

**Discrimination Against Black African Migrant Women in Valencia:
Multidimensionality and Intersectionality of Social (In)Justice**

**Discriminación de mujeres migrantes africanas negras en Valencia:
multidimensionalidad e interseccionalidad de la (in)justicia social**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores, from an intersectional perspective and drawing on Fraser's three-dimensional conception of social justice, the experiences of discrimination faced by black African migrant women living in Valencia (Spain), analyzing how these experiences are shaped along their trajectories in the country of origin, the migration process, and the host society. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach based on 19 semi-structured interviews, analyzed through a hybrid coding tool that combines the deductive application of Fraser's framework with the inductive incorporation of emerging analytical categories. The findings show that the intersection of gender, race, and coloniality creates interconnected exclusions, expressed in economic precariousness, cultural devaluation, and political invisibility. The study contributes to overcoming methodological nationalism by addressing the transnational continuum of social injustice and proposes an intersectional analytical tool useful for the design of public policies aimed at social justice.

Keywords: 1. racial discrimination, 2. intersectionality, 3. social justice, 4. international migration, 5. African migrant women.

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora, desde una perspectiva interseccional y a partir de la concepción tridimensional de la justicia social de Fraser, las experiencias de discriminación de mujeres migrantes africanas negras residentes en Valencia (España), analizando cómo se configuran a lo largo de sus trayectorias en el país de origen, el tránsito migratorio y la sociedad receptora. Metodológicamente, adopta un enfoque cualitativo e interpretativo basado en 19 entrevistas semiestructuradas, analizadas mediante una herramienta de codificación híbrida que combina la aplicación deductiva del marco de Fraser con la incorporación inductiva de categorías analíticas emergentes. Los resultados muestran que la intersección entre género, raza y colonialidad genera exclusiones interrelacionadas, expresadas en precariedad económica, desvalorización cultural e invisibilidad política. El estudio contribuye a superar el nacionalismo metodológico al abordar el continuo transnacional de la injusticia social y propone una herramienta analítica interseccional útil para el diseño de políticas públicas orientadas a la justicia social.

Palabras clave: 1. discriminación racial, 2. interseccionalidad, 3. justicia social, 4. migración internacional, 5. mujeres migrantes africanas.

Date received: September 9, 2025

Date accepted: May 6, 2026

Published online: August 15, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Institutional studies on racial discrimination against migrants in Spain have traditionally focused on the perceptions of the native population (Díaz, 2022; Fernández et al., 2019; Mora, 2025), which has limited the understanding of how migrants experience this phenomenon. In this context, the reports prepared since 2010 by the Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination (CEDRE, for its acronym in Spanish) represent a significant step forward, by defining such discrimination as the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on their racial or ethnic origin, which, based on prejudices and stereotypes, is conducive to inequalities in access to opportunities, and limits the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms (Ministry of Equality, 2025).

The above notwithstanding, studies investigating experiences of racial discrimination from the perspective of specific migrant communities are still scarce (Aparicio, 2020; Buraschi et al., 2021; Cea D’Ancona & Valles, 2021; Mamadou et al., 2021; Red Acoge, 2018). A representative case is that of the black African population, which faces high levels of exclusion and has a perceived racism index of 5.38/10, second only to the Roma community (Ministry of Equality, 2025). Several investigations agree that skin color and physical features are the main factors explaining experiences of racial discrimination, a perception that reaches 78% among African and Afro-descendant people (Cea D’Ancona & Valles, 2021), a trend corroborated by Buraschi et al. (2021), Iglesias et al. (2020), and Mora (2025).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant for black African women, whose discrimination is escalated by the intersection of gender, race, and immigration status, among other axes of oppression; 68% of the women surveyed in Spain by Mamadou et al. “have at some point felt criminalized for being African or of African descent” (2021, p. 35), and they face barriers of systemic racism, primarily in the workplace, and in the fields of healthcare and education. These statistics underscore the importance of addressing the experiences of these women from an intersectional perspective, supporting the relevance of this research.

This study makes use of the terminology “black Africa” or “black African population” instead of imprecise geographical categories such as “Sub-Saharan,” in order to follow the CEDRE methodological consensus for highlighting the determining role of skin color in discrimination in Spain (Ministry of Equality, 2025). It should be noted that, although race is a social construct lacking biological basis (Lewontin, 1972), it still produces concrete political and social effects. From decolonial and black feminist approaches, its explicit use reflects a deliberate political choice aimed at reclaiming the concept as a social, historical, political, and symbolic fact (Hall, 2015), a perspective shared by the present analysis.

The aim of this research is to examine, from an intersectional perspective, the perceptions and experiences of discrimination among black African women residing in Valencia throughout their migration journeys, considering their country of origin, transit, and host society. It also analyzes how these experiences shape different dimensions of social justice (Fraser, 2008). This approach overcomes the disciplinary fragmentation common in migration studies, which often stem from a

methodological nationalism that limits research to the period of arrival in the host country, thus rendering invisible prior experiences of discrimination in the country of origin and during migration transit (Gregorio-Gil & Franzé, 1999; Uhde, 2020). This way, the intersectional analysis of this continuum of social *injustice*, approached from the perspective of the Black African women themselves, is the main contribution of this research.

In terms of methodology, this study adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach, suitable for exploring the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Data collection was carried out through 19 semi-structured interviews with black African women and key informants living in Valencia, selected by means of purposive sampling. The analysis was performed by means of an *ad hoc* coding tool of hybrid design, combining the deductive application of Nancy Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional framework of social justice with the inductive incorporation of axes of oppression and other categories emerging from empirical research. Its design draws inspiration from intersectional models based on Hill-Collins' (1990) *Matrix of Domination*, such as those proposed by Rummens (2004) and Winker and Degele (2011).

After presenting the theoretical framework and methodology of this study, this article will delve into the discriminatory perceptions according to the territory in which they occurred: country of origin, transit country, and destination country. The research is approached from Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional conception of social justice; that is, it analyzes the manifestations of redistribution, recognition, and representation injustice in each of these territories.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, JUSTICE, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND COLONIALITY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The exclusion of migrants from access to resources and rights is sustained by preferential and hostile discourses that stereotype and exacerbate their differences with respect to the native population. These discourses establish operational forms of racial discrimination rooted in an ideology that functions as a structural mechanism of domination (Buraschi et al., 2021; Iglesias et al., 2020; Ministry of Equality, 2025; Mora, 2025). In this regard, if racism is the ideology that establishes hierarchies, racial discrimination is the practice that materializes such inequality, and impacts, across the board, on areas declared priorities in the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015–2024, namely employment, health, education, housing, public spaces, and social services, all of which are addressed in this study (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2024; Mamadou et al., 2021).

These dynamics require understanding of the social construction of race, which, despite not resting on a scientific basis (Lewontin, 1972), functions as a socially effective category that regulates access to assets and rights (Mora, 2025). This construction materialized through processes of racialization, which define certain groups as radically different and subject them to unequal treatment according to the racial category assigned by society (Gil-Benumeya, 2020). From this, the social, economic, relational, and cultural opportunities of migrants are severely

restricted in host countries, resulting in forms of social exclusion that prevent real equality of rights (Iglesias et al., 2020; Mora, 2025).

This situation is critical for black Africans, for whom skin color is the main predictor of the discrimination they face (Buraschi et al., 2021; Cea D’Ancona & Valles, 2021; FRA, 2024; Iglesias et al., 2020). At the European level, almost half of people of African descent have experienced racial discrimination, increasing from 39% to 45% between 2016 and 2022 (FRA, 2024). This issue is even more acute in Spain, with 56% having experienced racial discrimination in the past year, and 61% attributing these situations to skin color or physical features, an increase of six percentage points compared to 2020 (Ministry of Equality, 2025). The same source shows how widespread these inequalities are; that is, among the black African population, 81.8% report discrimination in housing and 84.7% in employment, while among black African women, these figures reach 63% and 73% in the same categories, respectively. Furthermore, 68% have felt criminalized at some point for being African or of African descent (Mamadou et al., 2021).

In this context, one of the core challenges of migration in Spain is the articulation of social justice. According to Fraser (2008), achieving social justice requires a three-dimensional approach bringing together policies of economic redistribution, cultural recognition, and political representation or participation (Arribas & Del Castillo, 2007; Fraser, 2008). To this end, we understand that a redistribution policy calls for a reallocation of income or wealth, while a recognition policy advocates for “revaluing the disrespected identities and cultural products of defamed groups” (Fraser, 2008, p. 87).

For its part, the politics of representation, based on the *principle of all subjects*, implies that “everyone who is subject, anywhere in the world, to a (transnational, national, or subnational) governance structure that generates coercively enforced norms, should be able to participate in decision-making” (Arribas & Del Castillo, 2007, p. 28). In this regard, Cherubini (2013) adds that civic stratification reveals tensions between governance and “lived citizenship,” wherein redistribution, recognition, and representation intertwine in the daily negotiation to cease being “perpetual foreigners” and become acknowledged as equals.

In this regard, Fraser (2008) adds that there are hybrid categories, such as those of gender and race, which, by not fitting into a single sphere of justice, intersect and result in diverse manifestations of injustice. As for redistributive injustices, both gender and race function as organizing principles of capitalist society, reserving for women both reproductive labor and the lowest-paid productive labor, the latter being a characteristic shared with racialized migrants, especially women.

Furthermore, recognition injustice manifests itself, in the case of women, in forms of gender-based violence and in the social devaluation of women stemming from androcentric cultural patterns. Similarly, racialized migrants experience cultural devaluation, everyday contempt, and other forms of discrimination associated with Eurocentric patterns that stigmatize anything that does not conform to hegemonic cultural values (Fraser, 2008). Both this form of injustice and

redistribution injustice converge in the experience of racialized migrant women, who find themselves at the intersection of these subordination systems.

That certain groups find themselves at the intersection of various manifestations of social injustice stems from the fact that the axes of subordination based on gender and race are not isolated categories, but rather reinforce and intensify each other (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill-Collins, 1990). Addressing this would require a comprehensive approach bringing together redistributive as well as recognition policies, and a policy of representation enabling these groups to become subjects of rights with a say and a vote in the aforementioned political decisions (Fraser, 2008).

Zuzana Uhde (2020) expands the debate on social justice by arguing that it should be framed in global terms, since migration is precisely a form of protest against globalized patterns of inequality that manifest themselves, for example, in the lack of the right not to migrate (the right to development) due to redistribution, recognition, and/or representation injustices in the country of origin. These injustices, which persist and are even exacerbated in different ways in the host country, highlight the limitations of methodological nationalism as an analytical lens for understanding social injustices that transcend state borders (Gregorio-Gil & Franzé, 1999).

Aforesaid limitations are also evident in the role that States themselves play in perpetuating global inequalities by prioritizing social reproduction through access to cheap labor (Uhde, 2020), such as that provided by migrant workers in global care chains through the international division of reproductive labor (Parreñas, 2001). These chains thus constitute clear evidence of the need to analyze, from a transnational and intersectional perspective, how these axes of subordination interact and are exacerbated in our current, globalized context (Orozco, 2007).

In light of this, intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) stands out as an analytical tool that allows us to problematize the multiple and simultaneous forms of subordination that people face based on their race, gender, class, and other social dimensions, whose experiences and struggles cannot be fully understood if analyzed only in a fragmented way (Hill-Collins, 1990; La Barbera, 2013; Viveros, 2016). As pointed out by Audre Lorde (1984), there is no hierarchy of oppressions; therefore, black African migrant women cannot choose which oppression to fight against: being a woman, being black, or being a migrant, poor, and/or lesbian represents an inseparable confluence that permeates each of their histories of resistance. Likewise, the intersectional perspective contributes to a more complete understanding of the experiences of black African women by overcoming the limitations of hegemonic feminist theory, which tends to universalize both the category of “woman” and its demands, and makes invisible the particular contexts of oppression they face (Ribeiro, 2018; Tamale, 2020).

From this perspective, the theoretical evolution of intersectionality has incorporated fundamental contributions from Latin American (Viveros, 2016) and African (Tamale, 2020) decolonial approaches, among which the inclusion of the axis of subordination of coloniality stands out. In this context, coloniality should be understood as a system of power that persists after the political independence of colonized countries and, based as it is on the racial axis, has

perpetuated the oppression, exploitation, and subalternation of people and knowledge seen as “inferior” (Lugones, 2012). This process was supported by a racial hierarchization that positions European culture as superior and delegitimizes knowledge that does not conform to the model of the white property-owning man (Tamale, 2020).

The invalidation of knowledge is a form of discrimination based on a recognition injustice rooted in colonialism, conceptualized as epistemic violence, which renders invisible those forms of knowledge that fall outside Eurocentric logic (Ribeiro, 2018). This hierarchical structure legitimizes certain voices and identities while silencing historically oppressed groups, allowing us to understand the “place of enunciation” as the social space from which both privileged and subordinate groups speak, relegating the latter to a structurally silenced position (Ribeiro, 2018). From a feminist perspective, recognizing this place of enunciation raises to visibility the social locus of all women and prevents the invisibility of the demands of those who have been marginalized, as black African women have been.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research is framed within the interpretive paradigm (Bernstein, 1983; Whitley, 1984), so as to approach material and symbolic reality through the interpretations that the studied population itself makes of its experience (Mora, 2020). Nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with black African women and key informants living in Valencia, which were transcribed verbatim by hand.

The participants were selected by means of purposive sampling, thus ensuring heterogeneity in variables such as country of origin, immigration status, occupation, and other factors relevant to characterizing their migration experiences. Initial contacts were facilitated primarily by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and subsequently, snowball sampling was employed to expand the number of interviewees, all of whom were asked to sign an informed consent form. Next, information on the profiles of the women (Table 1) and the key informants (Table 2) who were interviewed is presented.

Table 1. Interviewed Women Profiles

<i>Code</i>	<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>Immigration Status</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Reason for Migration</i>	<i>Years of Residence</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
M1	Equatorial Guinea	Naturalized	50	Studies	20	Spanish	University Studies	NGO Professional

(continues)

(continuation)

<i>Code</i>	<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>Immigration Status</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Reason for Migration</i>	<i>Years of Residence</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
M2	Mali	Residence	34	Family Reunification	13	Spanish, Bambara, French	Professional Training	NGO Professional
M3	Mali	Residence	30	Family Reunification	9	Spanish, Bambara, French	University Studies	Beauty Services
M4	Cameroon	Naturalized	48	Financial Reasons	22	Spanish, French, English	Secondary Education	Agricultural Work
M5	Senegal	Residence	37	Financial Reasons	12	Spanish, Wolof, French, English	Secondary Education	Agricultural Work
M6	Cameroon	Residence	28	Financial Reasons	8	Spanish, French, English	Professional Training	Domestic and Care Work
M7	Democratic Republic of Congo	Student Visa	29	Studies	5	Spanish, English, French	University Studies	Domestic and Care Work
M8	Cameroon	Naturalized	37	Health Reasons	22	Spanish, English, French	University Studies	Translator
M9	Equatorial Guinea	Student Visa	41	Studies	13	Spanish, Fang	University Studies	Writer and LGTB Activist
M10	Equatorial Guinea	Residence	30	Financial Reasons	5	Spanish, English, Bubi	University Studies	Restoration Services
M11	Mali	Residence	36	Financial Reasons	2	Spanish, Bambara	Secondary Education	Agricultural Work
M12	Gambia	Dual Nationality	52	Family Reunification	20	Spanish, English, Wolof	Professional Training	Domestic and Care Work
M13	Nigeria	Residence	35	Financial Reasons	10	Spanish, English	Secondary Education	Domestic and Care Work
M14	Mali	Residence	31	Family Reunification	10	Spanish, French, Bambara	Secondary Education	Unemployed

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2. Key Informant Profiles

<i>KI</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Key Role/Position</i>	<i>Organization</i>
KI1	Panamanian	Activist	Uhuru Valencia
KI2	Colombian	Activist	Orriols Convive
KI3	Spanish	Social Worker	Valencia Acoge
KI4	Spanish	Lawyer	Movimiento por la Paz
KI5	Spanish	Social Worker	Organización católica

Source: Own elaboration.

This study represents a methodological application of an intersectional approach to the analysis of our interviewees' narratives. To this end, an *ad hoc* coding tool was developed, inspired by intersectional approaches such as diagrams of overlapping and intersecting identities (Rummens, 2004) and the multilevel model (Winker & Degele, 2011), both within the framework of Hill-Collins' (1990) *Matrix of Domination*. Similar to these models, our tool allows for the conceptual articulation of the different dimensions of analysis, represented by six categorical circles. These dimensions were defined by means of a hybrid procedure that deductively combines Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional conception of social justice (redistribution, recognition, and representation) with the inductive incorporation of axes of oppression and other analytical categories emerging from fieldwork, all linked to the objectives of this research.

The application of the categorical circles that comprise this tool is carried out sequentially, progressing from the core to the outer circles. This process allows for the analysis of significant excerpts from the interviewees' narratives and the establishment of relationships between the different dimensions or analytical categories. The outer circle contains the main axes of subordination identified in the study (gender, social class, race, religion, sexual diversity, immigration status, language, and coloniality), which serve as an interpretive framework that allows for the understanding of the internal dimensions from an intersectional perspective.

The first analytical category, found in the central categorical circle, identifies the territory in which the described discrimination event occurs: country of origin, transit country, or host country. The second category focuses on the social or institutional dimension of the event. Social discrimination includes experiences of exclusion, harassment, or unequal treatment in everyday settings such as employment, housing, leisure spaces, and community relations (Buraschi et al., 2021). Institutional discrimination comprises "practices and policies of social, financial and political institutions" (Ministry of Equality, 2025, p. 15).

The third analytical category specifies the spheres of society in which the described event took place, accounting for both those declared priorities in the International Decade for People of

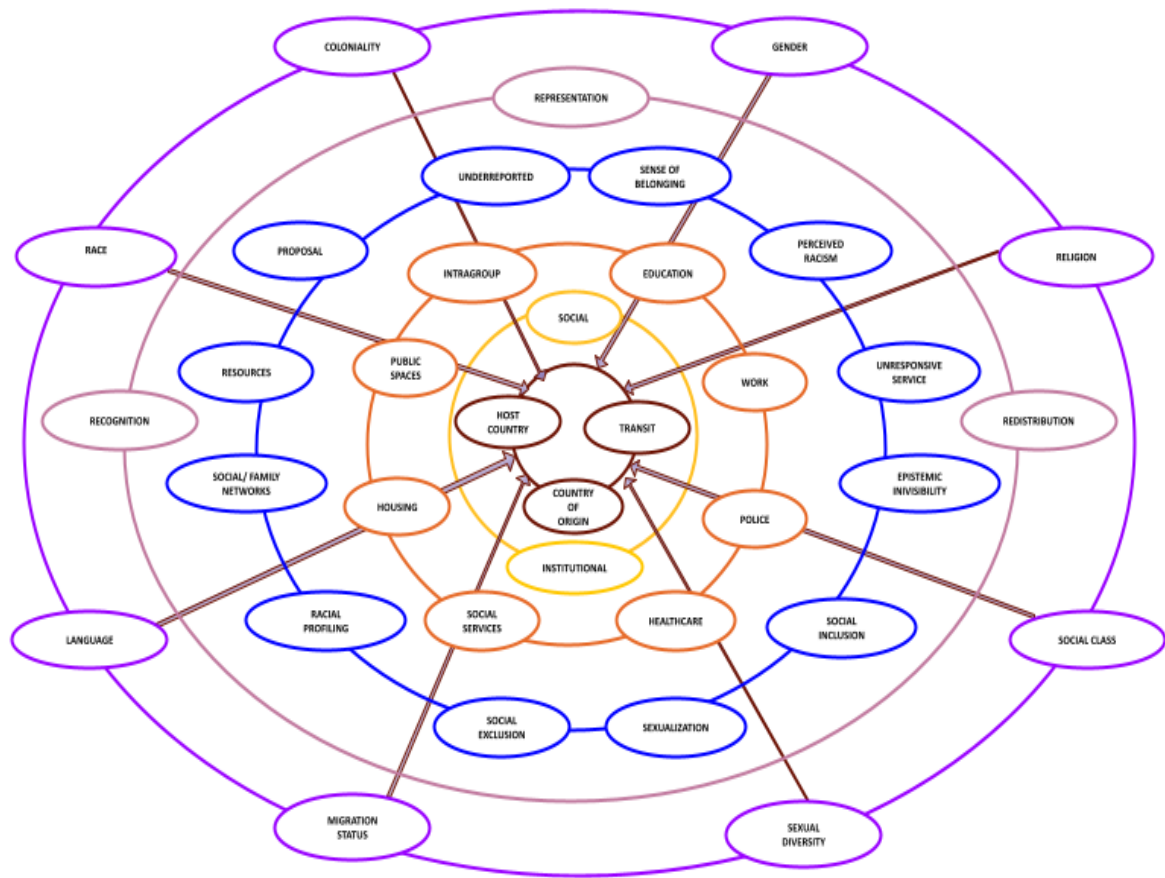
African Descent 2015–2024² and other emerging spheres, including the police and intragroup dynamics, understood as relationships with people from the same country of origin in public or private spaces. The fourth category incorporates specific codes derived from key concepts provided by the interviewees' narratives, which did not fit into previous categories but contributed relevant nuances that enriched the understanding and allowed for a more precise definition of the discriminatory event they described. Examples include racial profiling, sexualization, and epistemological invisibility. The fifth analytical category identifies which dimension of social justice was affected according to Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional conception; that is, whether an injustice occurred in terms of redistribution, recognition, and/or representation.

Finally, the sixth analytical category cuts across all the previous ones and includes the axes of subordination that allowed us to analyze which of these have intersected in the respective described event. It should be added that, in addition to the traditional axes of subordination addressed from an intersectional perspective (gender, social class, race), emerging axes from the analyzed narratives have been included, such as coloniality, language, sexual diversity, immigration status, and religion. Figure 1 illustrates this *ad hoc* coding tool.

The sequential application of these analytical categories allowed us to map, from an intersectional perspective, the axes of subordination that ran through the events narrated by the interviewees. This process wove a narrative thread that provided specificity and concreteness to the causes, effects, and contexts that shaped these experiences. The main motivation for structuring the coding and analysis procedure in this way was to ensure its replicability. Still, its recursive nature allows it to be adapted to the deductive and inductive categories that emerge in each particular investigation from an intersectional approach.

² Education, housing, health, public spaces, social services (Mamadou et al., 2021).

Figure 1. Coding Tool: Representation of Multidimensionality and Intersectionality in the Analysis



Source: Own elaboration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will be divided, for analytical purposes, into experiences of discrimination perceived by the interviewees in their country of origin, during migration, or in the host country. In the discussion, the territorial dimension will be linked to the three dimensions of social justice conceptualized by Fraser (2008).

Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination in the Country of Origin

The narratives of our interviewees make it clear that one of the main motivations for their migration is economic. Specifically, they have referred to the imposition of gender roles that has relegated them to both reproductive work (unpaid and socially naturalized as a female responsibility) and productive work with lesser social and economic recognition, when compared to that of men. While at first glance it may seem that these acts of material injustice in their contexts of origin are

only intersected by the axes of gender and social class subordination, these inequalities cannot be analyzed in isolation from their broader economic and geopolitical context. Accordingly, the women interviewed establish a direct link between their material deprivation, the impoverishment of Africa, and the neocolonial plundering of resources, all of which leads them to identify coloniality as a fundamental axis of subordination (Lugones, 2012; Tamale, 2020) in the perpetuation of this redistribution injustice at a transnational level, as argued by interviewee M8, a woman of Cameroonian nationality:

Today we are the migrants: you're going to rob my house, loot it, kill everyone, and you don't want the only survivor to take a backpack and go look for a better future? But I will keep coming here until you give me back everything you've stolen from me, because I'll have to come, looking for a better future!

These narratives manifest the intersection between the subordination axes of social class, gender, race, and coloniality, revealing how the economic inequalities that drive the migration of these women cannot be understood solely in terms of the material injustices they experience within the borders of their respective nation-states, but rather respond to a globally rooted structure of exploitation, which is consistent with the arguments of Gregorio-Gil and Franzé (1999) and Uhde (2020).

In Fraser's terms (2008), the discriminatory acts described above represent a redistribution injustice, understood as a structural inequality stemming from a global economic organization. This dynamic not only creates precarious situations for certain groups based on their social and gender status but also reproduces neocolonial relations of dependency between the Global North and South. As such, the persistence of the colonial project is sustained using the racial axis as a mechanism for legitimizing the plundering of resources and the subjugation of African populations, in line with the arguments of Lugones (2012) and Tamale (2020).

It should be emphasized that the axis of coloniality has made it possible to detach the analysis of these social injustices from methodological nationalism, by directly linking the redistribution injustices that drive these women to migrate with the global processes of neocolonialism. In line with Uhde (2020), the act of migration itself should be considered not only as a personal survival strategy, but also as a collective response to a global system of social injustice that prevents these migrant women from living dignified lives in their respective countries of origin. The interviewees make use of this argument to assert their right to reside in territories that have exploited the African continent, such as former colonial empires, Spain included.

In addition to economic motivations for migration, some of the interviewees' narratives described acts perceived by them as gender-based violence. Specifically, they mentioned forced marriages, social stigmatization in the event of divorce, and even having suffered female genital mutilation, among other reasons. Interviewee M2, a Malian national who founded an association against female genital mutilation and divorced her Malian husband due to gender-based violence,

points out that “When I reported my ex-husband, I was left with nothing. My family opposed the divorce; in Africa, it’s very frowned upon.”

Similarly, interviewee M6, a Cameroonian national, regarding the difficulties she has experienced in Valencia, recounts how gender-based violence becomes in some instances a driving force behind the migration of many women, despite the family sacrifices this decision entails:

Many of those who arrive don’t have children in their country, but many others do, having left their families behind... because of violence from their husbands or families, or many other things that force them to leave and come here. Besides the discrimination for being black and all that, they have nowhere to go... and people ask you to prove it. What proof am I supposed to have if everything was left there where I’m fleeing from?!

These testimonies evidence how the life experiences of these women are marked by multiple forms of subordination even before they begin their migration journey. The acts described reveal a recognition injustice linked to gender, in Fraser’s (2008) terms, reflecting cultural practices that contribute to the structural devaluation of women in their own communities. As Audre Lorde (1984) pointed out:

The oppression of Black³ women is practiced not only by the white racist society: the joint struggle with Black men against the annihilation of the race must not ignore that oppressions, such as those derived from patriarchy, also exist within Black communities (p. 129).

It should be noted how the axes of gender, race, and coloniality link and intensify the experiences of both redistribution and recognition injustices that these women have endured in their countries of origin, matching what Fraser (2008) calls a hybrid category. The above demonstrates that these forms of social injustice do not arise as a result of their migrant status in the host country, but that they rather were already present in their contexts of origin.

Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination in Migration Transit

The narratives of our interviewees show that the social injustices experienced in their countries of origin are not confined to them. On the contrary, these injustices can directly influence both their decision to migrate and the conditions under which they do so, specifically, the migration strategies available to the most impoverished women. In light of this, the intersection of gender, social class, race, coloniality, and immigration status exposes migrant women to multiple forms of danger and violence when traveling by land and sea, often so for as long as years. These forms of violence may include sexual assault, racist acts, labor exploitation, human trafficking, and even the risk of death. This becomes intensified in territories that comply with Europe’s colonial mandate to prevent the arrival of migrants by externalizing their borders (Díaz et al., 2024). Key informant KI3, who works for an anti-racist NGO, explains:

³ Author Audre Lorde capitalizes the word “Black.”

Most have taken the land migration route with all that entails. They have had to stay for very long periods in Mauritania and Morocco, and so much of the violence they experience is related to Negrophobia... There is a lot of labor slavery, including domestic and care work slavery there. A great deal of impossibility to socialize. There are certain areas where an entire system of repression exists due to border externalization.

Interviewee M5, a Senegalese national, also refers to the invisible risks of these migration routes:

Thousands of people have died in the Mediterranean Sea, and it's not talked about, it's not acknowledged. But Ukraine... they're neighbors, they're cousins, and they're valued... what are they teaching the children? That some lives are worth more than others?

These narratives reveal a common thread connecting the structural injustices affecting these women in their countries of origin with the new forms of violence and exclusion they experience in their migration journeys, which transcend borders. In line with Uhde (2020), these narratives suggest that social justice must be analyzed from a global perspective. From this approach it can be seen that the intersection of the aforementioned axes of subordination amplifies the vulnerability of these women in contexts of forced migration, intensifying manifestations of redistribution and recognition injustice. This is then compounded by greater vulnerability stemming from the unavailability of national legal status for these migrants in transit territories. In Fraser's terms (2008), the political exclusion of certain groups from participation in decision-making is a representation injustice that, in principle, does not affect these people in relation to their countries of origin, yet, based on their new status as migrants, will mark them as dispossessed of rights within a system of subordination that we can characterize as transnational (Gregorio-Gil & Franzé, 1999).

Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination in the Host Country

Since most of the experiences reported by the interviewees fall under acts considered discriminatory in the host country (particularly in the city of Valencia, Spain), these will be analyzed according to the dimension of social justice affected, based on the categories identified by Fraser (2008).

The Dimension of Recognition

It was identified that gender and race predominantly influence the perception of injustice among these women, in terms of the dimension of recognition. This injustice is experienced regardless of their social class in their country of origin, since both those with and without professional education reported feeling devalued by Valencian society. In this regard, interviewee M9, a woman from Equatorial Guinea with a doctorate, points out:

Here, social status doesn't matter; people think black people are stupid, that black people are mentally retarded. When it comes to this, Spain is a completely underdeveloped country. I

don't know if it's envy, but it's as if something is just wrong, 'Wait, a Black woman?'—plain disbelief.

This narrative evidences the existence of an epistemic discrimination that places women in a subordinate position within spaces of knowledge. These spaces, governed by Eurocentric logics, tend to render structurally oppressed groups invisible through a regime of discursive authorization (Ribeiro, 2018) that delegitimizes and marginalizes those forms of knowledge that do not conform to the hegemonic model of the white, property-owning man described by Lugones (2012).

This epistemic invisibility is experienced by these women in the host society not only through the omission or dismissal of their knowledge, but also through the imposition of a hegemonic epistemology that invalidates their experiences and knowledge within the educational system. Interviewee M3, a Malian nurse, refers to the epistemic violence she has experienced in the Spanish educational system, perceived as assimilationist, when she states, "Our education and culture are different, and you don't have the right to forcibly take it away from us."

It is important to note that the interviewees develop their perceptions of recognition injustice not only from the discriminatory acts they have endured, but also by contrast, when comparing the international protection measures granted to refugees from Ukraine with those provided for migrants from other origins. This comparison transforms their narratives: the perception of differential treatment explicitly brings to the surface the notion of racism, as they consider that this distinction is specifically due to skin color. In line with the findings of Buraschi et al. (2021) and Iglesias et al. (2020), ethnic-racial origin is the variable with the greatest predictive weight in experiences of discrimination. In this regard, interviewee K11, an Afro-Panamanian key informant, explains:

"It's not the kind of children we're used to seeing suffer; they're white children with blue eyes." That's exactly how she said it, meaning people are used to seeing black children drown. Their reality is completely different, simply because they are white.

The interviewees have experienced this recognition injustice, perceived as racist, both in the social and institutional spheres. In the social sphere, it has manifested itself primarily in public spaces, as there are repeated testimonies regarding harassment received on public transportation and in supermarkets from security personnel. It is also worth highlighting that streets can be a hostile space for these women, since all our interviewees report having received, on a daily basis, insults that sexualized them. They recount that, despite having normalized these insults due to how frequent they are, they do perceive them as racist aggressions that they would not suffer if they were white. This demonstrates the intersection between the predominant axes of subordination in this matter: gender and race. Regarding this topic, interviewee M6 recounts: "A man stopped his car and said to me: 'Do you want to go have sex?' 'Hey, that's just what you black women do'."

The above notwithstanding, Spain is perceived as a refuge by those excluded due to gender, race, and sexual diversity, representing for them a safe space from the violence stemming from the recognition injustice and the homophobic discrimination they have experienced in their countries

of origin. Interviewee M9, born in Equatorial Guinea, recounts her own experience as a lesbian in both countries:

I'm in the same situation in Guinea, because I talk about topics that neither the government nor society likes, so they discriminate against me there too. "You're not one of us anymore, you talk about faggots, you talk about racism, you talk about women." I suffer just the same in Guinea. At least here I go unnoticed. Over there, everyone knows me as the lesbian.

In line with Ribeiro (2018) and Tamale (2020), adopting an intersectional perspective allows us to understand ways of existing as women that differ from the monolithic approach of hegemonic feminism, by making visible the particular contexts of oppression faced by sexual dissidents. Given the global reach of sexual norms, and in accordance with the transnational vision of social justice of Gregorio-Gil and Franzé (1999) and Uhde (2020), it is necessary to approach the matter from a global perspective in order to acknowledge both the recognition injustices suffered by these individuals in their countries of origin and their potential persistence in host countries.

On the other hand, the recognition injustice perceived by the interviewees in the institutional dimension can be observed, for example, in the understudied practice of racial profiling of women by the Spanish police (Cea D'Ancona & Valles, 2021; Ministry of Equality, 2025). Indeed, most participants describe how the police have asked them for identification in public for no apparent reason other than their skin color. Interviewee M1 recounts her own experience of racial profiling during her university years:

They noticed me on campus... I was wearing typical clothing from my country, very colorful, too... [...] they asked for my ID. Had I done something? I hadn't done anything at all; it was simply that my appearance didn't fit in with the surroundings.

The excerpt above can only be fully understood if one considers that these discriminatory acts, in addition to being influenced by gender and race, are deeply marked by coloniality. As such, it can be stated that Spain's historical colonial background continues to shape the construction of otherness and the perception of inferiority that Valencian society and institutions project onto black people, based on their ethnic and racial markers and their origins in historically colonized territories, this in accordance with the findings of Buraschi et al. (2021), Iglesias et al. (2020), and Lugones (2012).

As Fraser (2008) argues, recognition injustice takes place when certain groups are culturally devalued, and their ways of life are dismissed or stereotyped. In this case, this manifests as the invisibility of black women, who are represented as lacking value in both public and institutional spaces, and are also subjected to specific forms of hypersexualization and stereotyping. All things considered, the perception of discrimination faced by black African migrant women in Valencia results from the intersection of patriarchal, racist, and colonial structures that perpetuate recognition injustice and impact redistributive justice, as will be explained in the following section (Fraser, 2008; La Barbera, 2013; Tamale, 2020).

The Dimension of Redistribution

In terms of the redistributive dimension, we identified its close connection to recognition injustice, since both are articulated around the same three axes of subordination: gender, race, and coloniality. As argued by Fraser (2008), these hybrid categories of social injustice combine cultural and symbolic dimensions with socioeconomic inequalities that intertwine and reinforce each other based on the same axes of subordination. It is therefore ineffective to attempt alleviating redistribution injustices without a corresponding reparative measure in terms of these groups' recognition. It should be added that this articulation of social injustices has been perceived by the interviewees in both the social and institutional dimensions, regardless of their educational level and employment status, that is, their social class.

This interconnectedness of social injustices has manifested itself in the social dimension, above all, in discrimination in access to housing, given that almost all of our interviewees have experienced rejection through the imposition of requirements that, in their view, would not be demanded of white people. Discrimination in this area is perceived as racist, since the denial of housing occurs when traits socially categorized as racialized are detected, as Gil-Benumea (2020) pointed out. From this perspective, interviewee M8, a naturalized Spanish citizen with an employment contract, explains:

Well, the discourse changes as soon as I show up and they see me... "Oh, no, the apartment's taken", "Oh, no, the apartment's been put down," and I think to myself, "Well, everything was fine on the phone, they just have to see me to deny me the apartment... It's not for lack of money, papers, or anything like that, it's simply because I have a different skin color than you, that's all."

Thus, it should be highlighted that there is no direct relationship between the interviewees' employment status and their chances of accessing housing. While the redistribution injustice in the workplace can translate into economic difficulties that limit access to housing, having a stable job does not guarantee such access. Indeed, even the women interviewed with employment contracts faced significant obstacles, which demonstrates how redistribution injustice in this area is more a response to racial stereotypes stemming from a recognition injustice than to any socioeconomic condition.

Another example of this connection between redistribution and recognition injustices becomes evident in the workplace, where the majority of interviewees, regardless of their educational level, were relegated to precarious, low-skilled, and poorly paid jobs. In line with Mamadou et al. (2021), who indicate that workplace discrimination is an expression of structural racism in Spain, it has been established that the main employment sectors are domestic work, caregiving, and agricultural labor. Interviewee M7, a Congolese psychologist, explained: "I haven't found [work as a psychologist] and I've had to look for work in a somewhat... how to put it? Basically, having a strategy. So, of course, I went straight into childcare."

The interviewee's observations bring together the concept of epistemic violence (Ribeiro, 2018) with those of injustice, both redistributive and recognition-based (Fraser, 2008), since devaluing

these women's professional trajectories limits their opportunities for employment commensurate with their educational level, therefore limiting their access to material and social resources as well. This aligns with Orozco's (2007) argument that global care chains, which underpin social reproduction in recipient countries, can only exist thanks to global inequalities that enable the exploitation of these women.

Unlike social discrimination, which has generally been normalized by the participants, institutional discrimination is perceived as most concerning due to its impact on their life trajectories, as it pushes these women into a cycle of vulnerability. This is how the interviewees point to institutions and their administrative obstacles (registration, credential validation, etc.) as responsible for propagating racism, in accordance with what Buraschi et al. (2021) stated regarding how discrimination in the institutional sphere enables or protects various forms of social injustice. On this type of discrimination, interviewee M7 argues:

It's the one that affects you the most in terms of building a life, because it makes it difficult to settle down, difficult to find a job, difficult to complete many procedures... It affects you in many areas of your life, because without work or without papers you can't have a job, and without work you can't have housing... it's a vicious cycle that starts with the institution.

A prime example of this is women who have migrated for family reunification, because if they divorce without proving in court that they have suffered gender-based violence, their documentation allowing them to reside legally in Spain is revoked. The revocation of their residency rights prevents them from accessing legal employment and, therefore, from supporting themselves financially, forcing some to live with their abusers. This situation highlights the lack of institutional protection these women face when confronted with gender-based violence; it demonstrates how a lack of recognition perpetuates redistribution injustice by hindering their material subsistence and, consequently, their ability to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. This institutional vulnerability in the host country is compounded by the prior experiences of gender-based violence some of these women endured in their countries of origin, reinforcing a transnational pattern of patriarchal subordination.

Likewise, this interconnectedness of injustices results in serious consequences for access to assets characteristic of a welfare State; a situation that is especially worrying due to its repercussions on gynecological care, as explained by interviewee M5, who practices the Muslim faith:

There are many women who complain and are not respected... Sometimes women are treated very badly: it is very difficult for African women to take off their clothes. Everyone is different, and sometimes the gynecologists, almost five people, want you to just go in there without anything on, I mean... the women don't want that. Many friends tell me they have problems, but they don't want to go to the gynecologist because they are studying, but in your genitals, which everyone has to see: a woman whose genitals no one has ever seen, only her husband.

The testimonial above reveals that one of the negative consequences of the intersection of various forms of social injustice is the lack of an ethnic perspective in health services, which then limits Muslim women's access to gynecological care. This situation is a specific form of social injustice that particularly affects these women at the convergence of gender, race, and religion. Along the same line, most of the participants complain about the lack of interpreters as a barrier to accessing public services, as explained by interviewee M6, a Cameroonian national who lost her unborn child:

And you were speaking in Valencian while doing the ultrasound... the girl was talking about the head, the placenta, that it's in the baby's head. In Valencian! I can't tell someone not to speak their language, but if I'm caring for someone who comes in from the emergency room, who wants to know what's wrong with their baby, at least speak in a language the person can understand.

The case described demonstrates a serious gap in institutional protection. The woman herself recounts that she was asked for her consent to donate her unborn child to science after having it preserved in formaldehyde, a fact that reflects the profound insensitivity and dehumanization of the treatment she received. This experience shows how the intersection of gender, race, and language can lead to such a severe recognition injustice that it makes it impossible to receive dignified treatment, even in circumstances as painful as the loss of a child.

The Dimension of Political Representation or Participation

The third contested front concerns the participation of historically subordinated groups in political processes (Fraser, 2008). In this sense, the interviewees point out that the unavailability of citizenship status to participate in these processes, along with the lack of political role models who represent their experiences, contributes to their perception of invisibility in the Valencian political and social imaginary. This condition is based on a recognition injustice grounded, fundamentally, in the axes of race and immigration status, which generates a feeling of rejection toward a society that excludes them. Interviewee K11, an Afro-Panamanian anti-racist activist, states:

I would say that if you find yourself in a society where you feel... not just feel, because it's not that you feel it, but that you experience not being accepted, then of course you don't feel included, and, in truth, there is no need to seek inclusion into a society that is hostile towards me. Why would I do such a thing?

This representation injustice is expressed in the regime of discursive authorization that underlies national political processes, since these processes determine *a priori* that legitimate identities and discourses are those that fall within the category of citizen, thus consolidating the social conditions that facilitate the structural silencing of the demands of non-citizen migrants (Ribeiro, 2018).

Notwithstanding the above, our interviewees identify political representation as a key resource for confronting racism, especially in its institutional dimension, due to its impact on daily access to welfare State resources. From the perspective of "lived citizenship" (Cherubini, 2013), some of

the women interviewed engage in civic practices beyond their legal status, organizing collectively to demand their own administrative regularization and the right to vote for migrants, with the consequent increase in the group's political participation. The most frequent argument presented by the interviewees to demand their right to participate in political decisions was the conviction that they contribute to the material well-being enjoyed by Spaniards. Therefore, they claimed to be deserving of the same right to recognition and representation as the native population, as argued by interviewee M5, a Senegalese national:

Immigrants ought to participate more, because they don't let us participate if we don't have citizenship. Don't we pay taxes? What do Spaniards do that we don't? So why aren't we included in these things?... If we were treated like Spaniards, we could do a lot of better things.

In conclusion, it is worth highlighting how the interplay of social injustice—in the dimension of redistribution, recognition, and representation—influences the sense of belonging of these women and their descendants, who, regardless of their legal status, also face serious difficulties in feeling integrated and perceiving themselves as part of Spanish society. Interviewee M12, a Gambian mother, recounts:

As a mother, I'm worried: when my children grow up, how will they make a living here? That worries me a lot, because they are already Spanish citizens, they were born here, they have Spanish passports, and after their studies, what will they do if there aren't even any black bus drivers?

As the interview excerpts reveal, the three-dimensional deficiency of social justice (Fraser, 2008) not only perpetuates the marginalization of these women in Valencia, but also affects their descendants born in Spain, who, despite their legal status as nationals, still face symbolic and structural barriers that limit their full integration and development on equal terms.

CLOSING REMARKS

The aim of this research is to analyze the collection of perceptions and experiences of discrimination in the country of origin, during migration transit, and in the host country, of black African migrant women residing in the city of Valencia; all in light of Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional conception of social justice, and by means of an intersectional analysis tool created *ad hoc*.

The study shows that the intersection of gender, race, and coloniality axes influences both the decision to migrate and the persistence of vulnerability during transit and in the destination country, thus shaping narratives that link transnational experiences of social injustice. These axes operate as hybrid categories that, in Fraser's terms (2008), simultaneously generate injustices of redistribution and recognition in different territories, compounded by an injustice of representation stemming from the fact that the interviewees are excluded from political participation, as they lack legal citizenship status.

In this regard, the role of coloniality is crucial for understanding the transnational dimension of social injustices, by revealing how these injustices are sustained by global neocolonial processes; such an analysis could hardly be conducted from the margins of methodological nationalism. In line with Uhde (2020), coloniality also allows us to interpret migration as a form of resistance by subordinate groups against the social injustices they experience in their territories of origin. This way, the experiences of these women cannot be explained solely by their migrant status, but also by their integration into a Eurocentric, patriarchal, and capitalist global system of social injustice.

As for the experiences of discrimination these women endure in the destination country, specifically in the city of Valencia, while the intersection of the same axes of subordination mentioned above is observed, skin color remains the predominant factor in the social categorization of these black African women as subordinate. This aligns with Buraschi et al. (2021), Iglesias et al. (2020), and Lugones (2012), who found that skin color is the variable with the greatest predictive weight in terms of discrimination against this group.

A comprehensive understanding of these social injustices in the destination country has revealed a domino effect: the recognition injustice generates a redistribution injustice, while the lack of political representation prevents them from addressing the aforementioned social injustices. An example of this is epistemic violence (Ribeiro, 2018), which, by devaluing the cultural identity and gender of these women, prevents them from accessing both jobs commensurate with their professional training and the assets characteristic of a welfare State, thus preventing them from enjoying redistributive justice on equal terms. Likewise, this epistemic violence and its resulting social injustices are considered fundamental to global care chains, since social reproduction in receiving countries would be impossible without relegating these women to cheap labor (Parreñas, 2001; Orozco et al., 2008).

On the other hand, this study aims to contribute to expanding research on international migration in Spain. Therefore, it adopts an intersectional perspective as methodological tool, thus ensuring rigor and replicability. Although its interpretive subjectivity limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, this perspective has allowed for capturing the complexity of individual and collective experiences by recognizing that inequalities do not manifest themselves in isolation, but rather through the intersection of multiple axes of subordination that operate in both the social and institutional spheres, and which are reproduced and interrelate at a global level.

Likewise, this social analysis aims to demonstrate that the intersectional approach in the Social Sciences is useful for making more accurate diagnoses, which can serve as a basis for formulating comprehensive and transnational public policies able to guarantee not only economic equity and cultural recognition, but also inclusive political representation that may allow the construction of a “fourth territory,” in which both black African migrant women and their descendants can lead dignified lives and exercise their full rights in a context of real social justice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was carried out within the framework of the 2020/2021 Fellowship for Collaboration from the Spanish Ministry of Education at the University of Valencia (Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology), under the supervision of Albert Mora Castro, and the 2022 JAE Intro Fellowship from the Spanish National Research Council at the Institute of Philosophy (IFS-CSIC), under the direction of Maria Caterina La Barbera. The author thanks both supervisors and the institutions involved for their support.

Translation: Fernando Llanas.

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