Theoretical-empirical article

Escrevivência: The Exhausting Process of Being an Outsider within a Postgraduate Administration Program

Escrevivência: O Cansativo Processo de Ser uma *Outsider* Interna na Pós-Graduação em Administração

Open Access

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■ **ABSTRACT**

Objective: this reader reflects on the exhaustion of being an outsider within a postgraduate Administration program. **Theoretical approach:** I also incorporate dialogue with black feminist thinkers to explore the intertwined intersections in autobiographical narratives. I highlight the concept of outsider whitin to reflect experiences of less privileged groups, who come up against paradigms established by a more influential community of insiders. In this movement, I shatter images that produce apathetic identities, enabling them to position themselves in the face of social dynamics. **Method:** to do this, I use Conceição Evaristo's theoretical operator *Escrevivência* to revisit memories and reveal, through a transactional dialogue, productions located in the knowledge of black women. **Results:** in addition, I instigate reflections, acceptance, and representation of all peoples, addressing not only personal drama but also community history. **Conclusions:** finally, through a utopian effort, I articulate possible ways for postgraduate courses in Administration to break through the barriers experienced and raise the potential for those willing to contribute to the country's social, scientific, and theoretical development.

Keywords: exhaustion; intersectionality; black feminism; postgraduate.

■ **RESUMO**

Objetivo: este texto reflete sobre o cansaço presentes no processo de ser uma *outsider* interna na pós-graduação em Administração. **Marco Teórico:** a fim de explorar as entrelaçadas interseções presentes nas narrativas autobiográficas. Destaco o conceito *outsider whitin* para contemplar as experiências de grupos menos privilegiados, que se deparam com paradigmas estabelecidos por uma comunidade mais influente de *insiders*. Nesse movimento são desfeitas imagens que produzem identidades apáticas e sem possibilidade de se posicionar frente às dinâmicas sociais. **Método:** para isso, recorro ao operador teórico da Escrevivência de Conceição Evaristo para revisitar memórias e revelar, a partir de um diálogo transacional, produções localizadas nos saberes das mulheres negras. Além disso, incorporo o diálogo com as pensadoras feministas negras. **Resultados:** assim, são estimuladas reflexões, acolhimentos e representação de todos os povos, abordando não apenas o drama pessoal, mas a história de uma coletividade. **Conclusões:** por fim, articulo, por meio de um esforço utópico, possíveis caminhos para que cursos de pós-graduação em Administração possam romper os entraves vivenciados e elevar as potencialidades para aqueles que se dispõem a contribuir com o desenvolvimento social, científico e teórico do país.

Palavras-chave: cansaço; interseccionalidade; feminismo negro; pós-graduação.

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THREAD OF THOUGHT: THE PRESENCE OF THE BLACK SELF IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF STORIES

The *escrevivência*[1] will guide all the perceptions throughout this text. Embracing this view as the core of writing starts from the primary need to break with empty, generic, and universalizing descriptions that circumscribe the body that, above all, is lived (Felisberto, 2020). I align with this theoretical operator to reflect on the nuances present in my daily life, supporting the knowledge arising from my dual condition, that of woman and black, and how this fact is crossed by oppression. Therefore, my voice will be active. This position breaks with the textual praxis usually adopted in the academic community, which aims at neutrality and reinforces academic standards that subscribe to the observations of women from the Global South (Akotirene, 2019; Anzaldúa, 2000).

The author of grounding *escrevivência* as a theoretical operator is a black Brazilian woman from Minas Gerais and a contemporary thinker, Conceição Evaristo. I got to know her power in her book *Olhos d'água* (Eyes of water), which evolved as a stimulus for personal reflections; the reality I insert; the individuals around me; and the whole structure that involves the construction of the image of black people in Brazilian society. Through her sensitivity and fictionalization of reality, she highlights the protagonism of the black feminine, self-involving a complexity expressed in the literary, political, and historical space (Nunes, 2020).

According to Conceição Evaristo, the founding figure of the term is the *Mãe Preta* or Black Mother, enslaved in the *casa-grande*, responsible for caring, feeding, nurturing, and telling stories to future 'owners' (Evaristo, 2020). The authors expose that comprehension is not to put to sleep the *casa-grande* that holds society's future in its hands but "to wake them up from their unjust sleep" (Evaristo, 2020, p. 30, our translation). Therefore, it favors an epistemic resistance that combats oppression in different structures, as in focus: the structural power intrinsic to the university. Hence, black scholarship seeks to produce and disseminate knowledge in search of legitimacy, freedom, and the feeling of belonging forged by racism (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023).

Morphologically, Conceição Evaristo joined the words 'write' and 'live,' forming a textual element that recovers and involves the act of narrating stories, lives, and experiences of Brazilians who have hyphenated and differentiated nationality (Evaristo, 2020; Fonseca, 2020). These individuals become holders of the power to exercise literary, lexical, and paradigmatic autonomy.

Hence, the *escrevivência* image demands to be formulated by and for us. In this way, it aligns body, condition, and experience of black people with intersectionalities inscribed throughout the text and in the realities (Fonseca, 2020).

The term 'intersectionality' is present in academic studies and other contexts, such as public policy, legal debates, professional and activist circles, and is even used by bloggers who influence public opinion (Collins & Bilge, 2021). According to Yuval-Davis (2006), intersectional analyses become central as they recognize the need to observe the various social divisions as interconnected categories of identity. Hancock (2015) emphasizes that the way of thinking about intersectionalities impacts different themes, considered incomplete and permeated by policies, an idea for a field of study, or a practice of social literacy. This list extends continuously, a fact that transcends the term and transports it beyond the academic community and national borders.

Due to the diversity of approaches to the term, I adopt the definition formulated by Collins (1998, 2016, 2019, 2022) and Collins and Bilge (2021). The author emphasizes that intersectional thinking structure systems of oppression that are reinforced by each other. Hence, she interprets and explains the knowledge produced and the processes used to substantiate systems of power and their connections (Collins, 2022). These axes form a cognitive architecture of non-exclusive and interconnected knowledge that affirms ways of thinking and favors theorization. In addition, they make it possible to break with the simple description of social phenomena, expanding the means to comprehend the world and understand it as a product of critical analysis. Accordingly, a vocabulary founded allows thinking about the problem, its similarities, and differences (Collins, 2022).

Likewise, I share Akotirene's (2019) views on the political challenge and activist imperative involved in the theme, which provides for theoretical and practical actions. Moreover, it is also shaped by hooks (2000)[2] who, throughout her experiences, signals the importance of paying attention to interrelationships. Therefore, I seek to avoid the marginalization of perspectives and the hierarchy of oppressions (which usually place the antagonism between sexes as the only prism to investigate). Moreover, I am committed to creating a comprehensive feminist theory focusing on various issues.

Intersectionality also acts through heuristics to investigate the reflections stimulated by metaphors grounded in intersectional thinking (Collins, 2022). For studies based on this perspective, it is not interesting

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to perceive social phenomena separately but to face the relationships that permeate symbols, practices, and actions. Intersectional heuristics involves considering other social markers of difference in a way that relates to the topics analyzed. Accordingly, it allows theorizing, studying, and reconsidering to understand and address social issues. Furthermore, it endows intellectual freedom to researchers who work on the agenda based on their openness to acting through an inventive tool that aspires critically engaged resolution of social problems (Collins, 2022).

According to Conceição Evaristo, when an Afro-Brazilian writer constructs a black fictional character, it is formulated from within. Writing is more than just describing a physical body. It involves creating a narrative that draws inspiration from recollections and ancestral marks inscribed in personal and collective memory. This narrative groups together reported experiences, often using remembrance to tell the story. They manifest themselves as an inscription, noted by the memory of the skin, of oppressions and suppressions, made from the identity of the black body. In this sense, the voice that enunciates brings a historical memory as a descendant of women who have undergone similar processes since enslavement. Therefore, it marks the social place contaminated with memories that stimulate the movement of doing and saying, as well as of word and action (Evaristo, 2020).

Also, for the national scenario, thinking through a black feminist epistemology enables the reduction of white and Western feminist supremacy in research and practice. This way, it influences and generates integration of the ideology of racial, ethnic, religious, and social class specificities. It likewise reiterates the need to overcome limiting views about the identity of individuals and, therefore, "to be a woman without being only a woman, to become an entire human being full of possibilities and opportunities beyond her race and gender condition" (Carneiro, 2003, p. 5).

From this perspective, this article explores the intersection of black feminism and intersectionality to examine personal experiences. I construct this reader as a cisgender woman, artist, and critical thinker on contemporary issues who identifies as black woman from Brazil. Additionally, I come from a low-income background. Hence, I limit myself to sharing personal experiences related to my postgraduate experience considering the different aspects that have influenced my identity. The following sections will provide support for these concepts. In this discussion, I will explore the potential use of *escrevivência* as a framework for both methodology and theory. Later, I will reflect on my experiences as a doctoral student in administration, observing it from an intersectional perspective.

DRIVING FORCE: *ESCREVIVÊNCIA* AS A PRACTICE OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In the communion between black and intersectional feminist thought, *escrevivência* is a conceptual-methodological principle that seeks to support the history of the excluded from memories and personal narratives. It is an episteme that reflects the experience, perspectives, and free letter of the agent of the voice: the black body (Evaristo, 2020). In this process, images of the past that produced subaltern, apathetic, and voiceless identities in the face of social dynamics are undone (Nunes, 2020).

Therefore, writing to live helps reflect on the state of things based on possibilities of contestation and questioning. Hence, it helps black women observe the world and its nuances not only in its extension but mainly in-depth (Evaristo, 2020). Furthermore, it instigates the inclusion of individuals into a society based on its needs, even for those who have been previously unable to express their own unique experiences (Evaristo, 2020).

In line with this approach, which avoids making comprehensive statements and emphasizes the importance of considering multiple perspectives, I will not outline specific steps for conducting this study. However, I comprehend this space as a possibility for dissemination, discussion, and expansion of black and intersectional feminist practice in organizational studies. This field historically supports processes of coloniality and epistemic injustice that order and simplify the world according to instrumental rationality (Dar, 2019; Ibarra-Colado, 2006). However, like Silva (2021), I understand the academy as a powerful space to build an academic struggle that reinforces a subversive praxis. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, I share the path traced in my writing, aiming to break developed patterns that invalidate cosmologies present in 'amefricanas'[3] histories, civilizations, and cultures (Gonzalez, 2020; Martins, 2000). Similarly, it involves promoting new perspectives that replicate research by observing differences (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), and avoiding the annihilation of narratives located in places of crossroads (Martins, 2000).

Initially, writing memories in graduate school occurred through the symbolic encounter with Conceição Evaristo, located in the passion for telling, reliving, writing, and observing diverse stories. Writing and reading became, since my childhood, an immersive experience and a favorite pastime. The municipal library of my city was the first temple and place of refuge where I found references and friendships, imaginary and real, that I have carried with me

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since that time. During this period, I also developed the habit of translating daily experiences into diaries, usually written on hand-colored papers. This practice continues into my adult life, diffuse, without regularity and the whim of childhood, but with the same purpose of transporting feelings and symbolic perceptions to the physical world.

In addition to encouraging fundamental narratives to my *escrevivência*, these records promoted a deep dive into the observed personal and group universe. In this movement, memories were rescued and close stories recognized. Through oral and bodily repertoires and habits, understandings sought the creation, passage, reproduction, and preservation of experiences (Martins, 2003). In this tangle of symbols, I have incessantly articulated identity and voice based on complex relationships between the self, the other, and the historical, social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and political environments (Martins, 2003). Consequently, my experience intersects with collective and ancestral history, especially those lived by black people in the observed context. Therefore, revealing this observation reinforces that the act of writing to live is not restricted only to writing of oneself (Felisberto, 2020), but takes on a collective sense, noting my existence in common with that of other women (Cavalcante & Cavalcanti, 2021).

I organized my experiences, memories, rescues, and symbols of the mythical African *abebés* of the orishas Oxum and Iemanjá. This approach enables knowledge that aligns with my worldview and provides a sense of liberation. According to Evaristo (2020), Oxum's mirror reveals the hidden truth in people's hearts. The person could not deceive himself or hide his true feelings and intentions by looking into the mirror. This artifact can reveal inner beauty, imperfections, and dark aspects. By culturally described myth, a symbol is created that reflects the ability to see beyond appearances and access people's inner truth. Additionally, it allows us to observe subjectivities and expose the dangers experienced, in addition to representing self-knowledge, reflection, and the need to face oneself with sincerity and honesty for the lived writing.

The mirror of Iemanjá reflects and points to the community's needs. This orisha is associated with salty waters, motherhood, fertility, and protection. She is often portrayed as a maternal and protective figure, representing feminine energy and connection with nature. The *abebé* of Iemanjá strengthens us to understand the other (in this study, the others). Incorporating the collective, it reveals our power. Looking through this mirror, we can write stories through many voices. We also learn that our image, our body, has the power to include our other bodies, thus linking the word and action to a way of reading multiple cultural productions (Evaristo, 2020).

To transform memory patches into a quilt full of meanings, I aimed to weave stories using theoretical concepts rooted in feminist and intersectional perspectives. Understanding this movement and putting it into practice stimulated my creativity. In addition to being a researcher, I am an artist, and the academic setting has annihilated my lively and imaginative thinking due to the recurrent need to formulate universal answers and the obligation to comply with structural norms of writing and research that distance themselves from lived experiences (Gilmore et al., 2019). Thus, by sewing, tying, and promoting a feminist, black, and intersectional repertoire, I strengthened autonomous and authorial writing (Felisberto, 2020). Making the *escrevivência* the driver of writing allowed the expansion and deepening of knowledge, supporting and creating new meanings to learn the ways that make us human (Gilmore et al., 2019). I became an artificer of memories, capable of exercising literary and grammatical autonomy and stimulating reflections by and for us, aligning body, condition, and experience to understand the revelation of black people, thus making intersectionalities a repertoire inscribed throughout the text and in the realities expressed (Fonseca, 2020).

Therefore, exploring the paths traced in the construction of my writing, based on the knowledge outlined by Conceição Evaristo, favored the process of breaking with patterns of importation, translation, and repetition of knowledge produced by the lenses of the Anglo-Saxon world (Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Sanabria et al., 2014). In addition, it has sharpened the holistic, configurative, and dialectical vision, promoting collective observations of daily life (Ocaña et al., 2018). In this sense, the writing practice helped build a different perspective on science that aims to question: What do we need to love-reflect-configure-understand? What difference will it make? How do we know it is worth doing and valuable for the community? Who will benefit from this, how will they help, and what resources will used? (Ocaña et al., 2018). Thus, it refers to a shared we (Evaristo, 2017).

Evaristo (2020) indicates that telling something is not just an abstraction but also a means to break the passivity of reading and self-inscribe. Thus, I transgress the individual's place to become the research subject. I am no longer the object but the subject. I am the one who writes, not anymore the one described (hooks, 1990; Kilomba, 2020). Writing to live is based on a process of coming and going observing and reflecting, in addition to finding in these bonds points of contact with theory and bringing to the debate the presence of other subjects with their black, female, and poor authorships. Like sewing by hand, fictionalizing stories of black women unite singular and collective perspectives from a process that allows a critical-biographical theorization

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that seeks to epistemologically treat plural experiences and identify relationships (Medeiros & Nolasco, 2020).

In summary, I understand it as a form of political and cultural resistance that stimulates first-person speeches derived from narratives that question the indiscriminate application of hegemonic perspectives, bringing new proposals to academia (Veiga, 2020). Through this prism, I reflect on the exhaustion and deep discomfort with situations that occurred while becoming an outsider within a postgraduate administration program. To outline these thoughts, I break with the circumscribed norms of article construction customarily adopted by academia. Otherwise, the following observations outlined by *escrevivências* will start from the exposition of Collins's (2016) concept of an outsider within.

Furthermore, I bring black feminist authors to the debate to reflect on the intersections in the memories exposed in autobiographical narratives. Finally, I articulate, through a utopian effort based on authors such as Carneiro (2019), Collins (2019), Gonzalez (2020) and hooks (2021), ways for postgraduate courses in administration to break the barriers and raise the potential for those willing to contribute to the social, scientific, and theoretical development of the country.

THE EXHAUSTING PROCESS OF BEING AN OUTSIDER IN A POSTGRADUATE COURSE

The text by Patricia Hill Collins from 1986 is at the heart of the discussion that provoked my thoughts, doubts, and concerns about the theme of exhaustion associated with postgraduate studies. Before addressing the fundamental concepts and applying them to the realities I know, I speak of my personal, social, cultural, and economic context. I am the daughter of a secretary and a metalworker; therefore, a woman, black, lower class, and from the countryside. I studied most of my life in public school. However, I could experience some educational benefits in a private school. However, my parents sacrificed many hours of work, sleep, dreams, and opportunities, using this fact as a 'stimulating' discipline method. With this practice, from a very early age, I realized that, for us, the sacrificial was the way to break with some limitations. This fact crosses my mind to the present day.

My parents dedicated considerable efforts to a fundamental purpose: that their only daughter studied at a federal university. It did not matter the course. A federal university was my parents' interest. With this discourse taught in daily life, I continued. Years of dedication to finally enter an institution with free and quality education. And many years of my parent's struggles to keep me in that

environment. Now, it is necessary to open a short parenthesis to expose the fact that there are elitist courses within public institutions. The administration course was like that. In my memory, some students were not symbolically accepted because they did not adapt to the consumption and aesthetic standards expected of other students. While it's not the main topic of the discussion, this observation stimulated me to construct questions, diffuse and unstructured, which shaped my perception and the path I traced toward postgraduate studies.

Within that particular setting in which there were only two black people, and the vast majority were the heirs of prominent regional and national businessmen, I saw no opportunities to achieve my goals, which until that moment were very ambitious. Without knowing any feminist theory, much less recognizing me as a black woman in a highly white environment, the only way out I had in mind was obvious: to become an employee of those who were next to me. Students with little dedication to the course did not respect the knowledge acquired and, unlike me, made minimal effort. As I sit here surrounded by my papers and memories, my mind wanders to a group of classmates from my past. They always sat in the back of the classroom, paying no attention to the teacher's lectures, and made fun of those who worked hard. At the end of each class, they would laugh and brag about passing without effort. Meanwhile, I and other dedicated students were constantly scrutinized and ridiculed for trying too hard.

I could understand all the traps of representing these students in the exposition of a teacher who brought the following speech highlighted in my notes: "Meritocracy does not exist." With that, all the internal stimuli in me fell to the ground. Next to the annotation of this speech, there is an erasure and, shortly after, a highlighted balloon that I wrote in uppercase: "The opportunities are theirs." They, a masculine pronoun, referred to the young man in the last rows, all men, white, heterosexual, who were guaranteed a chair, badge, uniforms lined up, and cars of the year in respectable organizations because they were born in financially privileged homes.

When I came up with this idea, written on one of the back pages of my old book, I was starting my journey into scientific initiation. The observation I made and the decision I took have contributed to my feeling of exhaustion today. Being in a research environment brought encouragement. More than that, I felt hope. Despite being lost and needing to understand ABNT (Brazilian Association of Technical Norms), norms and the role I was supposed to fulfill, I enjoyed the experience. I have to confess that my motivation for focusing on these functions primarily came from receiving a scholarship. At that time, I received four hundred reais monthly, which enabled me to

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buy a new notebook and a cell phone and go to the places my colleagues went. Moreover, I could see people like me coming from different realities than the heirs of prominent businesspeople, thriving in their careers. Was this a way out for the inadequate studious girl who did not want to be an employee of the heirs?

Yes, nothing else mattered; graduate school would be the goal. I was always good with words and curious. I could become a teacher. That was my line of thinking. Despite graduating with a high GPA (grade point average), I didn't feel joy or glory. Instead, I felt fear and hopelessness. The achievement made me contemplate pursuing a master's degree. However, this validation took time to emerge. Only after a long, tiring, and complex process could I celebrate. It was almost a miracle, I thought. At least for now, I would not be an employee of the white and undisciplined student. Understanding this reasoning from the black and intersectional feminist worldview brings me back to a latent ancestry that vibrated in me the contestations that women like Lélia Gonzalez elaborated. The author, already in her writings in the 1980s, warned that, in a country built under the myth of racial democracy, for black women and men, often what remains is to sell their labor force at any price to a white boss who agrees to work on the books (Gonzalez, 2020). I did not want to be part of this logic; I resisted.

Even without understanding the nuances of feminist thought, in the period before graduate school, I already used my sense of observation to notice that it would not be a straightforward journey. As a scientific initiation student, I often saw master's and doctoral students lamenting the pressure for publications in high-impact journals. In past notes, I recalled a doctoral student who was pregnant, complaining in a low voice so that the professors would not hear about the lack of opportunity, the judgments, and the fear of not being well accepted in the job market because now she had a child that she called 'degree' to present at congresses and future selection processes.

The graduate school path was more valuable and rewarding even with these preliminary criticisms. It would allow experiences and status historically withheld from people I know. I am the second in my family to have an undergraduate degree; the first was my cousin a few years earlier. I explored the paths of public education and was the first with a master's degree and the only doctoral student in a huge family, with life stories close to my reality. The initial months in the postgraduate environment showed the exhaustion of becoming an insider for all these factors.

Collins (1986, 2016) rescued the concepts of insider and outsider. The former reflects on individuals with homogeneous views, education, and professional training. In addition, they are close about social class, gender, and racial background; that is, they have similar experiences.

In this sense, insiders, in the context of the postgraduate program in which I was inserted, were usually white, from the cultural and economic elite. In addition to sharing experiences, they also shared ontologies about things and epistemologies of how we can know them. Recalling memories about the initial socialization to this scenario, I remember practices, mainly by veteran students, to produce a theoretical and cultural immersion to translate theories and worldviews into their language and be attractive to newcomers (Collins, 2016).

A record on the first sheet of the master's notebook refers to the exhibition of the inaugural study groups and conversation circles, which introduced new students to theories, research, and publications by other postgraduate students. Returning to the writings, I immediately noticed that they were all derived from visions founded in the Global North. Upon re-reading the text, it was easy to see the absence of people dedicated to theorizing critical epistemologies that break classical views to understand other nuances related to Management. At the time, the most striking feature of this initial page was the emphasis placed on quantitative, rational, and international terms, followed by an extensive explanation of impact factors and the phrase 'English is necessary.' Interpreting this narrative refers to the English language, its relevance to postgraduate studies, and the promotion of international publications.

I immediately absorbed this information, and with the money from the scholarship, I enlisted in an English course. I was one of the only ones to start this extracurricular activity from scratch, as the vast majority who were there already mastered two or more languages. Likewise, I tried to learn quantitative methods and undertake attempts to look at the world from a totalizing perspective, with people or objects being measurable and generic artifacts of analysis. I do not remember the length of time that this progressive attempt to remain attached to the insider group lasted, but it generated impacts that I deal with to this day. Attached to this period, I could not detach myself from processes that Gonzalez (2020) calls "effects of the ideology of whitening articulated with the myth of racial democracy" (Gonzalez, 2020, p. 27, our translation). Thus, I unconsciously absorbed, in my body, in writing, in the process of generating knowledge, the need to maintain more convenient characteristics of European ancestry (Gonzalez, 2020).

Therefore, I minimized ancestral wisdom that could contribute to constructing a cultural and intellectual heritage to the detriment of visions of the north of the globe. In this effort to be part of a group I would hardly fit due to phenotypic, social, and class issues, I reproduced educational and scientific practices that reinforced and stimulated the idea of white superiority. I also made the only form of writing disseminated and postulated as correct: eliminating

research subjects from the narrative. So I dominated the 'third person' and annulled my research identity. Beyond the postgraduate environment, but very much influenced by the need to be an insider, I needed help break the practice of straightening my hair, which I performed sacredly every two months to keep my roots in a pattern. The previous sentence sounds poetic, but it is literal. Symbolically, my body absorbed the public, conscious, and unconscious information about the roles of the black woman researcher in the postgraduate environment.

After this writing, which involves body, condition, and experience, I can recognize how many patterns I reinforced and the exhaustion generated by trying to be an insider in graduate school. Thus, the search to break with these necessities occurred on several levels. Briefly, during a conversation with colleagues, they ridiculed my proposal to analyze our research topic through a feminist lens. A second moment occurred when I was in a selection process, competing with other men for a Ph.D. position, and a member of the evaluation panel questioned whether feminist agendas would be economically viable for companies and, at the same time, rolled his eyes at the 'audacity,' in his terms, of my proposal. Finally, at a conference, I presented a feminist and intersectional study. Unfortunately, many other men highlighted my study as an example of theoretical disconnection. They claimed that I did not address guidelines fundamental to my analysis, specifically, those related to the perspectives of men, white individuals, and cis-heterosexuals. I was embarrassed by this criticism. However, it's ironic that the evaluators suggested authors who had already cited and substantiated the entire construction of my study. Overall, it was a tragic and comic situation.

I am wondering if the previous paragraph will appear in the final article. Remnants of fear of producing stereotypes stigmatizing women, black women, and researchers. However, the facts mentioned above are fundamental to illustrate my transformation. Living the experiences described and many others crossed by intersectional oppressions undermined my frustrated and tiring attempt to be an insider. Reflecting on the impacts and root causes of the reactions to seeing a researcher occupying a space different from that intended for the black workforce transformed me. Only after this reflection, which is not constructed in isolation, could I understand that I am an outsider in the context that involves debates, research, classrooms, conferences, status, power, and authority disputes.

The previous memories bring similar reflections to those exposed by Dar (2019). The author metaphorically characterizes the university as an ivory-white board surrounded by a turquoise migratory river that has different gatekeepers in front of it. That is, the river and the colors

represent the obstacles and distinctions of this environment. Moreover, the gatekeepers are those who allow or disallow the entry of other individuals. These are usually white men and women, often armed with anti-racist and feminist discourses. However, their academic practices reinforce a hierarchy of whiteness, making northern teachings 'superior' to racialized knowledge (Dar, 2019). In this situation, the perspectives of postgraduate students, including myself, come from marginalized backgrounds that intersect with class, gender, and race, are dismissed as inferior and not given proper consideration (Dar, 2019; Martins, 2000). From the exacerbation of new symbolic operators, the black experience aligned with the shadows is drawn, characterized as borderline bodies in scientific research, usually silenced and degraded (Martins, 2000; Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023).

Therefore, a colonial psyche is encouraged in which blackness is nothing more than part of a diverse culture (Dar, 2019). Moreover, they reflect an epistemic injustice that determines those socially located as less powerful, less informed, acceptable, and more broadly foreign, untrustworthy relative to white scholars (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). Thus, exhaustion is also based on the recurring dynamics of contesting authority, as the struggle for black efforts to maintain and produce knowledge is recurrent due to the difficulties linked to the structural power that underlies academic practice based on marks of racism, elitism, sexism, among others (Dar, 2019; Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023).

For Collins (2016), the notion of outsider or 'stranger' defines individuals who do not share basic assumptions proposed by the dominant group and do not participate in the historical tradition by which the group has formed. Adding to this term, the observations of black feminism, Collins (2016) introduced the idea of an outsider within. The author reflects on the experiences of less powerful groups confronting paradigmatic thoughts of a more potent community of insiders.

The idea of being an insider does not only address the power of the dominant group that determines which individuals will be outside the relationships. It also supports the ability of insiders to suppress knowledge produced by subordinate groups (Collins, 2019). This relationship is evident in my trajectory in the countless times I questioned (and still questioning) whether I should be in the postgraduate environment. I was, moreover, reinforced by the little focus given to epistemologies founded in diasporic locations, different from white supremacist manifestations of knowledge. I return here to a contestation. In my academic career, theories, methods, and pedagogies from the south were not paralleled with productions from other countries and generated immense exhaustion, aligned with a diagnosis

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of anxiety that, in my view, is only the result of recognizing the interconnected oppressions that make me an outsider in different spaces.

To break this movement, I understood the need to position myself not only in favor of black and intersectional feminism but also the paradigms that involve the construction of thought, forming a community of producers and participants who share a harmonious vision. To achieve this, I had to deviate from the traditional teachings advocated by postgraduate programs and explore alternative approaches. This movement reflects an epistemic struggle that seeks to communicate knowledge while facing difficulties linked to the structural power intrinsic to the racist academy (Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). To demonstrate this rupture in my journey, I dedicated extra hours to online courses and classes, often taught by people outside the academy. In addition, I have built a routine to delve into readings that reflect my worldview and other tides that incite discussions and shifts in agenda.

These nuances exposed in my reality are made clear in the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Institute for Applied Economic Research [IPEA]) data that analyzes the latest Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Statistics Institute [IBGE]) survey on women's education in Brazil. Engel (2020) shows that the schooling rate among young people aged 18 to 24, which involves higher education, is more heightened among white women and men. Even among these groups, black men and women have the lowest average years of study in a disadvantaged class. Carneiro (2019), in a lively writing, states: "We blacks are more than 44% of the country's population, and only 2% of us reach university education. This level of 'equity' is achieved by universalist policies in education and by Brazilian racial democracy" (Carneiro, 2019, p. 117).

This information reinforces my experience and contestation, not only of individual memory but of collective symbologies and different ways to reflect on discomfort with the state of things. Therefore, I understand the indices of access to education not only as a possibility of mastery but of contestation and existence for 'world-life' (Evaristo, 2020). Therefore, I continue asking, 'Should I be here?' The participation of women, such as myself, in the academic scene, has been forbidden since the first stimuli to literacy and education. Many of us do not get to be an outsider within but only an outsider, fulfilling an eternal role of subordination. As I reflect on this information, I feel a deep weariness. And it is founded on the cultural regression of public policies and discourse, mainly from the elites. I write this text following news about the cut in financial resources of universities. What once became a possibility of ascension and breaking with the historical pattern of work destined for

black people today reinforces white supremacy in pedagogy, research, and teaching.

Entry into quality public education has currently become an option for the few. I and many other colleagues, who experience oppression at different levels, depend on the funds allocated to education to keep us in this logic. Depriving resources undermines more the possibilities of people from lower class backgrounds than those of insiders to participate in the construction of knowledge. Making use of the thought of Carolina Maria de Jesus (1960), with the actions implemented by a harmful government communed to the needs of the elites, I and so many individuals will continue in the 'trash room,' barred from entering the 'drawing room,' economically exploited, tying the meaning of work to so many stereotypes, experiencing only a social place linked to peculiar forms of marginality (Collins, 2019).

For Collins (2016), the way out lies in conserving the creative tension of insider-outsider status by encouraging and institutionalizing its perspectives. But how can this path be traversed without encouragement, salary, recognition, and future opportunities? Backtracking with each new action has become a norm. Thus, the needs of black women remain on the margins. Limiting assumptions arise and are rectified by the whiteness that usually integrates feminist thought and allies itself with the masculinity present in social and political thought (Collins, 2019). The combination of whiteness and masculinity reflects and constructs the dominant sector of the university, preventing outsiders from occupying an internal position in any field of research as subjects whose marginality provides a specific angle of vision on these intellectual and political entities (Collins, 2019).

PICTURING FUTURES

On this path, full of barriers, the rupture with black views is based on the assumptions and paradigms that reflect colonialist, white, and hegemonic thoughts. Therefore, a legacy of changes and designs of visions entrenched in diasporic perspectives denies those with a look, criticism, and experience to enable changes. According to hooks (2021), every person, including blacks, can be complicit with the systems in vogue, due to the subtle ways in which capitalism, sexism, and racism operate together and co-opt products of the culture we expose to during socialization.

hooks (2021) suggests cultivating the decolonization of thought to cross these limitations. Through this path, it will be possible to break the dominant molds and stimulate different forms of union between people, movements, and institutions, in addition to building new structures of action, claiming the weakening of the assumptions that perpetuate domination and power relations (hooks, 2021). Based on this point of view, the following paragraphs set

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out arguments by black feminists to stimulate debate and foster paths to change in various areas, especially in the postgraduate field, the subject of this writing.

The writings of Gonzalez (2020), formed in the Brazilian context, reflect on the expansion of the entry of black people into academia, provided by access policies. This action strengthened debates on race and gender in areas that slightly reflected the topic. Even with the contextual discrepancy, it is possible to highlight the importance of configuring a new profile of students attached to the academy. Since their early entry, these representatives have produced much more than the social and racial diversity of the student body. They redefined the political concerns and the usual trajectories of black people in Brazilian society. In addition, they have provided a new space for public debate, guided by agendas involving different social markers of difference, which act interconnectedly.

However, the author did not leave aside criticism of the education system that hardly encompasses guidelines that celebrate the origins of the Brazilian people in its founding paradigms. Racism has negatively impacted various schooling levels, including primary education. Textbooks, teaching methods, admission processes, and teachers' attitudes in the classroom have all contributed to this issue. Additionally, the belief in racial democracy and the promotion of whitening are present throughout all stages of education, resulting in a lack of identity and representation for black individuals in these settings (Gonzalez, 2020). Carneiro (2019) shares this view by recognizing and defending the appreciation of the participation of Afro-Brazilians in the country's history, as well as the need to rescue African cultural values, possible ways to reduce the disparity between those who experience intersecting oppressions at different levels (Carneiro, 2019).

Therefore, the interconnections between race, class, and gender are embedded in education and need attention. To combat these limitations, implementing public or private system actions must be based on ethical and moral practices that condemn all forms of discrimination. Carneiro (2019) suggests that inclusion mechanisms are also an economic practice since separating black people from cultural, consumer, and labor dynamics compromises the nation's competitive capacity. Therefore, attention to the needs and inclusion of a significant portion of the population determine fundamental changes in the living conditions of people historically segregated by their color, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, age group, and physical capacity, among others (Carneiro, 2019).

Along these lines, I add the perspectives outlined by hooks (2021), for whom building communities founded on a social universe of black and intersectional feminist premises requires fostering the triad of critical awareness, love, and work. From the communion of these premises, weakening all the socialization that leads us to spread domination will be possible. To perform this ideal, hooks (2021) emphasizes the need to apply, in various areas, critical theories that examine and combat racism, sexism, and elitism. It supports the idea of raising the power of subordinate groups to implement practices to change the dominator's culture through intervention in historically founded structures. This action becomes an active deconstruction of thought to create relationships with greater racial diversity (hooks, 2021).

Similarly, I recall Collins (2019) about the strength aligned with self-definition. According to this statement, black intellectuals should emphasize their self-definition because talking about themselves and building an agenda appropriate to the needs of the group they identify with reinforce empowerment guidelines. I reiterate that the act of empowerment for intersectional feminism is not individual but reflects group experiences from the interconnection of thought of those who identify with the broad struggle for human dignity (Collins, 2019). Pursuing this self-definition breaks with the criticisms raised by the authors above, underlining the importance of not reproducing the epistemological, ontological, and paradigmatic essence of existing power hierarchies. Therefore, self-definition allows the exposure of agendas that foresee the need to resist the dominant ideology, combat the dialectic of oppression, reinforce activism, combat images of control of the condition of black women, and build community institutions for the development of resistance strategies (Collins, 2019; Collins & Bilge, 2021).

This collection provides a comprehensive summary of the essential steps that are performed in practice. I also highlight the importance of self-definition in reflecting on the transition from victimization to a free mind (Collins, 2019). 'Talking back,' using the original term disseminated by hooks (2019), subjects committed to combating oppressions of race, class, and gender articulate body, practice, and ethics in promoting human dignity. This position aims to ground (and found) the political, intellectual, and social projects linked to feminism, highlighting subjects' experiences on the margins (hooks, 2000). Therefore, we move the debate beyond single and generic discrimination. In another way, linking voice, courage, and commitment empowers diverse subjects to combat issues around the use of supremacy to express racial hierarchies, homophobia in black communities, violence in private space, the narcissistic cult of personality as an epiphenomenon of capitalist relations, and the dangers of confining feminist discussions strictly within the academic sphere (hooks, 2019, 2021).

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Uniting lively, localized, and reflective writing, stimulated by the epistemological practice of Conceição Evaristo (2020), aligned with the thoughts of intersectional black feminists, I reflected on the nuances that generate exhaustion in the postgraduate environment. For this, I exposed my reality. I also sought to reflect on despair and frustrations that can arise in internal outsiders who live experiences due to their marginal location in teaching logic. Following the observations outlined throughout the text, these limiting practices can compromise black women's path (as well as their maintenance) in postgraduate business environments due to the projections of various oppressions.

In addition to a personal reflection and construction of possibilities of action in my reality, this text revealed fundamental potentialities for a learning environment. It is also building and communion of knowledge to strengthen and combat manifestations of inequality at institutional, organizational, and behavioral levels. Therefore, the importance of critical theories, ancestral thoughts, and multiple experiences in a historically elitist scenario was exposed, aiming to direct changes toward a promising way free of barriers destined to some individuals.

This text is not only intended for academic publication. The *escrevivência* and writing reflected in the previous items have made this action a personal and social exercise to expose the desire that more women like me (black and from peripheral realities) integrate into this community that develops theories, promotes changes, and anticipates organizational and social relations. Therefore, I use the facilities I have acquired over the years, through many struggles and breaking barriers I did not want to deal with, to reinforce the importance of uniting experiences and thoughts to combat oppressions that come from different contexts and limit participation, an archaic and harmful practice to the knowledge produced in postgraduate studies in administration.

Following the standards required for publication in various scientific journals, seen by many as limiting, I combine observations and limitations in this last paragraph to enable changes, dialogues, and community construction. Thus, I embrace the possibility of self-criticism to foster scientific communication and improve my thoughts. Regarding limitations, I highlight familiar theories, perspectives, and paradigms. Therefore, I ignore many other possibilities to strengthen arguments and ideas when making choices. At this point, there is an opportunity to develop the theme, adding other theories, visions, and articles linked to exhaustion, intersectional feminism, and the relations between insiders and outsiders. In addition, for conventional metrics, breaking with the structure of a scientific article can be interpreted as limiting. But it was fundamental to transgress standard boxing to construct free and autobiographical writing. This rupture allowed to rise and stimulate new thoughts, criticisms, and knowledge.

Observing these barriers, I suggest that new texts based on other thinkers of intersectional black feminism linked to Conceição Evaristo's *escrevivências* emerge. Therefore, I would like to read not only in special calls, but in most of the scientific journals in the area, contributions made by black women made in business and management area, who imagine diverse, equitable, respectful, and committed to social justice scenarios.

NOTES

1. A theoretical operator that revisits memories and reveals biographical studies from a transactional dialogue that emphasizes productions in black women's knowledge. Therefore, it reflects power linked to memory, orality, stories, and trajectories based on a diasporic phenomenon founded on the figure of *Mãe Preta* or Black Mother (enslaved person responsible for caring for the children of the 'owners' of the enslaved people). Thus, '*escrevivência*' becomes an act of writing by black women to undo images of the past and wake up the *casa-grande* (residence of enslaved person 'owners') from their unjust sleep (Evaristo, 2020; Fonseca, 2020).

2. bell hooks uses her name spelled in lowercase letters for a political option that seeks to counter academic dictates. This pseudonym is a family name that aims to unite feelings about representations of the self and identity and a way to link the author's voice to an ancestral legacy of women's speech (hooks, 2019).

3. According to Lélia Gonzalez, *amefricanidade* is a political-cultural category allowing one to understand America more deeply. It refers to an ethnic identity that incorporates cultures that break with racism. It reinforces the historical and cultural context beyond geographical regions. Thus, it relates to the multiracial and multicultural character of societies in the area. Also, it contests the term's appropriation to define only Americans (Gonzalez, 2020).

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