

Still Need to Blacken Feminism: Against the Genocide of the Black Population

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to rescue Sueli Carneiro's main criticisms of the hegemonic Feminist Movement, highlighting the author's emphasis on the need to blacken feminism in order to demarcate and institute the weight of the racial issue on the agenda of the women's movement. It seeks to demonstrate the relevance of such a proposal, highlighting both the maintenance of intra-gender inequalities and the persistence of genocide against the black population. In methodological terms, a bibliographic review of texts published by the author and statistical data on the socioeconomic situation of black women were used to support the argument that it is still necessary to blacken feminism, since a genocide of the black population is underway, highlighting the case of women, which materializes through submission to subhuman living conditions and the physical extermination of this group.

Keywords: Sueli Carneiro. Black Women's Movement. Blackening Feminism. Intra-gender inequality. Genocide.

Ainda é preciso enegrecer o feminismo: contra o genocídio da população negra

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é resgatar as principais críticas de Sueli Carneiro ao Movimento Feminista hegemônico, destacando-se a ênfase da autora sobre a necessidade de enegrecer o feminismo para demarcar e instituir na agenda do movimento de mulheres o peso da questão racial. Busca-se demonstrar a relevância de tal proposta, colocando-se em evidência tanto a manutenção das desigualdades intragênero quanto a persistência do genocídio contra a população negra. Em termos metodológicos, recorreu-se a uma revisão bibliográfica de textos publicados pela autora e a dados estatísticos sobre a situação socioeconômica da mulher negra para sustentar o argumento de que ainda é preciso enegrecer o feminismo, pois está em curso um genocídio da população negra, destacando-se o caso das mulheres, que se materializa por meio da submissão a condições de vida subumanas e pelo extermínio físico desse grupo.

Palavras-chave: Sueli Carneiro. Movimento de Mulheres Negras. Enegrecer o Feminismo. Desigualdade intragênero. Genocídio.

1 Introduction

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In general terms, the Feminist Movement can be defined as a social movement that fights for women's rights. From its emergence at the end of the 19th century to the present day, various banners have been raised by the women who make up this mobilization, which leads to the idea that the feminist movement has different "waves". At the same time, we cannot speak of homogeneity, and it is possible to identify different strands of feminism. The very concept of feminisms in the plural brings to light the fact that the struggle is not just about white middle-class women seeking civil rights.

In this article, the aim is to bring into the discussion the criticism that philosopher Sueli Carneiro brings to the hegemonic Feminist Movement, which is mostly made up of white middle-class women. For this author, it is important to bring in the contributions of black feminist thought - coming from the black women's movement - to complexify the understanding of gender issues and highlight the central place of race in the social dynamics and power structures of our country. From Carneiro's discussion, it becomes possible to think about the historical singularity of black women and the intersection between gender, class and race. One of the main contributions of this thinker is to draw attention to the fact that racism produces subalternized genders. These are factors that help us understand the need to blacken feminism.

Following Sueli Carneiro's intuition, and even taking up issues already worked on by this intellectual, this paper argues that feminism still needs to be blackened, as there is a struggle against the genocide of the black population. Based on the presentation of statistical data, this work demonstrates the intra-gender disparities in different social spheres, which also reinforces the relevance of blackening feminism. However, what we are trying to emphasize is the current process of genocide, which materializes both through submission to subhuman living conditions and through physical extermination. It is in the proposal to radicalize social justice, which is part of the Women's Movement, that it becomes possible to glimpse a social transformation that will make it possible to overcome this situation.

This work is organized in two stages: in the first, we try to present Sueli Carneiro's challenge to the Feminist Movement, bringing her idea of blackening feminism; in the second, we try to answer why it is still necessary to blacken feminism. In the second part of the paper, data is used to present the intra-gender disparity and the genocide currently underway against the black population, highlighting that black women are not immune to this process.

2 Blackening Feminism: Sueli Carneiro Challenges the Feminist Movement

In Brazilian society, from the mid-1970s onwards, there was a resurgence of the feminist movement. Soares (2000) points out that, during this period, this movement had some characteristics in common with those that emerged in Europe and the United States in the 1960s, being formed predominantly by white, middle-class women¹. On the one hand, given the context of the military dictatorship, the feminist movement did not take a radical stance on women's liberation; on the other hand, it was possible to connect with militants from left-wing parties and with women engaged in the struggle for re-democratization. Returning to Anette Goldberg, Soares says that this was "feminism that was good for Brazil". It should also be borne in mind that the Brazilian feminist movement of the 1970s recovered the historical experience of women's participation, but broke with its traditional role. According to Soares, this movement was influenced by the ideals of social protest that emerged in Europe and the United States in the 1960s, particularly those stemming from the feminist, black, pacifist and hippie movements. There was a questioning of the role of women in the family, at work and in society, which led to a struggle for transformation in human relations and the extinction of relationships based on social and gender discrimination.

¹ Although American feminism was initially marked by white middle-class women, as Gonzalez (2020) explains, this movement was the result of important contributions from the black movement. The 1960s struggle for civil rights shattered assumptions about equality and freedom in America, opening up space to question women's reality.

With the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, from the mid-1970s onwards, there was a proliferation of popular movements, the consolidation of the opposition and the reorganization of the left, even though political repression persisted in a softened form. Soares (2000) also explains that, in this context, due to the social imaginary that saw women as depoliticized or intrinsically apolitical citizens, it was possible for this group to occupy a greater space for political action. Thus, the first public demonstrations came from movements made up mostly of women who, unlike trade unions, political parties and the student movement, found ways to express themselves without being politically persecuted. The author points out that 1975 is often cited as the year when feminist groups reappeared in the main urban centers. The public celebrations of International Women's Day, reinforced by the start of the UN Decade for Women, led to the emergence of several feminist organizations and newspapers.

The issue of gender was gradually imposed on "feminism good for Brazil". Soares (2000) explains that the feminists who brought the movement back to the scene were, for the most part, women who already had previous political experience, whether in the student movement, in clandestine left-wing organizations or in prescribed political parties, among others. After the amnesty in 1979, women from exile and many from prison joined the movement. There was a defense of the autonomy of the feminist movement and the tone was one of criticism of the left for considering that this strand analyzed the conditions for the exercise of citizenship by men and women based solely on the idea of class, thus ignoring gender differences. However, these same feminists also failed to incorporate the issue of race as an essential condition for understanding the situation of black women. The emergence of the black women's movement is directly related to this absence. It should also be added that women played a central role in the resurgence of the black movement at the end of the 1970s. Gonzalez (1982), when talking about the articulation of black women in Rio de Janeiro, reveals that, at one point, the women met separately and then went into a larger room, where they discussed common problems. There was machismo and paternalism, but on the other hand, solidarity and mutual understanding were also

present. According to Gonzalez, these women went on to take part in the Unified Black Movement.

Later, on the centenary of Abolition in 1988, according to Carneiro (1993a), there was a broad mobilization of black women around their specific issues and in most Brazilian states reflections on black women were developed in state meetings, debates, seminars, among others. These activities culminated in the First National Meeting of Black Women², The event, which took place from December 2 to 4, 1988, in Valença, Rio de Janeiro, was attended by 450 black women representing 17 Brazilian states, as well as activists from the Women's Movement and representatives from other countries such as Ecuador, Canada and the United States. According to the author, the Centenary of Abolition was a propitious moment for black women to express their growing mobilization and organization in defence of their specific interests with greater visibility. Carneiro cites the importance of the political action of various institutional and autonomous groups, such as the São Paulo Black Women's Collective, the Nzinga Black Women's Collective in Rio de Janeiro, the Baixada Santista Black Women's Collective, Casa Dandara in Belo Horizonte, the women of the Workers' Party's Black Commissions, among others³. In the entities, commissions and groups that have been formed, a specific movement has begun to take shape that seeks to redefine the political action of both the Black Movement and the Feminist Movement.

Although the expression "blackening feminism" was only used explicitly in Sueli Carneiro's publications in 2003, at least since 1984 this black intellectual has been making an effort to highlight the singularities of black feminism in her work, thus challenging hegemonic feminism. In the text "O Poder Feminino no Culto aos Orixás", written in

² Ribeiro (1995) points out that at the 3rd Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Meeting, held in Bertioga in 1985, 850 women took part, 116 of whom declared themselves to be black or mixed race. The theme of racism and feminism was debated by black women from various countries and the participants' testimonies revealed the difficulty of dealing with the reality experienced by black women. At the IX National Feminist Meeting, held in Garanhuns/PE in 1987, black women's criticism of the absence of the racial issue on the agenda intensified, which led them to opt for holding the National Meeting of Black Women.

³ Edna Roland (2000) presents an exhaustive list of the groups formed by black women during this period.

partnership with Cristiane Abdon Cury, the authors seek to build a frame of reference for a possible black feminism which, at the same time as nourishing itself, revitalizes ancestral culture. The article refers to research carried out with daughters of saints in Candomblés in São Paulo between 1980 and 1982. The authors (1993c) sought to understand the feminine models present in Yoruba mythology that could be a source of inspiration for real women who face problems similar to those of their mythological ancestors in their daily lives. Like all cultures produced by humanity, African culture presents exemplary models in its mythology to explain the need to control women. Such domination is justified because they are characterized by voracity, intolerance and excess. Men, on the other hand, are characterized by thoughtfulness, patience, reason, the ability to produce culture and build history. The authors explain that this is one of the reasons why women are not allowed to know the mysteries of the Ifá divination game, which represent the history and destiny of the Yoruba people. On the other hand, the balance of power between the two sexes is always present in the myths. From the man's point of view, the need to control the woman arises not because of her inferiority, but because she has potential and characteristics capable of subduing him. Both men know that they are physically and psychologically equivalent. The Nagô mystical universe, for example, of which Candomblé is a remnant, is structured like many other mythologies on the principle of sexuality. From this dynamic and conflicting interaction, everything is generated. For the authors, discussing women in candomblé immediately leads to the mythical female figures that make up a profile of the understanding that the mythical system of candomblé has of the female condition. Carneiro and Cury present an important account from a daughter of Oxumaré, when she was asked about the relationship between men and women from the point of view of candomblé.

I see it. I see the following: Candomblé women are more like men, let's put it this way, they don't underestimate themselves in terms of men, and women from other religions still do. They still think that the man is above them and I'm a little lower, I'm going to get there, and Candomblé women aren't, most of them already think we're there, we're together... I think that precisely because in candomblé there are a lot of women, a lot of female positions, the presence of women is much more marked, much more traditional... they are more confrontational because it's a fact: within candomblé, they live with men there, side by side, and in general, I think they stand out. So, if she excels there, why shouldn't she excel from the outside? [...]

(CARNEIRO; CURY, 1993, p. 28).

Two elements are important to highlight from this quote. Firstly, Carneiro and Cury consider that candomblé makes it possible for women to open up a space of competition with men and macho society, which, strictly speaking, is not given to them. With the support of the orixás, the woman justifies a possible rejection of the man, openly confronts him and sometimes affirms her ability to overcome him. Secondly, in the words of the authors, understanding this self-image necessarily refers to the history of black women and their position in relation to the reality of Brazilian society, especially in the post-abolition period. African mythology insistently pointing to the most diverse strategies of insubordination - symbolic or real - opens up the possibility for black women to create defense mechanisms to survive and preserve their cultural traits of origin in the new context. In this way, the social organization of candomblé seeks to revive the social and hierarchical structure of the African kingdoms - especially Oyó - that slavery destroyed. However, in the diaspora, this form of organization, according to the authors, will aim to reorganize the black family, perpetuate cultural memory and ensure the survival of the group, and transmutation into the African gods will be the source of support for these women in confronting a hostile society.

In the text "Feminine Identity" (1993b)⁴, Sueli Carneiro questions the idea of a homogeneous female identity that encompasses all women. At the beginning of the text, Carneiro explains that identity is the result of a historical-cultural process, in which different definitions are attributed to individuals. The point is that the difference established between men and women, white and black, in Western culture, is seen and experienced as inferiority. Female identity is constructed in opposition to male identity and, in this way, a biological view defines women as inferior to men because of their physical strength; a religious view identifies women as by-products of men, given that they were built from Adam's rib; a cultural view defines a specific field for female activity and other privileged fields for male activity. Together, these arguments attribute a negative identity to women,

⁴ This text was originally published in CACE Informativo - the newsletter of the Centro de Assessoramento e Coordenação Empresarial.

...serving as a justification for the various levels of oppression and subordination to which this group is subjected, while also promoting the acceptance of a socially subordinate role. The author argues that female identity is a project under construction that depends on the acquisition of a set of rights capable of guaranteeing women the exercise of full citizenship. It is therefore necessary to dismantle the introjected models of the queen of the home, of the inexorable destiny of motherhood, of the restriction to the domestic family space, seeking to rescue the potential that has been stifled for centuries by chauvinist and patriarchal ideology. In addition, there are multiple flags of struggle: equality in the job market; breaking with stereotypes present in the formal education system that direct women towards "female careers"; defending a program of comprehensive care for women's health at all stages of life; demanding that the state act in relation to reproductive health, not only by offering different methods of contraception, but also by combating the mass sterilization of black women, combating domestic violence, beatings and rape, among other demands.

Carneiro's questioning of feminism becomes explicit when she asks whether the set of rights demanded - arising from the various flags of struggle - will be able to guarantee full citizenship for all women. She also asks whether, through these rights, we will promote the construction of a univocal identity for women and whether female identity is the same for all women. It is at this point that the author challenges feminist assumptions that universalize the category of woman.

When we talk about the myth of female fragility that has historically justified men's paternalistic protection of women, which women are we talking about?

We black women are part of a contingent of women, probably the majority, who have never recognized this myth in themselves, because they have never been treated as fragile.

We are part of a contingent of women who worked for centuries as slaves in the fields or on the streets as vendors, greengrocers, prostitutes, etc.; women who didn't understand anything when feminists said that women should take to the streets and work (CARNEIRO, 1993b, p. 11).

The author points out that black women are seen as objects that in the past were at the service of fragile *sinhazinhas* and perverted lords and, in the present, are domestic servants of liberated women and *dondocas*, or export-type *mulattos*. Still with the aim of

differentiating between white and black women, Carneiro mentions that black women are not the queens of anything, and that they are the antimusées of Brazilian society, given that the predominant aesthetic standard is that of the white woman. Also included in the author's analysis are inequalities at work, where "good looks" are required, and in the health system. In particular, with regard to this last area, she criticizes the advisory services of the former governor of São Paulo, Paulo Maluf, who drew up a proposal for the mass sterilization of black women, on the grounds that it was necessary to control the population growth of blacks in order to prevent this group from becoming an absolute majority by the year 2000 and being able to dispute control of political power in the country.

Carneiro (1993b) stresses that black women come from a different historical background and the classic discourse on the oppression of women is unable to account for the qualitative difference in the oppression they have suffered, as well as the effect that this oppression has had and still has on these women. In a similar vein, hooks (2015) criticizes white middle-class women when they insist that suffering cannot be measured. The author agrees with Benjamin Barber that suffering should not be conceived as a single, universal experience, as it is related to situations, needs and aspirations. In this way, there should be some historical and political parameters for the use of the term, allowing political priorities to be found so that more attention can be paid to different forms and degrees of suffering. Both authors emphasize the fact that neither oppression nor suffering should be seen as universal categories. A proper understanding of the experiences of different women presupposes analyzing how they develop in specific socio-historical contexts.

In 1988, the year Geledés was created and the 1st National Meeting of Black Women was held, the intellectual wrote the text "A Organização Nacional das Mulheres Negras e as Perspectivas Políticas" (The National Organization of Black Women and Political Perspectives). In this work, there is a more direct criticism of both the hegemonic feminist movement and the black movement. As Carneiro (1993a) explains, the Black Women's Movement was born marked by a contradiction regarding the need to demarcate a political identity in relation to these two movements, despite sharing general themes and proposals with them. The central point of criticism is the subordinate nature of the issue of

black women on the agenda of both movements. An example of the demands made by black women can be found in the words of activist Alzira Rufino:

During the 9th Feminist Meeting in PE (September 1987), we from the collective called out the women's movement for the racism that still permeates relations between white women and women of other ethnicities. From another aspect, that of machismo, we can make the same criticism of the black movement, where black women have no space for their specificity, and are still seen as tasks, to be kept quiet and invisible (CARNEIRO, 1993a, p. 14).

Despite a common criticism from different black activists, there was no unanimity in terms of struggle strategies, and there were different perspectives. Carneiro cites some of the political positions that ran through the emerging Black Women's Movement in Brazil at the time. The first recognizes the importance and seriousness of the issue of black women, but defends the subordination of the organization of Black Women to the Black Movement. One of the reasons for this position is the fear that the political action of black women would break the supposed unity of the general black struggle, due to the possible dispersion of militant cadres. A second view was that the Black Women's Movement should take on an increasingly feminist character, with autonomy from the Black Movement. The issue of black women should be incorporated into the Feminist Movement. The third perspective sees the organization of black women as one aspect of the need to organize the various oppressed social sectors. The organization would be situated in the perspective of the class struggle and aimed at the radical transformation of society. There is an imposition of certain political party positions, regardless of whether they dialogue with the issues raised by black women. Finally, the fourth view advocates political action by black women based on dual militancy, i.e. in both the Black Movement and the Feminist Movement. It would be up to black women to sensitize these two movements to assume in their political practice that racism and sexism are structural elements and not peripheral when it comes to establishing a project for a just and egalitarian society.

The latent idea of blackening feminism becomes clear when Carneiro (1993a, p. 17-18) mentions that, regardless of the point of view on the mode of action, the struggle always moves in the direction of building full citizenship for black Brazilian women, which means going beyond defending the rights constitutionally won by the Women's Movements.

The author mentions that black women do not participate in the productive process on equal terms with other groups, and are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy as a result of being penalized for their lack of opportunity for mobility in the occupational structure. Thus, one of the flags of struggle is against the mechanisms of racial discrimination in the job market, such as the euphemism "good looks". Here we have the defense of compensatory actions that seek to eliminate historically accumulated disadvantages. Another demand presented in this text originally published in 1988 is for the collection and analysis of the color question in all official censuses to make it possible to identify the living conditions of the population, enabling knowledge of racial inequalities. The author also cites a series of demands: a) application of the constitutional principle that makes it a crime to practice discrimination; b) eradication of the terrible living conditions that lead black women to resort to abortion; c) creation of basic conditions for the black population so that it is possible to break the vicious circle that confines the black population in general, and particularly black women, to the underbelly of Brazilian society.

In 2003a, when Sueli Carneiro wrote the text "Enegrecer o feminismo: a situação da mulher negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero", there was a synthesis of these ideas that had already been gestating. Many of the elements previously discussed are taken up in this work, but there is a deeper reflection on the gender hierarchy. The author considers that the social appropriation of women from the group that was defeated in the colonization process - in this case black women - is one of the emblematic elements of the affirmation of the superiority of the victors. At the same time, it can be said that this appropriation is an explicit manifestation of racism. As Foucault (1999) postulates, the emergence of biopower has inserted racism as a central element in the exercise of power in modern states. One of the functions of racism is to fragment and make caesuras between races (to establish a cut between what should live and what should die). The second function, defined by Foucault, allows us to think more clearly about the relationship between the colonizer and the black woman. This function allows for a positive relationship: "the more you kill, the more you will make die", or "the more you let die, the more you will live" (Foucault, 1999, p. 305). The lives of one and the other are put in relation, and the

subjugation of black women is seen as the superiority of the white man. In this sense, direct and indirect murder are fundamental in this type of relationship.

Still on the subject of gender hierarchy, Carneiro points out that the colonial rape perpetrated by white men against black and indigenous women, as well as the resulting miscegenation, structures the myth of racial democracy and is the cement of all gender and racial hierarchies, which are still intact. Gonzalez (1984), on the other hand, highlights the deification of the mulatto as a symptom of how the myth of racial democracy has a disproportionate effect on black women. The author points out that the deification of this figure at carnival time contrasts with the persistence of black women in domestic work. In this sense, the mulatto and the maid are, in fact, the same figure. Also to think about the gender hierarchy and its relationship with colonial society, it is important to mention that Abdias do Nascimento (2016) points out that our slave society inherited the patriarchal family structure from Portugal and black women ended up paying a high price for this. The demographic imbalance between men and women during slavery and the asymmetrical relationship between masters and slaves made it possible for the white man to have a sexual monopoly over the few women who existed. Although these relationships were forced (rape), they were not considered crimes. Furthermore, in general, these relationships did not result in marriage. According to the author, a division was created in which each woman had a role: "white to marry, black to work, mulatto to fornicate" (2016, p. 62). The representation of the mulatto woman was ambiguous: on the one hand, her culinary skills, her hygiene, her resistance to work, her irresistible sensuality and her ability to seduce stood out; on the other, the author says, she was characterized by a lack of morality and irresponsibility. In any case, she didn't have the same status as a white woman and, above all, the possibility of starting a family was practically non-existent, not only with a white man, but also with a black man. This reinforces the understanding of Sueli Carneiro and Lélia Gonzalez that the myth of racial democracy is a fundamental element not only for hierarchies of race, but also of gender.

Reflecting on intra-gender inequality, Carneiro (2003a) argues that black women need a feminist perspective in which gender is a theoretical variable, but which cannot be

separated from other axes of oppression. It is necessary to consider racism and its impact on gender relations, since it determines the gender hierarchy itself in our society. At the same time, the author (2003b) reiterates that, on the one hand, the classic feminist formulation has a white and Western identity; on the other, it proves insufficient - from a theoretical and practical political point of view - to integrate the different expressions of feminism constructed in multiracial and multicultural societies. Thus, the struggle is to combat gender and intra-gender inequalities, adopting a black feminist perspective, which is related to the specific condition of being a woman, black and, in general, poor. It should also be mentioned that this perspective is inseparable from the anti-racist struggle. In summary, the author explains that:

Blackening Brazilian feminism has meant concretely demarcating and instituting on the agenda of the women's movement the weight that the racial issue has in shaping, for example, demographic policies, in characterizing the issue of violence against women by introducing the concept of racial violence as a determining aspect of the forms of violence suffered by half of the country's female population who are not white; introducing the discussion of ethnic/racial diseases or diseases with a higher incidence in the black population as fundamental issues in the formulation of public policies in the area of health; instituting criticism of selection mechanisms in the job market such as "good looks", which maintain inequalities and privileges between white and black women (CARNEIRO, 2003a, s/p).

Carneiro's idea of the need to demarcate the place of black women within the feminist movement is close to the debate on the intersectionality of forms of oppression, as she points out that black women are simultaneously subjected to forms of oppression caused by gender, class and race issues, among others. Thus, for example, it can be mentioned that there is a clear approximation between this author's perspective and Crenshaw's (2002) proposal, which uses the concept of intersectionality to conceptualize the association of multiple systems of subordination. Crenshaw uses the metaphor of avenues to explain the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between different axes of subordination. These axes, which overlap and intersect, can be seen as avenues that structure the social, economic and political terrain and cause dynamics of disempowerment. It is precisely this disempowerment that justifies the need to further blacken feminism, as will be discussed in the following section.

Why feminism still needs to be blackened?

Throughout its history, the Brazilian Black Women's Movement has made important achievements. The construction of an internationalist perspective of struggle, as Carneiro (2003) points out, is one of the reasons why issues relating to black women have gained greater space on the political agenda. As Prá and Epping (2012) explain, with the holding of international conferences and the signing of treaties, agreements, protocols or conventions, it became possible to find forms of support to confront the problem of gender inequalities, both in developed and developing countries. The Black Women's Movement took an active part in these international conferences. As early as the 1980s, as Ribeiro (1995) reports, in the run-up to the Third World Conference on Women, held by the UN in Nairobi in 1985, the São Paulo State Council on the Status of Women, which had a Black Women's Commission, put together a diagnosis of the situation of black women in the country. The study prepared by Sueli Carneiro and Thereza Santos presented a series of socio-economic data to demonstrate the reality experienced by the black population in general and black women in particular. It also tried to point out ways of overcoming these inequalities. In the run-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (held in Cairo in 1994), according to Ribeiro, Geledés - the Black Women's Institute - organized the National Seminar on Reproductive Policies and Rights for Black Women. From this seminar, the proposals on the subject were unified and expressed in the Itapecerica da Serra Declaration of Black Women. The document stated that:

It is the state's task to guarantee the necessary conditions for Brazilians, women, and in particular black women, to be able to exercise their sexuality and reproductive rights, controlling their own fertility in order to have or not have the children they want, guaranteeing access to good quality health services, pregnancy care, childbirth and abortion (RIBEIRO, 1995, p. 454).

Black women took to the conference the idea that "in times of the spread of the concept of superfluous populations, reproductive freedom is essential for discriminated ethnic groups, in order to stop controlling and racist policies" (CARNEIRO, 2003, s/p).

Previously, at the Vienna Human Rights Conference, held in 1993, the commitment was made, suggested by the Brazilian government, to hold a world conference on racism before the year 2000. Carneiro points out that, on the one hand, the Vienna Declaration advances the understanding of the universality of women's human rights, but, on the other, there is no explicit reference to the violation of women's rights based on racial discrimination. On this point, concrete progress was made at the Fourth Women's Conference, held by the UN in 1995. Carneiro points out that, due to women's efforts at this conference, Brazil, for the first time in international diplomacy, obstructed a meeting of the G-77 (group of developing countries) because it disagreed with the removal of the term ethnic-racial from Article 32 of the Beijing declaration. This was a non-negotiable issue for black women in Brazil and the countries of the North. In the end, the article established the need for:

intensify efforts to ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their development and advancement due to factors such as race, age, ethnic, cultural origin, religion... (CARNEIRO, 2003, s/p).

As Soares (2000) points out, in an unprecedented way, UN documents recognized that racism is one of the obstacles to equal opportunities.

As well as raising awareness of the issue of black women on the political agenda, it should be borne in mind that the relationship between the Black Women's Movement and the Feminist Movement has changed. Ribeiro (1995) considers that, from the 1970s to the 1990s, despite the difficulties, there were advances in the relationship between black women and the Feminist Movement. According to the author, the analyses of the historical processes experienced by the black population are still not fully absorbed effectively, but the possibilities for dialog, partnerships and joint actions have expanded. The Feminist Movement has shown itself to be more attentive or vigilant to the actions of black women, beginning to qualify its discourse and practice and also including ethnic and racial issues as important in the struggle for democracy and citizenship.

However, despite these elements, the socio-economic situation of black women is still alarming, showing that the agenda for change proposed by Carneiro (2003a,2003b) is still relevant. For example, when we look at poverty indicators, not only racial inequality but also intra-gender inequality is significant. The indicator of monetary poverty, which according to the IBGE (2021) refers only to insufficient household income, reveals that the rates of extreme poverty and poverty among black and brown people are more than double those observed for the white population: 7.4% of black and brown people are extremely poor (compared to 3.5% of white people) and 31% were poor (compared to 15.1% of white people). Black or brown women are the most disadvantaged when we look at this indicator: 7.5% are extremely poor (compared to 3.7% of white women) and 31.9% are poor (compared to 15.5% of white women)⁵. According to the same survey, households with black or brown women as heads of household, without a spouse and with children under the age of 14, have the highest incidence of poverty. In these household arrangements, 17.3% of the residents had a per capita household income of less than US\$1.90, which classifies them as extremely poor, and 57.9% had an income of less than US\$5.50 and could be considered poor.

However, in the literature and in international treaties, poverty is recognized for its multidimensionality. Thus, with reference to the Sustainable Development Goal - SDG 1 - of the UN's 2030 Agenda, it is recommended to monitor the situation of poverty not only by monetary indicators, but also by social protection coverage, access to economic resources and to de-mercantiled social services and goods, such as education, health and sanitation (IBGE, 2021). Without dwelling on all of these indicators, it is worth highlighting some factors of intra-gender inequality in the area of health. In 2017-2018, according to estimates from the IBGE's Family Budget Survey

⁵ The IBGE (2021), following the World Bank's definition, states that families with a monthly household income per capita of less than US\$5.50 are considered poor, which is equivalent to approximately R\$450.00 in 2020. The extremely poor are families with a monthly household income per capita of less than US\$1.90, which is equivalent to approximately R\$155.00 in 2020 (IBGE, 2021).

(POF), only 26% of the population had access to private health insurance. Among black or brown women, the percentage was 18.3%, while among white women it was 37.1. Also according to the IBGE survey (2021), those who had health insurance tended to declare a "good" family standard of living (58.8%). It is also black women who have the greatest restrictions on access to health services, according to the POF: in 2017/2018, 22.5% of family arrangements formed by black women without a spouse and with children up to 14 years of age suffered restrictions on medicines and 35.6% on health services. To give an idea of the social distances, the percentage of arrangements in the same conditions with white women as heads of household had 17.5% restrictions on medicines and 30.1% on health services, revealing a difference of approximately 5 percentage points for both indicators. To complete this picture, in 2019, 7.3% of black or brown women had not had a medical consultation for more than two years or had never had one (compared to 5.5 of white women)⁶.

Soares (2000) points out that the issue of poverty weighs disproportionately on black women, since they suffer discrimination based on both gender and race. Added to this is the fact that for these women, who are often responsible for looking after the family, the deterioration of public services (health, school, daycare) has a direct impact on their quality of life, in other words, it is black women who are hardest hit by the lack of adequate public policies. At the same time, social programs are of crucial importance to this section of the population. According to the IBGE (2021), the granting of benefits from social programs in 2020 meant that inequalities did not widen during the crisis, especially among those in extreme poverty. Without income support from social programs, black and brown women would reach a poverty rate of 42.4% (with the benefit, the rate was 31.9%) and extreme poverty of 17.7% (with the benefit, it was 7.5%).

⁶ The theme of this topic is intra-gender inequality, but it should be noted that, according to the same survey (IBGE, 2021), 20.3% of black men and 14.5% of white men had not been to the doctor for more than two years or had never been. This data reveals not only the difficulties of access, but also the lesser attention that men, in general, tend to pay to their health.

Still on the subject of intra-gender inequality, we must mention the situation of black women in the job market. One of the first challenges they face is making it into this social sphere. According to data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNADC), in the first quarter of this year, of the 48.8 million black women of working age, just over half (51.5%) were in the labor market, looking for work or employed.

The percentage of white women is slightly higher, at 54%. The percentage of black and white men is the same, at 72.2%. In addition to the disadvantages in the participation rate, black women are the hardest hit by unemployment. In the first quarter of this year, more than 4.1 million black women were unemployed, which equates to an unemployment rate of 16.3% (compared to 10.5% of white women and black men, and 7.4% of white men). Another important figure is the informality rate, since workers in this situation usually have less access to social protection. In the first quarter of 2022, 43.3% of black women were in informal jobs. This rate is only lower than that of black men, which was 46.6%; on the other hand, the white population had lower rates, 34.8% for white men and 32.7% for white women⁷. It should also be added that black women are mostly found at the bottom of the occupational structure. An example of this is the concentration of this group in domestic work. Although there has been a decrease in the number of people employed in domestic work, according to Lima and Prates (2019), if we focus only on the black population (black and brown), there was a significant increase between 2002 and 2012 in the number of people in this type of occupation, from 56.7% to 64%. This percentage still stands, as currently 65% of domestic workers in Brazil are black⁸. As well as being over-represented in this socially undervalued activity, this group has other disadvantages compared to white women. In a previous study (MELLO,2021b), we showed that white women are better placed in domestic work, being more likely to work as day-care workers or companions to the elderly, while black women are more likely

⁷Source of data cited: <https://portal.fgv.br/artigos/participacao-mulheres-negras-mercado-trabalho>. Accessed on November 30, 2022. According to the article, the black population includes blacks and browns and the white population includes whites and yellows.

⁸Source: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2022-04/mulheres-negras-sao-65-das-trabalhadoras-domesticas-no-pais>. Accessed on December 4, 2022.

to be domestic workers in general. Another important fact is that white women have an advantage when it comes to obtaining formal employment (a formal work permit), which guarantees them greater access to rights and social protection, as well as better incomes. In terms of this last criterion, in any of the country's regions, white women in domestic work have a higher income than black women. White privilege is unquestionable. At the same time, as Biroli (2018) points out, black women, compared to white women and white and black men, due to structural racism and unequal, capitalist social organization, have professional trajectories that are more marked by processes of exploitation and oppression.

This disadvantageous position has an impact on black women's earnings. All four population groups - white men, black men, white women and black women - experienced real income growth between 2012 and 2020. The income differences between the groups also decreased over time. However, black women still have the lowest average incomes. In the first quarter of 2022, black and brown women earned the equivalent of 62% of the income of white and yellow women and less than half that of white men. Over the last decade, even though inequalities have decreased, progress has been timid, since in 2012, black women earned 60% of the income of white women, i.e. the gain was only 2 percentage points in 2022. Compared to white men, the gain was slightly greater, as the percentage went from 41% in 2012 to 47% in 2022. In any case, it was white women who managed to reduce inequality the most in this regard. In 2012, they received the equivalent of 69% of the income of white men; in 2022, this percentage rose to 76%⁹. It should be borne in mind that even in areas where black women predominate, they suffer disadvantages in terms of income, as was shown when we looked at domestic work.

⁹ Source of data cited: <https://portal.fgv.br/artigos/participacao-mulheres-negras-mercado-trabalho> Accessed on November 30, 2022.

The data on intra-gender inequality in the labor market shows what has already been pointed out elsewhere by black women (e.g. Gonzalez, 2020)¹⁰, which is the coexistence of the sexual division of labor with the racial division. In this way,

[...] if the sexual division of labor has configured roles for women that the feminist movement seeks to question and redefine, the racial division of labor establishes differentiated roles and functions within the female group, where the evaluation of the costs and benefits earned expresses the differentiated levels of exploitation and oppression that fall to women from different racial groups" (CARNEIRO apud SOARES, 2000, p. 266).

This situation of socio-economic vulnerability of black women, in our view, is just another facet of the genocide of the black population. Abdias do Nascimento (2016)[Originally published in 1978], initially starts with two definitions of genocide:

The use of deliberate and systematic measures (such as death, bodily and mental injury, impossible living conditions, prevention of birth) calculated to exterminate a racial, political or cultural group or to destroy the language, religion or culture of a group (WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE apud NASCIMENTO, 2016, p. 15).

The other definition is as follows:

Genocide n. (neol.). Denial of the right to exist to entire human groups, by the extermination of their individuals, the disintegration of their political, social, cultural, linguistic institutions and their national and religious feelings. E.g. Hitler's persecution of the Jews, racial segregation, etc. (DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE apud NASCIMENTO, 2016, p. 15).

We can see that in the author's understanding, genocide is not just about physical elimination or lethal death, but also has a dimension that we could relate to forms of social death. Nascimento identifies two strategies of genocide against the black population. The first is related to the process of miscegenation, which is based on the sexual exploitation of black women. As the author explains, the black spot in the Brazilian population would be solved by eliminating the population of African descent, since the growth of the mulatto population would lead to the disappearance of the black race and the progressive whitening of the country's population. The

¹⁰ For Gonzalez (2020), the discussion on the sexual division of labour needs to be articulated with the debate on the racial division, because otherwise it would end up falling into a kind of abstract universal rationalism, which is typical of a masculinized and white discourse.

whitening policy was structured in such a way as to limit the growth of the black population in any way, with post-abolition immigration policy also playing a crucial role in this process. The second genocide strategy pointed out by the author lies in cultural whitening. According to Nascimento, the white ruling classes have at their disposal the organs of power (government, laws, police, capital, armed forces) and means of social and cultural control, such as the education system, the mass media and literary production. In his view, all these instruments are used to destroy black people both as people and as creators and drivers of their own culture. The only privilege granted to black people is to become white inside and out. And yet, this imperialism of whiteness, and also of capitalism, responds to bastardized nicknames such as assimilation, acculturation, miscegenation (2016, p. 111).

It is interesting to note that Nascimento suggests that genocide should be thought of historically, starting with:

From the crude classification of blacks as savages and inferior, to the extolling of the virtues of mixed blood as an attempt to eradicate the "black stain"; from the operation of religious "syncretism" to the legal abolition of the black question through the National Security Law and census omission [...] Brazil's unofficial history records the long-standing genocide that has been perpetrated against Afro-Brazilians (NASCIMENTO, 2016, p. 111).

Following this intuition, Elisa Nascimento (2016), in the book's afterword, argues that the theme of genocide is still very topical. The author talks above all about lethal violence, recalling the daily slaughter of hundreds of people that has been the subject not only of parliamentary commissions, but also of campaigns by human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. At the same time, there have been various forms of mobilization by the black population to oppose this violence, such as the "React or You'll be Killed!" movement. React or Be Killed! The elements pointed out by Elisa Nascimento help us to think about the transition from indirect forms of murder to direct murder. The disposability of the lives of the black population has always been a constant in our history. However, during the period of slavery, this group had a relative value that was associated with its condition as a commodity. The indirect

forms of provoking lethal and social death - which can be related to the two strategies pointed out by Abdias do Nascimento - have recently become increasingly explicit.

The argument is that the genocide of the black population is materializing in two main ways: a) through submission to subhuman living conditions; b) and through physical extermination. We have already talked in this article about the poverty to which black women are subjected. However, we must emphasize that poverty is related to other problems and what we want to highlight here is the process of mass incarceration that is happening to these women, which is causing their social death. According to Germano et al. (2018), since the 2000s, the incarceration of women has been growing at an alarming rate, not only in Brazil, but worldwide. Proportionally, the female prison population is growing faster than the male prison population. With reference to data from the 2nd edition of InfoPen Women, the authors state that the number of women in prison has increased by around 656%, with 42,000 women in prison by June 2016 and 44,721 inmates by the end of the same year. However, what is most important to highlight is the profile of women deprived of their liberty in our country. First of all, they are young women: 27% are aged between 18 and 24; and 23% are aged between 25 and 29¹¹. Secondly, it is mainly black women who are being incarcerated. They represent 62% of women deprived of their liberty in Brazil¹². It is important to note that in 2016, black women made up 54% of the female population in Brazil¹³, which reveals the representation of this group in the prison system. If we analyze the distribution of the prison population according to race/color by state, the situation is even more alarming in some places. In Acre, 97% of women deprived of their liberty are black; this percentage stands at 94% in Ceará and 90% in Maranhão, Piauí and Tocantins. Once again, it must be stressed that in all these places, the percentage of black women in prison exceeds that of black women in the total population. Imprisonment is a form of social death both because of the conditions in which women prisoners serve their sentences, generally without any

¹¹Information on age group is available for 74% of the female population, or 30,501 women (Infopen, 2017).

¹²Information on race/color is available for 72% of the female prison population (Infopen, 2017).

¹³Source: IBGE, Continuous National Household Sample Survey, 2016.

observance of basic human rights, but also because of the difficulties of social reintegration after life in prison.

The physical extermination of black women can be seen in various ways. One of them is the lethal violence caused by the police, which has hit the black population in an absurdly disproportionate way. According to research carried out by the Network of Security Observatories, every four hours a black person is killed in police actions in Bahia, Ceará, Piauí, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Pernambuco. Among the 2,653 deaths caused by the police, which include racial information in the six states of the Network, 82.7% were black people. Rio de Janeiro is the state with the highest number of deaths of black people in police actions. In this state, of the 1,092 deaths whose color/race was reported, 939 were black. The research also reveals that in the six states mentioned, the proportion of black people killed by the police is higher than the proportion of this group in the population in the respective states, which reveals the racism that structures police actions¹⁴. Although research on police violence is not always gender-specific, it can be said that black women are not immune to violent police action. In order to overcome the lack of data on women, Carvalho (2022) resorted to analyzing news broadcast in the media as a source of information. The author collected 250 news items on the Google News platform between January 20, 2022 and March 12, 2022. In this corpus, the following were identified: 9 reports on black women beaten in police action; 39 reports on black women beaten by police officers; 8 reports on black women killed by police officers and 21 reports on black women victims of stray bullets. Thus, out of a total of 250 reports, there was explicit mention of black women in 30%. It should be borne in mind that not all the reports allow for racial identification.

Still on the subject of the physical elimination of black women, we can cite the data on homicide and femicide of this group. Gonçalves (2022), using the Map of Violence as a reference, reports that there has been a 54% increase in homicides of

¹⁴ Source: https://www.geledes.org.br/negros-sao-maioria-dos-mortos-em-aco-es-policiais-em-seis-estados/?gclid=CjwKCAiAp7GcBhA0EiwA9U0mtr-y6Uuku0Eu3jr6Gpb6BWua2b3nMO4fd2QPjr8yq31inD8QQ3ldYhoCbXcQAvD_BwE. Access in : 01 dez. 2022.

black women, from 1,864 in 2003 to 2,875 in 2013. On the other hand, in the same period, the annual number of homicides of white women fell by 10% to 1,676 in 2013. It should be noted that the number of white women killed in 2013 is lower than the number of black women killed in 2003. The author also reports that data presented in the 2019 Brazilian Public Security Yearbook shows that in 2017 and 2018, femicide crimes accounted for 29.6% of deaths involving women. Once again, black women were the preferred victims, as 61% of those who lost their lives to femicide were black, compared to 38.5% of white women, 0.3% of indigenous women and 0.2% of yellow women, Gonçalves said. A revealing fact pointed out by Gonçalves' study is that black women are more likely to be murdered in public and not so much in the domestic environment, which indicates the limited reach of current policies to combat domestic violence when it comes to black women.

What the data presented at this stage shows is something already pointed out by Carneiro (2005): blackness is inscribed under the sign of death. This becomes explicit when analyzing the distinctions that arise in the process of being born, dying and death, or simply in the process of living and dying for blacks and whites in Brazilian society. What makes us argue about the actualization of genocide, still using Carneiro (2005, p 76), is his assertion that "where the device of raciality has no interest in disciplining, subordinating or electing the subordinate segment of the power relationship constructed by raciality, biopower begins to act as a strategy for eliminating the undesirable Other". In short, the author asserts that whiteness and blackness have different conditioning factors when it comes to living and dying.

Final considerations

The women of my generation understood the meaning of the words freedom and equality because of the thirst that the absence of freedom and equality caused us (CARNEIRO apud FRATESCHI, 2021, p. 6).

In this article we have tried to recover the main criticisms that Sueli Carneiro addresses to the hegemonic Feminist Movement. Above all, we were interested in her

proposal to blacken feminism which, among other elements, stands out for its emphasis on the need to demarcate and establish on the women's movement agenda the weight that the racial issue has in shaping society in different spheres.

As pointed out throughout the text, the relationship between the Black Women's Movement and the Feminist Movement has changed over the years. However, one statement made by Ribeiro (1995) still seems to be relevant today: the issue of race has been left to black women, as if they were the only ones marked by race. Ribeiro, like Sueli Carneiro, stresses that we need to understand that race, like gender, constitutes power relations and therefore determines the lives of black women and men as much as white women and men. This in itself is a reason to blacken feminism. However, the motivation for blackening feminism was sought by highlighting the maintenance of intra-gender inequality, which can be attested to by different indicators, such as those relating to poverty and the way in which people enter and participate in the labor market. With reference to any of these areas, one can unquestionably see white privilege and the fact that, as Ribeiro has already pointed out, the achievements of the Women's Movement privilege white women to the detriment of black women.

Above all, the argument that emerges from the data presented is that feminism needs to be blackened in order to act against the genocide of the black population. As Carneiro (2005, p. 78) argues, raciality inscribes whiteness in the register of vitalism and blackness in the sign of death. It has been shown that genocide against the black population today, especially women, is materialized both through submission to subhuman living conditions (poverty and mass incarceration, for example) and through physical extermination (lethal violence by the police and femicide). Thus, there is a combination of social death and lethal death, both caused by the articulation of multiple forms of oppression related to issues of gender, class and race. It is in this context that Sueli Carneiro's thinking becomes absolutely relevant. One of the author's main ideas that needs to be recalled is that groups of black women have specific demands that essentially cannot be dealt with exclusively under the rubric of the gender issue, if this

does not take into account the specificities that define being a woman (CARNEIRO, 2003b). There is no doubt that gender oppression weighs heavily on women, but as I have been arguing (MELLO, 2021a), we can talk about the primacy of race in the debate on intersectionality. In Carneiro, this perception seems to be explicit when she states that "the 'variable' race has produced subalternized genders, both in terms of a stigmatized female identity (of black women) and subalternized masculinities (of black men) with lower prestige than the female gender of the racially dominant group (of white women)" (2003b, p. 119). Thus, the author argues that racism lowers the status of the genders, instituting intra-gender equality as the first step in social equalization. In addition, as already mentioned in this article, Carneiro also considers that racism superlates the genders through privileges arising from the exploitation and exclusion of the subordinate genders.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Sueli Carneiro's thinking clearly proposes a radical transformation of reality which, of course, involves overcoming racism. For the author, racism is, at the same time, an obstacle to democracy, to the realization of the human condition and also to the implementation of "egalitarian justice in Brazil" (CARNEIRO apud FRATESCHI, 2021, p. 6). It is worth noting that the idea of radicalizing social justice in black feminist thought, such as Sueli Carneiro's, has a broad transformative potential and not just for one group, hence its supreme importance.

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