2021) warns that, for geographers working in a country at the periphery of capitalism, to analyze space without considering the dimensions of gender and race results in an incomplete reading. Thus, the perspective of Black women must appear.

According to IBGE (2019), Black women constitute the largest population group—60.6 million—of which 11.3 million identify as Black and 49.3 million as brown (pardas), together representing more than 28% of the total population. In terms of education, disparities remain significant: the percentage of Black women with higher education degrees is still only about half that of white women.

The greater presence of Black women in informal labor is due to

> […] their higher participation in domestic and care services, where informality is most prevalent. Of the nearly 6 million domestic workers, more than 67% are Black women, of whom 75.3% work without a formal contract and 64.7% without contributing to social security, with earnings that place them in poverty (26.2%) or extreme poverty (13.4%) (Dieese, 2023). In the care sector, Black women held 45% of all jobs in 2019, followed by white women (31%) and Black and white men (24%) (MDS, 2023). Their more precarious insertion in the labor market results in lower earnings and higher poverty rates. (MIR, 2023 p. 10-11).

Even in education, disparities remain considerable, as the percentage of Black women with higher education degrees is about half that of white women.

This statistic reflects a reality shaped by inequality and discrimination across multiple fields, preventing Black women from accessing social rights and breaking with stigmas surrounding their Black and female condition, even when they achieve social mobility. Our concern extends to the lack of geographic knowledge and research on this social group, although it is the most affected by segregation, urban violence, lack of mobility and access to the city, limited access to higher education, difficulties in remaining in graduate programs, and challenges in pursuing academic careers. Hooks (2019b) emphasizes that "racism and sexism, particularly in graduate studies, directly shape the academic performance and career prospects of Black women scholars" (p. 135). Considering this reality in the training of geography teachers and professors, we emphasize that geography education in schools faces challenges in addressing racial and gender issues in combination, when we consider its contents and learning objectives. We understand the school as a potential social *locus* for problematizing reality, generating reflections based on problem situations that encourage the construction of a geographic perspective articulated with social dynamics and societal plurality. All content in this discipline can be "racialized," since race is inherently part of the spatial dimension. For this to occur, geography education in schools must provide didactic-pedagogical tools that foster sensitivity and critical reflection on racial and gender differences as elements shaping social relations, the production and reproduction of space, the understanding of Brazilian social formation, and the processes of marginalization experienced by Black men and women throughout history.

The articulation of academic knowledge with that of communities strengthens public policies with a racial lens in economic, cultural, and educational spheres. In this regard, social movements are crucial actors for mobilizing and confronting the conflicts and inequalities that the state must address as part of historical reparation policies aimed at racial equity and overcoming racism and sexism. The implementation of Laws No. 10.639/03 and No. 11.645/08 represents the construction of affirmative mechanisms in the struggle against discrimination, recognizing the school as a space for promoting civic practices related to Black men and women. At the higher education level, the development of the Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-brasileira e Africana (DCNERER, 2004) aimed to support Brazilian education systems and educators in addressing racial relations through pedagogical proposals grounded in the principles of political and historical awareness of diversity, the strengthening of identity and rights, and educational actions against racism and racial discrimination.

We stress that geography teachers face the challenge of mediating the development of a geographic perspective that is both racialized and gendered. If we are to recognize schools as one of the institutions central to building equity and social justice, it is essential to adopt an intersectional perspective for analyzing space, place, territory, and landscape. In this sense, we agree with Santos (2021), who states:

> [...] Black women hold an omnipresent position at the crossroads of oppressions, which allows them to play an important political role in life demands. This does not mean that Black women know everything because they are more oppressed, but rather that their gaze is situated in their reality and shares the experiences of their group (Santos, 2021, p.358).

By sharing their experiences and offering a situated perspective, Black women—whether as teachers, popular educators, or knowledge producers—play a decisive role in interpreting social reality and advancing critical understandings of how racism shapes the lives and spatialities of Black communities.

Concluding Remarks

Black feminism seeks a sphere of freedom and equity for black women in the face of the daily challenges of experiencing discrimination and racism combined with sexism. We understand geographical analysis as necessary to recognize the spatialities of historically marginalized social groups, highlighting the intersections of gender and race in their spatial, material, and symbolic dimensions. Even in the twenty-first century, Black women carry a "historical destiny" (Nascimento; Ratts, 2021) that traps them in an image of subalternity. It is precisely this historical destiny that we aim to problematize, strengthening Black feminist epistemologies within Geography. Speaking from the self, as hooks (2019b) reminds us, represents an exercise in self-recovery, which must not be mistaken for the narcissistic act of self-promotion. Self-recovery involves caring for oneself in ways never detached from caring for others. In this sense, we view the struggle for a project of social justice, as articulated by Collins (2019), as a broad political endeavor for Black men and women alike.

By foregrounding the intellectual work about/for/of Black women in geographical scholarship, we also call for critical reflection on the recognition of other possible epistemologies through the strengthening of feminist and Black geographies. This brings us back to hooks (1995), who affirmed that intellectual life need not separate us from the community, but rather empower us to participate fully in the life of family and community (hooks, 1995).

References

AKOTIRENE, Carla. **O que é interseccionalidade**. Belo Horizonte: Letramento: Justificando, 2018.

ANZALDÚA, Gloria. Falando em línguas: uma carta para as mulheres escritoras do Terceiro Mundo. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, v. 8, n. 1, p. 229- 236, 2000.

BORGES, Rosane da Silva. **Sueli Carneiro**. São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2009.

BUTLER, Judith. **Problemas de Gênero**: Feminismo e subversão da identidade. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003.

CARNEIRO, Sueli. Mulheres em movimento. **Estudos Avançados**, set.-dez., v. 17, n. 49, p. 117-133, 2003.

CARNEIRO, Sueli. **A construção do outro como não-ser como fundamento do ser**. 2005. 339f. Tese (Doutorado em Filosofia) – Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2005.

CURIEL, Ochy. Critica pós-colonial desde las prácticas políticas del feminismo antirracista. **Nómadas**, Colômbia, n. 26, p. 92-101, 2007. Available from: https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1051/105115241010.pdf. Access at: 17/11/2024.

DIAS, Luciana de Oliveira. Quase da família: corpos e campos marcados pelo racismo e pelo machismo. **Revista Humanidades e Inovação**, v. 6, n. 16, 2019.

COLLINS, Patricia Hill. **Pensamento feminista negro**: conhecimento, consciencia e a política do empoderamento. Tradução de Jamille P. Dias. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2019.

CRENSHAW, Kimberlé. A interseccionalidade na discriminação de raça e gênero. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, v. 10, n. 1, 2002.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **História da Sexualidade I**: A vontade de saber. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal, 1985.

GARCIA, Antonio dos Santos. **Mulheres da cidade d'Oxum**: relações de gênero, raça e classe e organização espacial do momento de bairro em Salvador. Salvador: Editora da UFBA, 2006

GONZALEZ, Lélia. Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira. **Revista Ciências Sociais Hoje**, p. 223-244, 1984.

GONZALEZ, Lélia. A categoria político-cultural de amefricanidade. **Tempo Brasileiro**, Rio de Janeiro, n. 92-93, p. 69-82, jan.-jun. 1988a.

GONZALEZ, Lélia. Por um feminismo afrolatinoamericano. **Revista Isis Internacional**, Santiago, v. 9, p. 133-141, 1988b.

GONZALEZ, Lélia. A importância da organização da mulher negra no processo de transformação social. **Raça e Classe**, Brasília, ano 2, n. 5, p. 2, nov.-dez. 1988c.

HARAWAY, Donna. Saberes localizados: a questão da ciência para o feminismo e o privilégio da perspectiva parcial. **Cadernos Pagu**, n. 5, p. 7-42, 1995.

HIRATA, Helena. Gênero, classe e raça Interseccionalidade e consubstancialidade das relações sociais. **Tempo Social**, v. 26, n. 1, 2014

hooks, bell. Intelectuais negras. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, v. 3, n. 2, p. 464-478, 1995.

hooks, bell. **Teoria feminista**: da margem ao centro. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2019a.

hooks, bell. **Erguer a voz**: pensar como feminista, pensar como negra. São Paulo: Elefante, 2019b.

IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Síntese de indicadores sociais: uma análise das condições de vida da população brasileira: 2019. Coordenação de População e Indicadores Sociais. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2019.

INOCÊNCIO, Nelson Odé. Representação Visual do corpo Afro-descendente. *In*: PANTOJA, Selma *et al*. (org.). **Entre Áfricas e Brasis**. Brasília: Paralelo 15; São Paulo: Marco Zero, 2001. p. 191-208.

LOPES, Renata Batista. **De casa para outras casas**: trajetórias socioespaciais de trabalhadoras domésticas residentes em Aparecida de Goiânia e trabalhadoras em Goiânia. 2008. Dissertação mestrado (Mestrado em Estudos Sócio-Ambientais) – Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, 2008.

LORDE, Audre. Edad, raza, clase y sexo: las mujeres redefinen la diferencia. *In*: LORDE, Audre. **La hermana, la extranjera**. Madrid: Horas y Horas, 2003. p. 121-135.

MACHADO, Talita C. **A cidade das mulheres feministas**: Uma cartografia de Goiânia em perspectiva interseccional e da diferença. 2016. 231 f. Tese (Doutorado em Geografia) – Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, 2016.

MIR. Ministério da Igualdade Racial. Informe MIR - Monitoramento e avaliação - nº 2 - Edição Mulheres Negras. Brasília-DF – Setembro de 2023

NASCIMENTO, Beatriz (A.); RATTS, Alex (org.). **Uma história feita por mãos negras**: relações raciais, quilombos e movimentos. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2021.

POR uma geografia negra. Manifesto apresentado no XIII Encontro Nacional da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação em Geografia (ANPEGE) em setembro de 2019.

QUIJANO, Anibal. Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social *In*: CASTRO GÓMEZ, Santiago; GROSFOGUEL, Ramón (ed.). **El giro decolonial**. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global. Bogotá: Universidad Central - IESCO / Universidad Javeriana/ Instituto Pensar / Siglo del Hombre, 2007. p. 93-126.

QUIJANO, Aníbal. Colonialidade do poder, eurocentrismo e América Latina. *In*: LANDER, Edgardo (org.). A colonialidade do saber: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais – perspectivas latino-americanas. Buenos Aires: Clacso, 2005. p. 117-142.

RATTS, Alex *et al*. Geografia e diversidade: gênero, sexualidades, etnicidades e racialidades. **Revista da ANPEGE**, v. 12, p. 223-238, 2016.

SANTOS, Renato Emerson dos. Falando de colonialidade no ensino de Geografia. *In*: PORTUGAL, Jussara Fraga (org.). **Educação geográfica**: temas contemporâneos. Salvador: Editora da UFBA, 2017. p. 61-75.

SANTOS, Bruna Lúcia dos. A práxis coletiva do feminismo negro na luta pelo direito à cidade. R**evista da ANPEGE**, v. 17, n. 32, p. 351-366, 2021. Available from: https://ojs.ufgd.edu.br/anpege/article/view/12474. Access at: 22 nov. 2024.

SILVA, Cíntia Cristina Lisboa Da; SOUZA, Lorena F. de. Geografia e racialidades: as mulheres que produzem o campo científico. Anais do XIV ENANPEGE... Campina Grande: Realize Editora, 2021. Available from: https://editorarealize.com.br/artigo/visualizar/78048. Access at: 17/01/2022.

SILVA, Maria; SILVA, Joseli. Introduzindo as interseccionalidades como um desafio para a análise espacial no Brasil: em direção às pluriversalidades do saber geográfico. *In*: SILVA, Maria; SILVA, Joseli; Intersec Unesco. **Relatório de Monitoramento Global da Educação – resumo 2017/8**: responsabilização na educação: cumprir nossos compromissos. 2018. Available from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ por. Acessado em 13/10/2020.

SILVA, Joseli Maria. Geografias feministas, sexualidades e corporalidades: desafios às práticas investigativas da ciência geográfica. **Espaço e Cultura**, v. 27, p. 39-55, 2010.

SILVA, Joseli Maria; CESAR, Tamires Regina Aguiar de Oliveira; PINTO, Vagner André Morais. Gênero e geografia brasileira: uma análise sobre o tensionamento de um campo de saber. **Revista da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Geografia (Anpege)**, v. 11, n. 15, p. 185-200, jan-jun. 2015.

SOUZA, Lorena Francisco de *et al*. Uma geografia das corporeidades e das diferenças. *In*: MATOS, Patrícia Francisca de; COSTA, Carmem Lúcia (org.). **Uma Geografia do século XXI**: temas e tensões. Curitiba: CRV, 2020. p. 41-61.

SOUZA, Lorena Francisco de. **Corpos negros femininos em movimento**: trajetórias socioespaciais de professoras negras em escolas públicas. 2007. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia) – Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, 2007.

SOUZA, Lorena Francisco de; RATTS, Alex. Espaço, cultura e poder: gênero e raça em análise na geografia. **Ateliê Geográfico**, Goiânia, v. 3, n. 1, p. 107–120, 2009. Available from: https://revistas.ufg.br/atelie/article/view/6257. Access at: 22 nov. 2024.

SOUZA, Lorena Francisco de; CASTRO, Fabiana Leonel de. Mulheres negras em movimento: possibilidades teóricas dos feminismos negros para outras epistemologias na geografia. *In*: SILVA, J.M et.al (org.). **Corpos & Geografia**: expressões de espaços encarnados. Ponta Grossa: Toda Palavra, 2023.

SPIVAK, Chakravorty. **Pode o subalterno falar?** Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 2010.

VERGÈS, Françoise. **Um feminismo decolonial**. São Paulo: Ubu. 2020.

Data availability:

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study was published in the article itself.

Financial support:

The publication of this article was financed in part by the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) # 401619/2024-9.

CNPq
Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico

Article's editor:

Elisa Favaro Verdi

Received on: 9 January 2025
Approved on: 25 August 2025