

INTERSECTIONALITY, EPISTEMIC OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE: AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRÍCIA HILL COLLINS

INTERSECCIONALIDADE, OPRESSÃO EPISTÊMICA E RESISTÊNCIA: UMA ENTREVISTA COM PATRÍCIA HILL COLLINS

Patricia Hill Collins*
Kleber Aparecido da Silva**
Maria Carmen Aires Gomes***

INTRODUCTION

During the 2^a International Journey of Critical Applied Linguistics held in Brasilia-DF/Brazil from 23 a 25 July 2019 – Patricia Hill Collins (University of Maryland, The United States of America) gave the event's lecture entitled "*Who Gets to Tell Intersectionality's Story? – On Epistemic Oppression and Resistance.*" Widely known for her work on critical approaches about race, gender, and sexuality, she generously accepted our request to interview her for this special issue.

Patricia Hill Collins is an activist, professor of sociology, and researcher at the University of Maryland, United States. Her well-known research revolves around the debate about race, gender, and sexuality and her speech has much to add and enhance the debate around "*Language and Race*", proposed in this dossier. Collins starts from her experiences and experiences, her inner voice, in the USA context to problematize, in her intellectual work, how the "intersecting power relations of racism, heteropatriarchy, class exploitation, and nationalism remain dedicated to stamping out the power of a free mind of all those who are harmed by those systems and how these systems epistemically oppress and silence". Considering that this "occurs when you have an internal voice that cannot be heard or when the process of disciplining your inner voice is so total self-censorship of your ideas before you ever think them, leaves our best ideas stillborn".

That's why Collins states, in this interview, that «much of my work has aimed to protect my inner voice – this truth-telling voice that I cultivated as early as daycare and within my neighborhood continues to inform my intellectual activism. Yet much of my work has investigated Black women's collective voice in the context of discriminatory social structures". That is, to understand how social structures act, constrain, oppress, that is, how power is organized and operates (COLLINS; BILGE, 2016; COLLINS, 2009).

Collins addresses these issues from a critical point of view of black women as a collectivity and of intersectionality as a heuristic device that shapes a kind of critical investigation and praxis provides a framework for deepening a critical perspective on these multiple systems of oppression (COLLINS; BILGE, 2016). For the researcher and activist, "intersectionality at its best is developed in conversations among people who share similar goals concerning equity and social justice that foster their ability to have difficult conversations. Decolonizing voice requires new ways of speaking and listening, both to the voice within ourselves, as well as the kinds of conversations we have with one another".

On decolonization, one of the themes of the interview, Collins states that "the process of decolonizing ideas and material practices is organized across the axes of the economic, the political and the cultural". In other words, it is linked to systems of power to undertake such as an analysis, she proposes to dialogue intersectionality and decoloniality as part of a broader project of critical analysis of oppression. Thus, for Collins in this interview, "decoloniality as a process (economic, political and cultural) can be accommodated within each one. Stated differently, intersectionality focuses more on the connections among particular systems of power, whereas decoloniality focuses on the mechanisms by which contemporary neocolonial relationships might be resisted and replaced". This

* University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA. collinph@umd.edu.

** University of Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brazil. kleberunicamp@yahoo.com.br
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7815-7767>

*** Federal University of Viçosa, Viçosa, MG, Brazil. mcgomes@ufv.br
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7402-4353>

concept of decolonizing power can inform critical analysis of separate systems of oppression beyond neocolonialism (COLLINS; BILGE, 2016).

These are important debates evoked by the researcher, including the answer given to one of our questions. Starting from the speech of the professor and researcher Gomes (2003), the act of educating involves a daily physical and mental exposition, at the same time that they are exposed, educators also deal with the bodies of their students and their colleagues. These bodies are touched, felt. The pedagogical relationship develops not only through the logic of scientific reason but also through touch, vision, smells, tastes, and listening. To be inside a classroom is to put all our senses into action, in interaction with the other, we asked Collins how one can work the initial training of teachers in a critical and decolonial perspective and how important this bias is for teaching-learning. She answers: "This is a really interesting question that no one has asked me before. Western philosophies and epistemologies clearly privilege seeing as the superior form of knowing. They rest on a binary of seeing as knowing, a framework that subordinates other ways of experiencing the world. But if we privilege sight and vision as providing direct access to understanding the social world, how does this assumption limit what can be known from other senses? What cannot be taught and learned via listening, smelling, touching, and tasting as actions that provide?"

And among other issues, she ponders that it is necessary to trust the emotions, the embodied, experienced and experienced knowledge, in counterpoint to what is legitimized in didactic materials, and to develop collaborative engagement as a form of knowledge production as opposed to expert knowledge (COLLINS, 2015). It also states that such "epistemological premises shape education writ large and have important implications for how we organized schools, classrooms, curricular practices and relationships between students and teacher".

Finally, it reaffirms the need for coalitions and alliances even though they are often built by differences in power: "People who are differentially privileged and disadvantaged by systems of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability need to form coalitions and alliances that take these histories into account concerning how alliances and coalitions can be built across differences of power". For Collins, building effective coalitions involves constant listening, developing empathy for each other's stories, in a clear political and critical engagement and commitment (COLLINS, 2015; 2016; 2017).

This interview is structured in four sections, namely: a) her education and her professional performance; b) criticism and decoloniality; and c) impact of her research for the Global South; and d) politics, and perspectives in Critical Applied Linguistics. And in each section, we have proposed questions that our guest will answer from her intellectual production and will also present the implications of her research for Critical Applied Linguistics.

A. Education and professional performance

Question 1: Could you tell us a little about your story and efforts to build your voice and that of other black women and how this relates to your academic-scientific education and professional performance?

I opened *Black Feminist Thought* (2009) with a memory of myself playing Spring at my pre-school pageant. My day care was started and run by African American women who were from the South. They were strict but also extremely fair. I spent five years there, between the ages of two and seven years old. My preschool was connected to my community. That setting cultivated my internal voice that was inherently critical of received wisdom. Through daily, heated conversations with young Black children very much like me, I cultivated my own voice. My ideas weren't always appreciated, and I was wrong a lot, but I was a little Black girl among many other Black girls with working-class parents who had opinions, who expressed them, and who had confidence. That was me at my best, developing an inner voice in conversation with people who were interested in what I had to say, even when they didn't agree with me.

My earliest memories of being a young child were profoundly shaped by growing up in a Black working-class community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In the 1950s, Philadelphia was the 4th largest city in the United States, a Northern destination for a large and growing African American population of people who migrated from Southern US states in search of jobs and to escape racial discrimination. My neighborhood was racially segregated, but I didn't know it. For me, it was normal that I never saw white people before I was seven years old, except the few times that my mother took me downtown. It didn't matter. In my neighborhood, I felt loved, cared for, and protected not just by my parents, but also by my aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbors and pre-school teachers. They shielded us from the racism that shaped their lives, but also had to find ways to equip us to go out into a hostile world.

Growing up in my Black working-class neighborhood where women and men got up every day and went to jobs as factory workers, domestic workers, and laborers, cultivated my power to think for myself. I took nothing for granted because I could see how hard everyone worked for us. My father worked in a factory that made automobile jacks, and my mother worked as a stenographer for the Department of Defense. She had what was a good government job. Both of my parents went to work every day – no sick days – if you didn't work, you didn't get paid. And they both needed to work. Whether my school was like home (my day care) or not (my 12 years of public school education), going to school was my "job." Just as my parents went to work every day for me, I was expected to go to school everyday day for others. Contemporary treatments of the stereotypical ghetto within popular culture have never captured these and other complexities of working class, Black neighborhoods in the 1950s and 1960s. The Black working-class community where I grew up, especially the reasons why it was important for anti-racist activism, has never been accurately understood within social science. Sadly, with deindustrialization and gentrification, Black working-class neighborhoods such as the ones where I grew up are largely things of the past.

As I ventured out of my neighborhood and moved through both public schools and college, it became increasingly clear to me that the depictions of Black women both within popular culture and scholarship bore little resemblance to the African American women of my childhood and youth. When Black women were depicted at all, analysis seemed to labor under a short list of stereotypes of Black women. I was especially struck by how so much research on Black women seemed to be done by people who had never even met Black women, let alone have grown up as Black women. These were foreign voices about Black women's realities that made my own experiences unrecognizable.

The lessons learned as a child have provided a touchstone for my subsequent intellectual work. Much of my work has aimed to protect my individual inner voice – this truth-telling voice that I cultivated as early as day care and within my neighborhood continues to inform my intellectual activism. Yet much of my work has investigated Black women's collective voice in the context of discriminatory social structures. Black feminist thought examines the "inner voice" of Black women, aiming to capture the complexities of conversations like those that I heard around me when I was growing up and that provided a foundation for so many of us. I didn't just see Black women as a collection of individuals (although that individual voice that I described is certainly evident), but rather to analyze the parameters of Black women's group-based worldview or standpoint.

Social structures matter to me, in part because I can see how important where I grew up was to me, especially my pre-school and neighborhood experiences. Attending the Philadelphia public schools got me started on seeing the importance of schools and similar social structures in shaping my life, that of my parents and of my neighbors and friends. It's not enough to focus just on your individual inner voice, or even that of your group – analyses of social structures matter because they show how power is organized and operates. Intersecting power relations of racism, heteropatriarchy, class exploitation and nationalism remain dedicated to stamping out the power of a free mind of all those who are harmed by those systems. Because individuals and collectivities both constitute threats to existing social hierarchies, silencing individuals and groups who protest their treatment and who imagine something better has long been a core feature of systems of domination. In my own life and work, this notion of silencing led me to questions of epistemic oppression, namely, the silencing that occurs when you have an internal voice that cannot be heard or when, the process of disciplining your inner voice is so total self-censorship of your ideas before you ever think them, leaves our best ideas stillborn.

B. Criticism and decoloniality

Question 2: Although structurally similar to systems of oppression – patriarchy, colonialism, racism and sexism – they operate in different ways, considering mainly the geopolitical orientation (AKOTIRENE, 2019), how do you think these issues in light of a decolonial and critical perspective?

I have long approached these systems of power through a critical perspective that is both individual and collective. That has been at the heart of my work on Black feminism as the critical standpoint of Black women as a collectivity, of intersectionality as the critical perspective that is developed and among people who share similar concerns with larger systems of power, and with education broadly defined as a site where critical analysis is alternately nurtured or suppressed.

Carrying this critical perspective into my schooling, teaching and research has been foundational to my work on intersectionality. While this critical ethos is foundational, the journey of encountering a range of systems of

power that resembled racism but were not the same, was part of my journey. My work on intersectionality reflects my longstanding commitment to study racism, sexism, heterosexism, capitalism and nationalism on their own terms as well as political responses to these systems of inequality. Placing various expressions of resistant knowledge in dialogue has been a major axis of my intellectual work. My approach to intersectionality as a form of critical inquiry and praxis has provided a framework for deepening a critical perspective on these multiple systems of oppression (COLLINS; BILGE, 2016). But intersectional analysis does not just fall from the sky – it is difficult to do because it requires dialogue across differences of power. Intersectionality at its best is developed in conversations among people who share similar goals concerning equity and social justice that foster their ability to have difficult conversations. Decolonizing voice requires new ways of speaking and listening, both to the voice within ourselves, as well as the kinds of conversations we have with one another.

Because I have been working within the national context of the US, I'm still working through what might count as a "decolonial perspective." When I traveled to Brazil in 2017 for the Sao Paulo Theater Festival, I was intrigued by how central the term "decolonial" was as a framing idea for that event. Was this the same process of decolonization I had studied that was so central to liberation struggles of formal colonialism? For me, a colonial relationship is a power relationship of domination and subordination that encompasses interconnected economic, political and cultural aspects. Because it is a power relationship, the process of decolonizing ideas and material practices is organized across these axes of the economic, the political and the cultural. In many ways, reentering ongoing discussions about decolonialism and processes of decolonization taking place in Brazil has given me a fresh perspective on power itself.

Deepening my understanding of a critical perspective has sharpened my understanding of decoloniality as a state of being of institutional transformation toward equity and decolonization as a multi-faceted process that that is designed to bring it about. I feel as if I am melding pieces of my past into important issues that have not gone away, but instead take different form.

The issue for me now is to place intersectionality and decoloniality in dialogue as part of a broader project of critical analysis of oppression. I make a start in *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (chapter 3), but only a start (COLLINS, 2019). Intersectionality aims to be elastic enough to handle the specificity of particular systems of oppression, via their particular forms of organization as well as through their interconnections. I see the systems of power with which I'm most familiar as all organized around these axes but having different configurations that can make them unrecognizable to one another. A robust understanding of decoloniality can encompass all three. Alternately, decoloniality as a process (economic, political and cultural) can be accommodated within each one. Stated differently, intersectionality focuses more on the connections among particular systems of power, whereas, decoloniality focuses on the mechanisms by which contemporary neocolonial relationships might be resisted and replaced.

This concept of decolonizing power can inform a critical analysis of separate systems of oppression beyond neocolonialism. For example, patriarchy is organized in part via proximate, intimate forms of domination, a form of body politics that joins love and fear. Sexism, the ideology that upholds patriarchy, seems hegemonic because it has been naturalized and normalized. Decolonizing this dimension of patriarchy requires digging deep into everyday body politics, almost one person at a time that is the bedrock of this naturalization and normalization. Anti-black and anti-indigenous racism also invoke body politics but emphasize different dimensions of power as domination. The technologies of power applied to individual bodies matter, but the management of people and groups is central to these systems. The changes in how structural racism is organized has made racial hierarchy more visible, moving it closer to the kind of proximate forms of control that has long been associated with patriarchy and sexism. In contrast, capitalism: is most clearly a structural system of power, with exploitation that produces that produces economic inequality its signature structural feature. Capitalism seems situated on the opposite end of the structural spectrum –because the market has impersonal rules and procedures, we shouldn't take capitalism personally. A framework that focuses on decolonizing power that incorporates a robust understanding of capitalism would be immensely useful to an array of global social justice projects. Cultivating a dialogue between intersectionality and decoloniality as critical projects promises to deepen understanding within both projects as well as their interconnections.

Question 3: In Education, black identity and teacher education: a look at the black body and curly hair, teacher and researcher Nilma Lino Gomes (2003, p. 173) problematizes in light of the Brazilian context that "the act of educating involves a daily physical and mental exposure. However, at the same time that they expose themselves,

educators also deal with the bodies of their students and their colleagues. These bodies are touched, felt. The pedagogical relationship is not only developed through the logic of scientific reason but also through touch, vision, smells, flavors, and listening. Being inside a classroom means putting all our senses in place, in interaction with the other," how can the initial training of teachers be worked on in a critical and decolonial perspective and what is the importance of this pedagogical bias?

Epistemological premises I think that there is a fundamental epistemological framework here that suggests that other ways of knowing might have political implications. They signal a host of differences: (1) embodied knowing as learning from experience and experimentation as compared to receiving established wisdom that is validated by being in textbooks; (2) trusting emotions as a credible source of insight rather than something to be suppressed because they get in the way of thinking; and (3) collaborative engagement as a way of collectively producing knowledge as opposed to experts who ration knowledge and distribute it to people w coalitions ho they deem to be beneath them. These epistemological premises shape education writ large and have important implications for how we organized schools, classrooms, curricular practices and relationships between students and teachers.

The best way that I can dig into your question is by consider my own experiences as a teacher as a window into my understanding of pedagogical holism, a philosophy of teaching that I have carried with me through my career. I don't see this holistic pedagogy as confined to a classroom, but rather have worked in an institution that aimed to "being inside any experience means putting all our senses in place." As a young classroom teacher, I learned to prepare lesson plans the took content, cognitive and affective goals into account. For each class, I had to think about what content I wanted students to learn, what cognitive skills I wanted them to develop in the process of learning, and how their emotions and feelings, both internally and within the classroom setting that I provided would influence their learning. This belief in pedagogic holism has informed by experiences as a teacher, across different levels of classroom teaching, e.g., pre-school, K-8 community school, college, and post-graduate students, and with students from varying backgrounds, e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, ability and veteran status.

My five years as a classroom teacher and curriculum developer at St. Joseph's Community School, St. John's Community School and St Francis de Sales Community School (JJF Cluster), well as within during the period of Black social movement activism in the 1970s and 1980s cultivated my understanding of holistic pedagogy. All three were K-8 community schools attended by working-class and poor African American children, that also had substantial involvement and where each school had a broad educational mission for the communities that surrounded them that went far beyond just educating children. Pedagogical holism was central to how we organized all aspects of our school but here I want to focus on how listening, touching, smelling and tasting as ways of knowing the world and one another went beyond meeting basic needs. Touch – what kind/ Hugging children who needed it, restraining them form hurting themselves or others, all with the intent of helping a child grow.

There are so many examples for each of these categories, all which expressed our commitment to care. Seeing is a distant way of experiencing the world, one or putting it at arm's length so that we can "see" its truth. In contrast, the other senses are intimate ways of experiencing the world, senses that bring us closer to together. This was the ethos of our community school, not one that rejected seeing, but one that saw this emphasis on seeing as a partial perspective that could only yield partial truths. Listening – [example] Smells – which to ignore to preserve a child's dignity (I had students who shared a bed and one person regularly wet the bed), and how we located an old washing machine for our school so that our students could have clean clothes and could attend school. Flavors – our children arrived at school hungry. Their hunger was not the same as mine. We established a school breakfast program This pedagogical holism left me with an unshakable belief in what is possible, a vision of what we can do as well as a realistic sense of problem solving to breathe life into that vision.

The deeply-entrenched nature of scientific reason within higher education provides high barriers for those of us who wish to bring more holistic and humane pedagogy into higher education. Practicing pedagogical holism within formal school settings that are organized around disciplines, separation and hierarchy garners no rewards and can invite exploitation. Despite claims of interdisciplinarity, compartmentalization within higher education works against the kind of holistic pedagogy described here. Despite these barriers, it is important for those of us with even a modicum of authority to push on to expand possibilities for those who are subordinated by these narrow ways of knowing and to affirm alternative ways of knowing.

Question 4: Can we consider black activism as (or even the agenda of feminisms) a new dynamic of racism, especially in the media agendas in general (soap operas, advertisements, institutional propaganda, placement in organizations, etc.)?

I don't think that Black activism is a new dynamic of racism. Activist strategies always change in response to reorganized patterns of racism. For example, in the United States, Black activism has an historically deep constellation of ideological perspectives along a continuum from conservative and reformist to radical and transformative. Racial assimilation, multiculturalism, Black nationalism, socialism, and Black feminism all have characteristic worldviews and political strategies associated with them, with social actors drawing upon these ideas and practices for Black activism. Some strategies are more visible during distinctive historic periods than others, yet this does not mean that Black activism itself has changed. The changing contours of how racism is organized does not mean that the fundamentals of racism have disappeared. The resurgence of white nationalism after a period of seeming post-raciality certainly makes that clear. As long as there is racial oppression, there will be resistance.

What is new is the recognition of a longstanding how anti-Black racism constitutes as a distinctive form of racism that merits special analysis on its own terms. We've been working under multicultural models of a universal racism of some sort that takes different forms for different groups. While this may be accurate in the abstract, it suffers from the same problems as mainstream social theory – beginning with a universal and applying it to the particulars of diverse experiences. This framing assumption has centered on Black people the poster child for racism itself, an approach that has flattened the particular histories of racism for indigenous peoples or Latinos. The issue is not to misread anti-Black racism as universal but rather to analyze it as a particular dimension of racism that can only be fully understood in dialogue with similar analyses of similar experiences with racism.

Because anti-Black racism has changed in tandem with new technologies, forms of communication and methods of transportation, it is especially important for Black people to emphasize the meaning of Blackness as fundamental to strategies and institutions of Anti-Black racism. One significant feature in the US is how the rhetoric of colorblindness has ironically undercut a robust discourse of multiculturalism in the US which initially had a two-pronged approach of building alliances among people of color and of challenging exclusionary practices that excluded people of color from schools, jobs and neighborhoods. This shift toward believing that racism was dead because the US elected a Black president fundamentally weakened more radical analyses of racism as structural and suggested that people of color needed to get along with one another just as much as with whites. The focus on framing the relationship between Blacks and Latinos within the US as one of conflict served as a caution to both groups to learn how to get along. Because Black feminism has deepened its understanding of intersectionality over an extended period of time, it has a unique perspective on this theme of the persistence of oppression and the need to continually reframe one political project and strategies in response to it.

A similar situation has influenced current squabbles among women within feminism. There are certainly bona fide conflicts among women that are being worked out within modern feminism. Many of these conflicts were initially raised by Black women, Latinas and other women of color and have been taken up by other groups that resent being submerged in a universal discourse that seems insufficiently critical. Having these disputes played out in the media, in particular for a younger generation that has been raised within the public space of social media, highlighted these differences over the similarities of a feminist agenda. The case of the Women's March on Washington, which was a worldwide phenomenon, the day after the inauguration of Donald Trump, shows how the ideas of the march itself were often supplanted within mass and social media by a focus on how women couldn't get along. There's nothing that the media likes better than a good girl fight. Significantly, the success of the #metoo movement, which ironically was begun by a Black woman, when framed as a series of individual experiences (me too) shows the power of the media to reframe a movement.

In the US, this focus on Blackness always comes with significant political backlash, in this case, the continued assumption that claiming Blackness means claiming inferiority. A longstanding Western discourse that created a devalued Blackness and then continues to reproduce an ideology of inferiority has much to lose if Black people unapologetically claim Blackness. But why wouldn't Black people organize, collectively, in response to an anti-Black racism that creates shared challenges and experiences because we are Black? Would anyone question the need for female victims of sexual assault to have groups where women discuss their shared experiences with each other? Encouraging women to ignore their experiences as women and reframe their demands in terms of gender equivalency

is part of the problem. How would women's healing be helped by having to explain the harm done to them while the abusers were in the room? Isn't this the way power currently operates, asking people to plead their case with the very same more powerful people who are often responsible for the victimization? Wouldn't these be places not just for healing but also for analysis of strategies to resist sexual assault, and thereby contributing to healing?

C. Impact of her research for the Global South

Question 5: You were recently in Brazil participating in several activities. How did this rapprochement with Brazil and South America happen? Considering the decolonization of knowledge, how has your dialogue with Brazilian black intellectuals (Lelia Gonzales, Sueli Carneiro, Luiza Bairros, among others) and Argentinians, like Maria Lugones, for example, been?

Because the theme of dialogical engagement has been central to my work, I have sought dialogues in many forms. The best way to have dialogues is face-to-face. I wasn't able to travel when I was younger – too many commitments and responsibilities, and not enough time or money. I did not participate in the rich conversations of the early days of modern Black feminism with African American women who are now so famous. Nor was I able to meet in person the key figures of Black Brazilian feminism. Through the 1980s, I travelled through reading. In the 1992, I attended two international conferences that convinced me that my American experiences were basically provincial. (cite Translation intro). It's only been since 2014 that I've been able to travel to Brazil on my own terms, and my recent trips come in the context of my late-in-life efforts to deepen my understanding of the Global South.

Basically, I sent myself to school as an adult learner. I participated in four CIEE faculty development tours of approximately 10 days each. They were to South Africa (2001) "Nation Building in South Africa," Brazil (2003) "The New Social Face of Brazil"; Europe "Muslims in France and the Netherlands (200?); and Turkey (2011) "Crossroads of the East and the West." I signed up for two stud tours that I was unable to take for family reasons, one that focused on the relationship between Spain and Morocco, and the other an immersive experience in Senegal as Francophone Africa. These study-tours were intense – they were a crash course on a theme and there was very little down time. structured study tours where I didn't have to deliver talks or attend conferences – I could just be a student. What a gift that was.

My 2003 CIEE Brazil study tour was pivotal in how I received the work of Black Brazilian feminists as well as laying a foundation for my subsequent trips to Brazil. My group spent 10 days total, travelling from São Paulo to Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. We had a tight schedule all day, every day, where local faculty give lectures on various aspects of social and economic conditions in Brazil, we visited important places in each location, local leaders exposed us to cultural themes the were particular to each city. Throughout the 10 days, we had extensive structured and unstructured opportunities to interact with different people. For example, in Sao Paulo, we received an invaluable introduction to the landless peoples' movement. We began by visiting a community founded by landless people on a garbage dump and listened to eloquent community leaders about why they left the favelas and founded their settlement. But that wasn't all. We to a very long bus trip to a rural area where land had been acquired by the state and distributed to landless people. In Salvador, I experienced the palpability of the African Diaspora and the meaning that Bahia held for people of African descent in Brazil. That's where I first saw capoeira in the plaza at Pelhourinho and was stunned by how much it resembled hip hop. Rio de Janeiro provided yet a different lens on Brazil. The breathtaking beauty of Rio's harbor coupled with the physical challenges of a favela tour on foot up the steep hills of the Vidigil brought new meaning to "the new social face of Brazil."

It took me 11 years to get back to Brazil, but I did manage to get back. My visits to Brazil did not come from happenstance but have been part of a longstanding effort to learn as much as I could about Brazil. By 2014, my career was well-established, and I was worn down from the incessant demands of my institution, the field of sociology, and my own work ethic. As more people read my work, their requests and demands increased exponentially. I dreaded reading my email – it was never-ending. I liken that level of responsibility to being pecked to death by ducks. But in 2012, my avalanche of email contained one simple request from a Black woman in Brazil who was writing a dissertation on Black women's activism in Brazil and was applying for a Fulbright to study in the US. She needed a sponsor and wanted to come and work with me at the University of Maryland. I honestly don't know why I wrote her back. Ana Claudia Pereira had broken through. She sent me an honest email in a sea of requests from people who basically weren't interested in ideas, but in making name for themselves and in using my name to do so. Ana

and I worked out the terms for a visit and she arrived for a 2012-2013 fellowship. I loved having Ana at Maryland – I learned so much from her. I was especially intrigued by her sense of the vibrancy of Black feminism in Brazil.

When I received an invitation to speak at Latinidades in Brasilia in 2014, I was thrilled. And that 2014 visit led to more trips where I've been able to meet, learn from and hopefully contribute to the projects by with a wide array of Brazilian women and men, most of whom are Black and/or engaged in progressive projects of some sort. The energy in Brazil is palpable – the commitment the ideas and to the possibilities for the future, even when faced by unfortunate election results, is evident to me. There is another sense of intellectualism in work of my sort, one that is not refracted through the work of credentialed academics, but rather one that stems from a range of people who may or may not have prominent people speaking on their behalf or to them directly.

There is no way I can do justice to the many people I've met during my visits to Brazil over the past several years, but a few examples provide a tip of the iceberg. Just a rough sketch of the various projects for social justice that I've been honored to be introduced to in Brazil. My two visits in 2019 have catalyzed different dialogues and, as a result, have been especially gratifying. *Black Feminist Thought* in Portuguese translation has been extremely exciting for me. I held my first copy at the 2019 JILAC conference in Brasilia and was able to see the culmination of my many trips to Brazil in the reception of that book. I feel that I am building a network of colleagues and friends from my many visits, and as a result have a better sense of the scholarly and activist social networks in Brazil.

My visits to Brazil have convinced me of the importance of thinking expansively about what constitutes political action, especially in framing the distinctions between resistance and activism. I came to Brazil with years of experiences studying African American resistance, the broader construct of resisting social injustices. Resistance moves beyond the abstract when we take action. I could see the forms of activism that characterize Black women's struggles in the particular context of the US and for different periods of time. My actions or activism has been in my writing and through that study, contributing to it. What was new for me is the depth of political activism within Brazil, especially by Black Brazilian women. No amount of reading the works of prominent figures could have helped me gain the new insights that I have experienced simply by coming to Brazil and being so welcomed into so many different settings. The US press focuses on the exploits of the Trumps and the Bolsanaros, and with good reason. We need to know how power operates on such a high level. But they do a terrible job covering the myriad forms of resistance that make up social movements and activism.

I'm still on a learning curve. I don't yet have a rapprochement with other Latin American countries because I'm finding it difficult to not go to Brazil! It's such a big and amazing country, that I'll never tire of visiting it. I do realize that South America is bigger than Brazil – I've received invitations to speak in Argentina, Chile and Mexico, but I have not been able to accept. The work of women of the Global South was simply not available to me until recently. But entering that world through the experiences of Black feminism in Brazil has been a real gift.

Question 6: What movements can be thought of as actions of resistance?

When it comes to resisting far-right populism and strengthening representative democratic institutions, it is important to have people positioned both as *insiders* who can push back against shrinking opportunities from within governmental institutions as well as those who *outsiders* who see social problems and their possible solutions from a distinctive vantage point. Significantly, people who are differentially privileged and disadvantaged by systems of race, class, gender, sexuality, age and ability need to form coalitions and alliances that take these histories into account concerning how alliances and coalitions can be built across differences of power.

Insider strategies of resistance are crucial, if only to get information to those who are far removed from the seat of power. As large nation-states, Brazil and the US both have multiple layers of government, that provide a myriad of opportunities for insider activism. Institutional insiders can engage in forms of silent or hidden resistance to formal institutional policies. People who work within organizations and institutions can massage these institutions to do things differently. For example, the mainstream U.S. press on Brazil that I've been reading emphasizes the actions of President Bolsonaro and basically overlooks political resistance within Brazil. All protest is framed as a direct reaction to his action. This gives the impression that the federal system in Brazil is fundamentally hegemonic, and that what happens on the federal level is paramount. That very may well turn out to be, but during my short time here in Brasilia, I have learned that that while social protest may be catalyzed by federal policies, resistance is far broader than gathering in the streets to protest national policies. I'll be honest – I am unfamiliar with the inner

workings of Brazilian government, but I suspect that an event in one point in time (the 2018 Presidential election) and one social institution (the federal government) does not determine everything. It is definitely a big dog in the room. There are many levels of government and I see people standing up for democracy within a range of mainstream institutions. Now, when these complex, multi-level formal institutions of democracy disappear, we enter an entirely differently situation.

Brazil and the US have different policy arenas where insiders are essential. For Brazil, affirmative action constitutes a big target for far-right populists who assume that, if Black and brown people are making progress, they must be doing so at the expense of white people. The growth of the Federal University System in Brazil has been extremely important in providing educational opportunities for Black students, many of whom go onto become professors at these universities. Brazilian people who have been involved in social justice movements over time have been able to see tangible success of electing candidates who have tried to provide better schools, health care services, public services and housing. Protest by people outside formal government may have been the catalyst and ongoing pressure for these reforms, but insiders are the ones who are responsible for getting things done.

For the US, heightened demonization of people of color, women, LGBTQ people, Muslims and religions minorities, but especially Latinos, has brought an ugly twist to public policy. The rhetoric against these groups is important for setting a climate, but administering the government means that how existing laws are implemented can change dramatically when a new administration comes to power. People who are truly powerful understand the importance of wielding the backstage levers of power. In the US, efforts to disenfranchise voters of color, a set of practices that emerged from slavery, and efforts to pack the court system with ideologically suspect judges may seem benign for each small case. But the cumulative effects of these hidden efforts to change the rules of the system promise to shrink democratic participation for future generations. While we may be distracted by protesting the public face of social injustice, others within the systems itself go quietly about the business of dismantling everything that keeps unfettered power in check. In these environments, insiders matter.

Those who stand outside formal institutions can draw upon a different set of strategies for resisting formal political structures. Social movements are made up of outsiders, who petition government institutions, corporations, and social institutions of civil society to change. Forms of resistance that are visible as outsider activism span many arenas, from the macro to the micro, from the hidden to the public, to arts. This is often where a resistance and activism occurs that cannot be expressed via electoral politics. And that's where young people go in part because the social problems of democracies fall most heavily on young people and in part because young people lack access to positions of authority within social institutions.

Outsiders can now communicate directly with one another, not just through neighborhood networks of friends and family who share geographical space, but also to a global social media that provides tools for people to network across categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, religion, nationality and ability. This is a sea change in building social movements, not from the top down by accepting ideology from leaders, but rather by communicating directly with one another. This is the political potential of the Internet, and it too is a major site of contention. Far-right populists within representative democracies and elites within totalitarian states alike know that they need to "control the narrative," through persuasion and if that is not possible, through fake news and manipulating the very terms of truth.

We live in a time full of possibilities for resistance and political activism that has access to information. Rather than thinking about poor people or Black people as so downtrodden that they lack political consciousness, the internet makes it possible for people to share their own ideas. People who have social problem know that they do. Guns, drug addiction, unsafe housing, chronic unemployment, police repression and poor schooling are social problems that are shared by large numbers of people across the categories that seemingly separate us. Yet coming to understand how those problems reflect power relations is part of the process of politicization. Paulo Freire's notion of gaining literacy, of learning how to "read" the social world so that it no longer seems random and mystified is part of the process of developing a critical education. It is also foundational to political resistance to one's own oppression.

Certainly, intellectuals and journalists provide incisive ideas and analysis, and this information fuels resistance to right-wing populism. Far-right populism in high office is certainly an outcome or unintended consequence of past actions, but it also can be seen as a catalyst for change. In the US, the 2017 counter-protest in Charlottesville Virginia in response to a unite the right movement was a watershed event in making clear that far-right populism was not just an ideology but had tangible consequences in people's everyday lives. The visibility of far-right populism has taken the steam out of arguments that racism was a thing of the past. No one demonstration by itself can bring

about change overnight. But consistent protest over time that rests on a foundation of taking an ethical position builds capacity for change. Institutional change takes time and insiders and outsiders are both essential to that change, if the architecture of democracy as a formal political structure is to survive. For example, mid-twentieth century social movements in the US did rely on both large-scale protests and grassroots protests, but they also managed to get people within political offices who were in a position to push for change. This alliance of outsider and insider resistance was effective. Yet it also catalyzed the backlash that culminated in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. In the US, we are now seeing the unintended consequences of the Obama administration. Social change of this magnitude typically catalyzes seemingly unintended consequences. It is very important to have visible resistance outside of formal political structures, namely to public policies and the politicians who advance them. But we have to be careful not to conflate resistance either with the tools that formal institutions legitimate, for example, getting people elected to office, or with large-scale protests that ironically can release pent-up anger but not lead to substantive policy changes.

And now that we have a far-right populism in the US and apparently in Brazil, what will be the unintended consequences that reflect resistance to this new global reality that no one sees coming? In other words, the next push forward to resist far-right populism and to address the many social problems that far-right populists promise to solve cannot be thought through in its entirety in the here and now. We're living in the moment. We have to trust that resistance and push back is occurring and that it will result in "unintended consequences" for far-right populist regimes. But that is the general framework of resistance and activism.

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