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An Interview with Dr. Ginetta Candelario

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The Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis has traditionally published interviews with individuals who have strong connections to our special issue topics. We believe that interviews are important ways to contribute to the conversation surrounding critical issues in social justice. This interview features Dr. Ginetta Candelario, whose recent visit to Iowa State University offered the opportunity for the editorial team to discuss her research and interests in Latinx Studies.

Q. What drives you to do work surrounding Dominican history, activism, identity, and society? Where did it start for you and why is this work so important to you? Then, last part of that question, what's the most rewarding part of your work about Latinx populations?

These answers could become a book. Like all academics, we end up studying ourselves; that's really what we all do. I think that's the case even for natural scientists, that if you explore fully enough their biography you come to find that there's usually some kind of biographical relationship between their intellectual pursuits and their professional pursuits and their life story. It's usually more obvious for humanists and social scientists, but nonetheless I think it's true fairly universally. In my case, it's not so much as what as who, which was my mother.

My mother began her experience in the US not as an immigrant but as an exile. She was a political exile of the Trujillo regime and at some point, returned to the DR after I was born, with me as a baby, and then immigrated and became an immigrant into US society in the early '70s and remained in the United States, as I said in my talk last night, altogether for 53 years. She came as a 22-year-old, so really the bulk of her life was lived primarily in the US. But part of the experience of entering the United States in 1960, in fact the anniversary of her entry, October 10th, is coming up next week, was that she left a society that not only was a dictatorship, but it was a particularly closed society.

Again, one of the things I mentioned in my talk last night was that in 1960 when she came there were fewer than 10,000 Dominicans outside of the Dominican Republic, period, anywhere in the world outside the DR, which is astounding when you consider that there were 4 million Dominicans at the time. That containment was part of the process of the dictatorship. That meant that it was a total institution. Orlando Patterson saw that the media, the school system, public

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culture, the administrative and ideological apparatus, to borrow from Maraise, was very much run by the dictatorial state and the regime. That had profound implications for racial identity and racial identity formation and discourse in the DR.

The discourse was heavily Hispanicist and indigenous. That history goes back to the 19th century as it turns out, but what that meant was that despite the fact that the vast majority of Dominicans are Afro-descended to some degree or another, most Dominicans understood themselves to be “not black,” or at least publicly not black but “indio,” indigenous, and/or white. People who would not be considered white in the US were most definitely considered white in the DR. That was my mother’s case, that she personally, and her family more broadly, most people in the family, because, again, it’s a very also very individual based-on-appearance sort of categorization, considered themselves white Dominicans or “Hispanos,” or Hispanic.

She enters the US in 1960, and in this particular moment, it’s an entirely different racial context. She’s quickly re-racialized as not only not white, but obviously black to US observers, right? She first entered through Washington, DC where she spends a couple of months actually, and then from DC to Crown Heights, to Brooklyn, center of the universe. That’s what I always call Brooklyn, center of the universe. She’s forced to grapple not only with her condition as an exile/immigrant, and the language barriers, because she didn’t speak a word of English, because as an exile she wasn’t expecting to come to this country or to leave her country. She had to leave under threat of death or torture and so forth.

She had very little preparation for that. There was the question of being an immigrant, not speaking the language, being an immigrant specifically from Latin America, which was already constructed as not white geopolitically as a region regardless of the actual ancestry of the individuals because how many German-Argentineans are there, right? There was that problem, but then on top of that, that she was constructed as specifically black or Afro-descended. By the time she met and married my father and had me and then returned to the DR, she was moving back and forth across a space and a time where these questions about racial identity and identification and the really material and political consequences of that were very much a source of concern for her, both personally, but I think more broadly also intellectually.

I happened to be made and born in Brooklyn but raised back and forth between the two places. She spent a lot of my childhood asking questions of me because I was the American, born in the US, to explain. It’s complicated because in the context of a family and a community, it’s clear what your heritage and your racial identity might be. But when you’re moving independently in the world to whatever degree people don’t automatically know, right? Again, to my mother and my family I was clearly white, but to other folks I may or may not have been. The questions were always “*what are we?*” “*Why are we one thing here and another thing there?*” “*Why is it so different here?*” “*How do you make sense of this?*” These were questions that were very much circulating in my childhood, both in my immediate home but more broadly in my Dominican family at large because, as I mentioned in my talk last night, my mom was the first in her family of eight brothers and sisters to come.

She did that thing that is now apparently part of the historical pattern. She was the anchor in a chain migration. She brought every one of her seven brothers and sisters plus their spouses, one by one, her mother, and eventually the entire family was here. They are fairly polychromatic family and that question of why are we one thing there and another thing here and it really matters obviously in terms of where we live, what kind of jobs we have, how we're treated by the police and the schoolteachers and so forth. Those were questions that our family was grappling with, were grappling with constantly. I always joke in my classes that it was either therapy or graduate school, right? So, I did both, actually.

Those questions, they animated part of my undergraduate experience because also going to Smith, actually, I went to Smith in the '80s and dealing, not for the first time, because I dealt with racism coming-of-age, being called slurs in the schoolyard fistfights. It's not that it was new but it was more refined and subtle forms of racism, as well as not so subtle like notes and dolls with nooses and all these things happening at a very nice, elite women's college, but having to grapple with these questions of what is going on? Why is it going on this way? Where do Latinos fit in this story? The story was, and continues to be very black and white in the US, but it's much more complicated than that, especially for Afro-Latinos.

That's what drove me then into sociology in graduate school was really wanting to answer those questions that my mother and my broader family had and that eventually, as I became an adult, I myself began to have in trying to figure out what does this mean for me and where do I fit in this account? There was nothing. There was next to nothing being written about Dominicans and certainly really nothing about the question of race and embodiment and identity and all that. That's what drove me to the work itself. The activism, I think it's just part and parcel. Very few of us at that stage certainly, and I think still at this stage today, have the luxury of engaging in purely cerebral or intellectualizing work because the stakes are real.

This is something I say to my students, the reason I want to understand this is because I'm trying to make sense, for example, of Kiko Garcia being thrown off the roof of a building in 1992 in Washington Heights by a cop from the 34th precinct, which was systematically and with impunity harassing my family, and other Dominicans and engaging in really racialized forms of violence and policing, that Dominicans were concentrated in these particular 20 blocks and that they were concentrated in particular kinds of jobs with really material consequences for them, that they're the focus of a drug war, which is the Kiko Garcia context, that they're being criminalized and targeted without any real recognition of the fact that that was produced by US policy, in large measure. All of that stuff, if you're trying to understand because something is wrong. Something is wrong, it has to be addressed whether that's being addressed at the family level of "I need to intervene and intercede for my cousin or my *tia* or whatever" and translate or advocate or so forth, but you quickly understand this is not just about us.

That's one part of it. The other part, I don't know if I'm going on too long but, is the philosophy. I did a TED Talk called, "Saber es Poder." I lay it out in there, knowledge is power. This was a leitmotif of my childhood, my mother, it's the "dichos," folk sayings. There's all kinds of them, right? Hers was, "Saber es Poder," knowledge is power. She would say really explicitly to me in her condition as an exile who becomes an immigrant, "They can take everything from you; they

can kill your entire family; they can murder your children; they can rob you of your country and your land, but they cannot take what is inside you. What you know in your mind and in your heart.” It's like the *Invictus* poem.

She would say, "The thing that you must accumulate is not money; it's not stuff; it's knowledge. Because that is what will go with you wherever you go, even if you land in a place without a nickel in your pocket or a suitcase in your hand. What you know, right? The connection between knowledge and empowerment of yourself and of others was really clear and explicit in her experience of navigating this process of leaving one country and entering another but also her condition as single mom, eventually, and an immigrant and so on and so forth. That activism, that mutual aid and responsibility to not just hoard knowledge for your own upward social mobility but to spread it.

That's the activism part of it, that you have an obligation. Maybe it's partially Catholic, I don't know. You owe people to share in their support. That's the other part of it, right? I don't know if this is explicitly Dominican or my family, but this idea that you didn't get here by yourself. Okay? You didn't get here by yourself; it's also feminist. My mom was an organic feminist I would say for sure. She was very explicit about valuing her labor as a mother, as a member of a family, that this will not be made invisible. Because you did not get here on your own, you do have an obligation to reciprocate, to feed back into the family and the community that made you.

Q. Thank you for sharing that. I think this goes right along to the next question as you spoke about the diversity of Dominican narratives, or the lack thereof, as you mentioned. How do you see this being an important contribution to our understanding of social justice? The last part of that question is, what is unique about the Dominican narrative that isn't present in other social justice conversations?

Yeah. I'll say a couple of things. One thing that I learned in the course of trying to figure out the answers to the questions that my mother asked was about the nature of white supremacy and how universal it is on one hand, and culturally specific it is on the other hand. As I started this story, my mom belonged to a family and a segment of the community that in Dominican context was white. Then she gets re-racialized as non-white. Then moving with her, literally back and forth between these contexts and experiencing re-racialization constantly, as well as, by the way, the power of citizenship because as I mentioned I was born in Brooklyn so I had a blue passport. My mom was a Dominican national; she had a red passport. Every time we entered and exited we had to stand in different lines. We went through entirely different processes of entry and exit into the United States and the Dominican Republic.

That made the power of the state really visible, from the beginning for me as an incipient intellectual but also for my mom and the power of white supremacy. What it led me to understand was that the bigger picture is the picture of colonialism, settler colonialism and chattel slavery and those kind of world historical processes and that because the Americas as we think of it today was founded in a multiplicity of particular ways but with that larger overarching frame that, on the one hand, it really proves that it is all a social construct, that it's not inherent or biological. It's a truism now, but if you look at the history, what you see is that these race categories, whiteness for

example, simply becomes a way of denoting those who have the right to hoard and extract. They can look like anything because they do look like all kinds of things. This is where in studying Latin America and the Caribbean is especially helpful.

But even the US, because if you think about the range of appearances of people denoted as white now, it's like designated male and female at birth. People designated as white and not white at birth, first of all, how much that's changed even in the US. Again thinking about the Americas more broadly, what becomes really clear is that it, first of all, it's ideologically constructed, systematic culturally socialized and deeply institutionalized. It's a system for allocating the distribution. I am most certainly a Marxist but also Weberian because the question of status honor and political power and that the material does drive that, but there are these other forms of materiality that are not purely economic or economic-resource based.

But it's all about limiting who has control and power to distribute those goods that all humans need. That's kind of universal; that's in the Americas; that's a very American reality. But seeing how it played out particularly in the Dominican Republic versus the US and thinking about how in the DR, white supremacy takes the form of anti-Haitianism.

Because Latin America is inherently also “not white vis-à-vis the US” and the production of dependency and dependency theory, that constant repositioning and having to think both geopolitically and domestically I think gives you an insight that when you are so US-centric you might lose. To think about the critical role of the state, the dangers and pitfalls of nationalism, that it's universal. What it also does is, especially when you're young and you start thinking about this stuff or finding out about this stuff, anger is a natural response and outrage and very simplistic, "Oh, those people are the bad people and we're the good people because we're the victims."

But you come to quickly understand that, you know what? Everyone is susceptible. It's a systemic problem. Any particular group, when it's positioned in this way, can behave and work to reproduce its advantaged extractive, exploitative position. It's not inherent in people from Europe or people from Africa or people from Asia. It's how we organize ourselves. I think this is the question of social justice. If we understand both the specificity of “yes, these people did these things and had these important consequences, negative consequences, and therefore must be held accountable.” This is the reparations argument because they are benefiting in these ways at the cost to others. On the other hand, it's not inherent. It's not inherently part of who they are or who they must be into the future.

This goes to the white abolition movement. Noel Ignatiev, I don't know if you know this work, wrote about white abolitionists. He's been around for 30, 40 years. Noel Ignatiev, who wrote *How the Irish Became White*, he's at Mass College of the Arts, is a member of this movement. What they are arguing for is the abolition of whiteness. Meaning, the abolition of this mental structure and social structure that identifies certain people as being inherently entitled because of that. If we can build it, we can unbuild it. That's the social justice agenda, to find other ways of producing notions of shared stakes. Not purely Marxist, because that didn't work for us clearly, right? The labor movement was not able to incorporate minorities, people of color, as co-equals in the struggle

with few exceptions. That's not going to work. It has to do with the psychological wage problem that DuBois so beautifully laid out more than 100 years for us, right?

I think that's the social justice piece. It comes from that experience of moving back and forth between societies, of thinking about how whiteness and blackness are produced differently in these two spaces and of how Dominicans who then are forced themselves to enter and exit these two places, particularly in the second and third generation begun to have this broader view and, this why I quoted Silvio Torres-Sallant last night, hold two states accountable. Think Junot Diaz, who's constantly speaking here in the US, but also is holding the Dominican authority's feet to the fire around the denationalization of Dominicans of Haitian descent, as am I, as Julia Alvarez is, as is you name it, the list of diasporic Dominican scholars and thinkers. I think it's that. It's understanding the broader state geopolitical context.

Q. In thinking of Latino, Latina or Latinx studies and the programs that are appearing on college campuses, how can they be better understood as integral to a well-rounded college education and beyond simply “that diversity course requirement”?

It's the view from the south and the view from the internal colony combined. The image I put up yesterday of the upside-down map was an attempt to visualize that. You can understand the US so much better when you're looking at it from the outside or when you belong to a marginalized community that has had its labor and its life energy extracted in order to produce the air that we breathe and the water that we swim in. It's always the view from the margins can give us a far clearer picture of the center. I think that's what Latinx programs, Latino studies and Latin American studies more broadly, Caribbean studies, etc., women's studies, queer studies, all the kinds of marginal positionality programs that are critical, give us a fuller picture of the center.

That, I think, is the power that they offer, that consciousness of the hidden but vital relations of power that produce the center. I think that that's an absolutely well-rounded college education. One of the concerns I have, for example, thinking now as a parent. I have two kids who are in college. When we were doing the thing that you do with children, you take them around to visit and so forth, I, being a sociologist, was struck by the discourses and the narratives that they're using to sell one place or another. I couldn't help paying attention to all this. I remember walking away from one of the first ones with my daughter and saying, "You know, I'm sorry, but I'm not paying for your work education. That's the corporation's job, okay? I'm not doing workforce training." I refuse to privately take that on, which is the pressure of the situation we find ourselves in, in 21st century US, which is why we have the crisis of student debt and so on and so forth.

Corporations and the labor market have fobbed off on private household workforce training requirements, the credentialing problem. That is completely a neo-liberal problem. We've accepted it more broadly. That is not part of the public discourse. When in fact the role of higher education is human development and personal development, not in the sense of the atomized human capital stores, but the potentiality of every human being. That's stuff that's inside us and of us, including at the level of the spiritual and ancestral, if you believe in that stuff, which some of us do. To be actualized, to be externalized is part of our development over the life course. That's what, to my mind, in the best situation a college education is for.

That can involve preparing yourself for certain kinds of endeavors and callings. Your calling might be to tell them sell their land. Wonderful, here are the things you need to know. That's a different approach, for example, to say agriculture education, that, "No, you're going to need to know this so that you can be better prepared to work for Monsanto." They should cover that cost because they're the ones who are going to benefit from extracting that capacity. You see?

In that sense then, when you ask me this question, I assume that higher education in general is about human development or should be. That's the thing we have to insist on. That's why actually Latino studies and these other ethnic studies and critical studies and women's studies program, at their core they have that understanding. They enter the academy with an understanding around community development, community empowerment, community growth and the individual as embedded in community. That's a much more collectivist vision of well-being. Does that get watered down and co-opted and institutionalized and commercialized and commodified? Sure, but we do see it.

I've been in enough Latino studies and women's studies and spaces over the last 25 years to see that always there's still that kernel somewhere in there, whether it's the individual faculty or the students who are coming as new first-generation students, that sense of what I was saying before. To me, that really is about being a well-rounded college educated person, that it offers you the possibility of tapping into your power as something beyond a worker for someone else's benefit but more as your work in the world. Does that make sense?

Q. Given the recent devastation and natural disasters that happened in Puerto Rico, in your view, how has the historical narrative around the relationship between the US and Latino/Latina communities impacted these contemporary relationships?

Yeah. Of course, I've been tracking what the news has and has not said about Puerto Rico.

First of all, it's complete absence or virtual absence in the first two weeks from mainstream news reporting, which is shocking, though understandable I think to some degree because the history of US colonialism, and colonial relations is almost always entirely absent. We don't acknowledge it. When people talk about the colonial period, they mean 1776. We're still in the colonial period. The United States has colonies. Puerto Rico's a colony. There are native nations that are internal colonies. We have a sovereignty discourse and we do have some sovereignty structures, but the fact of the matter is that they're still subject to federal authority as internally colonized subject populations, okay?

Guam, the northern islands, the Virgin Islands, etc., this is very much an imperial state. The vast majority of Americans do not know that. They just don't; they have no sense. I was sitting a couple of years ago in San Juan at the airport in Puerto Rico actually. There was this couple. I think, actually, they were from the Midwest. Maybe I'm imagining that because of my own stereotypes. The stuff they were saying, they had just spent a week in Puerto Rico and still after that had no idea that they were in a US territory, that Puerto Ricans are Americans, that they're US citizens. The ignorance, right? It was just this fundamental level of ignorance, but that's produced. That's

produced through the school system; it's produced through our media. The lack of cognition of that history was really clear in the reporting or the lack of reporting about Puerto Rico.

What I thought was interesting was that just this week in the *New York Times*, there was an article about basically how this is going to affect you, "normal everyday Americans." It's going to affect you really vitally because the pharmaceuticals industry in Puerto Rico provides the manufacturing of several medications that are now part and parcel of the normal treatment of things like diabetes and cancer and so on and so forth. The average person, that mainstream, mythical white subject in Iowa is suddenly going to realize, "Oh, wait a minute. Those people who have been suffering for two and a half weeks without water, electricity, sewage treatment facilities, food, etc., I need to care about that because now I'm not going to get my Humira."

Now, it's unfortunate. This is why I talked about cognitive bias yesterday. Empathy is produced. In capitalist neoliberal society, I happen to believe that human beings are inherently empathetic, actually. That's why women give birth. This is a completely altruistic and empathetic endeavor. Otherwise, fetuses are parasites, right? Why do we do it? Because I think we are inclined to empathy and mutual aid. I don't believe in that competitive model of humanity. Yet in our reality, empathy has to be actively produced. It tends to happen more naturally with proximity because of that, but a core part of colonialism and racialization and enslavement as processes, is dehumanization, distancing dehumanization, objectifying.

Puerto Ricans have clearly been subjected to that. How do you produce concern from folks in the center about folks on the edge? In this case, with the Puerto Rico case, you show them this is how it's going to cost you that these people are suffering. You're going to be affected directly, not just because of the channeling of money, let's say, which there's a tremendous amount of resentment for because we don't understand that those folks are entitled to that money. It's not a gift; it's not charity; they're entitled to those funds. Beyond that, you will benefit from the care that may be extended to these folks. There's a direct stake for you, which again, in some way reproduces the problem. It doesn't really reveal part of the well-being that you take for granted comes because it's been extracted from a place like Puerto Rico.

I think that you see this disappearing of the colonial relationship between the United States mainland and Puerto Rico and Latinos communities through these strategies of illusion, of signaling to some degree in a transactional way but of not really addressing in a broader, political, ethical way what are the relationships and the obligations. I think people are going to start realizing the impact also when you have the immigration that I was talking about. Clearly there's going to be tens of thousands, if not more people, and particularly people in high need, elders, because I personally know people who are going to bring their old people and bringing them over. I can name 12 people just in my personal networks without even doing serious investigation.

You're going to bring your elders. You're going to bring your most vulnerable, the folks who are least able to survive a situation like that. Not only are you increasing the numbers of Latinos, now Puerto Ricans, in the United States, even in places like Iowa. I had a student come up to me yesterday, who was in that situation. You're increasing it with really vulnerable high need folks.

That's going to become really evident soon, in the hospitals, in the nursing homes and/or in the schools because also children will be brought.

Q. Regarding your affiliation with the Gloria Steinem & Wilma Mankiller School for Organizers at Smith College, I'm curious to know what is it like to be a part of a unique institutionally-sponsored endeavor where some scholars may not have access to such opportunity. What are the current issues shaping Latina feminism and has being at a women's college influenced your work? That's a loaded question.

Let me just clarify that the Steinem and Mankiller School for Organizers has not actually happened yet. It's a project, or an initiative and a project. It's not into its fourth year. It's honestly not clear that it will happen. That's the second part of the answer, which is that this wasn't a Smith driven initiative. It was the brainchild and the product of work of a core group of faculty and staff in the archives. All of us who have done community-based work who are feminists/activists both in the academy and outside in the world, in the community, who consequently have and/or trained students who are also oriented in that kind of practice of applying their education to activist/social justice work outside in the world.

One of the things that we were doing was looking at how can we formalize that in the sense of really explicitly producing a school that would bring together three constituencies, faculty, specifically at Smith and the Five Colleges, students and current undergraduate students and activists, people whose full-time jobs are as organizers and grassroots activists and non-profits of various kinds together for a period of a week or two weeks to converse and to exchange stores of knowledge, forms of knowledge and practice, so that we could mutually enrich our respective endeavors and the worlds that we move in. We're still trying to do that. We've had a couple of one-week schools in June that happened in 2016, 2015 and 2014.

We didn't have one this summer. We, meaning the project folks, are in conversation with the college to see if it is going to be possible in fact for a college, a university. Even the most progressive women's college or an HBC, whatever, at the end of the day, you know what Weber said about bureaucracies, just really becoming more concerned about sustaining themselves than about the thing that they were organized for.

I think that's still true even at places like Smith. There's a tension between the ethos of the college, which is women's education, so that they can empower themselves and act *on* the world as well as *in* the world and the fact that activists are critical. They're critical and they're not just critical out there. They're critical in here. They're going to turn those same skills on the institution itself and say, "Hey, wait a minute." That's some of the tension. I think that's important to name. Nonetheless, I think there has been, if not always active support, certainly the possibility and the space for being a scholar activist. I think that has to do with being a women's college. Smith specifically was founded for that. We always turn back to the mission statement, those of us who are in some ways trying to be critical. Look, Sophia Smith said this was the agenda 150 years ago and it's still the agenda today.

I think that is part of why in fact I've been able to do what I do. Even though it's a predominantly historically white, elite women's college, to some extent that has always been intention with this vision of women acting upon and in the world. Then, of course, intersectionality and the third way then, the pressures of actual women of color coming into the space and insisting on amplifying what feminism means and who it serves and to what end. What does it mean to be a woman? What does that mean?

That's what I think is the context. Current issues that shape Latina feminism, you know that the reproductive justice movement was (and I'm using that language) it specifically comes out of African American and Latina organizing around questions of sexual and reproductive rights in the United States. Where the movement began as abortion rights, let's say, the public discourse, we're talking about the broad mainstream movement from Margaret Sanger to now, birth control and abortion rights. For women of color, both inside and outside the US, again in terms of thinking about Puerto Rico where birth control was trialed at great harm and cost to Puerto Rican, mostly low income and black Puerto Rican women, the understanding has always been far broader than just access to abortion.

It's about the ability to control your reproductive life from how many, if any, children I want to have to the health and well-being of the children I actually *do* have, that broader sense of social reproduction as well. I think that is, and has been, a long-standing concern of Latina feminism, US foreign policy obviously, again because of this broader transnational frame of Latina feminists in the United States. Not I think; I know this. The book I'm working on right now, I've been working on it for 15 years, is on the history of feminism in the DR. What became clear to me fairly early in the project was that first of all it was autochthonous. It was from the Dominican Republic. It wasn't brought in by the gringos or someone from outside.

Feminists developed the feminist consciousness in the DR, in their context. That said, they had to also develop an understanding of geopolitics and the relationship between their societies and worlds and the United States hegemony, an empire in the Americas. Transnationalism as a framework and internationalism have long been part and parcel of Latina and Latin American feminism. What we have, for example, is evidence of literal correspondence as well as through newspapers between feminists throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and white suffragists and feminists and African American club women and feminists, for example. That transnational, international understanding of geopolitics and foreign policy and how it matters for domestic feminist issues for Latinas and other women of color. I think that's really important.

Then of course labor market questions. Women of color have always worked. For white women, women's liberation meant leaving the house and going into the workforce. For women of color, sometimes it the ability to stay home and care for your children. Clarity about labor market questions and economic class. I think all of that has long been an aspect of Latina feminism. Then finally I would say I guess if there's something not so much new but more explicitly articulated is around questions of sexuality and particularly not only lesbian sexuality but queer and non-binary, not only gender identity but also forms of sexuality. That's the whole Latinx thing.

Q. How do you see racism and racial privilege harming immigrants, refugees and migrants into the United States and globally? I know you mentioned a little bit about that earlier, but can you mention some important factors specifically ones that advocates for DACA that we should understand in preserving its viability, especially in this presidential term and beyond?

With the problem of racism and racial privilege, the UNESCO statement on race that was issued in 1950 in the aftermath of World War II and the Nuremberg Trials and so forth, in large part was driven by trying to make explicit to governments and nations throughout the world, the social construct that racialization is part of a process of dehumanization. Dehumanization and racialization is a process that nationalism often explicitly requires in order to manage the claims making of vulnerable populations on their states and on their national resources.

Refugees are produced; migrants are produced; races are produced. They're produced out of humans who have universal needs, shelter, food, water, beauty, etc., etc. These ideologies and the laws and schemas that emerge in the course of nation building and in the course of border production and control are about containing and limiting and invalidating the claims making of vulnerable populations, which themselves are produced. This is part of the problem, that states and nations produce vulnerability and vulnerable populations internal to them but also then externalize that. They want to externalize that. This is where I was an econ major, but it really is that. Human beings are resilient and will continue to make claims and struggle to survive regardless.

It's so fascinating because what you see always, and it doesn't matter who the human beings are. If they're Rohingya, if they're Hurricane Maria survivors, if they're people in the Sudan, it's always the same. The pained mother, the starving child, the frail elder, the desperate male provider, all of these, because it's the human condition. These folks are making claims. There's a desire and an effort to reject the basis of the claims making. The problem is that that could be us. I think this is the thing that's hard. That's where when you have these natural disasters, Katrina, there's this brief moment of people understanding, "That could be me." There but for the grace of God.

That's where all the ideological apparatus comes in. "No, no, no, actually that's not going to be you because whatever." I think in a similar way, the advocates of DACA should understand. It's the production of vulnerability. Really, we have so much theorizing about this. Undocumented people are produced as inherently vulnerable subjects. They're not that. No human is illegal. I think we have to figure out ways of framing. We have to come with counter frames, to come up with new counter frames and empathy building, even if, and I hate to say this because it goes against my own intellectual and political commitments, but if you ever go through a court case. I, for example, was divorced. I had to go through several family law court cases to protect the rights of my children.

One of the things that you see really quickly is that you are forced to use strategies of argumentation and discourses that completely counter your own political beliefs. For example, I'm a feminist, but I was forced to use some really conservative traditional modes of argument around mothering to preserve my relationship with my children, their rights and so forth. It becomes really clear to you that certain frames work given the current structures of power and others don't. The

ones that don't are the ones that are probably better ethically and historically, but they're not effective.

It's this question of pragmatic politics. If we're looking at something that is a governmental program and a legislative problem, pragmatic politics is where we have to go. Social movements must do the other work of Utopian politics and developing new cultural narratives and frames. We know that; we see it always. It's black power and civil rights. These are not the same, but having them both happen in tandem was necessary. You see what I'm saying?

With DACA, it has to be framed as a civil rights question and it has to use the kind of empathy building frame and the decriminalizing frame. It's caught. This is what DACA kids themselves are saying. Look, there's not just the deserving and the undeserving. We're part of a family; we're part of a community.

95% of us have jobs and go to school. What does that mean? The ones who don't have jobs, they're not deserving? They don't have the right? That's the trap of it. That's the pragmatic politics part of it. The social movement has to be about new narratives, new frames, but that's out here. These two things have to happen together.

Q. Thank you. That was very informative. In going along with this conversation, what are some important conversations that or you think is taking place that will shape this justice-based action and decision regarding immigrants, refugees, migrants?

That's what we have historically. We always have. Have you read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*? One of the things that she does there so beautifully is that she narrates exactly that. It's not progress. It's Ella Baker: "We who live in freedom cannot rest." She was, may she rest in peace, completely spot on. It's that constancy of it. I shouldn't say it will never, but we should not expect that in the course of our lifetimes or in the course of the history that is foreseeable to us. We will fix it because it is inherent in the system. That might happen; that's revolution, right? That could happen, but in the immediate near and medium term, what we should be aware of, and I think this is actually the radical hope thing is that if you understand that this will necessarily be a constant struggle, we who believe in freedom must not rest, cannot rest because the other side doesn't rest. It reinvents itself constantly. White supremacy has consistently found a way to invent itself over and over again in response to the resistance to white supremacy and settler colonialism.

It's that constant struggle is the thing. If we understand that, then the disheartening and the disillusionment and the exhaustion and the burn out might be less so. I think so many times we enter into the struggle and whatever our world is thinking, "Okay, I'm going to do this and I'm going to fix it."

It's not like home repair, right? Maybe it is. Homes are like living things. You have to constantly keep them up or else they fall apart. Maybe it is home repair, but it's understanding that it will require constant maintenance, constant vigilance. We cannot rest. That's the kind of also multiple sphere, multiple strategy thing. It's not just one. It's all these spaces. So just thinking about that success is not necessarily fixing it. It's necessarily keeping that utopian, radical imagination that

is an ongoing process that causes multiple splinter groups that continue to fight the good fight. Each in their own unique way, including ways that are contradictory and oppositional. That's necessary.

Like I said, people ask me about voting. Yes, I vote. Do I believe the vote or suffrage and so forth is the answer? No, but in the meantime, I'm still going to vote because to *not* vote, I know has consequences. Also, when the revolution comes, I'll be ready. It's not like I'm going to lose my mind and think *okay, this is the thing*. No, but I will do my voting and I will act as commissioner, which I am by the way. I'm the commissioner of The Status of Women and Girls. We had to be sworn in. I guess I saw that, but I didn't really stop and think about it. I'm in this swearing in ceremony. They're having us, hand to God. I'm doing this and all of a sudden it's like, wait a minute. Do I really think that? I had to say I believe and support in the Constitution...I thought, "wait, let me think a moment." I thought, "you know what? Actually, yes, I have a radical vision of democracy. I do believe." I am fundamentally fully an American in that sense. I believe this stuff. That's what animates so much of the outrage is that here is the promise and here is the practice.

Q. Last question for you: What suggestions do you have for young emerging scholars and those who are engaging in Latino/Latina/Latinx social justice work?

Hmm. I think it's exactly this. To understand that there are all these dissemblances. There's dissemblance, right? I think that being poly-lingual, not just multi-lingual, knowing all the languages, all the ways to speak and be, it can feel overtaxing and crazy making at times. That is absolutely true, but again, if you think about it, it's not just power. Knowing that you have this incredibly ample capacity to be and to know in all these ways can also be sustaining. I think again reframing what can often feel materially and psychically and spiritually as an injustice, the need to be so much more than just one self, but there's a tremendous power to that as well, to recognizing that you have access to so much more humanity both inside yourself and outside yourself because of that.

I think about my own experience of immigrating back and forth but also moving through a variety of neighborhoods in Hudson County, New Jersey where I was mostly raised, highly segregated, working class white, poor black, poor Latino, blah blah blah, middle-ish class Cuban and being able to fully be in any one of those or at least mostly fully. Sometimes it felt like a burden, but over time as I got older, this is a gift. It's a gift to be able to move in and out of these spaces. I think in the academy, if you understand that part of the work will be to learn the institution that you are in, it doesn't mean to internalize it. It means to learn it. That's a different thing. That's part of the advice is to learn it and then use all your skills and talents to do it, but along the way you are transforming it. You find your opportunity to transform the space that you inhabit.

I'm currently a mentor for someone who's at a big R1 in the Pacific-Northwest. She's a woman of color, a queer woman of color, who does really radical, interesting, critical work. She was seriously considering dropping out of the academy. I can't tell someone, "Don't do that," right? But she was

asking me, "How have you done this?" I said, "I've done it by making home wherever I've been." The way I'm going to make home is exactly that. I said that making home is to work with what I have, and to bring in my candles and bring in my painting and bring in my food and bring in my people in a variety of ways. They come with me and sometimes explicitly. Look, we've brought this speaker and sometimes implicitly and sometimes it's because you're doing community-based work. Instead of just the college going to the community, we're going to have the community come to the college.

That's how it is. This strategically figuring out the ways even as you're also meeting and knowing that the standards and the norms that they set are as artificial, they're not inherently the best. It's culture. We know this is intellectual. I think it's hard sometimes to apply to our own circumstance, that it's arbitrary. It's arbitrary, but it was produced in order to limit access. If those are the rules of access, okay, fine. It's different from the price of a ticket. I don't know if you read Baldwin who talks about what happened when European immigrants, especially from places like southern Italy, for example, and Russian Jews. They came in as really critical left folks who had real consciousness around exploitation and oppression and class and so forth.

But we're fairly quickly a generation or two in for the most part, not exclusively, we're assimilated not only into the American citizenship but conservative politics and whiteness and so forth. He calls that the price of the ticket. The price of the ticket was a loss of connection to man's history and humanity writ large and so forth. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying really, we have to work hard to not internalize even as we fully learn. I think that's the core piece of advice is to fully learn it, to speak it and do it better because we have to but not to be seduced by it. That's always I think the hardest part is to not be seduced by it, to really keep loving the ones who actually love you.

Q. Yes, that's true. Thank you so much on behalf of all of us at the *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*.

Thank you. It's a pleasure.

Author Notes

In addition to being a professor of sociology, Ginetta Candelario is a faculty affiliate of the Latin American and Latina/o Studies Program, the Study of Women and Gender Program, the Community Engagement and Social Change Concentration, and she also serves on the advisory group for the Gloria Steinem & Wilma Mankiller School for Organizers at Smith College. She has directed the LALS Program several times, most recently from 2011 to 2014, and is the founding vice president of the National Latin@ Studies Association (LSA). She is a founding executive committee member of the New England Consortium for Latina/o Studies (NECLS), she was appointed by the American Sociological Association to its Committee on Professional Ethics for 2017–19, and she has served as the Gender Section co-chair, the Latina/o Studies Program track chair, and the Latino Studies Section co-chair for the Latin American Studies Association (LASA).

