



Journal Organizações & Sociedade

2021, 28(97), 442-465

© Authors 2021

DOI 10.1590/1984-92302021v28n9709EN

ISSN 1984-9230

www.revistaoes.ufba.br

NPGA, School of Management

Federal University of Bahia

Received: 10/22/2018

Accepted: 06/30/2020

Narratives From Women Rural Workers: The Construction of Subalternity, Hierarchized Spaces and Colonial Domination

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Abstract

In this research, our aim is to analyze how gender relations are manifested in the narratives of women rural workers, in coffee farming in the Cerrado Mineiro Region, in a post-colonial perspective. It is a qualitative research, the empirical material of which consists of narrative interviews conducted with 14 rural coffee workers in the municipalities of Patrocínio, Carmo do Paranaíba and Monte Carmelo, in the state of Minas Gerais. The empirical material was submitted to the thematic analysis technique. The results suggest that gender relations are expressed through inheritances of colonialism, which constitute the themes identified: (1) constructed subordination; (2) hierarchical spaces; and (3) colonial domination.

Keywords: rural women workers; coffee cultivation; gender relations; post-colonialism.

Introduction

As far as time goes, in most part of history, women have always been subordinate to men, not sharing the world on equal terms (Beauvoir, 1970; Tedeschi, & Colling, 2014). The inequality contexts in which women live are not the result of a biological difference, but of social constructions arising from the social relationships between men and women, whose material base, the work, is manifested through the sexual division of labor, in which is characterized by a distinction and a form of hierarchy of spaces that assigns the productive spheres to men and reproductive areas spheres to women (Kergoat, 2009).

Reflections about the limitation of the women to private spaces and their social roles such as mothers, wives and caregivers started to emerge due to socioeconomic and demographic changes. Contextual changes, for example, the increased access of these women to education and their increased participation in the labor market, enabled the construction of reconfigured female identities (Couto, & Scharbier, 2013). However, even though these advances are happening, polarized and hierarchical environments prevail (Scott, & Cordeiro, 2013).

The integration of women in the labor market were more noticeable in domestic, industrial, health and education environments. However, there is category of female workers that is not often the target of interest: rural female workers (Bruschini, 2007; Camargos, Riani, & Marinho, 2014; Daniel, 2011), for example, the Brazilian historiographical production itself on women reconstructed the female occupational structure only in urban areas (Matos, 2009). In addition, the literature dealing with the labor market in Brazil does not turn its attention to rural workers (Guimarães, Brito, & Barone, 2016).

Legally, rural workers are recognized as individuals who provide services to employers, in exchange for a payment, on rural properties. We are aware of this definition, but for the construction of this work, we consider rural workers to be women who provide services directly in coffee plantations, in the operational area. The coffee activity was chosen due to its representativeness in Brazil and the absence of studies on women in Brazilian coffee farming. Specifically, it was considered the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil), the second largest coffee producing region in the state of Minas Gerais (largest producing state) (Conab, 2018), and the first region in the country to have a Denomination of Origin (Expocaccer, 2017).

When looking at the gap in studies on rural workers pointed out by Matos (2009) and Guimarães, Brito and Barone (2016), and moved by the intention of contributing to their completion, we developed this work, seeking to learn more about these women and their realities, using a post-colonial perspective. Our goal is to analyze the inheritances of colonialism expressed in the narratives of women rural workers, in coffee growing in the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil). To this end, we conducted a qualitative research, whose text corpus is composed of interviews with rural workers, which was subjected to thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clark (2006).

By bringing the post-colonial approach to analyzing gender relations, this article contributes to the field of organizational studies, as it brings knowledge of and from the margins to the center, offering to the feminism possibilities to glimpse other places of oppression and reject universalisms around the experiences of gender and men and women (Parashar, 2016). The reproduction of colonial inheritances in the interviewed women narratives allows us to recognize the colonial past in contemporary political and social contexts.

Based on the considerations presented in this introduction, we have delimited the structure of the article in four sections, in addition to this introduction. Next, we present the literature review, which covers feminisms and post-colonialism. Then, the methodological procedures of the research are presented, followed by the discussion of the results, and, finally, our final considerations are presented.

Women And Social Relations

Women's submission to men is one of the first forms of oppression in human history. The rise of capitalism made it possible to continue the process of oppression. Women became even more submissive, oppressed and exploited. When selling their workforce, they were denied the right to citizenship; unionization; access to labor laws that guaranteed salary, a limit on working hours, as well as the same working conditions offered to men (Costa, & Sardenberg, 2008).

While women worked in precarious and unsanitary conditions, men enjoyed more advantageous conditions, higher wages and greater opportunities, in addition to occupying the largest number of places in highly prestigious positions (Beauvoir, 1970). Beginning in the 17th century, critical feminist awareness of the contexts of female inequality and oppression began to emerge. Women then took on uncomfortable postures, resulting in concerns and bringing out feminisms in the late 18th century, which only took shape in the 19th century in European countries and the United States (Costa, & Sardenberg, 2008; Teles, 1999).

Specifically about Latin American feminisms, they cannot be equated with Eurocentric or North American feminisms that derive from conditions external to the realities of colonies and countries with dependent capitalism. A peculiarity to be dealt with in Latin America is the fruit of a colonized, slave-owning society dominated by European powers in order to boost mercantile capitalism. During this process, indigenous, black and mixed-race women led the sufferings of violence, domination and exploitation, representing the driving force imposed on the formation of the nations that were built (Bittencourt, 2015).

Within Latin American contexts, there is Brazil in which, historically, as well as in other societies, women have been subordinated, starting with differentiated education, as inferior beings, predestined and obliged to motherhood, to care for the domestic environment, children (as), elderly and sick (Lopes, 2013). While in Europe and, later, in the United States, a revolution continued in all spheres of social life, resulting from the capitalism established there, in Brazil, as well as in the other countries of Latin America, people lived under the colonial, slavery and patriarchal regime (Costa, & Sardenberg, 2008).

When referring to rural workers, it is clear that both men and women face difficulties, especially regarding social recognition. Many are inserted in work regimes with informal and unstable wages, remaining outside contractual reciprocity and then having to wait several years to obtain their social security rights (Guilani, 2004).

Rural workers joined feminist groups and some union organizations to mobilize (Guilani, 2004), and during the 1980s, in Brazil, rural workers began to promote regional and national meetings to discuss the difficulties of their work and make their claims regarding difficulties arising from pregnancy, how difficult it was to reconcile motherhood with the work of cane cutters, coffee

harvester, orange picker, among others. Many suffered physical violence from their husbands, others were abandoned with their young children and had to work to support them, being even more discriminated against. Women were only able to retire at the age of 60, except when they were not married, because if they were, only their husbands were entitled to retirement. Another problem was the fact that many rural workers did not have a formal contract with their employers, preventing them from enjoying their labor rights (Teles, 1999).

Research on rural workers addresses the struggle for land in settlements and social movements (Costa, Dimenstein, & Leite, 2014; Garcia, 2002; Salvaro, Lago, & Wolff, 2013; Van Der Schaaf, 2003), the social relations of genders and differentiated valorization of the work performed by male and female workers in family farming (Sales, 2007; Silva, & Ribeiro, 2004), in sustainable extraction (Lisboa, & Lusa, 2010; Mendes et al., 2014), and on the rural exodus of young women (Brumer, 2004).

Researches point out contexts marked by struggles of genders and social classes, seeking women professional recognition and the conquest of their labor and social security rights, the extreme lack of perspective of rural work's worth, difficulties and the profound inequality between men and women, discrimination, the devaluation of the exhausting work routine, to the point of verifying the prevalence of common mental disorders in women from a rural settlement (Costa, Dimenstein, & Leite, 2014). In general, the characteristics and peculiarities of the contexts and situations in which rural workers are inserted denote a situation of subordination, one of the central notions in the post-colonialist approach. Ling (2016) calls attention to the fact that postcolonial feminist analysis integrate race with sex and gender so that other analytical categories can emerge.

It is at this point that we highlight Kergoat's (2010) contributions to the analysis of social relations, pointing out in his research how women constitute themselves as collective subjects in their own history, that is, "as a subject always in transformation and irreducible to a only category" (Kergoat, 2010, p. 96). The author works on the notions of consubstantiality and coextensiveness to understand how social relations are structured not only by class, but also by race and gender categories, and that these social relations "interact over each other, mutually reproducing and co-producing each other" (Kergoat, 2010, p.18).

In this understanding, the comprehension of social relations and their interconnections allows the analysis of working women as political subjects and not victims of multiple dominations. For the author, it is an effort to think "both the plurality of power regimes and alchemy that transforms, in a more or less long term, this internalized domination into resistance practices" (Kergoat, 2010, p. 103). The notions of consubstantiality and coexistence allow us to glimpse, therefore, that the subjects of the struggles become a collective subject producing meaning and subject of their own history (Kergoat, 2010).

Postcolonialism as a filter for understanding feminism

Colonialism can be defined as a historic moment (Mignolo, 1996) when a certain policy was developed to execute control or authority through some territories, the colonies, which was occupied by a group of specific individuals, named colonizers, who held power. The natives of these dominated territories, on the other hand, were named colonized (Lugones, 2014).

In these colonies, the dividing line was the quarters and the police stations. In this context, soldiers were the legal and institutional interlocutors of the colonized ones and, at the same time, they were the colonizers' spokespersons disseminating the regimes of oppression. The contacts they maintained with the colonized ones were made using strong violence languages, promoting the domination (Fanon, 1968).

Considering the Latin American colonies, Taylor (2007) highlights the differences between the contexts of the colonizers and the colonized ones. On the one hand, there was the European cultural standard that was characterized by the white, hetero-affective, Catholic and patriarchal family. On the other hand, an enormous diversity of cultures were removed from their original contexts by the strength of the empire and, consequently, they were exploited and subjugated as a labour force in the Latin American colonies.

Regarding the beginning of colonization, in the Americas and Caribbean, there was a dichotomous and hierarchical distinction between humans (civilized ones, colonizers) and non-humans (indigenous, Africans, ex-slaves) imposed by the Western men. Therefore, this idea was also applied to other distinctions, such as men and women (Lugones, 2014). The European bourgeois men were considered as subjects (agents) of civilization, heterosexual and Christian ones who were able to make decisions. The European bourgeois women, despite being also considered human, were regarded differently from men in this context. They were meant to be someone able to service and satisfy the men. They were also expected to be someone passive and limited to the domestic tasks (Lugones, 2014).

Over the course of time, the "colonized" classification started to include women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities and even academic subspecialties that were marginalized. The status of the colonized people was also fixed in areas of dependency and periphery stigmatized during the designation of underdeveloped, less developed and/or developing countries, governed by developed or metropolitan colonizers (Said, 1989).

The differences between Europeans and natives must be understood, especially, as a racial difference: the "white race" was considered an attribute of the Europeans (dominants, colonizers), and the "races of color" an attribute of the natives (dominated) colonized (Rosa, 2016). These racial differences, as argued by Rosa (2016), were used to segregate and hierarchize groups. However, this distinction did not happen among the European ones, once everyone was already considered white, but there were class and gender differences. Based on these two differences, colonialism organized intragroup domination.

When considering social classes, colonialism was a way of expanding capitalism, emerging the division between center and periphery of capital (Lazarus, 1994), with the predominance of two types of capital-labor relations: in the center, there were salaried whites ones; and, on the periphery, there were non-whites, ex-slaves or ex-servants ones. The relations of center/periphery and salaried labor/ex-slave labor were responsible for highlighting the differences of social classes, creating efficient mechanisms of capital accumulation for the benefit of Europe (center) and fomenting the social and racial inequalities that marked the relations between the groups within the colonies (periphery) (Quijano, 2000).

Intellectuals and academics have defended the idea that the western heritage, considered as postmodern by some people and regarded as a result of the troubled history of the colonizers

and colonized by others, needs to be revised, recreated and rewritten. In the case of Brazil, a country colonized for more than three centuries, the inheritance comes from the former colonizers and from the people who experienced the resistant colonial process (Gomes, 2007). It involves problems, such as ex-slave labor, social exclusion, economic and cultural dependencies (Mignolo, 1996) and patriarchy, a system characterized by the position of submission of women in a society where men held power over her (Freyre, 2004).

The historic context after the Third World decolonization process, beginning in the second half of the 20th century, was named post-colonial. This expression can also be understood as a set of theoretical contributions from literary and cultural studies, evident in some universities in the United States and England, starting in the 1980s (Ballestrin, 2013). Another way of understanding the term is proposed by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007), who define it as an approach to all aspects of the colonial process, since the beginning of contact with colonization, always considering its antecedents and the consequences of this process.

In this article, we adopt the post-colonial expression referring to the historical time after the Third World decolonization process, as well as we understand that the expression can also be linked to the theoretical contributions of academic and cultural studies, as also presented by Calás and Smircich (1999) when discussing the Third-World Post-Colonial Theory. We are, therefore, adopting the two understandings defined by Ballestrin (2013), but without disregarding the relevance of the study of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007), considering the importance of not discarding the aspects involved throughout the colonization process.

Postcolonialism consists of an intellectual effort to manage the consequences of the colonial past in an era that the official political relations of colonialism apparently have ended (During, 1998). When talking about post-colonialism, the term “subalterns” frequently appears in studies about Africa, Latin America and Europe (Prakash, 1994). Spivak (2010) describes “subalterns” as the lower strata of society, composed of specific ways of excluding markets, as well as political and legal representations. Rosa and Alcadipani (2013) define “subalterns” as the peripheral countries and minorities that live in the center, as women, black women, black people and homosexuals, that is, those who live in conditions of silence, once its legitimacy is passed to other people who take their places in the public space, in order to represent them.

The matchup of feminism and post-colonialism as a critical approach examines the discursive violence of colonial literary and cultural representations that forced the gender categorization of colonized women and disregarded their voices (Fernando, 2016). Considering the subaltern women, specifically, they are in an even more peripheral position than the other subaltern ones, once the impasses regarding gender issues. Spivak (2010) deconstructed the monolithic representations of a woman from the named Third World, criticizing the unspeakability of the subaltern's texts: “if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern subject has no history and cannot speak, the female subaltern subject is even more deep in obscurity” (Spivak, 2010, p. 28).

In post-colonial studies, subaltern subjects are able to talk for themselves and their voices can be heard. These studies have several similarities with feminist studies, such as the attention focused on the theories of marginalization, exclusion and the constructions of subjects considered subalterns, either due to the colonial differences between centers and peripheries, or due to the differences between male and female (Ashcroft, 1989; Harding, 2009). Another aspect in common

is the reflection about the universal subject “woman”, and the rejection of the binary structures imposed by patriarchy and colonialism (Freyre, 2004; Quijano, 2000).

In Brazil, considered one of the first countries in Latin America in which feminist studies were consolidated (Piscitelli, 2013), there is a confluence of evaluations of the country's situation regarding the feminisms and post-colonialism. In the case of feminisms, the concerns are related to their lack of insertion in the theoretical debate in the country. Considering post-colonialism, there is a need to reflect about a post-colonial thinking regarding the country's historical experience (Almeida, 2013).

In regard to both feminisms and postcolonial theories, it is common and relevant to consider the locations and positions of these theoretical fields, anchored in Brazilian contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to start from a local reflection that dialogues with discussions at the global and international levels, trying to dissolve the historical asymmetries that created the interconnected and excluding structures of power and knowledge (Almeida, 2013).

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) argue that feminisms are an important field of interest for postcolonial discourses, due to three reasons: (1) feminist and postcolonial policies are opposed to the domination exercised by patriarchy and imperialism; (2) debates in colonized societies about gender or colonial oppression consists of the most relevant political factor in women's lives; and (3) feminisms and the post-colonial are concerned about the ways and extensions that representations and languages become crucial in the formation of identities and in the construction of subjectivities.

One of these languages able to sustaining postcolonial criticisms consists of the narratives of the colonized, because as they lived the colonial experience and witnessed the processes imposed, such as “domination, dehumanization, [...] loss of identity, racial prejudice [...], in short, all the damage that the unbalanced human nature can provide, they became authentic spokesperson for the post-colonial period” (Pezzodipane, 2013, p. 89).

The narratives of the colonized ones are named by Bhabha (1998) as colonial testimony. The post-colonial perspectives emerged from the “colonial testimony of Third World countries and the speeches of the “minorities” regarding the geopolitical divisions of the East, West, North and South”. Its critical revisions are built around cultural differences, social authorities and political discrimination “in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the “rationalizations” of the modernity” (Bhabha, 1998, p. 239).

The use of experiences, narratives and the knowledge of the colonized ones in general is also argued by Rosa (2016). According to her, it should be used as methodological assumptions in research using postcolonial theory. In accordance with the author, it is about the adoption of critical attitudes in relation to the practices of dominant cultures, always based on marginalized knowledge, aiming to elaborate narratives that describe the situations in which they are contextualized.

Spivak (2010) focuses the analysis on the subalterns` possibilities, highlighting that they live in conditions of silence, thus they are legitimized by other people who take their places in the public space, representing them and speaking for themselves. Regarding this possibility of speech, the author presents a concern with intellectuals who think they can speak for subalterns, keeping them silent, considering them only objects of knowledge and, consequently, reproducing the structures of power and oppression. Therefore, intellectuals cannot speak for subaltern ones, but they must work against subordination, creating spaces for them to speak so that they could also be heard.

Once adopting the post-colonial perspective in this article, as defended by Spivak (2010), we do not intend to speak for the group of women considered subalterns, in this case, the female rural workers in coffee farming in the Cerrado Mineiro Region. But we aim to create a space for them to speak for themselves, tell their trajectories, experiences and expectations. According to Pezzodipane (2013), creating this space through a post-colonial study generates as main contribution the rupture with a history considered, so far, unique and supported by metanarratives which authenticates the ideologies of the colonization process and that is also responsible for naturalizing the domination of men on other men and women, whose justification is the civilizing process. Therefore, we argue the importance of adopting a post-colonial perspective in order to deconstruct the dominant discourses.

Methodological Procedures Of The Research

This research is of a qualitative nature (Flick, 2004), containing participants such as 14 rural workers in coffee growing in the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil), here represented by Patrocínio, Carmo do Paranaíba and Monte Carmelo counties, all known for coffee production, located closer to the center of the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil).

To select the interviewees, we did not adopt the classification proposed by the legislation to define a rural worker. We consider rural workers to be women who provide services directly in coffee plantations, in the operational area, so to participate in the research, women should meet these criteria. We use the snowball technique (Biernacki, & Waldorf, 1981), a method that selects the participants of the research through references made between people who share or know of others who have some characteristics that are of interest to the research, and, then, indicate them, to gain access to potential interviewees. We started, initially, from contacts with employees of cooperatives and associations, as well as with coffee growers and other people related to coffee farming, such as rural workers themselves, those contacted through emails and phone calls to explain the research and subsequently ask for referrals from other participants.

The determination of the total number of rural workers who would participate in our research followed the guidance of Gaskell (2002), who considers the limit between 15 and 25 individual interviews to then reach data saturation. However, we obtained this saturation with a total of 14 interviews. General information about the interviewees is presented in Table 01.

Table 01
General information about the interviewees

Interviewees	Age	Marital status	Highest level of education	County
Maria Tereza	34	Married	Middle School	Carmo do Paranaíba
Worker	22	Common-law marriage Divorced	Middle School	
Maria	45	Married	Middle School	Patrocínio
Márcia	39	Married	Middle School	
Luciene	46	Single	Middle School	
Warrior	48		Middle School	
Maria I	47	Married	High School	Monte Carmelo
Warrior I	45	Married	High School	
Maria Aparecida	67	Married	Cert. Program	
Fighter	50	Single	**	
Battler	43	Married	Middle School	Monte Carmelo
Lúcia	47	Married	College Degree	
Battler I	32	Married	Middle School	
Maria II	32	Single	**	

Source: Elaborated according to research data (2017)

*The rural worker women interviewed are identified by codenames, chosen by them at the beginning of the interviews. As different interviewees chose the same codenames we used I and II after the codename to differentiate them.

** Did not attend school

The 14 interviews were carried out face to face, by one of the researchers, from September to November 2017, at the coffee producing farms where the interviewees provide their services, according to their choices, in the Patrocínio, Carmo do Paranaíba and Monte Carmelo's counties.

To gather the empirical material, a narrative interview with rural workers was used, seeking to follow the guidelines of Jovchelovith and Bauer (2008), who propose 4 stages, in addition to preparation: (1) Initiation; (2) Central narration; (3) Question phase; (4) Concluding Speech. The guiding topic used in the interviews was composed of five blocks of questions, elaborated according to the literature review and the research objectives. In the initiation stage of the narrative interview, the objective of the research was explained to each interviewee, as well as the Free and Informed Consent Term (FICF) was presented, as approved by the Research Ethics Committee based at the Federal University of Uberlândia. Eleven respondents, after reading and agreeing with the specifications contained in the FICF, signed it in two copies, and then we informed them that the recorder would be turned on and the next phase would begin. Three of the interviewees are considered illiterate. Two of them never attended the school environment, they cannot read or write; in another case, the interviewee had studied for a period of six months, but cannot read, she can only write her name. In these cases, in addition to the presentation, the FICF was also read to the interviewees, who agreed with the terms described therein.

The 14 audios resulting from the interviews were transcribed by the authors, in full, without the use of software. The average duration of the interviews was around 30 minutes, resulting in a total of 81 pages transcribed. The analysis of this material was done through thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clark (2006), for whom flexibility is a characteristic of the technique that allows it to be applied with a variety of epistemological and theoretical approaches. In addition to this characteristic, we consider this technique adequate for this research because it is indicated for researches that involves the identification of common meanings or patterns of meanings shared by a set of interviews, in which the semantic analysis would not be sufficient (Vaismorandi et al., 2016).

Thematic analysis procedures started with (1) familiarization with the empirical material, when we transcribed the interviews, we read and re-read them, writing down the initial ideas, for example, those that pointed to coloniality; then we generate the initial codes using a file to separate them, when we code resources (excerpts, words, associations) in the interview texts that seemed to be relevant for each code created. The first four codes created were: hierarchy, identity, domination and resistance. Then, we revisited the archive in search of potential themes, once we identified three themes that allowed us to proceed to the generation of a thematic map of the analysis. It was then that we gave names to the themes, inspired by the main issues discussed in the post-colonial theory that served as guidance to identify three thematic analytical categories: (1) The construction of subalternity; (2) hierarchical spaces; and (3) colonial domination. This task consisted of a continuous analysis, back and forth to the material, when we refined the themes and the stories that they would tell. Finally, we produced our text, selecting excerpts to exemplify our interpretations to answer the research question, in the light of post-colonial theory.

Colonial Heritage In Rural Workers Narratives

In this section, we present three thematic categories delimited based on the research problem and objectives outlined for this research, as well as the literature review. Together, these analyzes show us how the inheritances of colonialism are expressed in the narratives of the rural workers interviewed.

Category 1 - The construction of subordination

A life based on adversities and suffering are highlighted in the interviewees' narratives, leading us to the interpretation of a construction of subalternity, in which women live in conditions of silence (Spivak, 2010). In order to construct relations between this note and the colonial period, it is necessary to remember that only men enjoyed sexual freedom, in the specific case of the colonizers, white women should be faithful to their husbands, while the men, although formally inserted in a monogamous marriage, enjoyed full sexual freedom (Freyre, 2004). In the interviewee Maria Tereza's case, when single, she had a daughter with a married man, and, as in the colonial period when the man was not discriminated against because he was not monogamous, the discrimination was directed at women, in Maria Tereza's case she was discriminated against by her own mother, as can be interpreted in the excerpt of her speech: **"My mother used to put my things on the street so that I could leave home, but then I would pick up my things on the street, and go back inside the house, because I had nowhere else to go"** (our emphasis)

This extract from Maria Tereza's narrative also reveals a power relationship led by her and her mother, representing an example of reproduction of coloniality, power relations between women, that is, aspects of a colonial past that still resists (Gomes, 2007; Lugones, 2014 Said, 1989). Relationships like this, among women, are emphasized in the work of Lugones (2014), when dealing with the classifications and relationships between white bourgeois men, white bourgeois women and colonized "women".

Given this example of hardship during their trajectory and others that were mentioned by the participants of this research, some interviewees, such as Maria Tereza, Márcia, Warrior and

Maria II, assert themselves as “**warriors**”, they use, respectively, expressions with connotative meaning, like “**I don't let my head down easy**”, “**I don't give in easily**” and “**I went through an uphill battle**”. Maria I, Fighter, Battler I and Maria II use the term “battler” which, also, refers to the word “warrior”. Both terms are related to the trajectories of struggle faced by them. Lúcia, on the other hand, defines herself as someone who fights, “**fights like everyone else**”, that is, she says that not only those people who have trajectories marked by hardship fight, but everyone does (our emphasis).

Maria Tereza, unlike the other interviewees, identifies herself as having multiple identities: “There is the **worker**, the **sufferer**, the **housewife**, the **mother**, the **girl** ... there is, there is ... I ... I think I'm pretty much a **warrior**.” (our emphasis), and makes use of constitutive intertextuality, using the expression “like people say”, to refer to the judgment that some people make of not being modest when the person himself says something good about himself, in his case, be a “warrior”.

Among the nouns used to describe the different ways in which they are recognized, Maria Tereza and Maria use “**housewife**” and “**mother**” (our emphasis), mother also being used by Guerreira I. This recognition takes us back to the historical past, in which, in Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, women were subordinated, starting with differentiated education, as inferior beings, predestined and obliged to motherhood, to care for domestic environments, the children, the elderly and the ill. Identifying oneself as housewives and mothers can resume this past, in which domestic environments and childcare were considered the responsibility of women, and public environments dedicated to men (Kergoat, 2009).

Kergoat (2009) highlights this distinction that assigns productive spheres to men and reproductive spheres to women. The author states that this distinction is the result of the conditions of inequality in which women are inserted, the result of social constructions arising from the social relations between men and women, in which the principle of separation prevails: (there are jobs for men and for women) and hierarchy (men's jobs are more valued than women's jobs).

This same distinction between men and women was already perceived since Brazil's colonial time, thus the “woman's job” said by the interviewee Batalhadora I shows another aspect of coloniality. In the colonies, as highlighted by Rosa (2016), black women, former slaves, had as main responsibilities the activities of the kitchen, the big house and the care of their masters' children. White bourgeois women were educated to be mothers and housewives, in other words, to develop “women's skills”.

Based on the analysis of the trajectories, which, as we understand, interferes in the way the rural workers in coffee production in the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil) identify themselves individually and to the society, the rural workers interviewed still do not present the reconfigured female identities defended by Couto and Scharbier (2013). On the contrary, according to what was presented during the analysis of the narratives of rural workers, there are aspects from the colonial period in their trajectories and identities, such as the sexual division of labor; discrimination; social exclusions; propagations of the dominant speeches in which inequalities between men and women prevail; the silences; submissions and subalternities.

Category 2: Hierarchized spaces

In this subsection, we analyze the second category, whose central configuration is the hierarchy of spaces, in which some spaces are considered superior to others and, therefore, their occupation determines a relation of coloniality, because the hierarchy summarizes the notion of power standardized (Quijano, 2000). Although some interviewees, such as Maria Tereza, affirm that there are no more inequalities, their narratives and the examples they present point to the opposite. For example, Maria Tereza states that “Nowadays **there is no longer this differentiation between women and men**. I think there was it [...] but **now it doesn't happen anymore!** I think it happened a lot in the past [...] Nowadays it doesn't happen anymore!” (our emphasis). However, she contradicts herself by mentioning that there is still a separation between men and women on a farm in the municipality of Carmo do Paranaíba:

[...] **in some farms, it still happens....** I do not say segregation in terms of prejudice, but I mean it is like a routine that the farm already has [...] "oh, we have the tractor driver", "**oh, these women are doing this, they are doing that**". But I don't think it is a prejudice. It is not the same as arguing that “she is not able to do it”.

The interviewee uses the manifested intertextuality to refer to other people's speech, such as: “**oh, these women are doing this, they are doing that**” (our emphasis), and she affirms that such comments are not prejudiced, although they are, because gender equality implies equal opportunities, without adopting discursive practices such as those mentioned.

Guerreira also argues that there are no more differences between men and women: “**Nowadays everyone works equally**, whether male or female, they do the same job. **Nowadays, everything is equal.**” (our emphasis). Not only nowadays but since ever, women and men have always been able to perform the same “services”, however inequalities of opportunity between them still persist, as well as the sexual division of labor, in which there are jobs directed to men and women and other ones only for women.

Another interviewee, Maria Aparecida, who is the oldest among the 14 interviewees, said that there are no more inequalities between men and women:

[...] I think **we live with people who have a different way of thinking if you compare with those who lived some years ago**, nowadays, for example, **there is no longer the idea that men can do that and women cannot** [...] Of course **there are some activities that demand the man more than the woman and vice versa**, but that she cannot, that she shouldn't, I think that there is no more it (our emphasis).

One statement of the interviewee contradicts the context of inequalities between men and women highlighted by several authors, both in the labor market (Camargos, Riani, & Marinho, 2014) and in the domestic environment (Guedes, 2016; Hirata 2015). Even in the countryside, a place where rural workers perform their activities in the coffee production, there is a prevalence of

inequalities marked by the overlapping of genders, social classes and races/ethnicities (Gomes, Nogueira and Toneli, 2016).

At the end of her speech about the argument that there are no more inequalities between men and women, Maria Aparecida demonstrates some reflection when she says "[...] here, at home... **although here I can't count a lot on the men in the kitchen activities** (laughs). The most part, it is me and my daughter" (our emphasis). The expression "although" used by her, suggests something as: Considering, there are still inequalities. At home, for example, the domestic activities are the responsibility of the interviewee and her daughter and there is only a little participation by her son and her husband.

Maria argues that there is still a little inequality between men and women: "[...] **we are still a little unequal to men**" (our emphasis). The lexicon "we" refers to all women who, according to the interviewee, are "a little" unequal to men. In biological terms, there are differences, but we are not dealing here with these differences, but with those related to the social nature. And, in these terms, women and men should, for example, have access to the same opportunities, which did not happen in the past and still persists nowadays (Beauvior, 1970; Kergoat, 2009; Tedeschi, & Colling, 2014).

The interviewee Guerreira I speaks specifically about the community where she lives, Chapadão de Ferro, using the manifested intertextuality to exemplify the positioning of some people, through discursive practice, regarding the differentiation between men and women. According to the interviewee, "[...] the world will end and there it will continue, machismo, discrimination" (our emphasis). The lexicon "it" refers to the differentiation between men and women in that community and, using an analogy between the world ending and the continuation of this differentiation, the interviewee demonstrates that she does not believe in the possibility of change. It is something that has always existed and will always exist.

Maria II and Guerreira I use in their narratives the verbal inflection of the verb help, which is important for our analysis regarding inequalities. Both employ it referring to the work of women outside the home, specifically in livestock and coffee, as an aid to their husbands, reproducing, again, the dominant discourse present in the sexual division of labor. And, once reproducing this discourse they are agreeing and reinforcing the idea that underlies it. Garcia (2002), after researching about female rural workers, concluded that the notion of women is automatically linked to the private and reproductive spheres, whose activities are not considered work, once they are not paid. The tasks developed in the productive sphere, which can be remunerated, are considered subordinate and complementary, that is, an aid.

An important aspect regarding the analysis of inequalities is the intersectionality between social classes, sexes/genders and races/ethnicities. Through the dynamics of these intersections, it is possible to present explanations for the existing inequalities between men and women, such as their limited access to: less precarious jobs; higher salary incomes; life without violence; and higher positions in the organizations' hierarchies. Two interviewees used the intersectionality to talk about discrimination against women. Fighter refers to the intersectionality between classes and genders: "**And when you are woman and poor, then you'll really experience the discrimination**" (our emphasis). Interviewee Maria II uses intersectionality between classes, genders and races/ethnicities: "**They discriminate if you are poor, if you are a woman, if you are a single**

mother, if your are black” (our emphasis). It demonstrates that inequalities are related not only to the genders contexts, but also they are related to other categories, such as skin color, ethnicity and social classes.

Considering the owners of the farms and the bosses of the female rural workers, except those who work in family farming, two important statements are argued by two interviewees, Fighter and Battler I. Fighter said that she “thanks to God” about the fact that her boss gave her a job on the farm where she works, and complements arguing that, in certain activities, such as the plantation growing and the pest control process, her boss prefers women works, because he think they are more careful than men. We understand, in this case, that employers also reproduce the discourse and stereotypes about the appropriate task division between men and women.

Fighter also argues that, in a nearby farm, the owners offer work only for men, because according to them the place that women must occupy is limited to the domestic environment: “[...] the bosses think that a woman's place is only in the kitchen or in the house taking care of the husband and children”. In this case, the employers adopt a discursive practice with the presence of the slogan “A woman's place is in the kitchen”, which is full of implicit prejudice, discrimination, sexual division of labor and stereotyping. In the first era of feminisms in Brazil, at the beginning of the 19th century, both in the richest families as well as in the poorest ones, one of the main concerns regarding the education of women was to teach them how to cook and perform other household tasks (Mendes, Vaz, & Carvalho, 2015).

In Maria II's narrative, we can realize that the respect that she claims to enjoy in work relations is, in fact, a veiled discrimination: “Everyone here treats me well and respects me, but I can see that there are some people who look suspiciously the women who work here, they make jokes saying that we can't do it [...]” (our emphasis). The conjunction “but” used in her speech introduces a phrase that denotes opposition or restriction to the previous phrase. In short, it introduces an opposition to “everyone here treats me well and respects me”, as the interviewee said.

The use of the expression “look suspiciously” reveals that there is prejudice and discrimination towards women, because it means to look regarding disdain, suspicion and contempt. To make a “joke” saying that women will not be able to perform an activity is a veiled form of prejudice and machismo. And, from the moment that the rural worker uses the term “joke”, she is also agreeing and reinforcing machismo.

The interviewees use the lexicons “we” to refer to them and the other female rural workers. This use can be explained by the fact that they were working in groups during the day which the interviews were conducted. When I arrived at the place where the female rural workers were developing their jobs I asked the security technician of farm what activity were they doing and he told me that they were removing the pipes which they use for irrigation on the coffee production, because a tractor driver would pass through the coffee groves and it could damage them. At this moment, the female rural workers were working together, separated from the men, who were in another area of the field.

We understand that these contexts of inequalities in which the female rural workers interviewed were inserted interfere in the way they identify themselves, according to the analyzes previously made. They also present direct relations to the generalizations that men, other women

and even themselves and the society make about the behaviors or characteristics of the female rural workers interviewed in this study.

Category 3: the colonial domination

This thematic category refers to the reproduction of colonial values, even if, at times, they are slightly modified. We analyzed in the extracts of the interviews some aspects of the colonial way of organizing social life, which led us to interpret that this category is intertwined with the two previous ones, as we envision strategic uses of classifications aiming at the reproduction of the colonial system (Rosa, 2016).

Maria recognizes herself as black and tells, with a certain sadness (noticeable by the change in her tone of voice, and because she looked away to the floor), the position of some of her colleagues: “[...] there are **some people who call me big black woman**. I don't like it, **it is a jokes that is bad for us. My name is not big black woman**, and many women are as capable as men.” (Maria II) (our emphasis).

In Maria's II case, she uses the lexicon "some" to refer to those who call her "big black woman", without mentioning whether this discrimination of skin color comes from men and / or women. The interviewee considers being called this way as “a joke that is bad for us”. However, this is a form of veiled discrimination, because as the interviewee says: “My name is not big black woman”. When she mentions that “women are as capable as men”, she reveals gender discrimination. In other words, through the interviewee's speech, the presence of intersectionality between genders and races is identified.

In this case, there is the propagation of stereotypes of women as mothers and care providers, and the stereotype that women should be limited to the reproductive sphere is defied. Silva and Ribeiro (2004) refer to these stereotypes in their work, stating that the rural men and women interviewed considered it an obligation for women to take care of the house and children, and for men, the means necessary for the financial support of the household.

When talking about her expectations for the future, the propagation of these stereotypes is identified, according to fragments of Maria's II testimonies:

When I think **about the people at home, I think about my son the most**, like I told you, I want to give him what I didn't have, I want to see him study, graduate, have a good job so he doesn't have to suffer like us, and I want to **try to give comfort to mother also**. She has suffered a lot, now she is sick and I am the only one for her. On the **professional side, staying here is fine**. Just like I said, **it's hard for me because I don't have an education, I am a woman, a “big black woman”** as they say, right?, a **single mother**, so I need to work hard, raise my hands up and praise for what I have, my job and work until I see my son well, in his path (our emphasis)

Despite considering “big black woman” as a “joke that is bad”, Maria II mentions it when she reproduces the stereotype that being a woman, single mother, “a big black woman” and not having an education, there is no other way besides being a rural worker. Therefore, she feels obliged to

praise for having a job, using the metaphor that refers to the religious ideology of thanking God: “[...] put your hands up and praise [...]”. The interviewee Lutadora also mentions the lack of work alternatives for those who are women and have no education.

This analysis leads us to the stereotype that, it should be allocated, for women who work outside the domestic environment, the most precarious jobs, at the lowest hierarchical levels in organizations and of least social prestige, as highlighted by Bruschini (2007) and Camargos, Riani and Marinho (2014). Furthermore, when they are inserted in the public environment, women cannot, for example, make decisions. Lucia makes reference to men dictating orders and women to follow them without question. She illustrates the reproduction of this stereotype by telling about what it was like in the cooperative they were part, using the manifested intertextuality:

Oh, **you’re a woman and you’re in charge?**”. Exactly this conversation. I had to be very careful not to go through ... **I stayed behind my husband, teaching him not to pass in front of him so people don’t call him sissy.** What **“is she the boss”** people say to me, I would respond “I’m in charge, you’re not lying. I’m in charge!

We understand that in this situation there is the reproduction of the dominant discourses about women not being able to speak up, nor to express their opinion, because men are the decision makers (Costa, & Sardenberg, 2008; Silva, & Ribeiro, 2004). Lúcia says that women who do not participate and do not speak out, do not do so for fear of being judged and/or fear their husbands will be judged, called "sissies" because they are under the orders of their wives. Contexts like these, in which husbands are the ones who must give orders and make decisions, have been observed since colonialism (Lugones, 2014; Rosa, 2016), which allows us to state that situations such as Lúcia's, which are experienced today, they represent legacies from the colonial period.

On the farm where Worker I lives and works, two other families also live there. According to the interviewee:

[...] some of the **husbands think that farming is their job and not their wives**, others disagree [...] some still **think that a woman’s place is inside the house**, but there are those who don’t think the same [...] there is one of the women who lives here who has a little baby, she cannot work. Now the other one ... she doesn’t ... **I don’t think she works like that because there is a lack of motivation** (our emphasis).

In this extract, the presence of one of the aspects of coloniality is identified: “a woman's place is in the house”. The interviewee also reproduces a stereotype by saying that, if the woman does not work, it is due to “lack of motivation”, even though she previously stated what is the discursive practice of some of the husbands. Garcia (2002) presents a similar situation in his work. The settled rural workers participating in Garcia’s research, actively fighting for properties, claim that non-active women do not participate because they do not want to. In assuming this position, these workers, like Worker I, do not recognize the gender limitations to which women are exposed, and that their partners are primarily responsible for these limitations.

Some interviewees, when reproducing stereotypes of women as a universal subject, of which the dominant discourses are full of meaning, agrees with the idea of subordination present in different contexts since colonialism, that is, women must be submissive to men, being imprisoned by a cycle of domination. While single, they live under the orders of their parents, and, after getting married, they must submit to the orders of their husbands, devoting themselves to caring for the home, children and partners (Rosa, 2016).

The analysis of stereotypes shows direct relations with coloniality, the contexts of inequalities and identities also analyzed here. The contexts of evidenced inequalities are immersed with reproductions of colonial values, affecting the ways in which the interviewees recognize and identify themselves, since most of them have naturalized these inequalities and stereotypes, assuming them for themselves and reproducing them to other women.

Final Considerations

In this research, we analyzed the inheritances of colonialism expressed in the narratives of female rural workers in coffee growing in the Cerrado Mineiro Region (Brazil). We identified the central ideas of postcolonial studies: the subalternity, the hierarchy of space and the maintenance of coloniality.

The postcolonial perspective enabled to recognize that the narratives of the female rural workers interviewed refer to a colonial heritage, that is, the coloniality, highlighted in studies such as Said (1989), Mignolo (1996); Quijano (2000); Gomes (2007), and Lugones (2014). First of all, **the construction of women's subalternity**, characterized by their submission to men, one of the forms of oppression present in the colonial era (Costa, & Sardenberg, 2008). The **hierarchical spaces**, that we can find nowadays in different spheres of social life, also constitute colonial inheritances, remaining when men were used to occupy prestigious places and posts (Beauvoir, 1970). **Colonial domination**, which synthesizes the colonial way of thinking, is constituted by hierarchy and subordination, once these analytical categories are intertwined.

However, it is not possible to neglect the fact that the women interviewed are collective subjects of their own history (Kergoat, 2010) and, considering that they as political subjects, they produce their life histories, sometimes internalizing practices of resistance, sometimes reproducing colonial narratives. Using the notions of consubstantiality and coextensiveness (Kergoat, 2010), the thematic categories revealed how the social structure, in regard to class, race and gender, prints concrete content to the social relations of the interviewees, once they narrated different social experiences.

Considering the analysis of the narratives of the female rural workers interviewed and regarding the specific contexts in which these women have been inserted, is it possible to conclude that colonialism presents some "fissures", that is, despite the fact that the independence was achieved, colonialism left trace elements, such as the coloniality of genders, the hierarchy of spaces that must be occupied by men and women and the relation between center and periphery which is controlled by the first one.

The gender relations abstracted were manifested through the naturalization and reproduction of stereotypes, inequalities, differences of genders, races and social classes, which

were presented in their daily lives in the contexts of work, home environments and society. Considering these ways which they were manifested, they were also naturalized and incorporated into the discursive and social practices of the woman workers interviewed who, in some moments of their narratives, reproduced the dominant speeches and in other ones they denied them. These gender relations are dictated by the power that men and society exercises over women, as well as it happened in colonialism.

Our main contribution through this study is related to the gap found in scientific productions regarding the work developed about the gender theme in rural contexts, and, specifically, adopting the postcolonial perspective. Postcolonialism and feminism are perspectives that approach a complex conceptual range and both try to add more meaning to the world. Thus, the intertextuality between them are considered ways to advance studies about these themes regarding the organizations study field. We believe this research can encourage the production of spaces that could enable and recognize the commitment to discourses and alternative knowledge.

We would also highlight the social contribution of this study which is directly related to the female rural workers interviewed. During the interviews, we noticed that some of the questions proposed enable the raise of feelings such as joy and sadness in the interviewees as well as moments of reflection. When they were talking about the children, their speeches gained a tone of joy, the moment that we could note the expression of more smiles. When narrating what were their expectations for the future, it was possible to realize a different intonation of voices that suggested a mixture of relief (when talking about the waiting for retirement, for example) and hope (when talking about a new job; moving to another city, etc.).

Narrating their trajectories was the moment when all 14 interviewees assumed a face of sadness, the tone of voice was lower, in some cases, we noticed that some tears came from the eyes of the some female rural workers interviewed. Moments of reflection were also present in the interviews. Considering Maria Tereza, for example, when she was describing her work routine, she suddenly did an instant of pause, after that she restarted her speech using a tone of voice that suggests doubt and saying that she had never stopped to think about why is she the only woman in the farm who works in coffee growing. Maria Aparecida, when talking about how does she perceive the society, said that there are no more differences between men and women, but when she stopped her speech for a moment, she said that at home only the women develop the household tasks. Therefore, we consider that this article also contributed to promote reflections among the female rural workers interviewed regarding their conditions and the contexts in which they are inserted.

As a practical contribution, it is possible to highlight that this study enabled the creation of a space for the women rural coffee workers in the Cerrado Mineiro Region to narrate their trajectories and experiences; also how they recognize themselves; the contexts in which they are inserted; as well as the existing tensions between social, personal and work life. Thus this research can contribute to the formulation of possible public policies that may join their needs and demands, in addition to contributing to changes in the management posture of the farms, in order to try to promote more equal opportunities in coffee growing.

Regarding the limitations found along the trajectory due to the construction of this research, it is possible to highlight the few numbers of studies developed in the area of Administration

relating women to postcolonialism. This gap demonstrates a difficulty denounced by the post-colonial perspective, which is the deconstruction of colonial production, as Calás and Smircich (1999) claim. Another limitation, this time related to the practice on the field, involves overcoming the shyness of some of the interviewees during the interviews. In some cases, when asked about how their relationships were in the workplace environment the interviewees answered short sentences such as "It's good". Other difficulties related to the conduction of the interviews can be described as: the access to the places chosen to conduct the interviews, once it all happened in the farms where the women rural workers live and/or work in the municipalities of Carmo do Paranaíba (Brazil), Patrocínio (Brazil) and Monte Carmelo (Brazil), specifically, in their homes and coffee plantations during their working hours. I also highlight the difficulty in reaching the places indicated to conduct the interviews and, consequently the risk of the rural workers no longer willing to participate in the research.

As a result of this study, we suggest a research agenda that contemplates, in detail, the analytical categories identified here. For example, studies aimed at exploring how was built the subalternity of female rural workers in the Latin American context, considering theoretical discussions of authors of this context to offer the basis for possible explanations. Still, considering that postcolonial feminist analyzes are vital for understanding the subalternity of women, we suggest conducting future researches that could reveal discursive violence and that would expose how the discourse is performative.

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Funding

The authors did not receive any financial support for the research, authorship or publishing of this article.

Acknowledgements

The authors did not receive any financial support for the research, authorship or publishing of this article.

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Conflict of interests

The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contributions

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