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Labor and the shadows of gender-based violence in contemporary capitalism: an intersectional feminist perspective

O trabalho e as sombras da violência de gênero no capitalismo contemporâneo: uma perspectiva feminista interseccional

Abstract

This theoretical essay, grounded in Feminist Critical Social Psychology, seeks to unveil how the ontological disfigurement of work, inherent to capitalist dynamics, becomes intertwined with gender, race, and class oppressions. The analytical trajectory demonstrates how this entanglement produces suffering and psychological distress, with a particular focus on women's experiences. The analysis examines configurations of contemporary neoliberalism, specifically managerial logics within startups. We denounce the ideological discourse that attempts to conceal oppressions under the guise of so-called "labor market flexibilization" and an illusory sense of "belonging." Through an intersectional lens, we show that such mechanisms result in the superexploitation of labor and the erosion of workers' lives. This reflection calls for a radical social transformation, rejecting individual solutions or organizational palliatives. We advocate for the dismantling of patriarchy, racism, and capitalism, in pursuit of reclaiming the teleological meaning of human activity, the collectivization of care, and an ethical rupture in the valuation of work.

Keywords: Capitalism; Gender-Based Violence; Intersectionality; Labor; Feminism; Occupational Health.

Resumo

Este ensaio teórico, sustentado pela Psicologia Social Crítica Feminista, busca desvelar como a desfiguração ontológica do trabalho, inerente à dinâmica capitalista, se amalgama às opressões de gênero, raça e classe. O percurso analítico expõe como esse entrelaçamento produz sofrimentos e o adoecimento psíquico, com foco na experiência das mulheres. A análise debruça-se sobre as configurações do neoliberalismo contemporâneo, especificamente as lógicas de gestão em *startups*. Denunciamos o discurso ideológico que tenta camuflar as opressões sob as vestes da "flexibilização" e de um "pertencimento" ilusório. Sob uma lente interseccional, demonstramos que tais mecanismos resultam na superexploração e no desgaste da vida das trabalhadoras. A reflexão convoca uma transformação social radical, refutando saídas individuais ou paliativos organizacionais. Defendemos o desmantelamento do patriarcado, do racismo e do capitalismo, em busca da retomada do sentido teleológico do fazer humano, da coletivização do cuidado e de uma ruptura ética na valoração do trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Capitalismo; Violência de Gênero; Interseccionalidade; Trabalho; Feminismo; Saúde do Trabalhador.

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Introduction

This theoretical essay, grounded in the perspective of Feminist Critical Social Psychology, invites readers to immerse themselves in a critical and situated analysis of the organizational forms of contemporary capitalism, highlighting the shadows of gender-based violence in the workplace. Our objective is to reveal how the ontological distortion of work, intrinsic to capitalist logic, intertwines with the oppressions of gender, race, and class, culminating in psychological suffering and illness, especially among women. We explore a path that highlights the invisibility of gender in traditional approaches to work¹, deepening our examination of the symbolic and structural dimensions of violence, including everyday microaggressions. Although in this essay we seek to analyze and reflect on women and the forms of violence that subjectively and objectively haunt daily life at work, here we draw on ethnographic inspiration.

We look at women within the machinery of startups, who, for the most part, occupy the front lines of a generation summoned by the promise of autonomy, flexibility, and horizontality, and at the ways in which exploitation takes on the contours of modernity under the discourse of innovation. These workers, shaped by markers of class, race, and age, find themselves in environments that demand total subjective availability, where harassment often appears camouflaged within “group culture” dynamics and overwork is sold as engagement. This ideology of self-entrepreneurship projects the illusion that success depends exclusively on individual performance, masking the precariousness of labor relations and the maintenance of gender hierarchies that, in the daily life of these companies, continue to operate to exhaust bodies and minds in the name of an agility that disregards the concrete conditions of life and care.

Finally, we shed light on the possibilities for critical action and the foundation for building a vision of feminist and intersectional social organization, with the aim of creating a workplace free of gender-based violence and, ultimately, the demise of capitalism in the interest of the liberation of all humanity.

Rehearsing for change: Method

This study adopts a methodological approach of critical reading, grounded in an intersectional feminist perspective, to analyze gender-based violence in the workplace and its repercussions on psychological distress. The theoretical essay offers the necessary power for writing that transcends traditional formalism, allowing for an in-depth problematization and the construction of new perspectives. We draw inspiration from Nascimento's² proposal, which suggests using the essay as a form and narrative as a method, since, being deeply rooted in experience, these formats reflect in a more complex way the intersections between the object of study and subjective and historical transformations. This critical stance is essential to unveiling the layers of oppression that gender-based violence imposes and that are often obscured by analyses that disregard the specificities of race, class, and other social markers.

Our methodological approach thus involves a careful and questioning reading of the existing literature, which, rather than seeking definitive answers, is guided by inquiries that prompt deep reflections on the contradictions of capitalism and the way in which the “social question” manifests itself in women's lives³. This approach aims to identify the tensions and possibilities for charting new paths that emerge from women's concrete experiences at work. By considering the subjective dimension of psychological distress, we recognize that this is not merely an individual problem, but a manifestation of unequal power relations and the violence experienced in daily life. From an intersectional perspective, the goal is not only to describe the problem but also to contribute to the development of strategies that promote equity and social justice for all women.

Work and gender

Work, in its ontological dimension, is an essential human activity, connecting us to nature, to others, and to ourselves. It is a creative and liberating force. However, this force is diverted under the logic of alienation, commodification, and exploitation. The debate, rooted in Marxian and Lukácsian critique, understands work as a teleological process, directed by human beings to appropriate nature in a way that is useful to life.

Work is a process between humanity and nature, in which humanity sets its own forces in motion with the aim of appropriating nature in a way that is useful to its life. Work is, therefore, by its very nature, a teleological process, that is, determined by an end that humanity consciously establishes (Lukács, 2015, p. 27)⁴.

This teleology is affected by private property, which undermines the possibility of human self-realization. A dissociation then sets in between living and producing, generating subjective impoverishment and social control.

It is imperative to recognize that, in addition to the distortion of labor, there is a history of social, racial, and sexual division that reproduces profound inequalities⁵. The organization of labor has never been neutral but is intrinsically permeated by historical relations of domination, such as racism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

In the field of critical studies on labor, it is necessary to highlight the invisibility of the gender category. Although the Marxian tradition is indispensable for the ontological understanding of labor^{4,6,7}, much of its formulations were built upon a universalized and abstract subject. This universalization of the working class, as feminist and decolonial authors warn^{8,9}, erases the specificities of gender, race, ethnicity, and coloniality that structure the international and sexual division of labor.

Thus, intersectional feminist critique, especially that emerging from black women and women from the Global South, reveals how the inclusion of women – and racialized women, in particular – in the workforce has always been tied to the overlap of productive and reproductive roles, the devaluation of their labor, and the normalization of their exploitation. Lélia Gonzalez⁹ explains how the category “domestic worker” conceals the colonial and racist legacy of the subordination of black women. Angela Davis⁸ highlights how capitalism has incorporated the reproductive labor of black women without recognition in the formal economy. This perspective demonstrates, therefore, that a critique of alienated labor must integrate a critique of racism and patriarchy as specific technologies of domination and of the production of the working class itself.

In contemporary Brazil, the configuration of the world of work reflects and deepens historical inequalities of gender and race, direct legacies of colonization, slavery, and patriarchy. We observe that there is underreporting and underanalysis of data regarding employability and working conditions, especially due to barriers in monitoring information related to informal work, which currently accounts for most jobs. To this end, we present a brief snapshot, as an illustrative example, of this reality: according to data from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), in 2022, only 53.3% of women were employed, while the figure for men was 73.2%. Only one-third of women held leadership positions, and their earnings were lower. Their average pay in leadership positions was R\$ 5,870.00, which is 26.1% below the salaries of men in the same roles (R\$ 7,948.00)¹⁰.

However, it is concrete experiences, such as exhausting workdays and health problems, that reveal the persistence of a social model that thrives on inequality. In this context, precariousness, which erodes historical rights and guarantees, is paradoxically obscured by a hegemonic discourse that extols innovation, diversity, and inclusion. These themes, though valid, are instrumentalized to mask the absence of social protection mechanisms and the exacerbation of exploitation. Labor flexibility is often presented as synonymous with “freedom” and “entrepreneurship,” a “new arrangement” that, rather than questioning the logic of accumulation, reinforces it.

For women, the business landscape remains unequal. As presented by Kergoat¹¹, in addition to double or triple shifts, lower wages, greater participation in precarious jobs, and fewer opportunities for growth, they are constantly exposed to harassment and daily violence. Gender-based violence occurs “motivated by expressions of inequalities based on gender” (p. 294)¹². However, violent acts can intersect with other dimensions (race, age, class) and

are produced in relational and, therefore, interpersonal contexts and spaces, with non-uniform historical social settings. The centrality of violent acts falls on women, whether these acts of violence

are physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or moral, both in the private-family sphere and in workplaces and public spaces (p. 295)¹².

Considering the structural challenges faced by women in formal employment, this article specifically addresses the symbolic violence suffered by women in the workplace, which manifests itself in formal and informal speech, actions, and treatment, from the job interview to daily life. Often downplayed as subtle, veiled verbal microaggressions, they are difficult to identify and combat, yet they negatively impact women's mental health, causing suffering.

Gender-based violence in the workplace: The symbolic and structural dimensions

Here, we examine gender-based violence in the workplace as a phenomenon that transcends the individual sphere, revealing itself as a perverse manifestation of the power structures that have historically organized the social and productive world. Far from being an isolated event, gender-based violence in the workplace is an eloquent symptom of entrenched inequalities, which are perpetuated and renewed in the context of growing precariousness and discourses that sometimes camouflage it. This is a form of violence that cuts across the material and symbolic dimensions of work, impacting on the subjectivity and health of those who experience it¹³.

It is through recognizing the selective precariousness of women's working conditions, especially those of black and poor women, who are historically assigned devalued, poorly paid, and invisible tasks, that we understand gender-based violence in the workplace. This sexual and racial division of labor is structural to the capitalist mode of production, which depends on the normalization of the exploitation of women's bodies to ensure both the reproduction of the workforce (through domestic and unpaid care work) and the extraction of surplus value in formal and informal spaces¹⁴.

Furthermore, work processes carry symbolic and disciplinary dynamics that reinforce control over women's bodies: sexual and moral harassment, the imposition of aesthetic standards, the hierarchization of roles according to gender stereotypes, and the silencing of complaints. This violence acts simultaneously as an instrument of control over subjectivity and as an obstacle to women's emancipation, constituting a form of domination that operates in both the material and the inner realms¹⁵.

The Marxist-feminist perspective, as developed by Tithi Bhattacharya and Laura Veríssimo¹⁶, emphasizes that gender-based violence must be understood as a functional element of capitalist accumulation, especially under neoliberalism, which intensifies the privatization of life, the individualization of responsibility, and the precariousness of care.

Gender-based violence in the world of work is not limited to physical or sexual assaults. It takes on multiple and subtle forms, operating within the structures and daily dynamics of work, leaving deep marks on the social relations of production and reproduction. Since the 1990s, Heleieth Saffioti¹⁷ has argued that gender-based violence must be understood as a historically constituted social relation, permeated by the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchies that produce and reproduce inequalities.

This dynamic highlights the need for an intersectional analysis. Vicente and Zimmermann¹⁸ demonstrate how Marxist thought, linked to feminism, can offer powerful tools for understanding the multiple oppressions experienced by different working women in unique working conditions. This analytical lens seeks to break with universalism and affirm the possibility of understanding both objective and subjective dimensions simultaneously. According to the authors¹⁸, it is essential to observe how gender and class intertwine in the forms of control, exclusion, and violence present in labor relations, ranging from the gendered division of labor to the institutionalization of wage inequalities and the invisibilization of women's psychological suffering.

Thus, understanding gender-based violence in the workplace requires breaking away from reductionist or purely legal perspectives, incorporating a critical, historical, and intersectional perspective capable of recognizing

the material and subjective effects of this violence on women's life trajectories and on the ways the world of work is organized.

Moral harassment and microaggressions: the veiled face of gender-based violence

Within the unequal structure of the workplace, moral harassment functions as a mechanism that shapes power relations, especially when intersecting gender and race. Women, particularly black women, are primary targets of symbolic and interpersonal violence, which serves as a mechanism for disciplining, silencing, and excluding them. Moral harassment is a form of violence in asymmetrical power contexts that reinforces historically oppressive social structures¹³.

The analysis by authors Cristiane Andrade and Simone de Assis¹³, based on a critical review of the Brazilian literature, reveals that moral harassment is deeply intertwined with gender and racial relations, functioning as a way to “put everyone in their place” within the social and organizational hierarchy. They emphasize the double vulnerability of black women, who are constantly exposed to practices that delegitimize their competence, question their authority, and nullify their agency.

Such dynamics operate in a veiled, normalized, and continuous manner, often minimized as “jokes” or “misunderstandings,” but with devastating effects on these women's mental health, self-esteem, and job retention. Moral harassment is, therefore, an instrument for reproducing structural inequalities, and it is crucial to recognize it as part of a system that organizes work in a racialized and gendered manner¹³.

The discussion on gender-based violence in the workplace has focused on a conception of femininity aligned with hegemonic standards, with an emphasis on sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, especially following the criminalization of sexual harassment under Law No. 10,224/2001. However, Lima et al.¹⁹ emphasize that current legislation does not fully encompass the complex power and gender relations experienced by female workers, especially “incivilities,” low-intensity rude behaviors that, although not constituting a crime in isolation, contribute to a hostile and harassing environment.

The research highlights the need to broaden the debate by analyzing incivilities within the context of gender-based violence in the workplace to achieve a more accurate understanding of the dynamics of harassment¹⁹. Higa²⁰ points out that approaches restricted to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are limited, downplaying the complexity of the violence experienced. This framework, while recognizing the importance of combating sexual harassment²¹, may overshadow other manifestations of structural and symbolic violence in workplace power relations.

Since 2023 and 2024, the Controladoria-Geral da União (CGU) and the federal government have been making progress on policies and legislation that address harassment in a systemic manner. Notably, Law No. 14,540/2023 established the “Program for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Harassment and Other Crimes Against Sexual Dignity and Sexual Violence” within the public administration, and Decree No.12,122/2024, which creates the Federal Program for the Prevention and Combating of Harassment and Discrimination (Programa Federal de Prevenção e Enfrentamento do Assédio e da Discriminação - PFPEAD)²².

In addition, the Lilac Guide (Guia Lilás) launched by the CGU aims to establish guidelines, principles, and responsibilities, as well as define areas of action and procedures, with the goal of guiding, disseminating, and implementing mechanisms for the prevention, reception, handling, and analysis of reports and complaints regarding cases of moral harassment, sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination. There is a noticeable improvement in how harassment is addressed in the guide, as it encompasses all types of discrimination:

We recognize that moral harassment, sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical appearance, age, religion, disability, political opinion, and economic and social background are unacceptable under any circumstances (p. 6)²³.

However, we are still far from equality. Siqueira and Samparo²⁴, in observing women's trajectory in the world of work from a labor law perspective, narrate this tireless struggle, particularly when considering the division of labor and the overexploitation associated with undervalued domestic tasks, which constitute forms of symbolic violence.

The discussion highlighted above obscures the role of race in shaping history, contributing to the debate on gender relations and labor from a liberal perspective, that of white feminism, which often fails to recognize the history and specificities of the oppression of black women, erasing their ongoing struggle and their role as workers. Universal liberal feminism, in proposing the struggle for rights and equality in the face of a segregationist society, did not concern itself with including all women, omitting the oppressions of race and class from its demands⁸.

It is within this framework that Kimberlé Crenshaw²⁵ challenges institutional and entrenched structures in the face of analyses of discriminatory processes. The author introduces the concept of intersectionality, critiquing the inadequacy of traditional approaches that analyze racial and gender discrimination in isolation.

Crenshaw²⁵ argues that the experiences of black women cannot be categorized separately under racial or gender discrimination. She uses the metaphor of an intersection to explain that the "roads" of racial and gender discrimination intersect, forming "deep ruts" of power. The people at the center of these intersections, often women with darker skin, who are poor and socially marginalized, are the ones who suffer the combined and most severe impact of these forms of discrimination.

The author identifies three types of intersectional discrimination: discrimination against specific groups (which directly impacts women at the intersection of race and gender); mixed or compound discrimination (resulting from the combination of different forms of discrimination); and structural subordination (where the combined weight of structures of race, gender, class, and globalization marginalizes women at the socioeconomic bottom).

Gonçalves and Brambilla³ highlight the danger of conceiving equality as a linear and given path, without considering its inherent contradictions and the subjective dimension that permeates them. It is argued that, although the notion of equality is fundamental to the affirmation of social rights, there are distinct conceptions of it: equality of opportunity (abstract and liberal), which ignores structural inequalities, and equality of outcome (concrete and social), which recognizes the need to overcome historical asymmetries. Disregarding this complexity can lead to the normalization of violence, such as racial and gender-based violence, and to a superficial view of citizenship.

It is through this lens that we frame the possibility of demanding equality. Despite legislative progress and achievements, the authors²⁴ conclude that discrimination, distinction, and prejudice still persist, with women receiving lower wages (in 2015, 77% of men's wages globally, with wage equality projected only for 2086 by the International Labour Organization – ILO²⁶) and facing higher unemployment. The gender division of labor is still evident in the disproportionate representation of women in decision-making positions and in the expectation that women are solely responsible for domestic chores and family care.

Based on the arguments of Gonçalves and Brambilla³ and Davis⁸, the normative-legal interpretation regarding the struggle for women's rights to equality is called into question. Although Siqueira and Samparo²⁴ point out that the path to addressing workplace violence lies in gender equality, the authors assert that this struggle is not merely a women's issue, but a social problem and an obstacle to the full realization of human and labor rights.

Here we begin with an analysis of workplace violence in the context of large organizations, where women's experiences in the workplace are complex, permeated by challenges that go beyond the mere absence of legislation. Despite regulatory advances and the growing presence of women in these spaces, daily life is often marked by subtle and structural barriers. Organizational culture, understood as a web of fragmentations and ambiguities that, under the guise of discourses of harmony and belonging, operates as a mechanism of power to silence the plurality and resistance of individuals, leads us to understand its power to reproduce gender stereotypes and

the gendered division of labor, directing women toward roles considered “feminine” or undervaluing their contributions. Added to this reality is the constant need to balance professional life with social expectations of domestic and family responsibilities, creating an overload that often leads to silence in the face of discriminatory situations, out of fear of retaliation or invisibility.¹⁹

This articulation of critical analyses regarding the field of labor and gender-based violence leads us to Proni and Proni²⁷, who conducted a detailed critique of the effectiveness of labor regulatory instruments and initiatives to promote gender equity in large Brazilian corporations, highlighting the absence of an intersectional perspective that permeates the implementation and outcomes of these policies. The authors argue that, despite significant legislative progress, exemplified by the universalization of rights in the 1988 Federal Constitution and the incorporation of key ILO conventions prohibiting discrimination and seeking equal pay and treatment, such regulatory advances prove insufficient to dismantle structural inequalities.

Proni and Proni²⁷ demonstrate, through empirical data, that substantial barriers exist to women’s advancement to leadership positions. They point to the persistence of a significant “wage gap” between men and women performing equivalent functions or possessing the same level of education, including in high-level positions. This wage disparity is often “masked” by the subdivision of leadership positions into hierarchical levels with distinct pay scales, in which women frequently occupy the lower-paying levels.

The authors’ central critique lies in the perception that, although large companies seek legal compliance and adopt an emphatic discourse on diversity in their sustainability reports, this formal adherence does not translate into a profound organizational cultural change.

Thus, the aim is to provide an analysis that captures the subjective dimension of gender-based violence in the workplace, leading to a debate on “microaggressions.” The term emerged in the 1970s in studies on racism, defined by Pierce (*in apud* Fernandes²⁸) as “subtle, jarring, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges that constitute humiliations.” Studies have evolved, encompassing other types of discrimination and new classifications. Microaggressions can be classified in three ways: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations²⁹.

Micro-assaults are conscious, deliberate, subtle, and explicit attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors regarding gender, race, and sex, usually verbalized. They focus on the intentional attack on a person’s group identity²⁹.

Microinsults are forms of communication, whether interpersonal or contextual, that convey stereotypes, rudeness, or a lack of sensitivity regarding someone’s racial, gender, or sexual identity. They occur in both formal and informal settings, such as in hallway conversations, interviews, meetings, and performance reviews. Examples include statements such as: “Women are more dramatic,” “It’s good to have women on the team; it makes the environment more pleasant,” “Women are difficult to work with,” “She must be PMSing.” In formal settings, interruptions or mansplaining (a man condescendingly explaining something to a woman) are common. Other examples: “Do you have children? How do you plan to balance work?”, “You’re too assertive; you need to be more tactful,” “You look too young; you don’t come across as credible,” “This position is too challenging for a woman to hold; you wouldn’t have room to grow, you’d get frustrated.”

Microinvalidations are communications or “environmental cues” that exclude, deny, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or lived reality of certain groups. They occur unconsciously and represent the most harmful type of the three microaggressions because they are insidious and less “obvious”²⁹. They are identifiable when the topic of diversity is on the agenda or in situations of prejudice. It is common to hear: “Here we hire based on experience and competence,” “It’s hard to find women with the necessary qualifications,” “It was just a joke, let it go,” “You’re overreacting.”

The entry of women into sectors such as the service industry helps us understand the roots of these situations in everyday business life. From the outset, the division of labor was based on the segregation of positions and functions, with some activities considered more appropriate for men and others for women.

It is important to understand that women's entry into the workforce was driven by the erosion of the industrial base and the shift toward information technology and services³⁰. Whether in everyday relationships or in formal business dynamics, there are always explicit or veiled signs that make it clear what "their place" is, insisting on making it clear that these are spaces of and for men and that their participation has specific conditions and limits. Furthermore, we highlight the feminization of a set of activities and professions that are socially attributed to care work, as women's work³¹. Economist Marvin Harris, cited by Wolf, "described women as 'docile and educated' labor, and thus desirable candidates for jobs in the information and customer service sectors created by modern service industries"³⁰ (p. 47).

The author adds that the characteristics valued by employers and attributed to women were low self-esteem, lack of ambition, high levels of conformity, and greater respect for men (who are their superiors). Attributes based on biological factors disregard cultural and social influences and lead to the precariousness and devaluation of positions held by women.

Another very common aspect of differentiation is the use of beauty as a selection criterion, particularly in customer service positions. This attribute is emphasized more for female professionals. Job postings that required beauty as a mandatory requirement, though more common in the past, still persist. Over time, it is common to hear phrases such as "Hiring women for customer service, young, 'good-looking' or 'well-presented,' and friendly."

It is evident that, although women have gained more rights regarding wages and positions, gender discrimination has not been eliminated. On the contrary, they are subjected daily to microaggressions that render their trajectories and identities invisible, exclude them from the mainstream, and place them in positions of oppression.

Final remarks: Weaving the common toward the liberation of work and life

The analysis conducted revealed that work, in its ontological essence, as a teleological and emancipatory force, has historically been distorted under the yoke of alienation, commodification, and capitalist exploitation. This distortion deepens and becomes more complex when intersected by the categories of gender, race, and class, highlighting that the organization of labor has never been neutral, but rather intrinsically woven by relations of domination inherited from racism, colonialism, and patriarchy. The invisibility of the gender category in traditional labor criticism is a political and epistemic gap that anti-racist and decolonial feminist epistemologies, such as those of Lélia Gonzalez⁹, Angela Davis⁸, and Silvia Federici⁵, urgently bring to light. They demonstrate that capitalism is sustained by the expropriation of racialized and feminized bodies, instrumentalizing unpaid reproductive labor and the overexploitation of precarious sectors.

Gender-based violence in the workplace, far from being an isolated or sporadic phenomenon, emerges as a structural manifestation of neoliberal capitalist dynamics of power and subordination. The "maternal and loving apparatus"³² serves as a theoretical beacon for understanding how female subjectivity is instrumentalized and distorted, compelling women to a "total surrender" of care and affection that is neither remunerated nor recognized, generating suffering and psychological distress on a large scale^{33,34}. This violence is expressed not only in explicit harassment but in everyday "microaggressions" and "incivilities"¹⁹⁻²⁹, which operate as mechanisms of discipline, silencing, and exclusion, especially for black women¹³.

From a theoretical-methodological standpoint, this critical essay, grounded in an intersectional feminist perspective, sought to denaturalize the inequalities and veiled forms of violence that persist in the world of work, even amidst corporate discourses of "diversity and inclusion"²⁷. An analysis limited to sexual harassment or a hegemonic conception of femininity is insufficient to grasp the full extent of structural and symbolic violence¹⁹, which are articulated across layers of oppression²². The problem does not lie exclusively with managers or men who represent power, but in the very workings of the system that perpetuates the sexual and racial division of labor. These are mechanisms of exclusion that permeate women's entire professional careers, the so-called "glass ceiling" or "glass wall", which encompass such structural, persistent, and often unrecognized inequalities³⁵, in addition to the devaluation of care work. These terms represent an analogy, with the "glass ceiling" being more commonly used to describe the difficulties of professional advancement to the top of the organizational hierarchy, since "glass is characterized as an amorphous solid; it solidifies quickly, and its particles lose mobility before they

can arrange themselves”³⁰. The terms “crystal ceiling” and “crystal wall,” on the other hand, represent barriers at all levels of the hierarchy; they are more subtle and diverse, being related to everyday life, as crystal particles slowly combine into regular and stable forms³⁵.

Against this backdrop, critical action and the foundation of an intersectional feminist social organization point toward a path of radical transformation. To achieve liberation from labor, it is essential to dismantle capitalism, patriarchy, and racism, going beyond mere denunciation to challenge the structures of domination³⁶. This means reclaiming labor as a creative force, rather than a burden, through the collectivization and valorization of all forms of life-sustaining labor³⁷⁻³⁹. The construction of new forms of organization and work processes is essential to overcoming neoliberal management. It is crucial to adopt an intersectional lens to understand the multiple oppressions of gender, race, and class. Deracializing and degendering work are imperative to actively combat occupational segregation, promoting equal opportunities and recognition for all people.

Therefore, a workplace free of gender-based violence is not a matter of individual change or leadership, but a demand intrinsic to building a society where care and life are central, rather than profit and domination. As bell hooks⁴⁰ states, economic self-sufficiency is a step, but the true path is to discern “which work is liberating,” and that work, surely, does not violate, but emancipates.

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