

# Methodological Reflections from the Souths: Contributions to a Feminist and Decolonial Methodology\*

[English version]

Reflexiones metodológicas desde los sures: aportes para una metodología feminista y decolonial

Reflexões metodológicas do sul: contribuições para uma metodologia feminista e decolonial

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To reflect on the methodological approach, mainly on research that takes subalternated, racialized, and colonized groups as “subjects of study.” Those are groups that historically have been invisible and hidden in academic research due to acts of violence, epistemic extractivism, and discursive colonialism. **Methodology:** The fieldwork experience is systematized based on in-depth interviews with activists and the reconstruction of the political path of the Network of Afro-Latin

American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (RMAAD), born in 1992 in the Dominican Republic. **Results:** The main contributions of feminisms of the global south,

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decolonialism, and Abya Ayala proposed in a profound reflection on methodological practices in the Latin American context are revealed. These contributions concern understanding the female subject in a heterogeneous, plural, and situated way, and question the idea of a universal woman subject, as well as the intellectual dependence on the global north and the claim of objectivity as part of social sciences and humanities.

**Conclusions:** Preliminary conclusions will be specified to open new remarks and to rethink, reformulate, and problematize methodological practices and the way knowledge is built in the Latin American and Caribbean academic fields.

**Key words:** local knowledge; practices; methodologies; genealogies; feminism (from UNESCO).

## Resumen

**Objetivo:** reflexionar sobre el quehacer metodológico, en especial de las investigaciones que toman como «sujetos de estudio» a grupos subalternizados, racializados y colonizados; los cuales históricamente fueron invisibilizados y ocultados en las investigaciones académicas, producto de los actos de violencia epistémica, extractivismo epistémico y colonialismo discursivo. **Metodología:** se sistematiza la experiencia de trabajo de campo donde, a partir de la realización de entrevistas en profundidad a activistas, se buscó reconstruir la trayectoria política la Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora (RMAAD), nacida en 1992, en República Dominicana. **Resultados:** se recuperan los principales aportes que los feminismos del sur, decoloniales y de Abya Ayala proponen a la hora de llevar a cabo una reflexión profunda sobre las prácticas metodológicas en el contexto latinoamericano. Aportes que tienen que ver con entender tanto al sujeto mujer de manera heterogénea, plural y situada, y poner en cuestión la idea de un sujeto mujer universal, como a la dependencia intelectual con el norte global y a la pretensión de objetividad propia de las ciencias sociales y las humanidades. **Conclusiones:** serán precisadas algunas conclusiones preliminares que intentan abrir nuevos interrogantes con el propósito de continuar repensado, reformulando y problematizando nuestras prácticas metodológicas y la forma en la que se construye conocimiento en el ámbito académico latinoamericano y caribeño.

**Palabras clave:** saberes locales; prácticas; metodologías; genealogías; feminismos (obtenidos del tesoro UNESCO).

## Resumo

**Objetivo:** refletir sobre o trabalho metodológico, especialmente a pesquisa que toma como "sujeitos de estudo" grupos subalternizados, racializados e colonizados, que historicamente foram invisibilizados e ocultados na pesquisa acadêmica, como resultado de atos de violência epistêmica, extrativismo epistêmico e colonialismo discursivo. **Metodologia:** sistematiza a experiência do trabalho de campo, no qual, por meio de entrevistas aprofundadas com ativistas, buscamos reconstruir a trajetória política da Rede de Mulheres Afro-Latino-Americanas, Afro-Caribenhas e da Diáspora (RMAAD), fundada em 1992 na República Dominicana. **Resultados:** são recuperadas as principais contribuições que os feminismos do Sul, decolonial e de Abya Ayala propõem ao realizar uma reflexão profunda sobre as práticas metodológicas em no contexto latino-americano. Essas contribuições têm a ver com a compreensão do sujeito feminino de forma heterogênea, plural e situada, e com o questionamento da ideia de um sujeito feminino universal, bem como da dependência intelectual do Norte global e da pretensão de objetividade inerente às ciências sociais e humanas. **Conclusões:** algumas conclusões preliminares serão tiradas na tentativa de abrir novas perguntas para continuar repensando, reformulando e problematizando nossas práticas metodológicas e a maneira como o conhecimento é construído na academia da América Latina e do Caribe.

**Palavras chaves:** conhecimento local; práticas; metodologias; genealogias; feminismos (extraído do tesouro da UNESCO).

## Introduction

The European conquest in Latin America and the Caribbean meant the imposition of the colonial system and the subjugation of pre-existing indigenous peoples and those brought into slavery from Africa. It also established a system of beliefs and knowledge that deleted and silenced previous cosmovisions, thoughts, languages, and knowledge and established European experience as the universal (Lander, 2016).

These acts of silencing and concealing select experiences over others can be thought as acts of “epistemic violence” (Pérez, 2019) or “epistemic extractivism” (Grosfoguel, 2016). Moira Pérez (2019) refers to “epistemic violence” as the appropriation and use without recognition of the knowledge of subalternated or colonized groups such as African and indigenous knowledge. According to Ramón Grosfoguel (2016), these actions referred to “epistemic extractivism,” placed those who have the epistemic privilege as “superior,” while the “others” —the colonial subject— were relegated to “epistemic inferiority” (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Thus, this modern or colonial system of gender (Lugones, 2008), an imposed colonial regime based on social classification on racial and gender criteria, also involved the colonization of other areas of being and knowledge. This contributed to the imposition of a modern and European Western knowledge that still exists in universities and academic contexts. That is why, the construction of knowledge in Latin American and Caribbean regions merits a deep reflection and review, mainly on methodological practices.

For several decades, feminist, global southern and decolonialistic perspectives have taught about other possible epistemologies and methodologies that promote critical, complex, and multidimensional approaches on the ways knowledge is produced in universities. Experiences such as the *Taller de Historia Oral Andina (THOA)* [Andean Oral History Workshop], led by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and indigenous intellectuals in Bolivia, or Francesca Gargallo’s legacy (2006, 2010a, 2010b, and 2014) intended to recover the history of the ideas and feminist thinking of *Nuestramérica*, became a highly enriching legacy that reflects methodological practices in academic contexts, especially in social sciences and humanities.

Yuderkys Espinoza Miñoso, in *Tejiendo de otro modo: feminismo, epistemología y apuestas descoloniales en Abya Ayala* (Another Way of Weaving: Feminism, Epistemology and Colonial Wagers in Abya Ayala, 2014), with other feminists, decolonial, indigenous, African descendants, and lesbian authors and activists, builds political-epistemic displacements and critical analyses on several systems of power across Abya Ayala. First, the focus of this research is to contribute to

decolonial thinking on the implications of gender as a historical-political category in our region. Second, it proposes introducing into local feminisms a border view that considers the multiple forms in which colonialism acquires power, being, and knowledge, and disarms the feminist narratives that constructed—and construct—a female subject with pretensions of universality. Third, this complexity aims to make those voices and thoughts visible to “others” of Abya Ayala, based on a feminist and decolonial genealogy trajectory that heals wounds caused by the voices of activists, thinkers, and academics from this region (Espinosa et al., 2014).

This article reflects on the methodology of research that takes “subjects of study” as colonized groups historically invisible and hidden in academic research, from acts of epistemic violence (Pérez, 2019) and discursive colonialism (Mohanty, 2008). This paper recovers the fieldwork of the doctoral research toward the reconstruction of the political trajectory of the Network of African American, African Caribbean and Diaspora Women (RMAAD), born in 1992 in the Dominican Republic, and from the author’s teaching experiences in subjects related to the research methodology. It seeks to inquire into the standardized ways on the construction of knowledge in social sciences and humanities inherited from modern western thought, and the supposed objectivity and neutrality the scientific method traditionally has demanded.

Thus, some of the questions raised during this research became a starting point: how are “subjects of study” recruited? What about the places of privilege and oppression during fieldwork? Is a horizontal and feminist methodology possible? how to avoid seeing the “subjects of study” as objects? Are researchers able to “provide their voices” to subalternized and racialized subjects? How can research that promotes decolonization carried forward in our region?

To answer these questions, systematizing the fieldwork by detailing each of the tasks is proposed. Second, the research seeks to recover the main contributions of feminisms of the South, Decolonial, and Abya Ayala through a profound reflection on methodological practices in our context. Those contributions were extremely valuable in the fieldwork. Finally, preliminary conclusions are specified to open up new remarks to continue rethinking, reformulating, and problematizing methodological practices, and the way in which knowledge is built in Latin American and Caribbean academic context.

## Fieldwork and Meeting with Activists

This section is intended to review the methodological work, the tasks and activities conducted during fieldwork in the framework of the author's doctoral research. It aimed at reconstructing the political trajectory of RMAAD, born in 1992 in the Dominican Republic. This methodological practice promoted lessons and resignifications about the author's role as a researcher that will be explained.

This research dates from the middle of 2017, when after researching intersectionality in the United States, there was an interest in learning about the way a theoretical and political perspective was adopted in Latin American and the Caribbean region, taking into account the historical-political facts of this regional context. To address this question, an analysis was made of how the ways of understanding the intersection between the oppressions of gender, race, class, coloniality and sexuality were reconfigured and disputed based on the activism promoted by RMAAD from 1992 (when it was formed) until 2019 (the year of the beginning of a new general coordination in charge of Bolivia, which continues to the present) (Busquier, 2018, 2022a, 2022b). Thus, from this environment of a "feminist ear" (Ahmed, 2022, p. 22), an attentive, respectful, and careful listening was proposed to reconstruct and safeguard the genealogies and feminist memories (Ciriza, 2015).

The methodological strategy to conduct this research was in-depth interviews with RMAAD activists who participated in the beginnings or were currently participating. The analysis of several types of written documents produced by this organization such as bulletins, congress resolutions, balances, among others was conducted. In addition, RMAAD and other organizations' web and Facebook pages of were used. For the purpose of this article, the focus is on the interviews that included a meeting with "another" which mostly were distant from the author's reality. If "this distance" with activists caused difficulties during the interviews, they also led to rethinking and reflect on the methodology and connection with the "subjects of study."

The interviews were conducted and based on a set of axes in a "flexible conversational script" (Cohen & Gómez, 2019), the axes structured and led the interview. The first axis was the beginnings of activism, origins in RMAAD, the socio-political context, political definitions and strategic lines created by RMAAD, articulated strategies with other social movements, personal theoretical trajectories—such as readings and reference authors— theoretical training within RMAAD, and current activities. The intention was to avoid interrupting the narratives of the interviewees. The interview aimed to recount the trajectories

of their political, ideological and theoretical postures as activists, intellectuals, and teachers.

The first contact with interviewees was through one of RMAAD's founders, who at the end of the interview, suggested other activists who had participated or were participants. At the end of each interview, the interviewees suggested possible subjects, although some of them were suggested before. Emails, Facebook or WhatsApp were used to contact those activists who enabled a certain heterogeneity about geographical origins (Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Argentina), and time of participation in RMAAD (at the beginning or currently). Thus, there was a total of seven interviews conducted between January and June 2019.

There were video calls interviews due to geographical limitations and they lasted about an hour and a half. In all cases, an extensive and in-depth conversation was held about different perspectives, experiences, and reflections on participating in RMAAD, as well as the most important events, and the most relevant initiatives that were carried out, among other elements. From the third and fourth interviews, many of the interviewees' narratives began to show saturation in the responses, so the focus was on the particularities of the country or the organization of the interviewee, and not on general data such as the origin of RMAAD, as it had already been recounted in depth by founding activists.

Regarding the trajectories of the activists, five of the interviewees are developing academic activities at universities in the region, and two of them at institutional government as officials. Three of them were still in the formation stages when they joined RMAAD and the others joined in subsequent years. Three of the seven interviewees are still participating. Finally, although some of them no longer participate in RMAAD, they currently maintain some degree of political participation in some African descendant feminist organization, in artistic-political groups or in institutional contexts of government and universities.

The post-analysis of the interviewees was a textual analysis and the construction of a grid with the axes. Data was organized by theme, identifying the main categories within the pre-established axes. An axial codification was used to restructure and group the text records after an open codification into categories (Cohen & Gómez, 2019). At this point, while most of the axes were dealt with more or less in depth in all the interviews, in some cases, there was no deepening of the topic, such as the item referred to the personal theoretical path and the approach RMAAD provided to internal theoretic training. For this reason, this aspect was decided to not be included in the subsequent analysis.

There were other issues not previously considered in the flexible script. They were mentioned by most activists and then included as axes. One of these was the internal tensions and divergences throughout the political trajectory

of RMAAD. The initiatives of universities and other academic contexts was another axis that allowed inquiring about the entrances and crossing boundaries (Anzaldúa, 2016) between activism and the academy, political practices, and the construction of knowledge (Busquier, 2022b).

Even though the interviews were highly revealing and enriching material, they were not exempt from some difficulties, the first being online communication. As online communication is a way to circumvent geographical distances, there were technical problems such as connectivity that affected the communication process. Those made streamlining of the activists narratives difficult, as well as listening to and recording the information. In addition, online interviews did not allow the recording of non-verbal language as in ethnographic listening, that collects several elements related to observation, physical presence of the bodies, and silences, among others, that exceed the limits of verbal communication and the discourse of oral narrative.

The second difficulty concerned certain reactions or resistance from some potential respondents. Many of them accepted positively but others did not agree with the proposal. Some of them did not reply to correspondence, others explicitly expressed a desire to not participate or accept if the interview were in person. Although, the fourth group accepted, arranging the meeting was not possible due to other limitations.

Finally, despite some difficulties (often in the fieldwork), activists returned unfavorable response. The researcher's lack of experience conducting interviews before —personal limitations to contacting participants at the time of the meetings— the activists showed themselves to be affectionate, kind, and willing to share their experiences, perspectives, anecdotes, organizational documents, and bibliographic resources, among other materials. In some cases, this allowed the interviews to gain some degree of confidence, participants critically related some events within RMAAD or some political differences with other activists; something that, according to Pozzi (2020), usually happens when activists are interviewed. That is why, not all of the narratives were used. Narratives, opinions, and subjective assessments were excluded to preserve incipient intimacy and confidence with the interviewees during the meeting.

The following paragraph draws out the most relevant contributions of feminisms of the global south, decolonialism, and the Abya Ayala to produce a profound reflection on methodological practices in our context. These were extremely enriching to redefine some of the existing preconceptions before the fieldwork and to reflect on the links built with the activists interviewed.



## **Methodological Reflections in the Social Sciences and Humanities: Contributions to a Feminist and Decolonial Methodological Work**

In the field of social sciences and humanities, there are several debates, tensions, dissatisfaction, discontent, agreements, and disagreements that have undergone transformations and redefinitions over time with local and regional variations. This section systematizes the contributions that Southern and Decolonial feminisms propose on a profound reflection on methodological practices in our context.

As a starting point, stating that questioning the universal subject of women is one of the main axes that crosses much of the proposals from southern and decolonial feminisms is important. These questions point to universality in social sciences and humanities, in other words, to the fetishism of the abstract universal. These sciences originally aimed to develop knowledge that would explain and make rules regarding social issues (Wallerstein, 2006). This feature is necessary to guarantee the science of social knowledge and obtain the status of scientific knowledge (Pardo, 2012).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the claim of universality began to be questioned from different perspectives and fields of study. For example, the theory of the point of view of feminist like Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, and Nancy Hartsock seeks to question the standardized forms of knowledge production anchored in an androcentric logic, revealing their own experiences (Torrano & Fischetti, 2018). This means, to conduct research by women whose “subject of study” are also women or the social problems they face. The authors suggest “horizontality” as a closed link with shared experiences between the interviewer and the interviewee for fieldwork.

Black feminist authors such as bell hooks (2004) and Yuderkys Espinosa (2019) further intensify this criticism toward the claim of universality within feminist studies. In many cases, they also understand the subject woman in a universal way and make the differences between women of African descent invisible. This horizontality in feminist research, where the interviewer and the respondent would share certain common experiences, was criticized by Afro-Descendant feminism. It highlighted the inequalities and discrimination within feminist studies.

In other words, although the theory of the point of view first questioned the androcentrism and the universal view on the “subject” within the social sciences, it subsequently transformed into a homogeneous and universal female subject that obscured the diversity and heterogeneities of the group (Busquier, 2022b).

Thus, the productions of intellectuals of African descent that compromise black feminist based on their experiences and on their own perspective, put into practice a “localized” (Haraway, 1995) and specialized knowledge, or, according to Stuart Hall, a “policy of localization” in which knowledge is constituted from attending to the “positional” knowledge. (Hall, 2007, p. 271). Therefore, the fieldwork carried out with Afro-Descendent RMAAD activists meant a set of challenges in establishing a conversation that was “horizontal” and generate a degree of confidence with the respondents.

Despite the fact that the researcher and the interviewees can both be seen as “women” or feminized subjects that would experience similar violence and oppression, there were some differences in the realities of the two that prevented these discussions from taking place using terms like “horizontal” and “equal.” First, in most cases, they share academic contexts as many of them are referents and intellectuals at different Latin American and Caribbean universities. But their trajectories meant—and still mean—valuable contributions to this author’s academic, political, and theoretical formation. Thus, they occasionally took the role of “teachers,” in the interviews. They discuss their theoretical postures, political readings of the Latin American and Caribbean context, and analyze the implications of racism and gender in society. Also, the generational differences reinforced the link between “learner-teacher.”

Second, the interviewer or interviewee's involvement in any organization or social movement could be another “similarity.” This “common sharing” in activism facilitated a more intimate conversation about specific aspects related to the participation in an organization or movement. These included such as internal debates, mechanisms of choice and decision-making, creation of statutes, organization of meetings and assemblies, and internal roles. However, in the political trajectories of activists—most of them started in the early 1990s—the main claim was the fight against racism, and the implications of this form of violence in all aspects of their lives. As a white woman this did not appear as a priority dimension in the author’s activism. It was framed in the university student movement (mostly made up of white and middle-class people) and in white feminism in the early 2010s.

There are valuable contributions of the horizontal methodologies in recent decades that question the knowledge-power relationship between researchers and “subjects of study” (de la Peza Casares, 2020). The concept of horizontality becomes an impossible goal because, even with a permanent reflection during fieldwork, it will not be possible to neutralize and equalize the inequalities and privileges as social subjects (Briones, 2020). This does not prevent constructing respectful, ethical, affective, and equitable ties with the “subjects of study.” They are understood as protagonists in research, and also as producers of knowledge.

However, their own experiences allow the theoretical constructions to be carried out in the academic field.

Thus, the questioning of the universal subject of woman promoted by the feminisms of the south and decolonialism also enables discussing the idea of woman as a homogeneous subject, and enriches this category with the concept of race or class in understanding the realities of black women. In short, the categories from these marginal feminisms, such as racism, capitalism, nationalism, and sexuality, among others, interacted with the sex-gender category for white feminist thinking and made them complex, enriched, and optimized. To prevent generalizations and universalisms, this cross-cutting of categories needs to be considered from knowledge rooted in practice. The recognition and visibility of the voices of subordinated women, in this case Afro-descending activists, within feminist thinking enable the legitimacy of their political agencies, as well as their ability to engage in theoretical and epistemological enunciation (Medina, 2014).

Another of the relevant contributions of the southern and decolonial feminisms to methodological practice has to do with questioning the standardized forms of knowledge production. As they are based on a Eurocentric viewpoint, it obscures the local experiences and the epistemologies produced from “peripherals” or borders. Ochy Curiel (2010) states that many of the Latin American and Caribbean feminist productions are still based on studies and theoretical proposals from the Global North, that do not take into account local analyses and perspectives. For Curiel, it demands breaking with the intellectual dependence to carry out a critical theory and its own epistemology.

Yuderkys Espinosa (2009, 2010) analyzes how some Latin American feminisms still maintain some ideological dependency with the enunciations of European and American feminism. This reduces the potential of non-hegemonic feminisms that construct epistemologies, knowledge, and theories in post-colonial and decolonial regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean. To accomplish the task, the author proposes one of the possible ways to promote decolonial feminism: the one “that collects, reviews, and dialogues with the thinking and productions that come from developing thinkers, intellectuals, activists, fighters, feminists or not, of African descent, indigenous, *mestizo*, peasant, racialized migrants, as well as those white academics committed to subalternity.” (Espinosa, 2016, p. 151).

In the research conducted in 2017, this intellectual dependency marked the beginning of this inquiry, as at first learning about the “reappropriations” or “translations” that the intersectional perspective had received in Latin American and Caribbean region was proposed, as the local Afro-descendent feminism had been “influenced” or “inspired” by the Black Feminism of the United States.

This assumption was rejected when a reconstruction was carried out on the historical-political bases of struggles and resistance by black women in our region, who since slavery and the colonial regime questioned several systems of power that influenced their lives (Busquier & Parra, 2021).

Then, they checked particularities of Afro-Brazilian feminism, which in the second half of the twentieth century started to inquire on how racism, sexism, slavery and colonial regime affected Brazilian black women (Busquier & Parra, 2021). Finally, toward the end of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty-first century, oppression diversity and its intersection began to spread across other contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean, simultaneously and with the United States, and not as a consequence or effect of American Black feminism (Busquier & Parra, 2021).

The readings of Latin American and Caribbean theoretical references, as well as the communication held with the respondents allowed asking for those preconceptions and assumptions that claimed that intersectionality had “arrived” from the United States to Latin America and the Caribbean. On the contrary, forms that intersectionality adopted were questioned as a theoretical and political perspective in Latin American and Caribbean region taking into account historical-political issues of our context. This did not imply ignoring the valuable contributions of African American feminists such as Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, or Kimberle Crenshaw, among others. They were mentioned by most of the interviewees as the most relevant theoretical references.

To reveal the particularities and singularities of our region and put aside the universalist and eurocentric views, the questioning of the claim of objectivity by the feminisms of the south and decolonialism become another great contribution. Espinosa (2019) based contributions on the genealogy method and the theory of the point of view to propose a “genealogy of experience.” The author recounts “visual memory with speeches, feelings of joy, pain, victory or defeat, expectation, unbelief or certainty” (p. 2017) to carry out a genealogy of the experience of feminism in Latin America where the experiences become a valid document and file.

Gloria Anzaldúa (2016) within this approach from “frontier epistemology” proposes constructing a “self-history” or a “self-history theory” as a way to recover her own life story in a fictional way and construct a theoretical and epistemological proposal from her own experiences (Anzaldúa, 2016). The publishing *Esta puente, mi espalda. Voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los Estados Unidos* [This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color] (Moraga & Castillo, 1988) compiles writings by Third world women in the USA to tell their experiences that turned them into political and theoretical tools.

These writings can be thought of as a way of personal and collective witness. They seek to remove the barriers that border the private and the personal, the public and the collective, and that build a strong bond between these sectors and the possibility of doing collective actions (Busquier, 2016).

The main motivation for retrieving the experiences or political trajectories of the activists interviewed was to question the objectivity of the scientific method of the social sciences and humanities (especially the historical discipline) by considering their life stories, narratives, their sensations and their emotions as a valid testimony and documentation. The trajectory of feminist genealogies (Ciriza, 2015) or of genealogy of experience (Espinosa, 2019), and also the question on the construction of universal and objective knowledge, seeks to recover and visualize the historical and multiple forms of domination women of our region deal with resistance and emancipatory struggles against the several regimes of power (Parra & Busquier, 2022).

The narrative as a form of listening and recounting the experiences of the subjects is a possible path toward the construction of non-universalizing and objectivist methodologies (Ripamonti, 2017). In the —oral or written— narrative, the experiences, memory and memory of the “subjects of study” are merged with the references and perceptions of the one who tells the narrative. In other words, the narrative “constructs a practice of resistance to silence” (Ripamonti, 2017, p. 86) to the hiding and silence that historically experienced subordinated and colonized groups in Latin America and the Caribbean region. Thus, the narrative as a methodological tool seeks to disarm the scientific knowledge with pretensions of universality and objectivity and the historical narratives linear and eurocentric, while allowing “inhabiting the singularity of experience” (Ripamonti, 2017, p. 90).

This research on the political trajectory of RMAAD was specially aimed at recovering the political trajectory of the organization that additionally proposes a multidimensional view at several systems of power women of African descent in the region face. It aims at “giving voice” and visibility to these women who have historically been “forgotten” in the political, state, and academic contexts. The activists interviewed themselves became referents of great background and relevance in the areas they participate in. They install political and theoretical debates on the problems they face as women of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To make visible the collectives and political subjects from their practices, interests, requests, struggles, and resistance base political initiatives and enable the academic research to a political context (Busquier, 2022b). From experiences that, in most cases are alien, the author “tends the bridge, heals the wounds, writes

from the disagreements of the experiences of being a woman in Latin America” (Benavídez & Guerra, 2017, p. 6).

## Final Reflections

Reflecting on what to do methodologically has been gaining an important place in the academic constructions in the universities for some decades. Those who find themselves in this field and conduct research on “subjects of study,” subordinated, and colonized groups, which historically have been invisible and hidden in academic studies, must take on the challenge of, at least, reviewing, inquiring and problematizing the ways in which knowledge is built and link themselves with the “subjects of study.” From this point, systematizing the fieldwork of the research started in 2017 was proposed, and, secondly, recovering the contributions of feminisms of the south, decolonialism and of Abya Ayala proposing a deep reflection on methodological practices in our context. These contributions have to do with understanding the female subject in a heterogeneous, plural, and localized way; as well as stating the idea of a female universal subject, the intellectual dependence on the global north and objectivity inherent in the social sciences and humanities.

In relation to the universal female subject, these feminisms propose the construction of knowledge into the local and particular experiences of the subjects, especially black and indigenous women who are invisible within the universal woman subject proposed by white hegemonic feminism. They also enable rethinking the idea of a “horizontal” interview in which, while both researchers and interviewees can be read as women, their lives and trajectories are influenced by a series of privileges and oppressions that mark the particularities and heterogeneities of the female subject.

Neutralizing and equalizing the inequalities and privileges that inhabit individuals as social and political subjects in the face of complex and multiple ways of domination of our region and making social relationships is impossible. Feminisms from the south and decolonialism propose research that builds respectful, ethical, affective, and equitable ties with the “subjects of study.” Understanding them as protagonists in research, and also as producers of knowledge is important. However, their own experiences is what allows theoretical construction to be carried out in academic contexts. Thus, narratives, as a way of listening and talking about experiences, become a possible path

toward the construction of non-universalizing and objectivist methodologies that recover the unique experiences and heterogeneities of the subject.

In addition, the feminist perspectives of decolonialism and the south provide the tools of inquiry from and about local knowledge and the importance of constructing an epistemology. Decolonial feminism is responsible for articulating the proposals of thinkers and intellectuals belonging to the academic sphere, but it also brings together the perspectives of activists of African descent, indigenous, migrant and peasant women, among others. It aims at making visible the heterogeneities in feminisms of the region and carrying out the construction of a feminist epistemology of the south and decolonialism to break with the intellectual dependence with the great theories of the global north.

Against the claim of objectivity in the scientific method of the social sciences and the humanities, the feminisms of the south and decolonialism propose to carry out the construction of feminist genealogy and genealogies of experience, which pose the experiences as a valid document and file. Furthermore, it recovers the experience, political trajectories and life stories of the subalternized and racialized women of our region to make visible and enhance several strategies by such women to resist multiple forms of domination in the Latin American and Caribbean context.

In short, these were some of the reflections from methodological practices during this research. Reflections that still today remain open and in dialogue with other research experiences, and that allow rethinking the methodological doing from a feminist and decolonial perspective. According to Maria Lugones (2021), “‘travel’ to worlds of meaning that are not given as part of daily ‘teachings’ of the dominant structures of meaning is one of the techniques, it is an art, of moving from resistance to liberation ...” (p. 20, own translation).

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