

En-gendering critical spatial literacy: Migrant Asante women and the politics of urban space

Epifania Amoo-Adare

Abstract

The power of spatial configurations in our everyday social practices and ideological constructions of place and identity cannot be denied. As an architect and an Asante woman who has always lived in African and diasporic cities, I am particularly interested in how Black women's socioeconomic lives have been constituted, situated, and enacted in western urban spatiality. I believe that Black women the world over are disproportionately represented in unsuitable and inadequate urban spaces and are also underrepresented in urban development decision-making processes. Also, as a Black female architect intent on imagining and constructing radical architectural counter-narratives within hegemonic spatial politics, I believe it is important to develop a critical spatial literacy on Black women's urban spatial conditions by conducting research that recognizes the spatial nature of socioeconomic life and as a consequence would reveal the possibilities for radical change in the politics of space. To this end, I discuss and recount experiences surrounding my investigation of how migrant Asante women's household configurations, socio-cultural practices and spatial self-perceptions have changed in Ghana's rapidly urbanizing capital city, Accra; in order to en-gender a timely praxis of critical spatial literacy.