


Escrevivendo the many faces of racism: a cartography with black biology educators

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to map the lived-writings of black biology teachers and their perceptions of racism in Brazil. This is a qualitative study, inspired by the cartographic perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, and associated with the writing-living of Conceição Evaristo. The research was carried out through virtual meetings on Google Meet, with discussions initiated by thought-provoking questions presented to the participants. A research journal was also used as a tool for data production. Among the main findings were: questions regarding self-identification, the pain experienced by teachers when recounting the many faces of racism, gender issues that affect Black educators, as well as the need to broaden the ethnic-racial debate in teacher education. These findings highlight the need to expand research on teacher training and the implementation of legal frameworks in schools, aiming to foster racial literacy starting in basic education.

Keywords: Cartography. Black Teachers. Education on Ethnic-Racial Relations. Writing about Lived Experience(s). Basic Education. Biology Teaching. Anti-racist Training. Law 10.639/2003.

Escrevivendo as diversas faces do racismo: uma cartografia com docentes negros de biologia

Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho foi mapear *escrevivências* de docentes negros de biologia e seus sentidos em torno do racismo no Brasil. Esta pesquisa possui natureza qualitativa, inspirada na perspectiva cartográfica de Deleuze e Guattari, associada às *escrevivências* de Conceição Evaristo. A pesquisa se caracterizou por encontros virtuais no Google Meet, com debates iniciados a partir de questões mobilizadoras apresentadas aos participantes. O diário de bordo foi também utilizado como um instrumento de produção de dados. Dentre os principais mapeamentos, destacam-se: questionamentos em torno da autodeclaração, as dores dos docentes ao narrar as diversas faces do racismo, as questões de gênero que atravessam os docentes negros, bem como a necessidade de ampliar o debate étnico-racial na formação docente. Estes mapeamentos apontam para a necessidade de ampliação das pesquisas em torno da formação docente e da implementação dos dispositivos legais nas escolas, visando desenvolver o letramento racial a partir da escola básica.

Palavras-chave: Cartografia. Docentes negros(as). Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais. *Escrevivência(s)*. Educação Básica. Ensino de Biologia. Formação Antirracista. Lei 10.639/2003.

1 Introduction

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In this article, we focus on the process of mapping the *escrevivências* of biology teachers around racism, in its multiple dimensions, and its entanglements with Black bodies and Black teaching experiences. *Escrevivência*, a concept coined by Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo, refers to a form of writing rooted in lived experience, particularly the embodied, collective, and historical experiences of Black subjects, in which life and writing are inseparable. Our reflections began during the first author's undergraduate studies and culminated in her master's dissertation, affects that led us to map the bodies of Black biology teachers (Neri; Freixo, 2025). Inspired by the writings of Conceição Evaristo (2020), we engaged in the production of *escrevivências* with biology teachers, aiming to map, together with them, the different manifestations of racism in our society and how these traverse their Black bodies.

In *Plantation Memories – Episodes of Everyday Racism*, the author Grada Kilomba (2019) addresses three dimensions of racism: everyday, institutional, and structural. According to the author, everyday racism refers to the vocabulary, discourses, images, gestures, actions, and gazes that position the Black subject not only as the “other,” but as *otherness* itself (Kilomba, 2019). For Kilomba, otherness is the personification of the repressed aspects of white society.

Every time I am positioned as the “other” — whether the unwanted “Other,” the intrusive “other,” the dangerous “other,” the violent “other,” the passionate “other,” or the dirty “other,” the excited “other,” the wild “other,” the natural “other,” the desirable “other,” or the exotic “other” — I am inevitably experiencing racism, because I am being forced to become the personification of that which the white subject does not want to recognize in themselves. I become the “Other” of whiteness, not the self — and, therefore, I am denied the right to exist as an equal (Kilomba, 2019, p. 78).

Regarding institutional racism, Maria Aparecida Bento (2022), in her book *The Pact of Whiteness*, argues that racism at the institutional level refers to practices that appear neutral in the present but that reflect or perpetuate the effects of discrimination enacted in the past.

Institutional racism emphasizes that racism is not only an ideological phenomenon but also an institutionalized one. The term refers to a pattern of unequal treatment in everyday operations such as educational systems and agendas, the labor market, the criminal justice system, among others. Institutional racism operates in such a way that it places white subjects at a clear advantage in relation to other racialized groups (Kilomba, 2019, p. 78-79).

Official structures operate in a manner that privileges whiteness, placing members of other racialized groups at a visible disadvantage, outside dominant structures (Kilomba, 2019, p. 77), which characterizes what we call structural racism. Kilomba (2019) conceptually presents structural racism as the way in which Black people are excluded from most social and political structures. Almeida (2019) states that:

[...] racism is a consequence of the very social structure, that is, of the “normal” way in which political, economic, legal, and even family relations are constituted. It is neither a social pathology nor an institutional disorder. Racism is structural. Individual behaviors and institutional processes derive from a society in which racism is the rule, not the exception (Almeida, 2019, p. 50).

Although we recognize the need to discuss the different ways in which racism manifests socially, so that we can combat it and fight for racial equity, we initially sought to debate scientific racism and the possibilities of an anti-racist education. However, after our first contact with the teachers who participated in this research, certain entanglements emerged that guided our cartographic path toward the questions that mobilized the production of this work: what do teachers feel when debating racism, and how do they feel it? For them, how can racist practices and acts be characterized?

Focusing specifically on these questions, the aim of this study was to map the *escrevivências* of biology teachers regarding the entanglements produced by racism in their Black bodies, discussing the meanings constructed by these teachers around racism and racist practices in Brazil.

2 Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature, and we adopted the cartographic perspective proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1995) as our methodological framework, articulated with the *escrevivências* of Conceição Evaristo (2020).

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Cartography is presented by Deleuze and Guattari in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* (1995), based on the principle of the rhizome, a metaphor that explains the nature of an acentric system that has neither beginning nor end (but always a middle through which it grows and overflows) and is composed solely of lines (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995). Deleuze and Guattari (1995, p. 31) emphasize that “unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and none of its traits necessarily refers to traits of the same nature.”

Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2009, p. 10) argue that the meaning of cartography lies in the following of paths, involvement in processes of production, and the connection of networks or rhizomes. The tree represents filiation, whereas the rhizome represents alliance—exclusively alliance (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, p. 36); and, like the rhizome, we believe that in constructing a cartography we must foster alliances.

Thus, Passos and Barros (2009) caution that cartography, as a research-intervention method, is not an undirected action, since it reverses the traditional meaning of method without relinquishing the orientation of the research trajectory. According to Oliveira (2014), this cartographic characteristic of transforming method into problems renders it methodologically inventive.

By aligning the cartographic method with the inspirations of Conceição Evaristo (2020) and her *escrevivências*, we embraced the possibility of moving forward without following previously established rules, developing an engaged form of writing by the researchers. According to Gastaldo (2014, p. 12):

[...] the positionality of the researcher is a fundamental tool for interpreting what takes place in the field and for creating a narrative that, far from being neutral, is rigorous and engaged, allowing for the proposal of alternative ways of seeing and thinking about phenomena (Gastaldo, 2014, p.12).

While Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2009) present cartography as a method that is not meant to be applied, but rather experienced and assumed as an attitude, *escrevivente* writing, as a methodological device, breaks with traditional academic models and enables first-person intervention (Felisberto, 2020). *Escrevivência* is the writing of the self. Here, we refer to this research as an *Escrevivente Cartography*.

Our intention, in this section of the study, was to follow paths and processes of meaning production regarding racism, starting from the *escrevivências* of Black biology teachers. Therefore, we needed people with whom to collectively build an *Escrevivente Cartography*, since *escrevivente* writing goes beyond the boundaries of writing centered on an individualized subject; it is a reflection traversed by collectivity (Evaristo, 2020).

In light of the above, we sought teachers from basic education who self-identified as Black and were graduates of the Biological Sciences Teacher Education program at a public university in the interior of the state of Bahia. This choice was based on the idea of inviting colleagues from the aforementioned program to reflect, from our shared experiences, on issues related to ethnic-racial relations.

To initiate the interventionist stage of our *Escrevivente Cartography*, we invited potential research participants who fit the profile we were seeking: those who were working in basic education and who recognized themselves as Black. They were asked to state their self-identification, which served as an inclusion criterion for participation in the study.

After mapping the participants according to their self-identification, we arrived at a group of ten cartographers, six women and four men, who volunteered to take part in the research. Among them, five self-identified as *preta* (Black), one self-identified as *negra* (Black), two self-identified as *parda*, and two self-identified as *negra-parda*.

These biology teachers work in the city of Feira de Santana and its districts, as well as in neighboring cities such as Coração de Maria, Santo Antônio de Jesus, Santo Estevão, and Lamarão. They teach in a variety of classes, not only those associated with the Biological Sciences Teacher Education program, but also subjects such as Geography,

History, Integrative Practices II, Technology, and Innovation. Five teach in public schools in the state of Bahia, and five teach in private schools.

The research was characterized by virtual meetings held on the Google Meet platform, which we referred to as “Cartographic Meetings,” in which discussions were initiated through mobilizing questions presented to the participants. In this section of the study, we focused on the following questions: (1) Do you feel “comfortable” discussing the topic of racism? (2) For you, how can racist practices and acts be characterized? (3) Although in Brazil racist practices constitute a non-bailable and imprescriptible crime, why does racism remain a reality faced by the Afro-descendant population?

A field journal was also used to guide the construction of the *Escrevivente Cartography*, serving as a data production instrument and as a means of affecting participants toward *escrevivência*, understood as a form of authorial record (Mello, 2016). The purpose of the field journal was to record all Cartographic Meetings, the responses to the mobilizing questions, the entanglements generated among the cartographers, everyday situations, and reflections that emerged from the debates.

The mobilizing questions, discussions, and inquiries raised by the participants during the Cartographic Meetings guided the data analysis. According to Barros and Barros, “what drives analysis in cartography, therefore, are problems. It is toward a problem that it turns, and problems are also its outcome” (Barros; Barros, 2013, p. 375). In cartographic research, analysis takes place throughout the construction of the writing process, together with the participants. Thus, we used video recordings of the Cartographic Meetings, from which the audio was transcribed, as well as the records made in the field journals by the cartographers during data analysis. All statements and interactions among the participants were analyzed.

It is worth noting that the research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee involving Human Beings of UEFS (CEP). All cartographers chose fictitious names to preserve their identities and were informed about the research process. They agreed to participate by completing digital informed consent forms (Informed Consent Forms – ICF), as the research was conducted remotely.

Below, we present the results, describing the mappings carried out based on the questions raised in one of the Cartographic Meetings, which addressed the theme “the multiple faces of racism.” To this end, we organized our mapping around some powerful statements made by the cartographers who participated in the study, delimiting the results into the following subtopics: “It is difficult to talk about racism!”; “Being a woman already means being a minority; being Black as well; and when you combine the two, you are in a very delicate situation”; “In society, whose word carries more weight?”; and “It is important to discuss this in higher education so that it is reflected at the basic level.”

3 Results and Discussion

Before presenting our mappings of the meanings produced by Black biology teachers regarding the different faces of racism in Brazil, it is necessary to highlight that numerous questions and doubts emerged among the cartographers concerning their ethnic-racial self-identification. These questions are, to some extent, related to the ethnic-racial diversity of the Brazilian population, one of its main characteristics resulting from the various historical processes that have taken place in the country.

As a result of the colonization process that occurred between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Brazil came to be composed of different ethnic groups: Indigenous peoples who inhabited Brazilian territory prior to the arrival of the colonizers; the colonizers, who were white European men; and Africans who were forcibly brought to the country.

As a consequence of processes of racialization, during the colonial period social relations among different ethnic groups were also marked by hierarchical relations that positioned white Europeans as a “superior race” and Amerindian and African peoples as an “inferior race.”

During the colonial period, although Indigenous peoples were also subjected to enslaved labor, it is important to emphasize that Africans were removed from their homelands with the sole purpose of being enslaved. According to Abdias Nascimento

(2016, p. 73), in his book *The Genocide of the Brazilian Black Population: A Process of Masked Racism*:

Since the reason for importing enslaved people was simple economic exploitation represented by profit, enslaved individuals, labeled as subhuman or inhuman, existed relegated to a role in society corresponding to their function in the economy: mere labor power (Nascimento, 2016, p.73).

At the end of the nineteenth century, after the abolition of slavery, Brazil was portrayed as a unique and singular case of extreme racial miscegenation, as stated by Schwarcz (1993, p. 15). In the process of miscegenation, individuals who displayed characteristics closer to those of whites were considered “less degenerate” in comparison to those who exhibited phenotypes associated with Africans.

Such social categorization based on ethnic characteristics, unfortunately, did not remain confined to the past of Brazilian society. Silva (2018) points out that there is a valorization of Caucasian traits, such that miscegenation is viewed positively as a way of distancing oneself from Afro-Brazilian origins. When referring to racism in Brazil, Silva (2018) argues that racism disqualifies so-called Negroid traits, such as dark skin, curly or kinky hair, broad or rounded noses, and fuller lips.

Currently, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) considers Brazilian society to be composed of five color or race markers: *amarelos*, referring to people of Asian descent; *brancos*, descendants of Europeans; *indígenas*; *pretos*, descendants of Africans; and *pardos*, resulting from miscegenation among the other categories. According to data from the 2022 demographic census, 43.5% of Brazilians self-identified as *brancos*, while 55.4% self-identified as *negros* (Brazil, 2024).

Associated with the different categories established by IBGE, the color or race indicator also shows that the average income of Black people is 40% lower than that of non-Black people (DIEESE, 2024). Based on these data, we can state that more than half of the Brazilian population is composed of Black people who receive significantly lower incomes than non-Black people, which further reinforces social inequality in the country.

In light of this reality, certain policy instruments have been implemented as mechanisms to promote racial equality. One such instrument is Law No. 15,142, of June 3, 2025, which reserves 30% (thirty percent) of the positions offered in public service entrance examinations for *pretos* and *pardos*, Indigenous peoples, and quilombolas, for permanent positions and public employment within the federal public administration, including autarchies, public foundations, public companies, and mixed-capital companies controlled by the Federal Government (Brazil, 2025).

These initial reflections on the sociohistorical context of the Brazilian population are fundamental for a more contextualized approach to the mappings produced in this research, as they concern the configuration of Black subjectivities, which emerge as an important plane of forces in the cartographers' productions when addressing the multiple faces of racism. In this sense, it becomes possible to understand how painful it can be, for Black teachers, to talk about racism, as will be evidenced below.

3.1 “It is difficult to talk about racism!”

We know that although racism exists in our country, many people remain silent in the face of this discussion, as they believe, for example, in the existence of a racial democracy, according to which people, regardless of their ethnic or racial origin, live and enjoy the same rights in society. Regarding racial democracy in the context of Brazilian society, Nascimento (2016) states:

[...] based on intellectual speculation, often supported by the so-called historical sciences, the concept of racial democracy was erected in Brazil: according to it, this expression supposedly reflected a specific concrete relation within the dynamics of Brazilian society—namely, that Black and white people coexist harmoniously, enjoying equal opportunities of existence, without any interference, in this game of social parity, from their respective racial or ethnic origins (Nascimento, 2016, p. 47-48).

The notion of racial democracy was one of the outcomes of a nationalist movement that consolidated in Brazil from the mid-1930s onward, promoting the valorization of a

mixed-race culture as the official representation of the Brazilian nation (Schwarcz, 2012). As a result of this movement, relations among the three “races” (Black, white, and Indigenous), which gave rise to miscegenation, ceased to be viewed pessimistically and came to be interpreted in cultural terms (Schwarcz, 2012). Brazilian national identity thus came to include, as one of its main characteristics, the establishment of relations of social and racial coexistence among Black, Indigenous, and white people.

Bento (2022) reminds us that the history of *quilombos* and of many important uprisings or revolts that took place before the abolition of slavery—forcing its end—is omitted from Brazil’s official historiography. According to the author, this omission may have occurred in order not to undermine the image of the supposed racial democracy in the country or to avoid recognizing Black protagonism in national history.

To this day, we know that racial democracy is far from an accurate portrayal of the social and racial relations that exist in Brazilian society. Racism, for example, affects Black people at both structural and institutional levels: “There is no full equality between Black and non-Black people in Brazil” (Pinheiro, 2023, p. 51). Therefore, racial democracy is considered a myth.

With the aim of understanding how Black people, traversed by their subjectivities, currently face the debate on racism, the first mobilizing question presented to the group was: *Do you feel “comfortable” talking about the topic of racism?*

“[...] I do not feel comfortable talking about racism; however, it is important—we have to talk about it because it exists—but I think it is painful [...] usually, with my peers, the people I live with, who are Black like me, we talk in a more subjective way, we agree on some things, and it is not as heavy [...] there is an idea in our society that those who must talk about racism are Black people, that those who must fight racism are Black people. Of course, we also have to do it, but I do not think this is our responsibility, after all, it is not us who construct this process; it is white people. We have to defend ourselves and keep explaining over and over what it is and how it happens [...]” (Isis, oral statement).

“It is that idea of thinking that racism is a Black people’s problem. Racism is not a Black people’s problem, but it is often treated as if it were” (Researcher, oral statement).

When Isis spoke, she also stated that talking about racism is at times painful and raised a point of discomfort: the fact that many people still believe that discussing and combating racism is an exclusive task for Black people, even though racism is a social problem that must be confronted by everyone. Regarding the confrontation and discussion of racism in Brazilian society, Evaristo (2020, p. 45) states:

[...] I believe that Brazilian society has increasingly been willing to put its finger on the wound and discuss certain issues. One of them is the racial question. Brazilian society has also come to realize that the racial question is not a discussion only for Black people. It is not up to us to seek solutions—on the contrary. It is as if one expected the poor, the impoverished subject, to solve the problem of poverty alone. I think that today, or rather in recent years, Brazilian society has been less hypocritical when it comes to dealing with racism (Evaristo, 2020, p.45).

When formulating this first mobilizing question, we used the term “comfortable,” and although we resorted to quotation marks to emphasize the word, it still caused us discomfort, which became evident throughout our conversation. Our unease regarding the use of this term stemmed from the reflection that, in that moment, there is no comfort for Black people when talking about racism. After the contributions of colleagues during the Cartographic Meeting, which will be presented below, we realized that the discomfort experienced by Black people when debating this topic is virtually unanimous. Colleagues who were not present at this Cartographic Meeting also contributed through their writings on the topic: *“It is always difficult to talk about something that affects you or affects others like you, but it is important to talk about racism. I wish I did not have to talk about prejudice and discrimination, but it is necessary to do so”* (Júnior, field journal).

We reaffirm that talking about racism will never be a comfortable task for Black people. Ideally, as Júnior expressed in his writing, we would not need to discuss it at all, simply because racist practices would be absent. As Pinheiro (2023, p. 61) states, “it would be best if racism did not exist, as this would imply the uselessness or nonexistence of anti-racism”; however, there remains a need to debate racism in order to think about anti-racist practices.

"I had never stopped to think about this, but for me it is not a comfortable situation. Talking with people from my close circle, from my family, is fine [...] But last week in the classroom I found myself in a situation where I had to hear a racist remark among the students and, as a teacher, I had to intervene at that moment. It was very difficult because I had to be firm, in a way I do not like, but it was necessary at that moment [...] In short, it is an uncomfortable situation, especially because, at least in the schools I have worked in, there is not much concern about combating this racism, which, in the words of the boy at the school, 'is a joke.' I had to tell him that many people have already died because of what he was saying and calling a joke. That was very heavy. There have been other situations, but this recent one came to my mind when you asked the question, and I remembered how uncomfortable it was to be in that position [...]" (Helena, oral statement)

Helena, when reflecting on how she is affected by discussions related to racism, brings the racial agenda into the school environment. In Helena's account, we observe that she immediately associates racism with manifestations that occur in the school where she teaches, and she also comments on how the institution deals with racism. We will see that Fabrícia likewise refers to the school environment when reflecting on the topic. As committed educators, they shared accounts drawn from their experiences as basic education teachers. Once again, cartography and its "rhizomatic" perspective led us to discuss something that had not been planned for that meeting: debating and reflecting on racism in the school environment.

"[...] I believe that to fight racism you do not need to be Black. I also do not feel comfortable, but it is necessary to talk. Regarding the issues that have been happening in the classroom, I have noticed a great recurrence of racist remarks among students [...] The school where I work even promoted an event [...] about racism, but just one day will not be enough. These are practices that need to be implemented daily for this to have an effect in the long term. It is not something I can address only on that one day and expect students to become aware of reality; I think it has to be something ongoing, in order to build that awareness in them" (Fabrícia, oral statement).

According to Almeida (2019), the school environment is unfortunately still one of the main spaces in which racism manifests itself. When we understand racism as an element that structures society (Almeida, 2019), the naturalization of racist manifestations becomes a consequence. It is important to note that when we refer to racism here, we are referring to its multiple forms of manifestation, ranging from criminal acts to constraining gazes and malicious comments.

Helena uses the term *joke* to refer to the way in which the reproduction of racism is often interpreted by students. With regard to the fact that many people consider racial offenses as jokes or teasing, Almeida (2019, p. 76) offers the following reflection:

The fact that a significant portion of society considers racial offenses as jokes, as part of a supposed irreverent spirit prevalent in popular culture due to the notion of racial democracy, is precisely the kind of argument that allows the judiciary and the justice system in general to resist recognizing cases of racism, while presenting themselves as racially neutral (Almeida, 2019, p.76).

Given that racism is present in the school environment, it becomes both inevitable and necessary, as educators, to reflect: *How does the school combat racism? How should we position ourselves as teachers in the face of racist practices?* Regarding the racial debate in schools, Isis commented:

"I completely agree that most schools do not address the topic; when they do, it is always during Black November, on a specific day, and that's it. I also think there is a serious problem in schools regarding punishment. In a situation like this, at a minimum, the student should receive a warning sent home, because racism is a crime in Brazil [...] It does not matter if it is a primary school student or a high school student; you have to alert them that what they are doing is a crime. There must be a punishment so that they understand they cannot do that type of thing and do not repeat it. I notice very often in our students that when they commit a mistake and there is no punishment—even though I am not in favor of punitive education, the society has this structure of punishment—when a student makes a mistake and there is no response from the school, the tendency is that they repeat the mistake, and sometimes commit even worse ones" (Isis, oral statement).

Racist manifestations in Brazil are considered crimes under Article 20 of Law 7,716/89 and as the crime of qualified (racial or prejudiced) slander under Article 140, §3, of the Penal Code. However, the criminalization of racist practices and manifestations has not brought a new reality for the Afro-descendant population, which continues to be victimized by racist attacks. This raises a reflection: *Why, even in the presence of laws, do racists continue to attack Black people? Are the laws being enforced? Is punishment truly addressing the problem?* We understand Isis' position when she advocates for the application of punishments in the school environment for cases of racism, but based on what we observe daily, it does not seem that the existence of punishments is deterring

racist behavior in society. Beyond deterrence, we must also reflect: *what truly drives people to act in racist ways?*

“So I realize that the school is also unprepared in terms of understanding the full dimension of racism. Even the principals and teachers themselves are often racist and have no interest in studying racism [...] many teachers also perpetuate it. I completely agree, because some time ago, to share an experience, I was at AC and we were reading about the new curricular guidelines for education in Bahia. One of the axes the state government plans to address in high school is education for ethnic-racial relations. I was with six teachers from my field, and one of them said, ‘- it is important to talk about this subject, including the topic of reverse racism.’ That just killed me at that moment. When I say it is uncomfortable, that day I was very nervous, very sad, very angry [...] How can a teacher open their mouth to talk about reverse racism? To me, that is disturbing [...]”. (Isis, oral statement).

When we publicly discuss the faces of racism, we may be dismayed to hear someone mention the term *reverse racism*, even though it does not constitute a true face of racism. When Isis expressed extreme indignation over an incident that occurred in the teachers’ lounge, her position is easily understood. Even in the face of the historical record of racial and, consequently, social inequality, stemming from the period of slavery, there are people who spread the idea that racism exists from Black people against white people. “White men do not lose job opportunities because they are white; white people are not considered “suspects” of criminal acts due to their racial condition, nor is their intelligence or professional capacity questioned because of their skin color” (Almeida, 2019, p. 53).

One of the characteristics of racism is the domination of one racial group over another, and we know historically who has played each role (Almeida, 2019). Black people have historically been victims of white domination; therefore, it is impossible for them to exercise a role of domination over white people. Although Black people may reproduce discriminatory speech concerning white individuals, the latter are not victims of racism, as some continue to claim.

The school is a space in which diversity of gender, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, and other identities is present. The dynamics of the school environment reflect broader society; thus, we can observe the representation of social dilemmas within schools. By

failing to address these debates, schools may become hostile and oppressive environments.

In a society in which racism permeates daily life, institutions that do not actively address racial inequality as a problem will easily reproduce racist practices already normalized throughout society. This is generally what occurs in governments, companies, and schools where there are no institutional spaces or mechanisms to address racial and sexual conflicts (Almeida, 2019, p. 48).

To prevent everyday relations within educational institutions from reproducing racist manifestations—whether in the form of explicit violence or through microaggressions such as jokes, silencing, and isolation—it is necessary to promote debate and implement actions around Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER) at all educational levels. This perspective seeks to prevent the school from acting as what Almeida (2019, p. 48) terms a “conveyor belt of privileges and racist and sexist violence.”

3.2 “Being a woman already means being a minority, being Black too, and when you combine the two, you are in a very delicate situation.”

Indeed, racism can manifest in multiple ways in our society. However, practices that characterize crimes related to race and ethnicity are often interpreted as a malicious comment, a joke, a personal disagreement, or other arguments that attempt to delegitimize acts of racial slander or racism. Thus, the second question posed was: *How, in your view, can racist practices or acts be characterized?*

“In Brazil, racist practices often occur in disguised forms, for example, a security guard following a Black youth in a shopping mall, a sales clerk treating a Black woman differently in a store. A derogatory nickname related to someone’s skin color, but it also occurs explicitly, such as the treatment of Black youth by the police or by communities with a predominantly Black population, among others” (Júnior, field journal).

“Offensive remarks directed at Black people, diminishing the person due to their skin color or type of hair. When the individual feels harmed by someone else’s actions, such as persecution, suspicion, denial of rights, assignment to the worst work areas, or saying that all Black people are criminals” (Ana, field journal).

In her writing, Ana presents a context in which racism manifests explicitly. However, as Júnior highlights, it is also present through microaggressions, in everyday situations, attitudes, and normalized treatment. Thus, racism unfortunately constitutes a recurring experience in the lives of Black people. In Brazil, racism is frequently described as veiled or masked, as it is considered less violent compared to racist practices historically observed, for example, in the United States, a country marked by racial segregation. Consequently, in many cases, when racist practices occur in a masked form, victims may not immediately recognize that they are being targeted. Masked racism requires that the victim possess interpretive skills to recognize the act.

In our Cartographic Meeting, the debate among Black women led us to reflect on our social role. Once again, cartography revealed its lines of escape: from this question, we began to discuss the position of Black women in Brazilian society.

“It is primarily constituted in veiled racism [...] in the way people look at each other, in some jokes, in certain ways we perceive others, in romantic relationships, in the distribution of wealth in our country. Personally, I see racism in practically our entire structure [...] Before we even exist, we are already placed in a position assigned by the process of racism—my grandparents, my parents, me, and unfortunately still my children—but it is everywhere. How difficult it is for us to achieve even a little thing, you know, while others achieve more with less effort” (Isis, oral statement)

Racial literacy allows us to interpret social dynamics. Isis presented the perspective of racism as a structuring element of society, which she translates as “seeing racism in practically everything.” Racial literacy enables us to understand racism that often operates at structural and institutional levels.

In societies distorted by the legacy of racism, the preference for a homogeneous profile of people in positions of leadership and decision-making within financial, educational, health, and security institutions undermines the living conditions of Black populations, generating unemployment and underemployment, the overrepresentation of Black people in poverty, high rates of school dropout and poor academic performance among Black students, and high percentages of Black victims of police violence (Bento, 2022, p. 43).

Within the context of institutional racism, observing labor market inequalities reveals that Black women occupy the base of the pyramid, with the lowest salaries and the

most subordinate positions (Bento, 2022). Domestic workers constitute one example of a profession predominantly occupied by Black women, and for many years, it was the only category under the CLT (Consolidation of Labor Laws) without access to the FGTS (Severance Indemnity Fund). As Bento (2022, p. 45) notes, “the universe of domestic workers is where Black women are most concentrated in Brazil.” For this reason, this category has been the focus of significant attention by researchers and organizations in the Black women’s movement, both because of the majority presence of Black women in this occupation and due to the precariousness of their working and living conditions (Bento, 2022).

“[...] being a woman and being Black is different. Being a woman already means being a minority, being Black too, and when you combine the two, you are in a very delicate situation. I think that we who are Black women don’t feel as much fear of the police as Black men do, but in compensation we fear so many other things [...] so many other things in society that put us in a disadvantaged position [...]” (Isis, oral statement).

Beyond the weight of sexism and misogyny—since we live in a patriarchal society—Black women are also victims of the constraints of racism and become the most marginalized targets. This dialogue recalls Conceição Evaristo, who affirms: “The *escrivência* of Black women makes explicit the adventures and misadventures of those who experience a dual condition, which society insists on keeping inferiorized: woman and Black” (Evaristo, 2020, p. 223).

Black women are systematically disadvantaged in job opportunities, relationships, and socially. When they assert themselves, they are labeled as “troublemakers,” “violent,” “ignorant,” among other derogatory terms. These markers can already be observed in childhood and adolescence.

“Once I conducted a classroom activity aimed at discussing adolescence. There was a Black female student who commented on the difficulties she faced in having relationships, that boys did not want to commit to relationships because she was Black, that they prioritized dating white girls with straight hair. This frustrated her greatly. And it became something I started to analyze: how much Black women are excluded in these types of situations” (Fabrícia, oral statement),

The dilemmas that traverse the lives of Black women have been extensively studied by Black women researchers. The images forged during the slavery period still permeate how social relations are structured in contemporary Brazil, acting against Black women through multiple forms of silencing. Nonetheless, Black women continue to seek to make themselves heard in a conservative society, marked by a racial imaginary historically constructed against the Black population (Evaristo, 2020).

3.3 “It is important to discuss this in higher education so that it is reflected at the base.”

In our discussion, beyond the issues related to racism and school institutions, the colleagues also commented, at times, on teacher education:

“During the licentiate course, I felt a great lack of these debates; the university doesn’t prepare us for this. We have to learn on the job, in uncomfortable situations. Many times I’ve faced moments like this—witnessing these [racist] situations and not knowing what to do in that moment [...] It is difficult both for the teacher and for the victim” (Fabrícia, oral statement).

From the colleagues’ accounts about their undergraduate period, it is possible to identify that debates on Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER) in teacher training are still timidly present. Although the colleagues criticize the absence of racial debates in the university, it is important to highlight the existence of affirmative action policies aimed at instituting ERER in both basic and higher education.

Law No. 10,639/2003, which amends the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDBEN), establishes the mandatory inclusion of the theme “Afro-Brazilian History and Culture” in the official curriculum of the education network (Brazil, 2003). Subsequently, Law No. 11,645/2008 expanded this obligation to include the theme “Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture” (Brazil, 2008). Implemented by the Brazilian Federal Government, these laws significantly contributed to the advancement of Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations.

These laws result from demands by the Black Movement, which has historically positioned education as one of its key banners of struggle. The CNE/CP Opinion 003/2004, which regulates Law No. 10,639/2003, aims to establish the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) for Education on Ethnic-Racial Relations and for Teaching Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture. The document stipulates, among other points:

Art. 7: Higher education institutions, respecting their due autonomy, shall include in the content of disciplines and curricular activities of the different courses they offer, Education on Ethnic-Racial Relations, as well as the treatment of issues and themes concerning Afro-descendants, as detailed in CNE/CP Opinion 003/2004 (Brasil, 2004, p. 20).

When a basic education teacher, for example, receives initial training that includes ethnic-racial relations in education, there is the potential to implement education for ethnic-racial relations in practice and to address racist situations that may arise in the school environment. It is a relationship of interdependence: reinforcing the debate in universities so that it is also effectively reflected in schools.

"[...] it is important to discuss this in higher education so that it is reflected at the base, because I cannot change the base without changing higher education. That is why it is important to have a reformulation of courses, especially licentiate courses, to address more of this content so that it is reflected in teachers and directly applied to our students" (Isis, oral statement).

4 Final considerations

Our cartography followed its traces, tracing its lines of flight from one of the crossings that motivated our research: the diverse faces in which racism manifests socially and the meanings these faces assume and produce in Black teachers, in their bodies, their lives, and, specifically, in their teaching practices in biology.

Among the main mappings carried out, noteworthy are the questions raised regarding self-declaration, the pains that cross teachers when narrating and (en)living the diverse faces of racism, the gender issues that intersect with Black teachers, as well as the need to expand the ethnic-racial debate in teacher education, particularly in initial training.

Regarding the questions related to self-declaration, it is important to affirm that the historical processes of our country's formation as a nation lead us to perceive colorism as a justification for questioning a kind of "standard" of Blackness: dark or very dark skin, broad nose, curly hair, and full lips. This standard, as we discussed more deeply in a previous study (Neri; Freixo, 2025), profoundly traverses the teachers and their body-territories, generating numerous doubts regarding their ethnic-racial identification.

Another plane mapped in this cartography was the pain of (en)living the faces of racism. Indeed, "it is difficult to talk about racism!", especially because, in their *escrevivências*, Black teachers perceive the weight of the violence that crosses them, but also the discomfort of the responsibility of having it be exclusively their task to combat it. After all, who bears the responsibility for racial literacy and for confronting racism in Brazilian society? How can the *escrevivências* of Conceição Evaristo inspire us in this regard?

And when the plane of forces of racism is intersected by sexism and misogyny? It is at this moment that Black women teachers respond: "when you put the two together, you are in a very delicate situation." At this point, the map of the faces of racism takes on new contours and compels us to reflect on the double condition of subalternity experienced by Black women, which drives Black feminism and also motivates each teacher in this cartography to position herself in the world as a subject of rights and as both an actor and author of her adventures and misadventures, as inspired by Conceição Evaristo.

Equally important is the emphasis, in this mapping, on the plane of forces related to teacher education, strongly advocated by the cartographers in this research, since "it is important to discuss this in higher education so that it is reflected at the base." The teachers nurture the hope that initial teacher education can be a possibility for effective ERER in Brazil, calling upon universities to assume their responsibility in promoting racial literacy among their teachers-in-training.

In these mappings, based on contact with Black teachers, the sharing of experiences, the crossings generated in the cartographic encounters, and the readings of the diaries, following the trajectories of the Writing-Living Cartography proved to be

extremely challenging and rewarding. These mappings point to the need to expand research on teacher education and to develop further mappings regarding the implementation of legal instruments in schools, aiming to foster racial literacy starting from basic education (although this responsibility does not lie solely with schools, but with all institutions), thereby transforming the landscape of social inequality in the country.

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