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Antiracism in Times of Uncertainty

The Brazilian Black Movement and Emancipatory Knowledges

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Nilma L. Gomes

Abstract

This Working Paper is a revised manuscript of the keynote lecture delivered on March 5, 2020, at the conference *Living on the Edge: Studying Conviviality-Inequality in Uncertain Times* (Mecila, São Paulo).

Keywords: Black Movement | antiracism | emancipatory knowledges | indignation

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1. Introduction

The struggle against racism and racial inequalities and the affirmation of Black identity are a complex, demanding process that requires emphatic, persistent, and convincing approaches.¹

It may seem strange to return urgently to the antiracist struggle in Brazil after thirteen years of democratic government (from 2003 to 2016). During that period, the country had in its ministerial structure the Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR), later transformed into the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights.

Apart from this, at a Federal level, antiracist legal norms were created or altered, such as the modification of the Educational Guidelines Law (Law 9394/96) by the Law 10639/03, which made Afro-Brazilian and African history and culture an obligatory part of elementary school curriculums; the approval of Decree 4887/03, which regulated the procedure for the identification, recognition, delimitation, demarcation and titling of the lands occupied by *quilombo* communities referred to in Article 68 of the Transitional Constitutional Provisions Act; the establishment of the National Policy for the Comprehensive Health of the Black Population (Decree No. 992 of May 13, 2009); the approval of the Racial Equality Statute (Law 12288/10); the promulgation of the law of socio-racial quotas in federal institutions of higher education (IFES) (Law 12711/12); the racial quota law in examinations for the Federal Civil Service (Law 12990/14) and the signing of Ordinance 13/2016 of the Ministry of Education, which mandated racial quotas in the graduate programs of federal universities.

The antiracist struggle carried out by the Black Movement gained official recognition during those thirteen years. During that time, many of the demands imposed on the Brazilian state were translated into government policies. Why must we insist on the antiracist struggle, and why is there no relief from this tireless effort? Why not maintain and improve the existing affirmative action policies and, based on that experience, strive to build more structural and transformative policies?

These are not peaceful times. Rather, we are experiencing a real threat to the rule of law painstakingly built by the Brazilian emancipation movements in recent decades. Any attack on the rule of law is a direct blow to the social battles for equality and rights, as well as a direct hit against antiracism. For men and women who identify as Black and

¹ This paper was inspired by the article “Por uma indignação antirracista e diaspórica: negritude e afrobrasilidade em tempos de incertezas” (Gomes 2018). It is part of my reflections in the context of the project “Por uma pedagogia pós-abissal: movimento negro e conhecimentos emancipatórios” (Research Productivity Fellowship, CNPQ, 2018-2021). The ideas presented here were further explored in Gomes 2020.

their allies in the struggle against racism and social and racial inequalities, this warning cannot be repeated too often.

Since August 31, 2016, Brazil has been experiencing a conservative political backlash from pro-capitalist, religious fundamentalist, *ruralista*, and military groups which are supported by various sectors of the judiciary and mainstream media and are well represented in the National Congress. This alliance managed to force Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, the first woman to be legitimately elected President of Brazil.

Our country is now living in a time of great uncertainty and constant attacks on its democratic institutions.² Political uncertainties in the face of an impeachment process that happened to be a harsh parliamentary coup in disguise, which affected the Brazilian society in general but mainly put at risk the achievements of social struggles set in motion after the fall of the military dictatorship established in the 1960s and defeated in the 1980s; legal uncertainties in the face of attempts to eradicate the rights guaranteed to male and female workers since the 1930s and improved in the Federal Constitution of 1988; economic uncertainties in the face of a realigned and oppressive international capitalism; cultural uncertainties in the face of a growing culture of hatred, intolerance, and fear; social uncertainties in the face of growing poverty, inequality, and violence; educational uncertainties in the face of setbacks in educational policies, conservative and authoritarian surveillance concerning issues of gender, sexual diversity, and race; emotional uncertainties in the face of the psychological and destructive force of racism, above all with regards to the self-esteem of so many Black and poor people; religious uncertainties in the face of the neo-Pentecostal attack on religions of Afro-Brazilian origin.

These are times of the Constitutional Amendment 95/2016, which freezes for twenty years the public funds mainly designated for health, education, social security, and public safety; times of rising unemployment and informal work; of an increase in the

2 On August 31, 2016, in a plenary vote, the Federal Senate approved Dilma Rousseff's impeachment. The approval went through even without proof that she had committed a crime of fiscal irresponsibility, the only constitutional path to interrupting a presidential term in Brazil. Due to this political and legal irregularity, the executive power was taken over by a government considered illegitimate, which began to implement, together with the conservative wing of the National Congress, a series of setbacks in social policies and labour rights that had been attained by the Brazilian population since the late-20th century. The country then began to experience hard times of realignment of capitalist and neoliberal politics, supported by the mainstream media, businessmen, *ruralistas*, and sectors of the judiciary. There was a break between the sectors considered to be at the political center (*centrão*) and the PT government, which proceeded to support the conservatives and the right wing of the National Congress. Many of these congressional representatives at the centre are members of self-serving parties, which easily change their position without the slightest shame when they understand that their interests are served by a more powerful political group. Beyond the context of national disputes, the impeachment crisis also reveals an international realignment of neoliberal capitalism that has enhanced the power of the market, of the economic elites, and of privatization even further that is behind the fall of democratic governments in Latin America and elsewhere in the world.

number of murders of *quilombolas* and indigenous leaders, and human rights activists; of attacks on the environment; of labour reform; of outsourcing; of pension reform; of privatization; of the conservative proposal of a “School Free of Politics”; of increased LGBT-phobia; of attacks on human rights; of the genocide of Black youth; of increased femicide.

The uncertainties that we experienced in 2016 became fiercer after the 2018 elections. Brazil and the world witnessed the far-right candidate’s victory in the presidential elections, with the support of the military, businesspeople, *ruralistas*, neo-Pentecostals, militias, mainstream media, and sectors of the judiciary. The same actors who directly or indirectly supported President Dilma Rousseff’s brutal impeachment and the illegitimate interim government had free rein to proceed with their nefarious political plot.

We are living in the aftermath of a 21st century-style, capitalist, racist, patriarchal, heteronormatively oriented, fundamentalist, mediatic, parliamentary, and judicial coup that plagues Brazil and many other Latin American countries and threatens the elusive South-to-South integration.

For those who struggle against racism daily, times have always been uncertain. Racism cannot be eliminated in Brazilian society; it is hidden behind the rhetoric of racial democracy, miscegenation, and equality but reveals itself unabashedly whenever the reactionary wave is resurgent. With democracy under threat, racism in Brazil enjoys a free pass.

We live in times of uncertainty, but with each uncertainty we face, certainties have a chance to fully develop and become alive. Perhaps the greatest certainty is the necessity of awareness, affirmative action, and solidarity now. Additionally, we need a more robust articulation of linkages between victims of racism and victims of all social inequalities, allowing for a more forceful antiracist, anticapitalist, antipatriarchal, and emancipatory response.

For Black Brazilian women and men who fight for democracy, this certainty is reinforced by the fact that we are members of the African diaspora, and Brazil is our land by conquest and right. We have built this country where we have grown roots and developed our Afro-Brazilian heritage. I believe that there is a Black way of being, living, engaging in politics, art, culture, and music; of educating and producing knowledge. This is not essentialism. It is acknowledging our historical, cultural, and political legacy.

The knowledge that we, Black Brazilian women and men, are the producers of Afro-Brasilianities, is not a lesson taught in school. This knowledge has been taught and learned through antiracist social movements and several diverse forms of Black activism and resistance. Among them are the actions, demands, denunciations, and struggles of the Brazilian Black Movement.

2. The Educational Power of the Brazilian Black Movement

I assume that everyone in Brazil was, directly or indirectly, educated and re-educated by the Black Movement. Blacks, whites, indigenous people, descendants of Asians, Arabs, Jews, and other people from around the world who live in our country learn and relearn about the antiracist struggle – whether they take part in it or not – through the educational action of the Black Movement. This movement is the heir to the struggles of enslaved Africans in Brazil and the first types of associations and organizations of Black people created after the abolition of slavery in 1888 and at the start of the 20th century.³

When I speak of the Black Movement, I am not referring to a specific entity but to actions organized and carried out by Black women and men in the fight against racism and in the affirming of Black identities.

I understand the Black Movement as:

[...] the most diverse forms of organization and articulation of Black women and men politically positioned in the fight against racism which aim to overcome this perverse phenomenon in society. Included in this definition are the political, academic, cultural, religious, and artistic groups that have as an *explicit objective* to overcome racism and racial discrimination, valuing and affirming the history and the culture of Black people in Brazil, breaking with racist barriers imposed on Black men and women in the occupation of different spaces and places in society. It is a movement that does not hark back in a romanticized way to the relationship between Black Brazilians, African ancestry, and the African continent today but recognizes the historical, political, and cultural ties of this relationship, understanding it as part of the complex African diaspora. Therefore, it is not enough to value the presence and participation of Black people in history and culture and praise Black and African ancestry for a movement to be considered part of the Black Movement. There must be *an explicit political stance to fight racism* in the actions carried out by this group, a posture that does not deny possible confrontations in the context of a hierarchical, patriarchal, capitalist, LGBT-phobic, and racist society (Gomes 2017: 23-24, emphasis in the original).

The Black Movement's approach to race as a structural and structuring issue was of crucial importance to understand the complexity of discrimination and inequalities in Brazil and gradually gained prominence among sociologists and policy-makers. Sueli Carneiro argues that "the current data on racial inequality grant authority to the complaints carried out by contemporary Black movements regarding the differences in

³ These reflections are largely inspired by the discussions in Gomes 2017.

rights and opportunities existing in our society to the detriment of the Black population” (Carneiro 2002: 7). Luiz Alberto Oliveira Gonçalves and Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva state that “without this collective actor we would never have included the theme of racism and ethnic-racial discrimination in Brazil’s political and judicial agendas” (Gonçalves and Silva 2000: 105).

The Black Movement is an educator, a collective and political actor that re-educates and emancipates society, itself, and the State, producing new knowledge and understanding about ethnic-racial relations and racism in Brazil, in connection with the African diaspora. There are also anonymous Black voices and bodies that act to overcome racism and affirm the identities, values, work, culture, and life of the Black population who are either directly connected to the practice and interventions of the Black Movement or indirectly re-educated by it. The Black Movement is the movement of Black women and men. We are all, in some way, heirs of the knowledge and teachings of the Black Movement.

3. The Brazilian Black Movement and the Production of Emancipatory Knowledges

By recognizing the Brazilian Black Movement as an educator, I recast its intrinsic epistemological legacy as a producer of a specific type of knowledge: knowledge born of struggle.⁴ The more consolidated this knowledge becomes, the greater its ability to transform its way of perceiving and interpreting the problems that motivate its struggle. This knowledge emerges in the form of intellectual production and political, social, and educational practices. I call this political-epistemological body “emancipatory knowing” or “emancipatory knowledge”, historically produced by the Black population and articulated and systematized by the Black Movement.

This knowing or knowledge has led to transformations in the Brazilian society. It is important to remember, resume, analyse, and proudly emphasize this knowledge. They are a part of the history of our fight against racism and for equality and democracy. Black women and Black men who fight racism are the producers of this knowledge and part of this history.

4. Emancipatory Knowing: Keeping Alive the Flame of Hope and Struggle

It is of utmost importance to resume and emphasize this knowledge to keep the flame of hope alive and to make sure that our feeling of indignation in the face of injustices

4 See Santos 2017.

does not immobilize us but redirects us towards the construction of other political and pedagogical paths and new strategies in our democratic and antiracist struggle.

As Paulo Freire has taught us, “if we are progressive, really open to the Other, we must strive, with humility, to reduce as much as possible the distance between what we say and what we do” (Freire 2000: 45). A feeling of indignation, in Paulo Freire’s view, is one that promotes and improves democracy:

It is not a democracy that deepens inequalities, that is purely conventional, that fortifies the power of the powerful, that watches with its arms folded the violation and destruction of the humble and fosters impunity. It is not a democracy that dreams with a so-called liberal State that maximises the freedom of the powerful to accumulate capital in the face of poverty and sometimes the misery of the majorities, but a democracy in which the State, by rejecting licentious and authoritarian positions and genuinely respecting the freedom of its citizens, does not give up its role in regulating social relations. It therefore intervenes democratically, as the institution responsible for the development of social solidarity (Freire 2000: 48).

One cannot accept, says Paulo Freire, “a democracy founded on the ethics of the market which, wickedly and only allowing itself to be exercised for profit, makes democracy itself nonviable” (Freire 2000: 49).

I will further discuss these emancipatory knowledges generated in the Black Movement’s struggle in the following sections.

4.1 Identity Knowledges

The Black Movement, especially within the context of affirmative action, brought back, once again, the debate about race in Brazil. Despite criticisms, there was an increase in the institutionalization of the use of colour categories on identification forms used by institutions and in the censuses, bringing racial self-declaration to Brazilians’ daily life. The debate about who is Black and who is white now permeates Brazilian women’s and men’s lives in a new way, beyond the context of activism and political discussion.

On social media, one now sees a profusion of accounts of Black individuals, public figures, artists, and youth groups who write about the experience of being Black, denounce racism and even provide information and tips on skin care and how to care for one’s Afro. Discussions such as cultural appropriation, colourism, racism, and affirmative action are carried out online and offline critically and politically by a growing number of Black people.

A new visibility of the racial issue and the Black identity is present in literature, art, cinema, theatre, and academia. Different Black Movement groups are gaining space on the political and public scene and party politics, affirming Black identity in all its complexity.

Issues such as violence against Black women and the genocide of Black youth, which are a part of the Black Movement's historic denunciations, are being incorporated, albeit slowly, into the concerns of researchers, NGOs, and the government. Racial and colour profiling became a relevant category of analysis to understand the reality of gender, youth, employment, regional disparities, and poverty in Brazil – and the alarming data confirm the Black Movement's denunciations. Black identity is now in a different place. Gradually, Brazil is realizing that being a Black woman or a Black man and asserting one's identity as such is a political stance that discomforts the elites. The use of violence, racism's old strategy, has been renewed to silence them yet again. The Black Movement expanded the definition of Black identity to places where previously it had been overlooked or rendered invisible.

4.2 Political Knowledges

Government agencies and universities are now addressing the issue of racial inequality. Research and educational policies, school evaluation indicators, anthropology, sociology, history, and health sciences are giving the racial issue more attention. The field of law is being pressured to provide answers that contemplate social justice and diversity. Universities are instituting inter(multi)racial hetero-identification commissions to stop fraud in implementing the Quota Law (Law 12711/12). The debate concerning racial issues in Brazil is being re-examined under new frameworks, bringing back to the public scene positions that were supposed to have been overcome after the military dictatorship's demise. It reveals that scientific racism still exists, even among progressive intellectuals. A renewed concept of race becomes a criterion to overturn inequalities by adopting formal state policies.

In the year 2000, Black intellectuals founded the Brazilian Association of Black Researchers (ABPN), responsible for the biannual Brazilian Congress of Black Researchers (Copene), and its regional editions. In universities and colleges, centres for Afro-Brazilian Studies (Neab) are being set up to conduct research, do community outreach, train teachers, and promote political and academic debates on the Brazilian racial issue and African culture, history, and politics.

The racial issue now occupies a new political place in the field of knowledge production. Higher education institutions are offering optional, elective, and mandatory courses about the history of Africa, ethnic-racial relationships, gender, and ethnic-racial

relations, creating the need for educators who specialize in those subjects. Additionally, under Law 12990/14, some public institutions are required to conduct examinations for higher education professors with a quota reserved for Blacks.

Some universities already apply the quotas in graduate programs, in compliance with the Normative Ordinance 13/2016 set by the Ministry of Education in 2016. To comply with the legislation and guarantee the Black population's rights to affirmative action, managers, intellectuals, and professionals from several fields need to learn more about the racial issue. They are obliged to reveal their ignorance and resort to those women and men who are competent and have expertise on the subject matter. At the moment, intellectuals, researchers, and activists from the Black community are being asked to provide their opinion. The political knowledge created by the Black community and organized into the Black Movement is used for collaborating with others by accessing both their knowledges and ignorance. Against epistemic racism, there has been an acceptance of Black women and men as political subjects who possess the competence and knowledge to discuss racial matters as well as other topics.

When we consider political knowledge, Black women deserve special attention. Black female activists construct political, identity, and aesthetic-bodily knowledge. They call upon Black male activists to reconsider and change their attitude toward women in their personal and political relationships. They denounce male chauvinism within the Black Movement and other social movements, in domestic relations, labour unions, political parties, and at the workplace, re-educating white women and men and those of other ethnic and racial backgrounds about feminism. The National March of Black Women Against Racism and For Good Living in Brasília on November 18, 2015, was a landmark of Black Brazilian women's activism.

4.3 Aesthetic-Bodily Knowledges

The year 2000 saw the emergence of a politization of Black aesthetics which was different from the last decades of the 20th century. Black aesthetics began to be understood as part of the civil and existential rights for Black women and men. It becomes present in a more public and assertive way once affirmative action policies are in place. These policies aim to re-educate Black women and men regarding their relationship with their bodies and re-educate Brazilian society regarding their views of Black people's bodies.

With the advent of affirmative action policies, Black youth began to see themselves through personal aesthetics and academic achievements. Young people, mostly from the outskirts of large cities, learned to take pride in their race and their origins, adopting a positive and realistic stance. Young Black women organized marches such as the Afro

Pride Parade [*Orgulho Crespo*], actions such as the Afros for All [*Encrespa Geral*] (an event promoting empowerment through Afro hairdos), and Facebook groups, YouTube videos, blogs, and tutorials dedicated to Black beauty. They appreciate the significance of their body and hair as symbols of Black identity. In their way, they politicize the idea of Black beauty.

The aesthetic-bodily knowledge is also part of a series of struggles and teachings by Black women. In an international political articulation, Black women activists managed to institute the Afro-Latin-American and Afro-Caribbean Women's Day on July 25, 2000. In Brazil, this date was given an institutional scope and became part of the re-education process of the Brazilian State in relation to the recognition of Black women's struggle through the sanction of Law No. 12987 of June 2, 2014, declaring that Tereza de Benguela National Day and Black Woman Day are to be celebrated on July 25.

5. The Attack of the Far Right on the Antiracist Struggle

In these times of uncertainties and antidemocratic politics, all this wealth of information, accumulated by Black women and Black men throughout Brazilian history and systematized and articulated in the Black Movement's demands for rights, is under attack.

The extreme-right government that took office in 2018 established, together with its supporters spread across various institutions and regions of the country, an atmosphere of attack against everything that can be considered democratic and emancipatory. The hawkish, capitalist, and neo-Pentecostal ideologically charged group-think regards fighting for rights and social emancipation as suspicious behavior. Anyone who calls herself or himself a defender of democracy, equality, and social justice is considered a "communist".

Institutions dedicated to the promotion of racial equality such as the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights, and the National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality (also known as the CNPIR) were dismantled. The ongoing genocide of Black youth is barely addressed by the current Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and Black femicide has no place in the agenda of the National Secretariat of Policies for Women, which is an organ of the Ministry of Women, Family, and Human Rights. The Palmares Cultural Foundation, an organ of the former Ministry of Culture – now downgraded to National Secretariat of Culture – is at the whims of a far-right Black man who openly attacks the Black Movement, discrediting it and ignoring its social and political achievements.

The current administration's explicit support of the military and police has authorized even more violent actions by security forces against the poor, Black, and youth population in the city's outskirts, *bailes funk*, *morros*, and *favelas*. Police officers ostensibly use more violence to suppress political demonstrations and festive gatherings and during individual police checks.

Universities are suffering from targeted austerity policies and political interference in their autonomy. Educational institutions are being attacked as places where communist ideas are cultivated. Military-style curricula have been adopted in public elementary education. Racial quotas in universities are being contested and criticized as paternalistic. In the National Congress, there are already bills proposing to end racial quotas. This kind of discourse strengthens the conservative and far-right sectors of the country's rich and poor.

We are currently experiencing a time when the knowledge developed by the Brazilian Black Movement is being questioned, distorted, and reinterpreted by both the far-right conservative forces and the "Afro-Right". This fringe seemed invisible but was always there. The ignorance of racism, neoliberalism, and neofascism has now taken control of political power. It is also targeting those knowledges that were built through the antiracist struggle. However, even in these uncertain times, the emancipatory knowledges of Black women and men forged during the antiracist struggle are challenging ignorance. This complex and tense social, political, and ideological struggle is not always visible or addressed in mainstream analyses of the current crisis of democracy.

6. Conclusion: the Brazilian Black Movement in Times of Uncertainties

As the Black Movement progressively intensifies its fight for social emancipation and for overcoming racism, the range of oppressions and dominations to which it has to put an end multiplies, along with the number of global, national, and local struggles in which it is involved (Santos 2006). With its complex and dynamic configuration, the Black Movement is challenged to produce new knowledge and new forms of resistance in the face of uncertainty and coups d'état.

Just as in other critical times, we must build a democratic antiracist radical resistance. We need to extend our capacity for outrage, increase our solidarity, and get beyond disputes about who is capable of an accurate analysis of the situation we live in, and find the best way out.

It is time for the intellectuals to prove that it is possible to create knowledge with, rather than about, people, society, life, and especially women and men who suffer most. Our responsibility is to produce new forms of knowledge.

In the past few months, I have been investigating another set of knowledges systematised by the Black Movement, and that stands out even more in times of increased racism, inequality, and violence: the knowledge of indignation. It is also a type of emancipatory knowledge that is non-conformist, antiracist, antipatriarchal, anticapitalist, and based on the dignity of those who fight against oppression.

Although forged in the struggle against racial oppression, these knowledges of indignation have nothing in common with Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, since they are built through the struggle against racial oppression. This form of oppression is intrinsically linked to social class; still, it crosses over all Black people and the African ancestral heritage inscribed in their skin and bodies, regardless of social class. Race oppression results in an accumulation of oppressions which also includes class, gender, and sexual orientation.

This complex overlap of forms of oppression can suggest that racism is mitigated based on the Black person's social, educational, and employment achievements, or on their artistic, political, or public visibility. This is how racism deceives us all: it makes us think that it is a problem that can be mitigated. Perverse phenomena can be hidden and rendered irrelevant to us, but their nefarious effects on their victims' lives are never mitigated.

Indignation is expressed through the overlapping of dignity and indignity. The more undignified the situations and the way racism is imposed on Black people, the more damaging will be the effect on their dignity. The result is often a feeling of isolation; however, this phenomenon can also result in the revival of political identities and lead to new confrontations.

Historically produced by the Black population in Brazil, during their trajectory of suffering and resistance, the knowledges of indignation seek expression through gestures, memories, the recognition of Black personalities who were overlooked by history, the affirmation of Afro-Brazilian religion, teachings derived from *capoeira*, and *quilombola* tricks to survive the struggle against ruralist oppression. They are present in the actions of Black high-school and university students who are advocating for the inclusion of Black intellectuals in their curricula and public memory. They appear in calls for representation in positions of power and decision-making in left-wing parties, in the creation of websites, Facebook pages, and Instagram accounts by Black leaders of different generations. They are also evident in the work of Black YouTubers, in the construction of various inter-entity forums by the Black Movement, in hip hop culture,

in slam poetry, in the marches and acts against racism, machismo, and violence, such as the killing of Black Rio de Janeiro City Councilwoman Marielle Franco in 2018.

This set of knowledges transforms the denunciation of racism into an effervescence and articulation of national and international scale. They are realized through the presence of Black women and men with a racial conscience in institutional politics, Black feminism, and Africana Womanism.⁵

At this moment, the question remains: how has the Black Movement articulated and systematized this knowledge and understanding of indignation? How has it been re-educated by this knowledge in the face of uncertainty and attacks on the rule of law? Has the Black Movement mobilized its capacity to expand its intervention in society and power relations, transforming these knowledges into strategies to combat exacerbated racism in times of neo-fascism?

To translate the dignity that spans the history of resistance of the Black people into political action is crucial for Black people to systematize, articulate, and transform these knowledges of indignation into strategies of struggle when democracy is under threat, such as it is today in Brazil. To mobilize feelings of dignity and indignation, and to turn them into a political action that opposes racism, neoliberalism, religious fundamentalism, and neo-Fascism, we need to work with emotions in the face of human perversity, which can sometimes manifest itself aggressively and bluntly, and at other times more peacefully.

The social and political outcome of the overlapping of dignity and indignity present in the knowledges of indignation is one of the challenges of the Black Movement's new cycle in the 21st century. It is necessary now to articulate between the knowledges already constructed and new political learnings, given the rapid acceptance by many sectors of the Brazilian population, including Blacks, of democratic attacks against so many rights built into our social and political history.

This situation has led the Black Movement to search for new forms of dialogue and strategies to articulate and systematize the knowledges of indignation and, together with other progressive movements, to oppose the authoritarianism the far-right has been imposing since its ascent to executive power in 2018.

5 Africana Womanism is an emancipatory political preposition coined by Dr. Clemora Hudson. By researching and identifying the agency present in these women's wisdom, teachings and struggles, Hudson finds in them an example of women who, as matriarchal generators of power, have always been ahead of the agency of men. It is an emancipatory perspective of the Black population elaborated through Black women's pain in the face of racism, and not a political action for freedom confined to a particular segment. An exclusive focus on gender neglects to account for the ontological disintegration of Black women and their people. Womanism is a proposal to think about the place of Black women beginning with ourselves, and not accepting ideologies that were not directed at Black women from their inception (see Njeri and Ribeiro 2019).

Since the democratic transition in the 1980s, social movements, including the Black Movement, have made their mark on a broad democratic landscape, whether they choose or not to combine with parties more oriented towards the left or the right (Francisco and Macedo 2020). In this political space, the knowledge of indignation is articulated, mediated, and consolidated by the Black Movement and the Black women and men who have aligned themselves with pro-democracy and antiracist movements. In this same space, the knowledges of indignation denounce the political attempts to homogenise the racial question into universalist agendas.

But indignation over racism does not go well with groups, parties, religious organisations, and capitalists who feed and practice social, racial, and gender violence, from its symbolic forms to the most explicit ones. Black individuals who choose these spaces and groups and advocate an euphemistic discourse emphasizing individual effort and merit, while marginalizing the historical struggle of the Black population in Brazil, are producers of knowledges of indignation. Instead, they reinforce the myth of racial democracy and submit to the power of whiteness.

In Brazil, this strain of Black conservatism has become more noticeable due the increased visibility of Blacks and the racial issue as a result of antiracist struggles. This is not to suggest that this strain is new to the Brazilian political arena; perhaps it is now only more apparent. We note the emergence of Black women and men aligned to the right and the far-right, as well as the emergence of new Black leadership that represents this line of thought and whose names gain local and national influence.

Even if they have been affected by racial equity and affirmative action policies, a number of Black people do not recognize them as political achievements, nor do they come out in defense of these policies. In addition, there are those who for many reasons publicly walk in the opposite direction of their own antiracist and emancipatory struggles.

The director of the Palmares Cultural Foundation, Sérgio Camargo, a member of the far-right government team that took office in 2018, is an example of this. His reactionary and disrespectful public manifestations and his opposition to the antiracist movement and the Black Movement are notorious. He called the Black Movement a “cursed scum” of “punks” during an internal meeting with staff members, an audio recording of which was leaked to the press:

On the same occasion he also attacked Zumbi, referring to him as a “son of a bitch who enslaved Blacks”, called a *mãe de santo* a “*macumbeira*”, scorned Black Consciousness Day, and declared that he would purge “leftists” from the Foundation. “I don’t have to admire Zumbi dos Palmares, who in my opinion was a son of a bitch who enslaved Blacks. I don’t have to support Black Consciousness Day. There’ll be none of this – no Black Consciousness [Day].

When I first got here, there were events scheduled even in Amapá, I had a *pagode* concert with Black Consciousness money. So I'm supposed to send a guy there, to travel, to stay over, to supervise things... This is bullshit!", he said. The meeting took place on April 30, behind closed doors, with the participation of two other staff members. The subject of the meeting was the disappearance of Camargo's corporate mobile phone. When asked who might have picked up the device, the Director of the foundation implied that the theft was intentional and was meant to harm him. This is when he attacked the Black Movement. "As soon as I returned, I exonerated three of our directors. Any one of them could have done that. Who could have done that? Someone who wanted to hurt me by breaking into this building to beat me up. How was that possible? Employees, assisted by the Black Movement. Those Black Movement punks, that damn scum" (Brasil de Fato 2020).

It is imperative to understand, at this time, the greater complexity of the racial question in Brazil and its political and ideological entanglements. The more significant the progress made in the fight against racism and racial inequalities, the greater the chance of social and racial integration for Black women and men. With increased integration, the greater the heterogeneity of perspectives, opinions, positions, and political and ideological choices of these subjects, which are not a homogeneous bloc. Human beings are susceptible to contradictions and may or may not adhere to emancipatory projects and make different political and ideological choices.

The production of knowledges of indignation and the strains they place on power relations, racism, and various forms of inequality occur in an increasingly complex field. But one thing is sure: they are built by the Black subjects who are located in the emancipatory and democratic camp. On the other hand, it is imperative to understand why a racism-denying reactionary camp can attract people who are its victims. Only through emancipation is it possible to build antiracism. Reactionary movements that align themselves with the political project of the right and of the extreme right and with the authoritarian state are incapable of contributing to this struggle.

Unlike the other emancipatory knowledges (identity, political, aesthetic-corporeal) systematized by the Black Movement of the 20th century, which were able to re-educate the State, society, and universities, the knowledges of indignation warn us that an authoritarian state cannot be re-educated. Instead, it should be challenged, because only the democratic rule of law can guarantee mutual emancipatory learning, rights, and social justice.

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