

Black female professors in health postgraduate courses: between structural racism and the feminization of care

Professoras negras na pós-graduação em saúde: entre o racismo estrutural e a feminização do cuidado

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ABSTRACT Based on black feminism, intersectional perspective and Brazilian ethnic-racial studies, the paper problematized racism and sexism in the Brazilian academy. It characterizes and analyses the presence/absence of black women professors in PhD programs in health sciences of two federal universities, UFRJ and UFF. Using information from the websites of 31 PhD programs, we reconstructed, quantitatively, the gender and ethnic-racial profiles of the PhD programs by university and evaluation area. Twenty-three black women professors were identified in 26 teaching positions. Based on information from the Plataforma Lattes, we also addressed the study dimension longitudinally. The results indicate that the presence of black women professors is 2% at UFRJ and 6% at UFF. It is greater in areas related to care, and non-existent in areas of greater scientific and socio-economic prestige, such as Medicine. Racism is seen as the main power system, operating in the institutional and disciplinary context. In the latter, it is associated with sexism that determines gender hierarchies in health fields. It is also observed that race inequalities overlap with gender inequalities in the context of this research, confirming the theses that point to the epistemicide of black knowledge.

KEYWORDS Racism. Sexism. Health science. Nursing. Intersectionality. Higher Education Institutions.

RESUMO *A partir de referenciais do feminismo negro, da perspectiva interseccional e dos estudos étnico-raciais no Brasil, problematizam-se o racismo e o sexismo na academia brasileira com base na caracterização e análise da presença/ausência de professoras negras em programas de pós-graduação em ciências da saúde de duas universidades federais fluminenses, UFRJ e UFF. Utilizando informações de sites de 31 Programas de Pós-Graduação (PPG), reconstruíram-se quantitativamente os perfis de gênero e étnico-raciais por universidade e área de avaliação. Identificaram-se 23 professoras negras que ocupam 26 vagas docentes nos PPG analisados. Com base em informações da Plataforma Lattes, também se abordou longitudinalmente a dimensão de estudo. Os resultados assinalam que a presença de professoras negras é de 2% na UFRJ e de 6% na UFF; que ela é maior em áreas relativas aos cuidados e ínfima em áreas de maior prestígio científico e socioeconômico, como medicina. Constata-se o racismo como principal sistema de poder, operando no contexto institucional e disciplinar. Neste último, associado ao sexismo que determina as hierarquias de gênero nas áreas de saúde. Observa-se, também, que as desigualdades de raça se sobrepõem às de gênero no contexto desta pesquisa, confirmando as teses que apontam o epistemicídio dos saberes negros.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Racismo. Sexismo. Ciências da saúde. Interseccionalidade. Instituições de Ensino Superior.

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Introduction

Brazilian population is estimated to surpass 200 million individuals¹. According to the latest census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)², 52.1% of them are negroes (blacks or mulattoes), and 0.47% are indigenes. The ethnic-racial and linguistic diversity in Brazil should point out as well to a multiplicity as to perspectives, theories, methods, objects and subjects in the academic universe. Nevertheless, that is not true when it comes to real life.

Data from the Census on Higher Education carried out in 2016³ revealed that black or mulatto individuals represent just 30% of those who are granted some kind of research scholarship from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), although they are more than 50% of the population. And yet, one must consider that most financial support are directed to scientific initiation for which the access by black and mulatto candidates has increased over recent years⁴, thanks to affirmative actions.

As to the number of PhD men and women, Venturini⁵ states that, among those who declare their race and/or color in data divulged by CNPq, the configuration would be: 79.01% whites; 15.29% mulattoes; 3.05% blacks; 2.22% yellows; and 0.42% indigenes. In PhD Programs, black female doctors (blacks and mulattoes) sum just 3% of all professors currently in activity in the country⁶.

When considering Rio de Janeiro, reports published in 2018 in the magazine 'Gender and Number' pointed out to the existence of 18 black female doctors as professors in post-graduate *stricto sensu* courses (both master and PhD levels). Obviously, women are under-represented in the category 'higher level professorship'. Aiming at producing a deeper study on black women in spaces of scientific production and professional preparation in the health area, the present study is intended to stir the reflection on the presence/absence of black professors accredited

in PGPs (PPGs) in the health sciences area from two federal universities in Rio de Janeiro: Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and Fluminense Federal University (UFF). Specifically, the question is: how is shaped the presence/absence in PGPs (PPGs) in the area of health sciences? How do they take/do not take part in institutional and disciplinary contexts? How do power systems concerning race (racism) and gender (sexism) regulate the access and the place of black female professors in the PGPs (PPGs) analyzed herein? How is the intersection between both situations disclosed?

Black women and care

A study on medical demography in Brazil⁷ shows that men are 54.4% of the practicing doctors in the country. Nevertheless, in some 'more prestigious' areas, such as surgery, the domain of male doctors goes up to 70%. Among newly graduate doctors, the research reveals that just 1.8% are self-declared blacks, and 16.2% are self-declared mulattoes. Therefore, the figure suggests a white and male medicine. In other areas of the health sciences, such as nursing, the figure is the contrary: women are 84.6% of the work force, and 53% self-declare blacks or mulattoes⁸.

According to Almeida⁹, Brazilian colonial period's legacy for black women were the care and healing practices. Nevertheless, as the profession was straightened out in the early 20th century, the access of black individuals was at first forbidden, and many women were set out to technical courses. A social abyss between blacks and whites was then outlined, directly affecting occupational positions in the country. Yet, standing up to all those barriers, black women did succeed in accessing higher education in the health sciences area. Records in the Medicine School of Bahia show that Maria Odília Teixeira is considered to be the first black female doctor in Brazil, graduated in 1909. On the other hand, in Anna Nery Nursing

School, in Rio de Janeiro, records prove the admission of the first black student in 1926⁸.

Despite the racism that did impede black women do become professional doctors in the most prestigious areas, they went on widely dedicated to the care areas, using ancestral practices. On the other hand, one can understand that racism dictates rules for actions in structural spheres, thus reproducing and justifying the wider number of black women in care occupations. The occupation of black women in the nursing field is a definitive example of the hetero-cis-patriarchal-racist normative in force⁹.

The structural racism

According to Almeida¹¹, racism is shaped in the collective unconscious by means of a social imaginative construction where blacks always take subaltern positions. The author considers that social life is mediated by the racial ideology, by means of an imaginative construction systematically reproduced by the communicational, the educational and the judiciary systems, and in consonance with the reality, as despite generalizations exhibited in soap operas, for instance, most domestic servants and prisoner individuals are black. At the same time, most of those in leading positions in both public and private companies are taken by white men.

On the other hand, the meritocracy logics re-states in the collective imaginative construction the idea that ability, intelligence and merit are intimately connected to whiteness – and also to maleness, heterosexuality and cis-normativity. According to the author, this is what leads to the collective idea that black people – and particularly black women – are less able to carry out highly intellectualized professions. And the author states:

Racism results from the very social structure, that is, the 'normal' way political, economic, juridical and even family relationships are

constituted, and is not a social pathology nor an institutional disorder. Racism is structural. Individual behaviors and institutional processes derive from a society whose racism is rule, not exception. Racism is part of a social process that takes place from behind the individuals and they take as being a legacy of tradition¹¹⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Today, the low percentage of black researchers in PGPs may be associated to the sum of phenomena which Almeida¹¹ names as direct and indirect discrimination. According to the author, direct discrimination involves a treatment that causes disadvantage for the person who is discriminated. On the other hand, indirect discrimination is marked by the absence of such explicit (or publicized) intentionality, and may take place under the intermediation of processes where the specific situation of minority groups is ignored, by means of the execution of a series of rules related to a supposed racial neutrality.

Both forms of discrimination result from the structural racism, and their practices, in both the medium and the long terms, lead to the social stratification, reducing the ascension chances for the entire group. As racism is inherent to the social order and is present in daily life, if the institutions do not implement effective anti-racial practices, they will inevitably be reproduced. Therefore, one may infer that those same institutions tend to ignore the intersectional logics that overpasses black women's bodies.

Sueli Careiro¹² relates the reproduction of racism in the selective processes to positions in the public service and vacancies in public universities to the effect of universalist practices that, in Brazil, did perpetuate the privileges of the most favored groups – that is, white individuals. She argues for the need of affirmative actions to be opposed to the meritocratic fallacy. According to the author, as long as the merit is used as an excuse to forbid the development and the execution of proposals able to promote racial equity, a social construction in which "being born white

is by itself a merit, an additional advantage whose prize is to naturally lead whites to the privileged access to social goods,”¹²⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ will be overlooked.

Carneiro¹² presents a set of data corroborating this argument. The Index of Human Development (IHD), calculated using just data from the part of the population that is self-declared white, presents a pattern of development that is similar to countries such as Belgium. On the other hand, the same calculation based on data of the population that is self-declared black results in lower levels than other development countries, such as South Africa.

Data from IBGE¹³ that are brought to date indicate the maintenance of those figures. According to data produced by that Institute on the distribution of unoccupied population considering color or race, in the first quarter of 2019, 63.9% of unemployed individuals in Brazil were blacks or mulattoes. Another data reveals the abyss that separates whites and blacks is illiteracy: in the black population between 15 and 60 years old, it reaches 9.1%, while in the white population from 15 to 60 years old it reaches just 3.9%¹⁴.

Data presented by Carneiro¹² show that, in the formal work market, black women receive, on average, half the average income of white women; and these, on the other hand, receive more than a black man and about 50% of the average income of white men. At this point, Carneiro remarks the racial dimension of gender, as data show the specific dynamics that associates disadvantages among women. In other words, black women support the impact of racist, sexist and class oppressions, all together and not dissociable.

Racism and sexism

In a research on the performance of black doctors in Brazilian academic space, da Silva¹⁵ revealed that, at the time, there were, in the entire country, 251 black doctors in the basis

of the National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (Sinaes), aggregating data from the National Census of Higher Education. Based on the analysis of the Lattes *Curriculum* of those researchers, the study revealed that the promotion of black women along the career posed more difficulties than to their white colleagues. Besides, the research pointed out to the ‘phenomenon of overqualification’¹⁵, as black women tended to be allocated in lower positions, not compatible with their academic education. In this sense, the researcher argues that this would be the consequence of two factors that are interconnected: the racism and the sexism, which would act as a social exclusion tool.

Sexism and racism are manifested conjointly and indissociably in the life of black women, creating a ‘social asphyxia’¹², with consequences in all the areas during those women’s lives. In a recent research on how scientist women are affected in their productivity by the Covid-19 pandemic, the collective Parent in Science¹⁶ pointed out how black female researchers, either they had or had not children, were those who faced the greatest difficulties during this period. This corroborates the thesis by Davis¹⁷⁽²⁶⁾ as the author states that “there is no abstract femininity that suffers the sexism in an abstract way and that struggles against it in an abstract historical context”. Therefore, when analyzing the sexism effects, it is fundamental not to separate it from social and socio-economic dimensions.

Thus, sexism, racism, class oppression and other power systems create structuring inequalities that determine the relative positions of women, races and classes¹⁸. This is about a discrimination phenomenon observed in multiple overlaid social strata. Crenshaw¹⁹ explains that a mixed, composed discrimination takes place that combines the weight of racial discrimination with the weight of gender discrimination¹⁹. The author considers that, in certain situations, race can be a condition able to determine the credibility assigned to the woman, so that the racial condition may,

occasionally, add to gender, thus placing black women in even more disadvantageous condition when compared to white women.

For Collins²⁰, the intersectionality allows for seeing how the three systems – race, class and gender – are intertwined to structure the institutional dimension of oppression. This perspective, also according to the sociologist, would avoid the mistakes generated by analyses that sum or add with oppression, tending to quantify oppression, thus leading to the idea that one group is more oppressed than other. However, she also remarks, as does Crenshaw, that one must recognize that a category may well have precedence over other for some time and at a certain place, which does not minimize the theoretical importance of the intersectionality. In other words, although data reveal that, in one certain moment one specific oppression may predominate, that does not mean that there is no intertwining between them. An analytic perspective that considers the combination of the structural racism¹¹ and the effect of the intersectionality in the discrimination by gender, race and class provides elements to understand the social phenomena that leads to the low number of black women and their invisibility working as professional researchers in public institutions of education and research in Brazil.

bell hooks²¹ also calls the attention to the invisibility and difficulties faced by black intellectual women in the academic world. Both hooks and González²² argue how racist stereotypes influence the social imaginative construction on black women, leading them to be regarded from the sexist and animalist points of view, placing them only as ‘care professionals’, thus depriving them from legitimacy as intellectuals. According to hooks²¹⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾,

Acting together, sexism and racism perpetuate an iconography of representation of black women that prints in the collective cultural conscience the idea that she is in this planet mainly to attend other people.

Thus, an interdiction is built in that collective imaginary conception against black women in the academy, routinely seen as a “body with no mind”²⁰⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾, a process of denial of the intellectuality of the ‘other’.

Black women and the struggle for knowledge

Though concentrating the higher rates of illiteracy, the struggle for education has always been at the horizon of black people. According to Davis²³, education has always been a priority for that people, which, after centuries of educational deprivation, revendicate – and still strongly claim for – their right to education. For the black people, the struggle for receiving academic instruction has always been part of their collective battle for freedom.

In Brazil, particularly since the post-abolition period, education became a priority fight²⁴. The social ascension by the educational way is a constant in the social expectation of black people in the country. This was, inclusively, one of the recurrent battles of the organized black movements. For instance, the Brazilian Black Front (Frente Negra Brasileira – FNB), founded in 1931, had education as one of its pillars. Therefore, it acted in literacy programs for children, teens and adults, besides opening schools all over the country, until it was extinguished, in 1937, by Getúlio Vargas dictatorship. Other organizations, such as the Experimental Theater of the Negro (Teatro Experimental do Negro) and the Unified Negro Movement (Movimento Negro Unificado) – still active – have been stimulating art, culture and education, playing a fundamental role for the emergency of a black intellectuality.

hooks²¹ argues on the importance of the intellectual work for the struggle of liberation of all those oppressed and/or explored, considering that, as they change from an object into a subject, they leave colonial behaviors and make their minds free. Ratts²⁵⁽²⁹⁾ points to how those black bodies, in this movement, also turn to be

political agents of a collective struggle, as when entering the academic space they come to act both individually and collectively, putting into practice a “political academic project that carries memory and history”.

However, the researcher also denounces that

There is an evident discomfort with black bodies, bodies that think, propose this debate, and with the black corporeity that are entering the university²⁵⁽²⁹⁾.

Euclides, Santos and da Silva²⁶ corroborate the argument when they suggest that, as they reach that space, those black women’s bodies must prove their ability, always questioned by the whiteness, developing great effort to be recognized. In this sense, hooks²¹ defends the construction of strategies so that black women may be granted due recognition of their intelligence and excellency as an important step in the process of re-education and emancipation of the society, aimed at eliminating racial, gender and economic oppressions.

So, an investigation aimed at thinking over the presences and the absences of black women researchers, intellectuals in the area of health sciences, follows the road pointed out by hooks²¹. It is important stressing that the most academic community seems not to be surprised with the fact that in great part of the PGDs in the country the presence of black professionals is very reduced, or even inexistent. On the contrary, as states Carneiro¹², it is considered satisfactory that one or two black women be outstanding, and those cases are still used to disqualify denounces of social and racial exclusion in the academic field.

Material and methods

Methodological tasks were divided into two stages, which used, as data sources, information available in institutional on-line platforms. The collection was carried out, as well the systematization and the treatment

of public information, extracted from official sites of both the PGP and Lattes *Curriculum* of the black researchers identified. The variables considered were quantitative, looking for: 1) Reconstruct the ethnic-racial profile (black and not black) and gender (men-women) of each PGP; 2) Reconstruct the longitudinal dimension of the phenomenon. Collections were carried out manually and were limited to information available at the institutional sites explored.

The research started out with the selection at the Sucupira Platform, of the PGP *stricto sensu* in the evaluation area ‘Health Sciences’, which include the courses of the Higher Education Institutions analyzed (UFRJ and UFF): Physical Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, Nutrition, Odontology, Collective Health, Medicine I (multidisciplinary programs and clinic specialties in Oncology, Cardiology, Endocrinology, Nephrology, Pneumology, Gastroenterology and Hepatology), Medicine II (Infectious and Parasitological Diseases, Pathology, Pediatrics, Neurology, Psychiatry/Mental Health, Radiology, Hematology, Rheumatology and Allergology) and Medicine III (Surgery area and Anesthesiology)²⁷. This survey resulted in 31 PGPs, 20 from UFRJ and 11 from UFF.

The first stage involved getting to know the ethnical and gender profile of each PGP and identifying the black women researchers with credentials. So, institutional sites of the PGP selected were investigated in sections ‘professor’/‘professorate’, looking for: number of male/female professors; number of sub-groups ‘gender’ (male and female) and ‘gender and race’ (black women and black men). For this classification, the criteria used were gender of the name of each professor (female or male) and the photo available in official pages. Besides, a checking commission was created meant to verify the phenotypical characteristics, in order to establish the racial identification (black or not black), based on the professor’s photo available at the same site, at the

Lattes *Curriculum* or other on-line source (ResearchGate, Academia.com, LinkedIn). Reliable photos to carry out the hetero-identification process of 22 female professors and 20 male professors of UFRJ and 34 female professors and 14 male professors of UFF were not found. The checking was carried out by three researchers, following parameters established both institutionally and legally by the commissions of hetero-identification on work over recent years in some public universities in the country²⁸. The verification process of female and male professors was carried out in two stages, so as to consolidate data collected. It is worth mentioning that the research team was submitted to hetero-identification training, counting on the support of the UFRJ Chamber of Racial Politics.

Data from each PGP were organized into Google Sheets, systemizing the following variables:

- University;
- PGP name;
- Evaluation area;
- Total number of professors/researchers;
- Number of male professors/researchers;
- Number of female professors/researchers;
- Number of black professors/researchers;
- Number of black male professors/researchers;
- Number of male professors/researchers without identification;
- Number of female professors/researchers without identification.

Based on those data, it was possible to build

indicators that allowed for estimating the presence of black women professors/researchers for each PGP and institution. The results were 23 female professors/researchers, using 10 positions in UFRJ and 16 in UFF (in the Nursing programs at UFF, two of them in more than one Program). Information obtained from the collection and systematization process were visually organized in tables and charts to be presented and analyzed.

In order to deepen considerations on the study, the longitudinal dimension of the phenomenon was also analyzed using the indicator ‘admission date in PGP programs’, obtained from information in the Lattes *Curriculum* of female researchers. Those data were presented in a comparative and linear chart (1995-2019), considering both universities.

Results and discussion

The barely inexistence of black female professors/researchers in the PGP analyzed becomes evident in data presented. *Chart 1* presents professorates data on the PGP analyzed in both UFRJ and UFF according to gender and ethnical-racial groups (blacks and not blacks) of male and female professors occupying positions. One may observe that women are the majority, representing 60% in UFRJ and 63% in UFF.

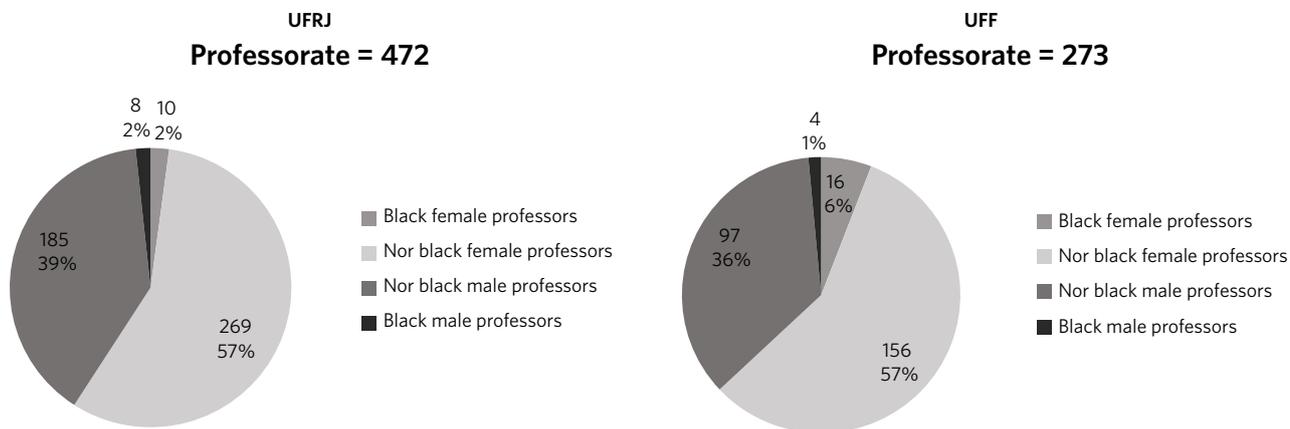
When compared to UFF, the professorate in UFRJ counts on nearly twice the number of professors, however the total number of black men and women is just slightly higher in UFRJ: 18 black men and women in the UFRJ out of 472 total professors in the PGP, 10 of which are black females – that is, 2% of the total. In UFF, on the other hand, the professorate is not that large: 273 men and women professors, of whom 16 are black women, corresponding to 6% of the total positions.

As we analyze exclusively teaching positions occupied by women, black women

researchers represent 3.58% in UFRJ and 9.3% in UFF. However, when analyzing just the black ethnical-racial group, positions occupied by black women are majority: 55.5% in UFRJ and 80.0% in UFF. Therefore, these indicators confirm Davis¹⁷ and Carneiro¹² as they draw

the attention to the racial weight on gender. In other words, the low percentage of black women as professional researchers in PGPs of the areas reveal that, more than a gender issue, there is a deep racial invisibility in the access to those work positions and power.

Chart 1. Gender and ethnic-racial characteristics of professor positions in health PGPs in the UFRJ/UFF



Based on those data, one may observe that the racial character overlaps gender when it comes to position occupations. In both cases, most positions are occupied by white individuals, thus confirming Almeida's¹¹ and Carneiro's¹² thesis¹¹ when they state that the structural racism stands on indirect discrimination, which exclude black bodies from higher hierarchical positions, thus reproducing the racist power order in spaces of knowledge production.

As proposed by Crenshaw^{18,19} and Collins²⁰, the intersectionality supposes that the analyzes on oppression shall not discuss variables according to hierarchical relations. In this sense, what was analyzed, based on data presented herein, is mainly the intertwining

of gender and race oppressions. And in this specific case, data demonstrate that, at the end, oppressions of gender and race do prevail over the other oppression axes, which is clear when compared to gender. This possibility had already been considered by both Crenshaw and Collins, and demonstrates, in practice, the need for a detailed data analysis.

As a whole, considering gender, women are the majority in PGP in both universities, Nevertheless, a closer racial look on those data shows that, although there are more women than men, the majority of those women are white. Black women and men constitute minority in both institutions. This analysis will be resumed later. It is therefore evident the importance of racial

affirmative actions, as the intellectual trajectory and production of black individuals do not ensure the access to high hierarchical positions.

This suggests as well the presence of an ‘epistemicide’ of black peoples’s old

knowledges – particularly female black knowledges – and the refusal to the meritocracy theory imposed by the neo-liberal system, as already pointed out by Sueli Carneiro¹² and remarked by da Silva⁵ concerning the ‘over-qualification’ of black doctors.

Chart 2. Gender characteristics of ethnic-racial professor positions in health PGPs in the UFRJ/UFF, according to evaluation area

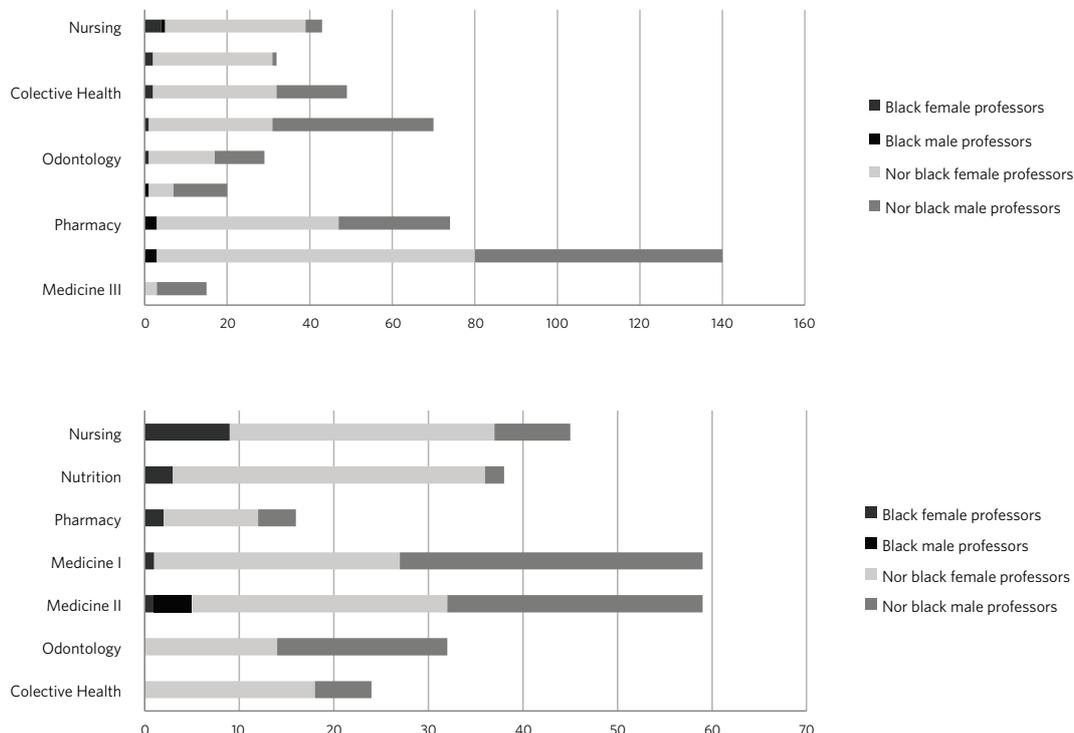


Chart 2 presents data on professor positions according to evaluation areas, disaggregated into four sub-groups of analysis: black female professors (dark gray), black male professors (black), not black female professors (light gray) and not black male professors (medium gray). Besides, for each evaluation area (each bar), the chart presents the number of black professors (total) in the professorate, and the percentage resulting from that relation.

One may note that women predominate in positions for care areas, as pointed out by

Marcondes²⁹. At this point it must be remarked that, as racial data are disaggregated, the argument already posed becomes evident, as those who predominate in this area are not ‘the women’, but ‘the white women’. In the meantime, in areas that area assigned more social and economic prestige, such as medicine (I, II and III), the domain of white men is quite absolute. In the UFRJ, out of 225 professors in the medicine area (I, II and III), only one position was found that was occupied by a black female professor; in UFF, out of 118

professors in the medicine area, two positions were found that were occupied by black female professors. The conclusion is that the presence of black female professors is more usual in care areas, such as nursing, followed by the nutrition area (also related with 'female' themes, such as feeding).

Based on data in both charts, one may identify two 'contextual axes' that conditionate the presence/absence of black female doctors in the professorates of the PGPs analyzed. Those axes are the 'institutional' and the 'disciplines'. The first one refers to the characteristics of prestige, status and resources availability for Higher Education Institutions. Once comparing data, UFRJ (the most 'prestigious' institution and the one with more resources), the number of female black doctors is almost half the number found in UFF (*Chart 1*). On the other hand, the context that involves the disciplines presents other conditioning factors that have to do with social-cultural stereotypes assigned to black women, as remarked

by hooks²¹ and Gonzalez²². Therefore, considering the evaluation areas (*chart 2*), one may notice the larger presence of black female doctors in areas related with care activities, such as nursing.

In Brazil, those course/professions are less prestigious when compared, for instance, with medicine and odontology. By the way, data presented turned evident that, in areas of specific evaluation of medicine, the number of black male and female professors is either low or inexistent, thus demonstrating the racist component not only at the institutional level, but also in the 'scientific field', due to the medical-centric-racist-sexist hierarchy that is still in force in the health areas professions.

Another element refers to the feminization of the health professions, which leads to a larger presence of black female researchers when compared with black male researchers. Therefore, one may suppose that racism operates in a more structural way in the institutional context, while gender stereotypes appear as conditioning elements that are specific of the disciplines context.

Chart 3. Longitudinal evolution of black female professors in PGPs in health areas. UFF and UFRJ. 1996-2019. Values accumulated according to admission year as professor in PGPs

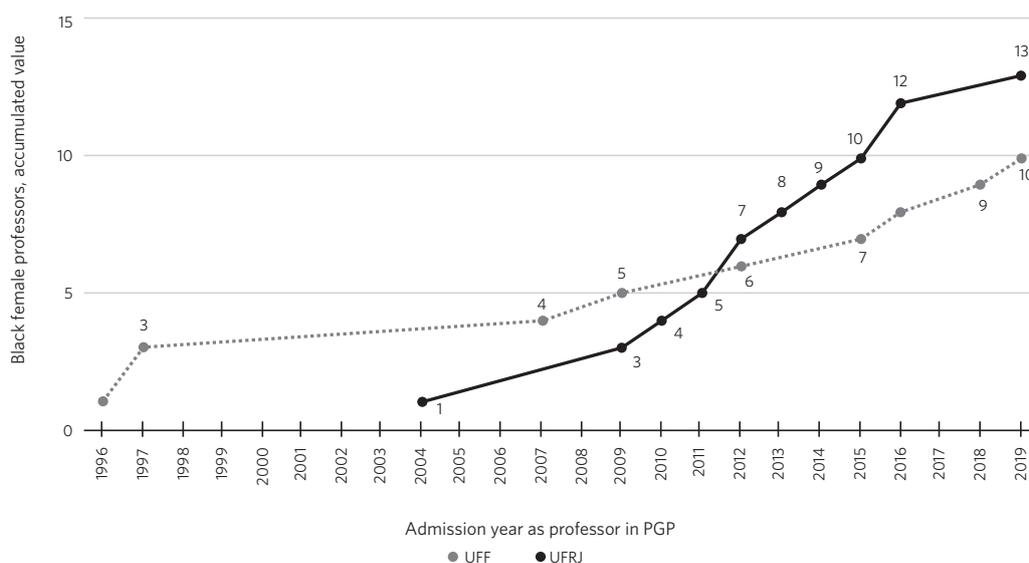


Chart 3 presents the number of black female professors, according to the year of admission as professors in the PGP analyzed. The chart allows for inferring that, in UFF, black female professors did advance more faster in the career, in the context of their PGPs, over the last 10 years. Thus, one may state that mechanisms of indirect discrimination¹¹ contribute for lower development speed in the academic career of black female professors in more prestigious institutions.

One possible reason is the idea that those persons would be less prepared to carry out positions that demand higher responsibilities, requiring them to constantly prove their technical-intellectual ability – an extra effort. This assumption corroborates the hypothesis by Ratts²⁵ and Euclides, Santos Silva and Da Silva²⁶ on the internal institutional mechanisms for the reproduction of racism.

Thus, one may also suppose that there is a directly proportional relation between prestige/size of the institution and the absence of black female professors in PGPs. This confirms the partial results of an ongoing research, carried out by the work group of the authors of the present article, showing less difficulties for black male and female researchers to access professor positions in the higher education in smaller universities in inner cities – which therefore are less prestigious when compared to older and more traditional universities located in large metropolis. This hypothesis deserves deeper analysis and consideration, and shall be resumed in a posterior study, when all data from all PGPs of the state of Rio de Janeiro have been fully treated.

Final considerations

The present work analyzed the dynamics generated by racism and sexism in the access to highly qualified and intellectualized positions in the academic universe in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Although the analysis has been limited to two public universities in the health sciences area,

considering the importance of those institutions, for both their size and their academic-scientific importance, data and analyses presented herein may proportionate a quite wide comprehension of the problems discussed.

The approach allowed to delineate some elements that make evident the effects of the structural racism and the ‘feminization’ of care regarding the professional career of black female scientists and intellectuals in the health areas. Therefore, it was observed that women are the majority of the professorate in that area – 60% in UFRJ and 63% in UFF. In this sense, courses in the areas of nursing and nutrition concentrate not only women, but also black women.

The intersectional perspective adopted by black male and female authors was fundamental to critically broach the social and institutional context studied, but also to bring about the adoption of the PGPs, to observe racial and gender inequalities in the access to positions in higher education post-graduation, besides identifying the ‘care’ position of most black female professors currently active.

From this perspective, it was observed that although women are the majority in PGP programs in the area, the presence of black female researchers and intellectuals is still insignificant. In UFRJ, out of 472 professors, only ten correspond to that ethnical-racial group; in UFF, they are 13 professors occupying 16 out of 273 positions. When gender criteria are considered, black female researchers are still in disadvantageous condition: they are 3.58% of the professors among women in UFFJ, and 9.3% in UFF. These results show that, even considering just the female universe, black female researchers occupy less than 10% of those highly qualified positions in the academic career.

Considering medicine specialties (I, II and III), the study found just one black female researcher out of 225 professors in UFRJ, and two in UFF, among 118 professors in the PGPs in that institution. Even in the nursing area, which concentrate the larger numbers of black female researchers, that number is still low. In UFRJ, four positions are occupied by black female professors

in that area; in UFF, there are six researchers in the area (health care sciences and attendance nursing), and three in nutrition sciences.

Racism rises as an important power system, operating in both institutional and disciplines contexts. Concerning the disciplines, it is associated with the sexism, which determines the gender hierarchy in the health areas. An increase in the number of black female professors was observed following the implementation of policies based on affirmative actions that allows for the discussion on their important effects in the combat against racial inequalities – nevertheless, still not enough.

Concerning the limitations of the study, some considerations must be offered herein. The first one refers to the sources consulted in order to obtain primary data. Despite being official and the most reliable sources available for the public, both the Lattes and the Sucupira Platforms, as well as the institutional sites of each PGP were not updated, had deactivated links and other maintenance problems as to digital contents. Besides, in this stage the ethnic-racial self-declaration of female researchers were not included. This is planned to occur in the next stage of the research, as well as the interviews with professors who were interested in taking part in the project.

Besides, it is worth considering the specificity of the research, as data are specific of the participant PGP and universities. In this sense, the results were not meant to be generalized, although they might be a useful contribution for future works on the same theme. Finally, it is certain that deepening into the macro-institutional perspective is necessary when dealing with the presence/absence of black female professors, in order to have a closer and more pertinent perception of the complexity of ethnical-racial and gender relations, and their intersections in the academic ambience.

Thus, future works might consolidate both the information and the results presented herein, considering the fundamental need of getting closer to black female professors in order to obtain quality information on their

immediate action contexts. This might provide other transversal dimensions, such as, for instance, the professional and personal trajectories, the research agendas and the individual and collective performance strategies.

In this sense, future researches that come to discuss collaboration ways based on research, teaching and extension indicators, as well as the scientific production, may provide fundamental developments to understand not only how the structural racism is reproduced inside the academy, but also, and mainly, how confrontation, resistance and re-existence strategies are put into practice.

Collaborators

Sousa ALN (0000-0003-1924-5297)* contributed to conception, study drawing, analysis and data interpretation, drafting, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Cabral LFE (0000-0003-1767-141X)* contributed to conception, study drawing, analysis and data interpretation, drafting, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Moreira JM (0000-0001-9838-9613)* contributed to critical review of manuscript, data collection and interpretation, drafting, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Weihmüller VC (0000-0002-1559-8354)* contributed to critical review of manuscript, data collection and interpretation, drafting, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Rodrigues MMS (0000-0003-4240-7733)* contributed to data collection and interpretation, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Araujo GG (0000-0001-6646-4076)* contributed to data collection and interpretation, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. Macedo BCC (0000-0001-9587-4189)* contributed to data collection and interpretation, critical review of content and approval of the final version of the manuscript. ■

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