



Ayotunde Khyree Ikuku
Blu Buchanan

We Major

Black Trans Feminism Fights Back

The racialization of gender in the U.S. constructs unique and shifting expressions of gender. Black gender performances are distinct from the gender performances of other races. This makes Black feminist sociology (BFS) and Black trans feminism (BTF) an important space for "upending anti-black, cis-centric foundations" (p. 292). The authors describe principles of BTF and delineate interventions for mainstream sociology to push the discipline towards a holistic inclusion of the "material, affective, and political realities of Black trans women and femmes" (p. 291).

Features of Black Trans Feminism

Refusing "realness"

The categories of Black women and femmes as fluid, so BTF is primarily concerned with dismantling the conditions of "realness" in reference to authentic or passable gender performances.

Community care

The trans community cares for itself when others do not address its emotional, social, and material needs. When BTF practices and community action are combined, the community can better resist assimilation into neoliberal feminism and white feminism.

Resisting disposability

Those within the community can do harm to each other. Instead of enacting punitive justice, transformative justice prevents total ostracization while maintaining individuals' responsibility for atonement.

Potential use of violence

The lack of structural protections for the Black trans community leads women and femmes to act in self-defense. Defending oneself is necessary to stay alive, care for oneself, and care for the community (p. 295).



Interventions for Sociology

Analyzing abjection

Black trans women and femmes experience abjection, "a state of being cast off", before and after entering sociology (p. 295). Thus, the authors call for better incorporation and support for Black trans women and femme scholars and subject matter within sociology.

Material reparations

BTF demands reparations for Black, indigenous and First Nations peoples because sociology is entangled with the continuous death and incarceration of these communities. Although sociology has harmed the trans community, the discipline can also promote the "transfer of wealth, land, and authority to the dispossessed within society" (p. 296).

Considering of abolition

BTF promotes the abolition of sociology as a way to radically change how the discipline privileges epistemologies and work from dominant groups. By executing reparations, sociology can prevent further abjection of Black trans women and femmes.

Buchanan and Ikuku desire to reinvigorate queer methods among the Black trans feminist and Black feminist communities. Closing with a statement on intra- and intercommunal bonds organized through difference among Black trans women and femmes and cis Black women, they write:

"By locating our different positionalities, it is possible to organize ourselves in ways that recognize our relative structural power and powerlessness -- to... work together toward our collective liberation" (p. 297).

From *Black Feminist Sociology, Perspectives and Praxis* (2022)

www.blackfeministsociology.com

Designed by Kaitlin Webster in collaboration with the Black Feminist Sociology Team with support from the American Sociological Association's Howerly Teaching Enhancement Grant.

Citation:

Buchanan, Blu and Ayotunde Khyree Ikuku. 2022. "We Major: Black Trans Feminism Fights Back." Pp. 291-299 in *Black Feminist Sociology*, edited by Z. Luna and W. N. Laster Pirtle. Routledge.