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TRANSNATIONALIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION:

INTERAMERICAN FRAMEWORKS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A Dissertation Presented

by

MIRANGELA BUGGS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst inn partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2016

College of Education

Student Development

Social Justice Education

TRANSNATIONALIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION:
INTERAMERICAN FRAMEWORKS FOR
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late uncle Nuri Muhammad, whose outlook, travels, studies and stories regarding Africa and our origins as African-Americans inspired this path.

I also dedicate this to all the writers, artists, educators and activists who invoke hope for liberation and decoloniality. A most recent gift of sight came from the writer Junot Díaz who talks about transgressive things like "decolonial love" and who wrote to me about "hope for radical communion across the fractures of our multiple oppressions." *That* is the work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful for all the ancestral and embodied spirits, places and people that have shaped my sight and insight. I am grateful for my Afrodescendant family in the Americas, my North Carolina and Virginia Black-Indian people, my Cape Verdean-Afro-U.S. American, Afro-Canadian cousins and their families, my Haitian-American partner, Gardy Guiteau, and all his people, and our daughter Zami Buggs-King who navigates multiple worlds in America. I am grateful to have been able to travel and to have life-changing experiences in places that schooled me deeply. I am forever indebted to Friends World College (now LIU Global at Long Island University-Brooklyn), where in the late 1980's and early 1990's I took "the world's most pressing problems as the basis of my curriculum" as an undergraduate at that amazing, transformative institution. Friends World College sent me to live and study in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, the Borderlands/South Texas/Refugio del Rio Grande, Bangalore, Mysore and Goa in India. Other places that have influenced my life and outlooks profoundly are New York City, Cambridge, MA, Woodstock, NY, Miami, FL, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

My teachers are central in this— Rafael Bolaños, Davíd Smith, Emilio Vargas, Manuel Monestel, Jeff Halper, Pio Celestino, Lisa Brodyaga, M. Jacqui Alexander, Amitabh Rai, Ella Habiba Shohat, Meena Alexander, Dina Siddiqi, Amala Levine, AnaLouise Keating, Luís Marentes, Agustín Lao-Montes, John Bracey, Daisy Rubiera, Ann Ferguson, Sangeeta Kamat, Alexandrina Deschamps, Bailey Jackson, Katya Hahn D'Errico, Ximena Zúñiga, and Maurianne Adams. My woc besties are all over this— Cyndi Suaréz, Nova Gutierrez, and Aleyamma Mathew. Thanks for being comadres, intellectual and spiritual community simultaneously. I offer many thanks to my friends, Mustafa K. Emirbayer, Meg Goldner Rabinowitz, Antoinette Peters, and Allia Matta, who have been cheerleaders and readers for this work.

ABSTRACT

TRANSNATIONALIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION:
INTERAMERICAN FRAMEWORKS FOR
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY
FEBRUARY 2016

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Social Justice Education currently uses mostly U.S.-based theories and concepts, and it often relies upon nation-specific historical legacies and nation-centric contemporary understandings of patterns of inequality. This study offers interdisciplinary conceptual-historical frameworks garnered from historical studies, African Diaspora Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, along with studies of frameworks and pedagogies in critical and multicultural education to enlarge Social Justice Education. This conceptual study utilizes a world-historical analysis and focuses on the interconnectedness of the Americas—Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America— establishing a hemispheric and regional framework to inspire more transnational work in educational projects. Arguing that there are shared historical and present-day patterns of social oppression across the Americas, this work excavates dynamics of race and gender and how they have lived in similar ways across American societies. Focusing on the African diaspora, this research charts a history of colonialism and the workings of race in various American nations. It also

utilizes multicultural feminist thought and the theory of intersectionality to expand the

frameworks that educators can use to "transnationalize" their thinking and practice, and

to work with interlocking systems of gender, race and class in their teaching content and

pedagogy.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

**EXPANDED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS**

**An Interdisciplinary Conversation: The Coloniality of Power, African Diaspora
Studies, and Multicultural Feminist Thought**

In this dissertation, I engage in a conversation with three major conceptual

frameworks. First, I review the work put forward by scholars working with an analysis of

the coloniality of power. The coloniality of power analysis provides an important

historical and political perspective, and offers an anti-oppressive framework that can help

inform educators and researchers addressing questions concerning social power and

social justice, especially when working from a global perspective. The notion of

coloniality—as historical and continuous—is, in my view, a crucial beginning point for

those attempting to decipher questions of the history of the Americas, systems of social

classification, domination, and hegemony. Looking to issues of identity and power—

racial/ethnic, gender, class, and sexuality—an analytics of colonialism and ongoing

colonial processes offers an important framework for understanding the complex

positionalities and subject formation of both past and current subordinate and dominant

social groups. With particular feminist epistemological and conceptual interventions, the

coloniality of power as a field of analysis has salience for our work in understanding both

the *status quo* of past and present American societies, along with the potentials for

resistance to and refashioning of contemporary social relations.

"The coloniality of power" school of thought (Grosfoguel, 2006, 2007; Lao-

Montes, 2006; Lugones, 2007; Mignolo, 2000; Quijano 1993, 2000a, 2000b, 2007, 2008)

has been developed by Latin American scholars who hold a macro-historical/super-

1

structural picture of social formation in the Americas. Coloniality is argued as the continuous manifestation of colonial processes, which commenced in the 15th century Americas. In other words, race, class, and gender norms found in the present-day Americas have historical roots to colonial processes that started durring the formation of the Americas upon the arrival of European settlers and conquerors. I argue that the coloniality of power is a foundational concept for understanding oppression in the Americas and for building curriculum for Social Justice Education. Some concepts offered also involve an exploration of questions of anti-colonial/ decolonial modes of imagining and thinking about liberation (Fanon, 2005; Grosfoguel, 2006, 2007; Lao-Montes, 2007; Memmi, 1991; Mignolo, 2008; Walsh, 2007) as a specific kind of social justice thinking that can be adopted by educators.

Second, I engage with important ideas in the field of African Diaspora Studies, with its focus on the local and global dimensions of black cultures, histories, movements, and identities. African Diaspora and Black Atlantic Studies that focus on the realities of Afrodescendants in Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America are offered as a particular field of analysis to gain clarity about the formation of racialized systems of oppression and how "race" as a phenomenon is a simultaneousely national, regional and transnational dilemma. African Diaspora Studies are rooted in a transnational understanding of the multiplicity and interconnectedness of Black experiences, Black histories, and Black cultures across national boundaries. I rely on the work of scholars who deal with the African diaspora in the Americas. The focus here on the African diaspora is specifically rooted in its Atlantic reality, beginning with the 16th century and the Middle Passage through the 19th century – the movement of millions of Africans by

Europeans to live in bondage in the Americas. The forced migration of Africans in the

Americas has had a profound influence upon historic and present-day racial identities,

cultures, and politics across borders (Andrews, 2004; Edwards, 2003; Falola & Childs,

2005; Gilroy, 1993; Hanchard, 1997; Heywood & Thornton, 2007; Lewis, 1999;

Manning, 2010; Patterson & Kelly, 2000; Ratcliff, 2008; Sarduy & Stubbs, 1993, 2000;

Telles, 2004; Wekker, 1997; M. Wright, 2003).

Working with cross-disciplinary African Diaspora Studies as a model, it is

important to note how these scholars have stressed the transnational linkages and a shared

historical trajectory in their mapping of Black experiences and social identity formation.

In a work that proposes to expand the study of Blacks in the United States, Earl Lewis

(1999) suggests that:

> . . . to study African Americans requires us to historicize the processes of
> racial formation and identity construction. Race in turn is viewed as
> historically contingent and relational, with full understanding of that
> process dependent on our abilities to see African Americans living and
> working in a world of overlapping diasporas (p. 5).

Michael Hanchard (1997), an African-American scholar of race relations in Brazil,

argued that

> [i]t is imperative that progressive political and cultural movements by
> blacks in this country reject the idea of America as the United States. For
> to accept that definition, with its self-selected borders and dominions, is to
> impoverish a political and cultural heritage to which blacks from the
> Caribbean and Latin America have made important contributions (p. 236).

In short, the insights of African Diaspora Studies encourage educators who teach about

race and racial oppression involving the experiences of Black people/Afro-descendants,

to expansively formulate their analysis of race and the formation of Blackness by looking

at Afrodescendant experience transnationally across the Americas. African Diaspora Studies provides educators and scholars with new knowledges upon which to understand the multiple cultural, racial/ethnic, gendered, and classed realities of Black peoples in the Americas as a group that has been affected in particular and instructive ways by the consolidations and re-consolidations of colonial relations.

Third, this work is grounded in multicultural, U.S. women-of-color, and transnational feminisms, fields of thought that have complicated and extended the conversation about race, gender, identity, and power by insisting on an analysis that stresses the interlocking nature of oppression. Multicultural feminist thought is foundational in this work. The ideas of "polycentric multiculturalism" (Shohat & Stam, 1994; Shohat, 1998) and "multicultural feminism" (Shohat, 1998) are crucial conceptual frameworks and rest upon the theoretical insights of various women of color feminisms. Multicultural feminist bodies of research and literature have developed a distinctly multifaceted, transnational, and comprehensive theorization of the nature of oppression across contexts. This literature provides key concepts that are needed for 21st century Social Justice Education theoretical frameworks and practices.

Some central work in feminist thought has been pioneered by interdisciplinary scholar Ella Shohat, the editor of a volume entitled *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age* published in 1998. Shohat's work provides a definition of multicultural feminism that is a guiding definition for this study. In *Talking Visions* as in previous works (Shohat & Stam 1994; Shohat 1997), Shohat clarifies a definition of multiculturalism and its linkage to feminist thought. Multiculturalism, she argues, is "polycentric . . . entail[ing] a profound reconceptualization and restructuring of

4

intercommunal relations within and beyond the nation state" (1998, p. 2). Multicultural

feminism "yok[es] multiculturalism and feminism not as distinct realms of politics

imposed on each other, but rather as coming into political existence in and through

relation to each other" (1998, p. 2). Noting the points of relation between what she calls

"diverse resistant practices," multicultural feminism is viewed as a "polyphonic space", a

"polyrhythmic staging" where diverse forms of feminist anti-racist and anti-colonialist

knowledge can be located and contended with.

In Shohat's view, multicultural feminism is related to the work of women of color

feminists working in various geographical locations, acknowledging the "intersection of

oppressions [which have] generated a multifaceted social critique" (1998, p. 3). At the

same time that multicultural feminism incorporates the theoretical insights of Black,

Chicana, Native American, Asian and other non-white feminisms produced within and

beyond U.S. borders, Shohat's definition is also concerned with questions of the

transnational, with multicultural formations across borders, histories, and contexts, and

with a transborder political project that names and shifts colonial imaginaries which have

imagined much of the world around the axes of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

Along with a transnational and historical understanding of multiculturalism, the

intersectional nature of oppression, as articulated by a myriad of feminist and pro-

feminist scholars over the decades (Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldúa 1990a&b; Brown, 1992;

Carby, 1988; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2001 and 2008 Davies, 1994, 1999; Davis, 1981;

Grewal, 1994; Kumashiro, 2000, 2001; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002;

Sandoval, 1991, 2000; Smith, 1983; Wing, 1997) is central in this project. In the U.S. and

beyond, feminists have stressed the need to work with how systems of oppression such as

racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism overlap and interlock. Feminist lenses

challenge social justice educators to begin to more rigorously examine the intersections

of various systems of oppression, and of the question of the interaction among various

social identity groups and their relationality. Cognizance of historical relationality of both

social identities and forms of societal oppression, sets the stage for broader lenses which

enable educators to work across contexts, groups, and to engage individuals with varied

and diverse social identities.

In this study, I put these ideas in conversation with feminist theory and the work

of diaspora studies emphasizing dimensions of gender and feminist analysis that

conceptualize contemporary notions of "race" and Blackness in the U.S. and in other

parts of the Americas. The world-historical analysis of coloniality which continues to

structure present-day power relations and systems of oppression that I utilize allows for

the decentering of the U.S. as the hegemonic center of what is popularly known as

"America." This decentering is not merely a geo-political reconceptualization. It is also

an incorporation of feminist analytical visions and metaphors—garnered from women of

color's feminist explorations of diverse women's lives and other transnational feminist

work—that encourages us to foreground the gendered realities of transnational

communities—diasporic cultural and political formations and existence. Feminist

conceptualizations are of importance to educators because there is an urgency, at this

historical moment, to contend with the expanded substance of subaltern histories, and the

interlocking experiences and knowledges of marginalized groups, such as Blacks,

Latin@s, poor people, women, queer folks, etc. in teaching and learning.

It is my goal to engage these three bodies of work (and myriad discussions that they invoke) in an interdisciplinary conversation about the historical roots of present-day patterns of oppression and domination and to identify key concepts that can help enlarge current understanding of oppression and visions for liberation in Social Justice Education from a transnational perspective. These complementary discourses constitute a powerful conceptual basis for understanding present-day workings of social power and can inform our educational content and pedagogies for critical consciousness.

Twenty-first century education for social justice can respond to global conditions and to an inherently multicultural, diasporic, and multinational domestic reality in the U.S., and can be transnational in its outlook. To be more relevant and effective in a globalized world, social justice educators can be more prepared to understand oppression across contexts, to teach about the historical linkages between geographical regions, and the historical processes that occur across nations that contribute to comparable types of oppression in different locations. In this project, I propose that social justice educators can begin to focus our teaching content more explicitly on cross-national processes such as diasporic histories and cultures, and on grappling with global historical dynamics in colonialism and coloniality and a shared trajectory of these across nations. I argue that educators linked to the Americas can more clearly work on transnational and global issues by more vigorously utilizing some of the insights of women of color/Black/Third World, and multicultural feminisms, along with the groundbreaking interdisciplinary work in diaspora studies.

This works draws from history, social sciences, cultural and ethnic studies, gender studies, feminist thought, and in some cases literary theory and legal studies, along with

critical education and pedagogy that address the workings of inequity in the world. It is

my view that by engaging in multiple and expanded fields of knowledge and analysis

social justice educators can deepen their conceptual and pedagogical repertoire, can foster

work that extends beyond national boundaries, and can engage our students in new

questions about transnational inequity and global needs for justice.

Social Justice Education (SJE)

As a field, Social Justice Education offers a range of conceptual and practice

models as well as principles for teaching and facilitating learning about the dynamics of

privilege, oppression and liberation in various educational settings (Adams & Love,

2009; Bell, Love & Roberts, 2007; Goodman, 2001; Hardiman & Jackson, 2007;

Kumashiro 2000 & 2001; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler &

Cytron-Walker, 2007). In the field of Social Justice Education, we encourage students to

learn about and examine various forms of oppression, their histories, trajectories, and

present-day dynamics and consequences in human lives mostly from the perspective of

the United States. Learning to name inequity and its workings begins a process of

educational engagement that is transformational for learners.

However, in my view, the transformational impact of Social Justice Education can

be multiplied when we take a transnational perspective that looks beyond the United

States, and puts U.S.-based histories and dynamics in conversation with the world, and

when educators excavate matters of power and inequity using transnational lenses.

As Maurianne Adams explains (2012)

> In the US, SJE is closely associated with civil rights and identity-based
> social movements. It also has roots in the experiential, social - learning
> reforms identified with John Dewey and in antiracist and critical
> pedagogies (p. 3).

And that

> In general, SJE is the study of how social group differences have been used historically to rationalize and justify inequitable social group relationships (p. 3).

In addition to its associations and basic framework, Social Justice Education utilizes various modes of critical pedagogy in its learning spaces and "builds on anti-oppression theory" (Adams, 2012, p. 3), openly engaging students in studying various dimensions and dynamics of inequity through the analytical lens of *oppression* as a past and present-day fact of society. "Oppression" constitutes some of the core vocabulary in the discourse of the field of Social Justice Education, and the complex dynamics of oppression are made intelligible through critical educational processes. Thus, advancing social justice through education requires theories of oppression (Bell, 2007). Rather than simply holding localized acts of discrimination, bias, prejudice, or bigotry, theories of oppression helps us unveil " the ubiquitous and systemic nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness" (Bell, 2007, p. 3). The concept of oppression, however, includes the interactional and "everyday" dynamics of discrimination, bias, prejudice, and bigotry.

To transmit knowledge about inequity and oppression in society generally and in the world-historical frames that are proposed in this work, involves a willingness to excavate systems and structures, histories, ideologies and discourses, as well as personal and interpersonal experiences, perceptions, beliefs and everyday actions. Oppression in the Americas has a history, is persistent, systemic, institutional, and structural, as well as individually and psychologically motivated, and underlies all aspects of colonial-modern

American societies; it is a "social-group-based phenomenon" (Cudd, 2006, p. 56). Therefore, incorporating an enlarged and nuanced concept of oppression is a necessary foundation that provides major theoretical grounding for social justice educators. The core of Social Justice Education—teaching and learning about oppression— includes being able to identify oppressive practices and situations, and to "[understand] the dynamics of oppression and articulating ways to work against it" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 1).

The Americas as the Site of Inquiry

In order to teach more expansively about oppression and social justice—utilizing a world-historical frame (Wallerstein, 2000; Quijano, 1999, 2000, 2007 and 2008; Lao-Montes, 2006) and incorporating knowledge about transnational processes, i.e., beyond one nation, into our conceptual frameworks—educators located in the United States can engage a broader historical analysis. This analysis incorporates the dynamics of history and oppression in the U.S. but also extends beyond the United States, and notes the continuities and disjunctures across regions, nations, and communities. While the U.S. is a somewhat unique British-influenced settler-colonial experiment in North America, its establishment and its contemporary dominance is part of an overall history of the Americas as a whole. The British, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Dutch colonial and settlement processes were established historically; they effectively organized American societies around various kinds of class exploitation, racial hierarchies, racism, and white supremacy, gendered and sexual hierarchies, male-dominance, and suppression of indigenous communities and knowledge. Parallel historical processes occurred across the Americas: the social construction of race; the importation of European forms of gender

10

and sexual hierarchy; and a particular kind of classed order rooted in the conquest, genocide, and suppression of indigenous people, the enslavement of Africans, and the creation of a global world order dominated by European descendants. A core connection discussed in this interdisciplinary study is that that "despite national variations a similar social process defined all of the cultures of the Americas" (Holt, 1999, p. 34). The social dynamics of race, gender, and class were foundational in the making of the Americas as a whole. The commonality of historical and social processes in the U.S., Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean, are presented here as case studies from which I conceptualize the necessity for teaching transnationally about race, gender, and their intersections.

In order to better teach about the U.S., I assert that it is a necessity for educators to develop an understanding of U.S. history as part of a greater, larger American and global history. This Latin-Americanist and North-Americanist comparative project is a particular contribution to fostering transnational and relational understandings of histories of oppression; it opens revised pathways for teaching. Thus it is crucial, I believe, that educators in the U.S. begin to work with an idea of Americanity (Kurasawa, 2008; Mignolo, 2005; Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992; Saldívar, 2003, 2012) a concept which includes a sense of a linked and parallel historical trajectory of all of the countries and regions in the Americas.

Our historical moment is unique because the processes of globalization and international activities are increasingly discussed and have gradually become part of mainstream U.S. social consciousness. While many would argue that globalization is not a new social phenomenon, situating globalization in the contemporary presents an

opportunity for educators to begin to teach more specifically about globalization and cross-national processes.

As a U.S.-African-American, my contribution to critical, global consciousness in teaching is to discourage students from thinking of the United States as if it is exceptional, somehow the center of the universe, and as if it has a wholly unique national history. Despite the overwhelming and dominant global influence that the United States has, the fact is that all knowledge is not contained here, and it certainly does not reside in dominant academic spaces and in hegemonic scholarship. If, as learners and educators, we are going to look at sites of knowledge that are produced in the U.S., it is imperative that we look to our "Third World" within this "First World," to social movements, theoretical fields, and modes of consciousness that are shaped by the realities of subaltern groups. This foregrounds peoples of color, their experiences and ways of knowing, that are both counterhegemonic, oppositional, and liberatory, often with transnational application.

The frameworks discussed here establish some core concepts and contemporary theorizations for educators to begin to develop a cross-national historiography and sociological lens by incorporating knowledge of the dynamics of history and oppression across the Americas, noting continuities and disjunctures among the regions, nations, and communities using comparative examples in varying parts of the Americas. I focus particularly on the formation of race, racial identities, and the racialized experiences of Afrodescendants and their inextricable connection with classed oppressions and classism, using a gendered feminist lens and the theory of intersectionality garnered from women of color, third world, and multicultural feminism.

12

Recasting "America"

While many activists and educators in the U.S. are engaged in the crucial work of naming and identifying the forces of oppression to expose it and in the process to shift consciousness and to inspire the potential for liberation in the society, there are increasing challenges to U.S.-based educators to better respond to current global conditions and shifting national domestic realities. Are we accurately dealing with the social phenomenon of "race," for instance, if we focus solely on racial histories and race relations rooted in the dynamics of oppression, privilege and resistance in the United States? Do we adequately deal with gender when we teach about sexism through the lenses of a standard, cultural male vs. female power dynamic? How do we work with the intersections of sexism with race, class, and sexuality for women of color, for instance? Do we imagine our students to be primarily of U.S. national origin when we engage them in questions about power, identity, and social issues? How do we understand the history of the United States and its contemporary social and political dynamics on the world stage? What relationships and interconnections can we see across experiences of oppression and what visions for liberation are possible when we begin to have a global and interconnected view of struggle?

The United States is the only country in the Americas that refers to itself as "America," whereas peoples in Mexico, Central and South Americans see themselves also as "Americans." The U.S.' hegemony in the hemisphere is exemplified by this notion of its centeredness— its claiming of "America" when it is only one part of América; this is a pervasive idea among U.S. citizens, even among progressive ones. In

the worldview of many U.S. residents and many people in the world, the United States equals America.

In general, the development of more global perspectives is an important cognitive shift for U.S.-located students in the 21st century. In my localized work as an educator, I seek to expand my students' concepts of what being "American" means. Educationally and developmentally, it is important that U.S.-based students move toward a more complete understanding of the particularities of their country of origin and/or residence in a global, cross-cultural frame. This begins with an understanding of the relationship of the United States to the rest of the Americas. Throughout this work, the language of "America," "América" or "American" will refer to the Americas as a region, and not only to the United States.

Holding the tangled and longstanding, subtle and overt workings of oppression in human life, this dissertation project holds a mirror to the Americas, its colonial formation, which was itself a profound system of power that translated into myriad forms of American specific systems and practices of oppression. The Americas are also transnational formation, sharing an interconnected legacy that connects North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean in shared patterns of power, domination, hegemony, and oppression involving race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion. It is this interlinked/ interconnected regional reality that "recasts" what America is and means for those interested in teaching for social justice.

All in all, this work takes the basis of some of the anti-racist and feminist work that is conceived of as Social Justice Education and expands that work by presenting frameworks which complicate and multiply our conceptual and knowledge base. I

propose a diasporic, critically feminist, intersectional, relational and transnational approach to teaching our students about the complex dynamics of oppression and the various kinds of potential for liberation that are found across and between individuals, groups, and nations. In so doing, I bridge a variety of "intellectual neighborhoods" that we don't often reference or rely upon in education, in order to emphasize new transnational/ macro-structural questions about power and its workings as well as meso- and micro- level applications and meaning-making processes regarding questions of social identity, structural oppression, as well as liberation and empowerment for groups and individuals. As social justice educators often teach about these very things— social identity, systemic and structural oppression, liberation and empowerment— my contribution to our work is to offer this interdisciplinary exploration to multiply the frameworks we use to do that.

My Subjectivity, My Perspective and Educational Pathways

As an educator, I am interested in engaging diverse bodies of knowledge that help students and teachers analyze and learn about oppression, and to imagine liberation, as important foundational practices in teaching and learning for social justice. My own educational pathways led me to a doctoral program in Social Justice Education, where I examined bodies of knowledge and pedagogical frameworks that would enable me to transmit complex ideas and to effectively engage students in deep exploration about social injustice and its causes and impacts. I was led to this field of study and practice in the aftermath of an undergraduate education that sent me to live and study for extended periods of time in Latin America and India, and after completing a master's degree that involved me in the study of interdisciplinary feminist and critical theory. After my

15

involvement in international and theoretical studies based on social justice knowledge, I wanted to be a better teacher of these ideas, to be able to transmit complex content in learning spaces, and to develop pedagogical frameworks that foster integrative learning. Given my international perspectives, my commitment to the educational process, and my exposure to bodies of knowledge that have sought to expose and explain social injustice, I have developed a multifaceted and a complex global view of the function of oppression and its effects on differently located peoples.

I, the writer, inhabit a particular social and epistemic location. I am Black (ancestrally Afro-North American with historic roots in the United States) and a cisgender (i.e., gender-conforming) woman. I am currently a feminist, and I was raised middle class and (Black) Protestant Christian in the mid-Atlantic. My life partner is a cisgender man which makes me largely heterosexual. I am currently able-bodied, an academically successful student, and a former instructor at a large Northeastern public university in the United States. I name my social identities in this work, as a model for how educators can begin to chart the workings of social location and social identity, which are components of teaching about the interactional realities of systemic/structural patterns of oppression and the socialization, individual-based consequences of our worlds shaped by domination and subordination. Our specific social location and social identity as educators informs our perspectives and knowledge in our teaching and learning projects.

In my work—which is inevitably shaped by my social location and standpoint— I have been engaged in projects of teaching women's and gender studies, feminist theory, and critical studies of social identity, race, racism, class, ethno-religious oppression, and

homophobia/ heterosexism to U.S.-based students. In my work of learning to teach about oppression and liberation in U.S. classrooms and other learning venues, my instincts have been to use transnational frameworks. My undergraduate experiences at Friends World College (later Friends World Program of Long Island University, now Global College of Long Island University) in the late 1980's and early 1990's provided an important opportunity in that as a U.S. citizen I had the opportunity to live outside of the United States. These extended study abroad experiences are important aspects of my work because they have inspired me to encourage my students to see the U.S. as part of a much larger world, and that the United States is only one part of American life, history, and the struggle for social justice.

My teaching approach employs the use of an integrative conversation and pedagogical methods, to transmit the complex and multilayered knowledges that I feel are needed to convey an understanding of gender, class, religious, sexual and racial oppression in the United States and simultaneously to encourage a "transnational imagination" among students. While all of the courses that I have taught focused on the dynamics of social identity group formation, histories of discrimination, social movements and consciousness that would conventionally be held as specific to the United States, I believe that there is a pressing need for U.S. students to learn to de-center and contextualize U.S. historical and socio-political concerns, and to understand that the U.S. was formed and exists in interaction with the world, with other settler colonies (Adas, 2001; Gott, 2006; Veracini, 2008, 2010, and 2013) across the globe, and in particular, is intricately connected with the rest of the Americas—the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America.

Clarifications and Delimitations

While examining and bridging the theoretical contributions of multicultural feminism, world historical sociology/the coloniality of power and African diaspora studies to the field of Social Justice Education, this work does not survey all of what can be categorized as social justice and/or multicultural education. It is premised on the conceptualization of multiculturalism as potentially polycentric (Shohat & Stam, 1994; Shohat 1997) and utilizes a world-historical frame – while focusing on a particular region, the Americas – to explore concepts about the colonial nature of oppression and the decolonial possibilities for social justice, applying these understandings to what educators can know and teach, and how they can engage learners, in their courses. Its attempt to deal with the transnational is primarily presented through an example of transnational conceptualization and teaching vis-à-vis looking at the Americas as an interconnected global region. It does not represent an in-depth analysis of the specific issues and dynamics in other regions in the world—Africa, Europe, the Middle East/West Asia, South, East and Southeast Asia, or the Pacific.

This study is bound by and located within bodies of literature associated with multicultural feminism, world historical sociology (namely, the coloniality of power political and scholarly orientation), and African Diaspora Studies to primarily foreground how the concepts of intersectionality, relationality, and transnationalism can multiply what educators understand and can implement in their teaching content and practice.

As an African-U.S. American woman living in the United States and with formative personal and educational experiences in Latin America, I have developed an eye for some of the social dynamics and dilemmas in Latin America and I attempt to

connect the U.S. with Latin America as they have been connected in my own personal life and path of study. Primarily, I focus on scholarship that situates Latin America and the U.S. with some explorations of the Caribbean. While I am mindful that Canada and Canadian scholarship are crucial components of transnational American studies, a close look at Canadian histories and dynamics is not included here. Perhaps, an emphasis on Canada would be the focus of future projects.

My primary preoccupation with interAmerican dynamics of race and gender connects to my own social identities as a Black woman with roots in the United States and connections in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further the historical connection and parallel social formation of Latin America, the United States, and the Caribbean in the Americas informs this work. My movements and experiences as a Black woman and engaging with Afrodescendants in my country of origin and in Latin America and the Caribbean influences this study. At the same time, the powerful privilege of being a part of a Black community (African-U.S. Americans) that has a high level of visibility on the world stage could present certain limitations, with respect to how I explore the realities and historical processes in the construction of Afro-Latinidades—Black communities in Latin America and the Caribbean that struggle for visibility and recognition locally, nationally, and regionally. Yet, my progressive politics, a cross-national sense of solidarity, and my recognition of the limitations and possibilities of my own Black feminist diasporic location in the U.S. inform my work as an educator. Moreover, I intend for this work to inspire other educators, and to attempt to push the bounds of unicentricity (Davies, 1999) while encouraging social justice educators to consider and to employ a teaching practice that engages transnationally and relationally. Educators who hold the

reality of the intersections of oppressive systems and their impacts on individuals, groups, and regions, become more grounded in progressive social justice educational praxis.

This study recognizes that shared patterns across the Americas can be charted, yet nation- and geographically-specific studies are needed to fully reveal the character of questions of race, identity, gender, oppression, etc. in specific contexts. This work holds an overarching picture of similarities across the Americas, yet it does not mean to claim that social dynamics, hierarchies, and systems are the same in every place and space across the Americas. Instead, this work should be held as a toolkit or blueprint for educators who want to expand their grasp of oppression beyond the United States to include other parts of the Americas. Further study and emphasis on country-specific details would be a next step in the vein of this project.

On Language

As previously discussed, this endeavor recasts "America" and regionalizes this concept. In addition, the words "Afrodescendant/Afrodescendiente/Afrodescendencia", "Afro", "Afro-American" and "Black" are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this work. This is intentional, even as this dissertation describes divergent and competing racial imaginaries between the United States and Latin America that designate some Afrodescendants as "black/negro" while others, notably those that are visibly bi- or multiracial, choose and live within racial-color categorizations other than "black". This work assumes "Black" as a political terminology given this work's anti-racist purpose in holding "a larger context where competing discourses exist" (Caldwell, 2007, p. 113). In Kia Lilly Caldwell's work on black women in Brazil (2007), her fieldwork led her to speak with Afrodesdendant women who— as part of Brazil's ongoing civil rights

movements and within their own shifting identity-based consciousness about matters of race and color— noted that "being negro/negra is not just about skin color, nor is it an issue of 'pure' racial ancestry; instead, it primarily based on an acceptance of blackness" (p. 115), i.e., being of African descent. I hold the large sociopolitical context of transnational African Diaspora Studies and its work on transnational linkages, pride in African heritage, and challenges to varying racial hegemonies that disadvantage Afrodescendants while simultaneously distancing them from consciousness about the source of discrimination in their lives— anti-black racism and valorization of Europeanness/whiteness— and I have chosen to blur the lines in my use of language. In addition, wherever I quote authors in the original Spanish, the English translations are my own.

Description of Chapters

Chapter two, "Colonialism and Its Power" discusses key processes in the development of colonialism across the Americas, focusing on the shared features of the colonial process in Latin America, parts of the Caribbean, and the United States. It explains the coloniality of power concept, white settler-colonialism, the social construction of identities in the process of America-making, the construction of "race" through statutory and customary law, ideology, and practice, and the creation of "Black"/Afro-descendant communities across the Americas.

Chapter three, "Transnational Visions: InterAmericanity, Diaspora, and Black Presences" discusses the significance of globalization and of transnational frameworks, and particularly, the idea of "interAmericanity" that links the United States with the rest of the Americas. The African diaspora is explored as a community with shared

experiences across borders. This chapter also explores the formation of Afrodescendencia as a subordinate racial identity along with shared patterns of racism across the Americas. It also briefly explores the significance of Black presences in the hemisphere beyond the limits of "race." Looking to Cuba, Brazil, and the United States, this chapter explores shared and differential patterns in the development of anti-Black racism through historical and contemporary lensses.

Chapter four, "Interlocking Systems of Oppression" engages the theory of intersectionality offered by feminists of color writing across various locations. It seeks to illuminate the applicability of this theory to the practice of social justice teaching and to conceptualizations of oppression. This chapter foregrounds examples from the U.S. and Latin America regarding the predicaments of Afrodescendant women, and it offers educators a transnational exploration of the phenomenon of interlocking oppressions. It presents how transnational work from this standpoint along with the theory of coloniality of power can assist and complement teaching frameworks that address the complexity of oppression in the Americas.

Chapter five, "Bridges and Coalitional Thinking: The Significance of Interdisciplinary Conceptual Frameworks for educators" provides a summary of the three previous conceptual chapters, and discusses the significance of the conceptual frameworks to the transnational, cosmopolitan modes of inquiry and exploration that I offer to social justice educators.

Chapter six, "Elaboration of Social Justice Education from a Transnational Perspective of the Americas" explores some of the key concepts in Social Justice Education teaching through the lenses of oppression and liberation. It looks to the

multifaceted dynamics of oppression, explores socio-structural matters in the formation of social identities, and reviews the theory of post-positive realism (S. Mohanty, 2000; Moya, 2000). in understanding the construction of social identities. The salience of history and historical legacies, and general dynamics of privilege and subordination are analyzed in this chapter. By utilizing a groundwork of core texts in Social Justice Education from my training, this chapter emphasizes the importance of theories of power and oppression, and how some of concepts apply to systems and dynamics of oppression across the Americas.

Chapter seven, "Transnational, Relational Teaching And Transformative Learning In Social Justice Education" applies the conceptual analyses of transnationality, intersectionality and diaspora as frameworks for teaching in the vein of Social Justice Education. Exploring examples of Social Justice Education, critical pedagogy and the practices of naming systemic oppression along with the development of social identities, this chapter imagines and poses possibilities and makes the connections apparent for use in classrooms and with students who inhabit intersectional social identities, framed within the world-historical perspectives put forward in this work overall.

Chapter eight, "Going Further: Implications" concludes the study by charting implications for curriculum development, educational practice, and for the praxis of healing and liberation which is the ultimate goal of teaching for social justice.

Conclusion
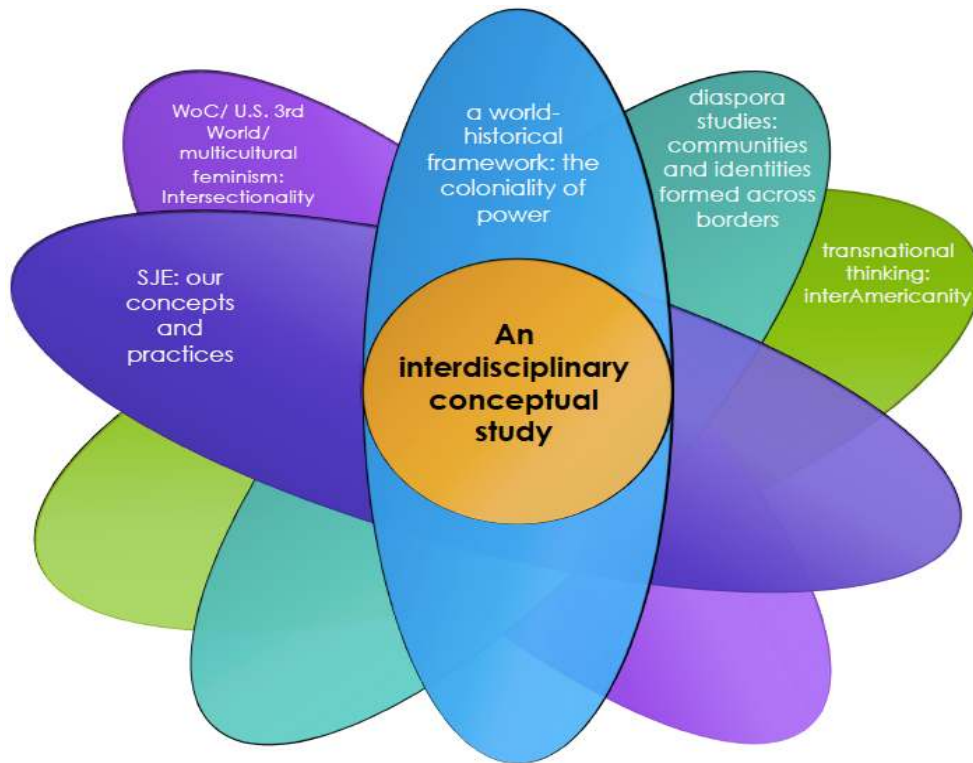
Figure 1. Venn diagram demonstrating a multi-scholar, interdisciplinary methodology

As illustrated in the above figure, what this dissertation offers the field of Social Justice Education and to educators and scholars generally, is the idea of the *interconnectedness* of the world and regions within it, of systems of oppression and their impacts, of social identities and their formation, along with multiple bodies of knowledge involved in developing transnational conceptual frameworks for Social Justice Education.

Personally and intellectually, I find meaning within schools of thought labeled as "postcolonial studies," "diaspora studies," "cultural studies," "women of color/U.S. Third World feminism," and "transnational/multicultural feminism." These interdisciplinary knowledges have come from particular social and hence epistemic locations, and are put forward by justice-interested scholars whose work in mapping and deconstructing the

workings of social power, and histories of racial, class and gender oppression have offered educators a wealth of insights that are useful in our social justice teaching and activism. This dissertation, with its literature reviews and historical analyses to highlight conceptual frameworks, is based on the premise that theories and conceptualizations from a range of fields can be utilized effectively by social justice educators and scholars, both to inform our own study and preparation for teaching and research, and to expand our content knowledge and teaching approaches and materials.

As I offer this conceptual/theoretical project to social justice educators, I would hopefully inspire my colleagues the work with knowledge produced from the inhabitants of varied 'intellectual neighborhoods' and to borrow from the conceptual structure of this project that relies on a multi-scholar methodology. This work draws from multiple knowledges gained from sociology, history, cultural studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, critical theory, education and feminist studies in order to demonstrate the interdisciplinary salience and application of transnational, multicultural feminist/intersectional, and relational frameworks for thinking and teaching. Working with macro-historical and macro-structural frameworks to explain the dilemmas and analyses that social justice educators often work with – histories of inequality, systems of oppression, and the formation of social identity – I engage with the intersections of various scholary perspectives. In doing this work, I hopefully, in the words of feminist theories Chela Sandoval (2000), discourage "intellectual apartheid" and foster a "coalitional consciousness" among educators and scholars across disciplines.

In the chapters that follow, analyses of history, the transnational African diaspora, the social construction of race in various parts of the Americas, the significance of

intersectionality explored through the lives of Afrodescendant women, along with the frameworks and pedagogical models used in Social Justice Education are presented. This work in itself is a meeting of many fields of scholarship to elaborate conceptual frameworks that are useful for educating for critical consciousness (Freire), to share the truth of social histories and dynamics with our students such that they are well-informed and responsibly educated in understanding the historical legacies that have shaped the Americas and the contemporary patterns of inequity that persist and shape our lives. This engagement in a conversation with scholars of colonialism and the coloniality of power, of multicultural feminism/U.S. Third World-women of color feminism/transnational feminism, diaspora studies and its work across the Americas, along with the formulations and practices that already exist and are continually expanded upon in the field of Social Justice Education. In sharing this conversation through the parameters of this study and its conceptualizations, I affirm the possibility for more inquiry across fields and frameworks, more global and regional conversations, and more intersectional analyses in our teaching and learning work. Beginning with a history of American colonialism is a ground-setting task in this larger educational project.

CHAPTER 2

COLONIALISM AND ITS POWER

Introduction

Historical analysis is a crucial part of understanding society; a long view helps us to make sense of how to make meaning of our present-day reality. Since the claiming and the establishment of the Americas originally by European powers starting in the 15th century, the varied trajectories and experiences of cultures, nations, communities, and individuals have been fraught and unequal up to the present moment. Throughout this study, I emphasize the legacy of colonialism that is specific to the Americas as an overarching framework from which to theorize the nature of American forms of inequality and domination. Colonialism was a root cause of the development of intricate and pervasive systems of unequal power, and sustained systems of oppression flowing from the colonial epoch are evident in contemporary social patterns of hegemony and domination. Scholars and activists have given names to the various forces of oppression shared across the Americas: for instance, "racism," "sexism," "classism." These are often held in a localized and nation-specific manner. However, an understanding of transnational American histories offers a view into the religious, ideological, economic, legal, and practical work engendered in colonial processes that inform our contemporary grappling with race, gender, class and other systems of oppression and domination.

Scholars across disciplines work with various frameworks to explain dynamics of oppression, and some of those have been influential here. At the core of this work is a macro-, global-structural view that systems of oppression such as the racism, classism, and sexism we know in present-day have roots in historical processes which can be more

27

fully described as "colonial-modern" (Dirlik, 2005; Quijano, 2007). Our contemporary systems of inequality began to be put in motion with European colonial encounters, conquests, and subjugation in the Americas. A close look at colonialism, colonial processes, and what a group of contemporary scholars calls "the coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000a, 2000b, 2007, 2008; Grosfoguel 2006 and 2011; Lao-Montes, 2006; Lugones, 2007; Mignolo, 2000 and 2008) adds depth to our understanding of dynamics of oppression and injustice that shape social reality across the region, utilizes a radical (i.e., going to the root of matters) approach, and allows for a transnationalist kind of thinking about shared patterns of power and domination that are characteristic of the Americas.

The Americas were/are alternatively referred to as "the New World." This notion of a "new world" reality is useful, as it indicates the historic significance of the social, cultural, political, and economic establishment and formation of a Euro-dominated Americas. During the periods of encounter and conquest, however, the naming of a "new world" was meant to describe what Europeans deemed as a new, unclassified space previously unknown to them. The idea of a "new world" was ironically disputed by Amerigo Vespucci— the Italian explorer for whom the Americas were named— who recognized that the lands newly encountered by Europeans, were fully inhabited. Yet still the idea of their "newness" prevailed in the initial encounters (Rivera, 1992).

While the "old [European known] worlds" of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean and the Pacific had been configured socially and transnationally in particular ways, the "new world" from the 15th century on evolved in ways that were historically unique and consequential for all who would inhabit American lands.

"Columbus's voyage did not mark the discovery of a New World, but its creation" (Mann, 2011, p. xxiv), and the "new world" included "old" and wholly new forms of interaction and modes of power. Sociologist Anibal Quijano (2008) notes that "America was constituted as the first space/time of a new model of power of global vocation, and both in this way and by it became the first identity of modernity" (p. 182). What was "new" in European colonialism of the Americas and its subsequent colonization of much of the planet was "its planetary reach, its affiliation with global institutional power," (Shohat and Stam, 1994, p. 15) and its consequences for inequality and oppression in past and present worlds.

In this chapter, I discuss key social processes that were the result of European conquest and colonization of the Americas. This discussion focuses on shared dynamics of colonial process in Latin America, parts of the Caribbean, and the United States. It rests on the analytical framework of the coloniality of power offered by several scholars, foregrounds the phenomenon of white settler-colonialism, the historical-social construction of "race" as system of colonial social classification, along with the similar experiences of "Black"/Afro-descendant communities across the Americas. This chapter provides a historical overview, framed conceptually through arguments that show how the Americas have a shared colonial legacy that involved at least five distinct dynamics: 1) the conquest of indigenous peoples; 2) the enslavement of Africans; 3) the imposition of Christianity and; 4) the establishment of white domination through processes of social classification, labor and economics, and law. The core assertion is that colonialism began a continuous process that structures present-day race relations and patterns of identity-based oppression.

World-Historical/Colonial-Modern New World Systems

Many thinkers, particularly those in the United States' mainstream, tend to conceptualize in nation-specific ways. This work posits, however, that the United States is one particular social space in the constellation of the Americas overall. Its formation alongside that of what is now known as Latin America, Canada, and the Caribbean occurred within an interAmerican (Saldívar, 1991, 2003, 2011) and world-historical framework beginning with Columbus's initial encounter (on behalf of Spain and eventually much of Western and Southern Europe) with what we now know as the Bahamas. Flowing from the "discovery" of the Americas was a continuous influx of European explorers, conquistadors, and settlers that first and fundamentally transformed the realities of the indigenous peoples who had long populated what is now known as America (Galeano, 1973; Rivera, 1992; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Takaki, 1994; R. Wright, 2005; Zinn, 2003) The United States is one particular story, and its history is interlocking with the multiple stories in the formation of the Americas, in the global-transnational historical phenomenon of America-making.

With the encounter and conquest of the Americas, a global system began to emerge that positioned Europe and Euro-derived lives, imaginaries, and forms of knowledge as privileged and dominant on the world stage (Quijano, 2000a&b and 2008). Europe, in the 15th century was replete with formations of territories, kingdoms, ethnicities and eventually interlocking nations in the region which are roughly understood as continental Europe. New models of global power derived from the European drive to generate wealth, to branch out from their own realities and to spread their own religious and cultural ontology (Galeano, 1973; Quijano, 2008; R. Wright,

30

2005). What began to evolve and to be established were new notions of peoplehood, roughly coded in an emerging imaginary of continentalism (i.e., the European naming and imagined homogeneity of "Africa", "Asia", "America", etc.), of new imaginaries of race-ethnicity and eventually systems of local and regional racial classification that would position Europeans (later, "white") in hierarchical control of "Other," non-European (later, non-"white") peoples. European colonial dominance structured the emergence of local and global capitalism that would degrade old economies and shape new systems of labor and means of production across nations and contexts. The cultural centrism and European ethnocentric domination would shape social relations in "new" and "old" worlds (Grosfoguel, 2006; Quijano, 2000a&b and 2008; Shohat & Stam, 1994). As such, a pervasive "modern world-system . . . began to form with the colonization of America" (Quijano, 2008 p. 193) and "[w]ith America an entire universe of new material relations . . . was initiated" (Quijano, 2008, p. 195). As historian Luis Rivera (1992) makes clear, "[w]hat started as an encounter between different human groups soon turned into a relation of oppressor and oppressed," (p. 18).

European claiming and settlement of the Americas set the stage for a particular kind of dominating engagement— "a new global colonial power matrix" (Grosfoguel, 2006, p. 172)— with nearly the entire world. Subsequent colonial projects impacted much of Africa, Asia (including West Asia/"the Middle East") and Oceania. Some of these colonial projects included settler colonial-national formations (e.g., all of the Hispanic Caribbean, some of the Anglo- and Dutch-Caribbean, much of South, Central and North America, Australia, New Zealand and Southern Africa) and various other kinds of exploitation-colonialism across the globe. Colonialism and its legacy are still

seen today at the macro-global level, with a profound unequal distribution of wealth

within and between nations, a pattern of wealth in most formerly colonizing countries

and in many of their settler colonies, and a pattern of impoverishment in formerly

colonized regions of the world. Hence, this fundamental, global inequality is a starting

point upon which to theorize the historical formations pertinent to the Americas, with

colonialism and *the coloniality of power* as foundational conceptualizations for

understanding the workings of past and present systems of oppression.

The System: A Colonial Heritage

Colonialism is always about domination. It is "always, everywhere, and above all,

violent," (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010, p. 60). Colonizers bring a profound ego- and

ethno-centrism to worlds that they take over, and they create intricate, violent systems of

hierarchy that privilege certain groups and individuals and profoundly oppress others.

The colonization of the Americas followed these characteristics. Colonialism in the

Americas was a project of genocide and suppression of communities of indigenous

peoples representing many different languages and cultures, it established exploitative,

capitalist systems of labor and economy, it involved a massive extraction of Africans

from their homelands who were subject to profound human cruelty and enslavement in

the establishment of profit-making industries, it involved the creation of multiple

diasporas amidst white settlement, it created unprecedented environmental degradation, it

established European-derived forms of patriarchy that positioned women (and non-

masculine people generally) in extricate and precarious ways, it imposed Christianity

and other European-derived cultural forms (including Judeo-Christian notions of gender

relations), and it contributed to the formation of what was and what is now a profoundly

unjust, hierarchical social system structured around lines of race-ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. Colonialism "entailed . . . submission of the earth, control over nature . . . and a tragic sense of life" (Salinas, 1992, p. 525), along with profoundly reshaped cultural, social, and political landscapes replete with European-derived influences and problems.

Colonial-Christian Ideology and Practice

Despite the stock stories/hegemonic narratives of colonizers as "noble adventurer[s]" and "noble pioneer[s]" (Memmi, 1991, p. 3), in actuality "[c]olonialism is ethnocentrism armed, institutionalized, and gone global" (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 16). Flowing from the strife and complexity of Europe in the 15th century, explorers, conquerors, and settlers from Spain, Portugal, and later Britain, France, and the Netherlands came to dominate the lands and peoples of the Americas; they made significant world-historical impact on Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

Europe's own internal strife involved the initial economic dependence and later colonial predominance of Spain and Portugal, Europe's radical transformation from feudalism to mercantilism, and the movements through the medieval period into what historians have called the later Renaissance (Stein & Stein, 1970). The eventual consolidation of Western European interpretations of Christianity as a worldview and pervasive ontological force— culminating in Spain with the expulsion of Jews and Muslims in 1492 and the entrenchment of Catholicism and Protestantism across Europe— was a profoundly motivating structure and mentality for the colonial process in the Americas (Fredrickson, 2002; Galeano, 1973; Rivera, 1992; Stein & Stein, 1970; Takaki, 1993; R. Wright, 2005). Within Europe, a kind of "religious and moral

conformity were being demanded" (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 25) along with persecution of

Jews, slavs, and those in Christian worlds who were purported to be witches and heretics

(Federici, 2004). Once the encounter with indigenous peoples in the Americas became

known in Europe, beliefs emerged that non-Christian "'monstrous races' or subhuman

'wild men' inhabited the fringes of the known world" (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 35). A

particular popular "read" on Christianity in its most polarizing interpretations was a

profound ontological fact of European civilization, an impactful form of knowledge, and

a solipsistic sense of self, purpose, and destiny. These specific cultural ideas and

perceptions were brought to the Americas and were characteristic of the colonizing

mission overall.

In fifteenth century Western and Northern Europe, Christianity, flowing from the

Judeo monotheistic tradition, had factored, as described by philosopher Aimé Césaire

(2000), "an [equation] *Christianity = civilization, paganism = savagery* from which there

could not but ensue . . . colonialist and racist consequences" (p. 33). Christian thought

held a binary understanding of the world, its inhabitants, and its workings: good and evil;

man and woman; black and white; heaven and hell; God and the devil; wild and civilized,

etc., "a complete cosmology" (Donovan, 1994). This particular imaginary was projected

inward and outward. Flowing from these ways of thinking and knowing, eventually land

masses, bodies of water, peoples, animals and plants would be classified, categorized and

subjugated. Worth and value would be attributed according to similarity or non-similarity

with what was familiar to European Christians. Notions of private land ownership, a

tolerance for hierarchical and unequal social relations (in terms of class, gender, and

eventually race), and the right to individualist entrepreneurship, claiming of resources,

and profit-making were consolidating themselves in European Christian society and were

brought to the Americas. The European Christianities that were brought to the Americas

represented "the worship of a peculiar messianic providentialism" (Rivera, 1992, p. xv)

that shaped the "new world" and fundamentally transformed indigenous societies.

A hybrid of Christian-capitalist ideology and an emerging Western philosophical

tradition contributed to colonial projects and to the systems, philosophies, and outlooks

which influenced European dealings in and outside of Europe. Combined with the Bible,

Church hierarchies and doctrine, and the colonists' assuredness in profit-making and

capitalism, ". . . Europeans sailed out into the world armed with knowledge from the

ancients, above all Aristotle: with a long tradition of exotic European travel literature

filled with strange people, fantastic geography, and mythic creatures . . . " (Donovan,

1994, p. 11). Some of peoples first impacted by the European imaginaries were those

indigenous to what would later be called the Americas. In America-making, "European

culture was delineating the border, the hierarchical division between civilization and

wildness," (Takaki, 1994, p. 31). The notion of civilization, for many Europeans involved

in colonizing endeavors, involved "the repression of . . . instinctual forces of human

nature" and the valorization of mind over body (Takaki, 1994, p. 32).

The native peoples that Europeans encountered in the Americas were initially

deemed to be "wild." They were upon encounter non-Christian, their social systems and

economic logics differed profoundly from Europeans. They were in fact, vastly diverse

peoples, some of whom lived in highly structured and stratified social systems, many of

whom organized their lives around collectivist cultures. The Aztecs were urban dwellers

and warriors. The Maya were city-state dwellers, having survived the fall of their own

great, urbanized civilization. The Inca were hylotheistic, recognizing the divine in all things. The Cherokee were town-dwellers, with organized systems of agriculture and resource-sharing. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) were confederated, matrilineal peoples whose women enjoyed political power and voice. The Powhatan and the Wampanoag were agriculturalists with worldviews invested upon the movement of the seasons of harvest. The Abenakis were hunters and gatherers who lived close to the land and depended upon its abundance (Takaki, 1994; R. Wright, 2005; Allen, 1992; Wagner, 2011). As diverse as they were, the cultural and spiritual practices of indigenous peoples in the Americas were deemed to be foreign, "savage," and threatening to European explorers and settlers. Indigenous spirituality and cosmology— including shamanism, polytheism, reverence of nature, and hylotheism— Native notions of the divine and of spirit, and the societies that lived according to these ways of being and knowing would be irrevocably transformed, and in many cases destroyed, by the European colonial project whose clashing ways of being/conflicting ontologies were combined with the overwhelming power of disease, weaponry and conquest. In the eyes of Europeans, "America was the vast kingdom of the Devil, its redemption impossible or doubtful" (Galeano, 1973, p. 24), yet its potential for European settlement and enterprise was held as immensely possible and rightful.

It is important to say that Christianity, as in any religious practice and ideology, was and is inherently contradictory. The particular brands of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism that flowed from the European experience were situated, as with all religious outlooks and beliefs, within their own social and cultural milieu. Insomuch as Christianity was becoming a world religion through colonialism and general missionary

work/proselytizing, in Europe and the Americas it functioned as a "folk epistemology" (Stoler, 2008), orienting its adherents to a sense of their own rightness, interpreting their actions as divinely sanctioned and supported. While many European Christian colonists and settlers who came to the Americas were convinced of the righteousness of their religious traditions and were convinced of the inferiority other non-Christian religious and spiritual practices, the Christian tradition also contained within it some tendencies of humanism and altruism[1]. However, in the periods of colonialism, Christianity was most often used to support and justify the colonial project (Rivera, 1992; Spring, 2013), to subdue indigenous communities, involving a spectrum of outright demonization of Native peoples to a patronizing project of conversion and cultural suppression of indigenous ways of knowing and being.

For the most part, European Christian logics, with their binaries, their sense of certainty, and their proselytizing, provided a kind of "lived epistemic space " (Stoler, 2008) of the colonial process, serving to justify European actions of plunder, exploitation and settlement in the New World. It was less the various interpretations and personal spiritual practices of Christianity, and more the systemic and cultural nature of Medieval and Renaissance Catholicism, Protestantism and other West/Northern European Christian forms which fueled a hierarchical, ideological system and that were trafficked in the Americas with dire consequences. The colonial era "combined propagation of the

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[1] Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican friar who lived in various parts of the Americas during the periods of conquest and colonization, was an example of a church official who witnessed the slaughter and violent oppression of indigenous peoples in the Americas. Las Casas is cited as having compassion for the suffering that indigenous people experienced and for advocating on their behalf. Even las Casas' compassionate stance, however, was complicated by his advocacy for the Christian conversion of Native peoples, for agricultural colonization (Rivera, 1992), and of the advance of the African slave trade to alleviate the suffering of indigenous peoples. Las Casas later recanted and also spoke against the brutality of slavery in the colonial project (1994).

Christian faith with usurpation and plunder of native wealth" (Galeano, 1973, p. 24).

Capitalism and European colonial Christianity were rarely in contradiction (Craig, 1997;

Fritz, 2014; Galeano, 1973; Rivera, 1992; Salinas, 1992; Whitford, 2010). Christian

ideology carried many logics that supported the colonial capitalist project.

Accompanying the culturally and historically expressed importation of

Christianity into the Americas was the ideology and practice of extraction, forced labor

and hoarded profit that had evolved from European feudalism, to primitive accumulation

that would eventually lead to global and transnational capitalism (Federici, 2004). The

accumulation of private wealth, the value of private land ownership, and the tolerance for

and encouragement of exploited and forced labor were foundational in the worldview of

colonizing Europeans (Rivera, 1992). In Latin America, the Spanish focused on mining

gold and silver, and like the English in North America, on agriculture and cash crops.

Mining required forced Native labor and the forced paying of tribute, and

agriculture/*latifundium*, "[t]he landed estate oriented toward export" (Stein & Stein,

1970, p. 39) which emerged – sugar, tobacco, cotton, rice, indigo, etc.— and would result

in the massive forced and cruel importation of Africans as slaves to the Americas

(Galeano, 1973; Stein & Stein, 1970; Takaki, 1994; R. Wright, 2005).

Latin America's colonial systems of *encomienda*— forced labor, relocation and

the paying of tribute by indigenous communities— along with the eventual move across

the Americas to cash cropping and enslavement were products of a mentality of wealth-

generation and private ownership that served the few to the detriment of the many. In

comparison, in the 19th century U.S. West among the Oceti Sakowin (known as Dakota

and Lakota peoples, and in the French, *Sioux*), Protestantism informed another parallel

38

"Christian colonial project" (Craig, 1997), where usurpation of Native land for expansion, profit and settlement, evangelism, Indian removal onto reservations, along with disregard for and destruction of Native economies, spiritualities, and communal use of land were characteristic.

Colonialism across the Americas included cultural and actual devastation for the indigenous peoples the Europeans encountered. By 1550 indigenous peoples in the Caribbean had been annihilated (Galeano, 1973; Stein & Stein, 1970; Zinn, 2003). By the late 19th century across the Americas, indigenous peoples had been subdued, subjugated, depopulated, stripped of their land, in many instances massacred, and in struggle to preserve their cultures. Christianity and capitalism flowed from the cultural logics of Europe and were stridently imported and practiced in the Americas as part and parcel of the imperial project. European evangelizing, disrespect for Native (and African) cultures and ways of life, land theft and usurpation of resources had cultural consequences for all who would be victims of colonialism and its power. For

> [c]olonialism has never been disinterested even on a cultural level . . . Colonialism exalted European culture and defamed indigenous culture. The religions of the colonized were institutionally denounced as superstition and 'devil-worship.' . . . Colonialist institutions attempted to denude peoples of the richly textured cultural attributes that shaped community identity and belonging, leaving a legacy of both trauma and resistance. (Shohat & Stam, 1994, pp. 16-17).

Across the Americas, the colonial themes are echoed. European religious and economic worldviews, held in the highest esteem and with a steadfast notion of European civilizational superiority, informed the colonial practices of cultural imperialism, individualist ideas of rights, use, and ownership of land, reorganization of economies, land grabbing and Indian removal, and the violent disenfranchisement and labor

exploitation of whole populations. Colonialism involved the violent "remolding of a communal society along individualistic, profit-oriented lines . . . " (Stein & Stein, 1970, p. 37) in every part of the Americas. A drive and lust for money, control and power, enacted invariable human suffering, and the establishment of pervasive, hemispheric patterns of domination.

Slavery and Black Labor as Distinctly Colonial

Upon the encounter with Europeans, the indigenous experience in the Americas was certainly and clearly an impactful and devastating one. The colonial process was very clear in terms of invasion, takeover and the radical transformations that occurred among the peoples who had ancestral ties and long histories living in what would be called the Americas. Initially, Europeans enslaved Native peoples and created systems of international trade in Indian slaves. For the colonists, there was some success in this initial endeavor, yet the experience of forced labor was a complicated one involving indigenous people. Native peoples were impacted profoundly by European disease, their familiarity with the land and landscape made escape, non-cooperation and resistance possible, and the increasingly diminishing numbers of indigenous people in the wake of European arrival inspired the colonialists to turn to the importation of enslaved Africans as laborers (Galeano, 1973; Holt, 1999; Mann, 2011; Stein & Stein, 1970; Takaki, 1994).

The experience of Africans in the Americas was markedly different from that of Native peoples. The historical dynamic of the dislocation of Africans from their ancestral lands to be abused and refashioned in the Americas was one that was historically unique and unprecedented. Both phenomena— the conquest and subjugation of peoples in their own ancestral space, and the dislocation of peoples from their original ancestral space on

another continent to become inhabitants in the Americas— were central in the colonial project. American colonial systems harnessed an "inexorable power of the slave system, the power of the social processes it inevitably [set] in motion, that shaped a *common destiny* [sic] for the Americas," (Holt, 1999, p. 40). In other words, as much as colonialism involved conquest and plunder, American colonialism also equaled slavery. As Shohat and Stam argued, "only with colonialism and capitalism did slavery become modern, industrialized, tied to a mode of economic production and to a systematic ideology of racial superiority" (1994, p. 78).

For the most part "the history of Africans in the Americas began in colonial Latin America," (Landers, 2006a, p. 1), and the presence of *ladino*— African-descendant— laborers/slaves in Spain pre-encounter is arguably the beginning of the colonial relationship of Africans to the Americas. Some Africans, already acclimated to Iberia and its religious and cultural milieu, traveled with explorers and conquistadors to the Americas (Landers, 2006a; Rivera, 1992). What follows the experiences of those first acculturated Africans was the process and practices of the massive enslavement of Africans imported more directly from the continent of Africa. This mass deportation/forced immigration of Africans shaped the formation of the entire region of the Americas.

In Iberian America, Africans were brought starting in the early 1500's to work in sugar and mining. The first Africans were brought to Virginia, in what would become the United States, in 1619 to work in tobacco. Africans were "the slaves of choice" (Guitar, 2006) for European colonists, as they "had proven to be good workers on the ingenios [sugar mills] established by the Portuguese and Spaniards on the Atlantic islands off the

West Coast of Africa" (Guitar, 2006, p. 46). "[S]lave-trading powers simultaneously

patronized different parts of Africa" (Curtin, 1969, p. 125) with Africans being brought

from West and West-Central African regions, along with some exported from East-

Central African regions such as Upper Guinea, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, northern

Zambia, Angola and eastern Congo, representing multiple ethnic and language groups.

(Curtin, 1969; Lovejoy, 2008 and 2005; Klein & Vinson, 2007; Manning, 2010; Rodney,

1982). The Atlantic slave trade, the Middle Passage and other horrific experiences of the

captured and forcibly imported Africans was key in the making of the Americas. Along

with noting the impact of the slave trade in the Americas, some thinkers like historian

Walter Rodney (1982) held that the drain of so many from the African continent set the

stage for more extensive European colonial projects there as well as for the poverty and

"underdevelopment" found in many parts of Africa today.

Slavery was central to the development of colonial economies and colonial

relations. The enslavement of Africans as laborers in profit-industries was found in nearly

every part of the Americas, in Iberian Mexico, Central and South America, the French,

Dutch, Spanish and the Anglo Caribbean, and in the Spanish, British, Dutch, and French

colonies of North America (which would become the United States). African slaves en

route to and in the Americas were regarded simultaneously as laborers who produced

trade-able commodities and were themselves regarded as goods/commodities to be

bought and sold for profit. In the Americas, "[c]olonial-style slavery trafficked in a

racialized terror, displaying the logic of commodification in stark and hyperbolic form"

(Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 78). Accompanying European Christian, capitalist, and

conquering ideologies and practices, "slavery became deeply embedded in the entire

structure of [American societies] profoundly affecting its institutions, values, and psychology," (Hoetink & Sio, 1979, p. 270).

White Settler Colonialism in the Americas

European colonialism as a global and world-historical phenomenon came in several forms. Scholars who work on the specificity of settler colonialism discuss its unique characteristics, and notable scholar Lorenzo Veracini (2010) regards "settler colonialism as distinct from colonialism" (p. 2). Veracini discusses how "historiographies have traditionally acknowledged the distinction between colonies of settlement and colonies of exploitation and between 'internal' and 'external' colonialisms" (2010, p. 6). For my purposes, I regard European settler colonialism as having distinct features, yet not necessarily wholly separate from other European forms of colonial domination.

Looking at the regional similarities across the Americas, the focus on *settler colonialism* is an important analytical turn. Shared characteristics in the formation of the Americas include the oppression of indigenous peoples and the forced importation of Africans who served as a captive class of laborers and were themselves regarded as property. Conquest of the Americas eventually involved settlement and establishment of French-, Dutch-, British- and Iberian-derived forms of culture, ideology, and religion. European owners of the means of colonial production (plantations, mines, land, etc.) and Europeans who were free laborers[2] *came to stay and would not return* to Europe; they

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[2] In the United States, most European laborers came initially as indentured servants. Europe's overpopulation and diminishing resources to meet the needs of the poor resulted in a system where workers came to America as servants laboring for a particular amount of time and to later be free to make their way in the settler colonial experiment. A number of scholars have noted that the conditions of indentured servitude mirrored those of Africans who in the North American colonies were not at the onset considered slaves; there is evidence that the first Africans in Virginia were regarded as indentured servants. A series of laws, occurrences, and ideological work delineated a system of Black slavery vs. white servitude and established the meaning of freedom based upon ideas about racial superiority and inferiority (Battalora, 2013; Herbes-Sommers, 2003; Painter, 2010; Walker, Jones & Bell, 2000).

claimed "sovereign entitlement" (Veracini, 2010). In the Americas, conquerors, settlers, and profiteers made a new world fueled by the settler-colonial impulse, creating a unique world-historical social landscape along with regional and (eventually) national identities crafted around the practices of settler domination and hegemony. In my view, much of Central and South America, significant parts of the Caribbean, and North America are quintessential "settler projects" (Veracini, 2008, 2010 and 2013). The Americas are a case that illuminates "a broader history of settler colonization within an even broader history of global colonialism" (Hixson, 2013, p. ix).

In the Americas, the histories of the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica eventually established those nations as "white"-majority settler colonial states. Other countries such as Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela developed a "white"-minority type of settler colonial impulse. Similar to Anglo America, in Iberian America, a "white" elite, descended from Portuguese and Spanish creoles/*criollos* and other European immigrants, controlled these countries economically, culturally, and politically, privileging "whiteness" in their increasingly racialized social imaginary, even in parts of the region where there was a large or significant presence of indigenous, African, and "mixed" peoples (Gott, 2007). Therefore, settler colonialism in the Americas, involved a range of "white"-majority and "white"-minority dynamics of domination. "The white settlers of Latin America were unique in oppressing two different groups within their territory: they seized the land of the indigenous peoples, and they appropriated the labour [sic] of the black slaves that they had imported" (Gott, 2007, p. 271). European settler colonialism across the Americas, thus, shared features specific to its overall new world context and historical

44

dynamics, enacting genocide and suppression of indigenous communities to make way for European-derived lifestyles and communities, alongside the violence of enslavement and oppression of Africans, to fuel economies that provided wealth and trade opportunities for European elites who decided to settle in the Americas. Over time, the evolution and consolidation of "race" as an imaginary, ideology, and hierarchical system would embed the cultural, aesthetic, social, and political mechanisms that privileged European settlers and the phenomenon of "whiteness" across the region.

The subordinate and dominated status of non-whites flowed from an imaginary of European superiority, dominance and claimed entitlement that was foundational to the construction of "race" in the Americas. Latin America and North America share a historical legacy as white settler societies (Gott, 2007). This distinct naming provides conceptual insight for understanding the shared colonial heritage of the Americas, and the structural positionality of indigenous, African, Euro-descendant, and "mixed 'race'" peoples across the Americas.

Historically informed scholars and educators in the United States often grapple with the facts of providential Christian expansionism, settler imperatives, and the racist oppression of African-descendants and American Indians. Latin America's parallel historical and social processes are not often evaluated on similar terms. While the "... white population of Latin America is not usually described as 'white settler', Latin America should not be seen as ... conveniently set apart ... but should be included in the general history of the global expansion of white settler populations ..." (Gott, 2007, pp. 269-270). White settler colonialism in Latin America eventually resulted in "racialist ideas common among the settlers elsewhere in Europe's colonial world" and that "[t]he

racist outlook of these Euro-centric elites in Latin America led to the downgrading and non-recognition of the Black population, and, in many countries, to the physical extermination of the indigenous peoples" (Gott, 2007, p. 276). Settler colonialism, its "white" supremacy, its Eurocentrism and patriarchy, and its capitalist projects across the Americas were *the* shared paradigms in the making of a so-called "new world."

The Coloniality of Power in the Americas

The conquest and settlement of the Americas was established over four centuries, involving various encounters, genocidal projects, fluctuating waves in the importation of enslaved Africans, nation-making, economic shifts, expansion and conflict from the 15th century until the late 19th century. Thus, "[t]he encounter between Europeans and the inhabitants of the new found lands was in reality an exercise of extreme power," (Rivera, 1992, p. 7). Colonial practices and systems of oppression, however, did not end with a revolutionary war establishing the United States as a British-derived settler nation independent from England, nor did they end with the abolition of slavery in 1865. Colonialism did not stop with the independence of Latin America from Spain and Portugal and the abolition of slavery in the latter part of the 19th century. Some have even held that the legacy of colonialism still plagues a country like Haiti which long overthrew its French colonizers by 1804. "Colonialist thinking . . . is not a phenomenon of the past" (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 16). A group of contemporary scholars in conversation and who explore various aspects of colonial legacies have charted a conceptual framework that deals specifically with the inheritance and continuation of colonial forms of domination into the present day; this framework is "the coloniality of power."

46

The coloniality of power – the continuity of colonial legacies, thought-forms, economies, structures, and social identities – is a durable feature of modernity, of contemporary life, and of present-day circumstances of peoples across the Americas. The concept of coloniality as continuous (related to but historically more fluid than the connotations of *colonialism)* offers present-day critical theorists, activists, and educators a set of clearly articulated terms upon which we can engage with the inheritance of the colonial as something that is alive and well in the present. For:

> [t]he concept of coloniality is distinct from, but bound up with, colonialism . . . coloniality has proven in the last 500 years to be deeper and longer-lasting than colonialism. But coloniality was without a doubt produced within colonialism, and moreover without the latter it would not have been able to be imposed in such a prolonged and deep rooted way on global subjectivity (Quijano, 1999).

The coloniality of power framework offers a particular kind of historicism which takes colonialism and colonial projects as originary moments of sorts to map coloniality as a continuity, where present-day processes of social stratification can be uncovered and deciphered using this particular historicist view of colonialism as shaping the process of modernity. Across the Americas, social power has been constructed via coloniality, via imposed modes of social classification and the establishment of numerous social hierarchies engendered in colonial relations which then became enmeshed in global, macro, and micro level economic, social, cultural, and intersubjective relations that are fluctuating, shifting (Bhabha, 1994; Quijano, 2000a&b, 2007 and 2008), yet continuous. European settler colonialism in the Americas and the colonization of much of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands charted a genealogy for coloniality around which contemporary inequalities and forms of oppression can be identified on a world scale. One of the most important conceptual frameworks to properly name inherited systems of

inequality and hierarchical social stratification is Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano's theory of the "coloniality of power."

Coloniality and the Social Construction of Identities

The encounter of Europeans in the Americas had devastating effects upon communities and individuals, and simultaneously created new multi-ethnic classed and gendered hierarchies, uniquely stratified societies that were an unprecedented precursor and purveyor of modernity. The coloniality of power construed a constellation of new human social identities that emerged, constructed in the context of the social, political, ideological and economic systems that were established by Europeans who encountered, exploited and settled in the Americas.

Constitutive of this thesis, Anibal Quijano's major contribution to understanding the historical formation of identity and economics in the Americas is his identification of the idea of "race" as an organizing principle of the colonial project. Numerous scholars have mapped the trajectory of the social construction of race as a colonial project that occurred through different mechanisms. European Christian interpretations of human difference were involved (Rivera, 1992), the Spanish notion of "*pureza/limpieza de sangre*"/blood purity/cleanliness originated a conception of Christian purity and emerged in Iberia before and after the defeat of Muslims and expulsion of Jews (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Fisher & O'Hara, 2009; Fredrickson, 2002; Quijano, 2000a; Telles & Flores, 2013). Eventually the rise of scientific racism that flowed from Europe and was emphasized in the Americas, European philosophy and aesthetics, and the use of law to encode and enforce "race" (Battalora, 2013; Herbes-Sommers, 2003; Hernández, 2013) all contributed to the construction of race and racism (Fredrickson, 2002; Painter, 2010;

Rivera, 1992; Saxton, 1990; Smedley & Smedley, 2012; Takaki, 1994). The emergence

of the idea of "race" to serve what was essentially a dominating capitalist and cultural

enterprise was crucial in the colonial project and used "physical differences to structure . .

. social ranks [as] . . . a logical consequence of the conquest situation and the enslavement

of physically differing populations" (Smedley & Smedley, 2012, p. 205). Quijano

(2000a) argued that

> Insofar as the social relations that were being configured were relations
> of domination, such identities were considered constitutive of the
> hierarchies, places, and corresponding social roles, and consequently of
> the model of colonial domination that was being imposed. In other words,
> race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social
> classification (p. 534).

A constitutive and organizing principle of race overlapped with various forms of

labor – coercive and paid labor – and created continuous pathways of disenfranchisement

and disempowerment of communities within the American nation-states who were

deemed racially inferior, permanently exploitable, and/or controlled by imperialist and

genocidal policies and practices. In keeping with Quijano's thesis that the coloniality of

power has always been and continues to be *a racialized project of globalization*, despite

contemporary configurations and new models of sovereignty of corporate entities around

the globe it remains that, "American Indians and blacks could not have a place at all in

the control of the resources of production, or in the institutions and mechanisms of public

authority," (Quijano, 2000a, p. 561). Thus, through looking specifically at the social

positioning of indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent in the Americas, the

coloniality of power framework offers a world systems theory rooted in an innovative

critical race perspective that is relevant for the present-day, along with a powerful

critique of capitalism, Eurocentrism and their effects.

The coloniality of power, as a macro-historical process, has profoundly impacted social identity formation and subjectivity in the Americas. While American settler colonialism was a profoundly multicultural encounter, involving Europeans from various places, Native peoples of all sorts, and Africans from numerous linguistic and cultural groups, colonialism set in motion processes of racialization through the collapse of diverse cultural and historical identities into homogenized "racial" categories:

> . . . in the moment that the Iberians conquered, named, and colonized America (whose northern region, North America, would be colonized by the British a century later), they found a great number of different peoples, each with its own history, language, discoveries and cultural products, memory and identity. The most developed and sophisticated of them were the Aztecs, Mayas, Chimus, Aymaras, Incas, Chibchas, and so on. Three hundred years later, all of them had become merged into a single identity: Indians. This new identity was racial, colonial, and negative. The same happened with the peoples forcefully brought from Africa as slaves: Ashantis, Yorubas, Zulus, Congos, Bacongos, and others. In the span of three hundred years, all of them were Negroes or blacks (Quijano, 2000a, pp. 551-552).

In alignment with European imaginaries and classificatory schemas, diverse groups of people's identities were collapsed into single "racial" categories, and this categorization along with the social practices and experiences that correlated with such categorization negatively shaped the lives of colonized, enslaved, and conquered peoples. In other words:

> the colonizers exercised diverse operations that brought about the configuration of a new universe of intersubjective relations of domination between Europe and the Europeans and the rest of the regions and peoples of the world (Quijano, 2000a, p. 541).

In this sense, "race" was constructed, by cognitive processes established in colonization (i.e. European namings and consolidations of peoples in the context of their

50

domination in the Americas) and by the subsequent organization of peoples within a European-imposed hierarchy of culture, labor, and value. The idea of race in the Americas was a "folk ideology" (Smedley & Smedley, 2012) and "folk epistemology" (Stoler, 2008) generated and imposed by the colonizing Europeans and adapted as a system of naming, knowing and granting of social status to both the colonizers, settlers and immigrants, and the colonized.

In dealing with "race" and its construction, we much bear a recognition that what is embedded in the cognitive concept, ideology and practice of "race" is a complex interplay of history and geography, along with conceptions of culture, religion and ancestry, forms of knowledge, color, phenotype and language. What also accompanies our modern day understanding of "race" and "racial formations" (Omi & Winant, 1994) includes a colonial history of erasure of indigenous (indigenous to the Americas, Africa, and Europe) identities and knowledges (Grosfoguel, 2011; Mignolo, 2000 and 2008). The collapsing of peoples through an organization of labor, allocations of hierarchical power and domination vis-à-vis European/"white" supremacy, utilized a cognitive construction that not only imposed new identities under colonialism but which structured new group experiences through these very constructions (Quijano, 2000a&b; Lao-Montes, 2006).

In this sense, "race" became real because of what the idea of "racial" difference gave to people and with what it took away. Being named "black" or "indio" in colonial terms signified the experiences of domination and exploitation. Being seen as "white" in colonial terms conferred superior and dominating status. "Race" continues to be a crucial experience of power and domination precisely because it was imagined, constructed,

51

imposed, and organized within the space of colonial power. Continued social classification and systems of hierarchy remain structured, for the most part in the Americas, around colonial boundaries and proscriptions (Quijano, 2000b).

Colonial ontology and social organization created social identities that were imagined to be unrelated, separate and unequal. Yet what actually emerged was a constellation of peoples in relation, newly named peoples—Black, Indian, white, Asian, etc.—who were compelled into hierarchical interaction in the new world, peoples whose lives, belief systems, cultures, knowledges, and circumstance would be intimately entwined in relation to one another (Shohat & Stam, 1994). Hence, with respect to "race", while formal colonialism in the Americas may be over, the coloniality of power – the continuity of relations established during the colonial process, hierarchies, and social identities—is deeply embedded in the quotidian and has tremendous impact upon present-day concerns regarding social power, belonging, community, agency and economy (Grosfoguel, 2011; Lao-Montes, 2005). "Race" as a structuring logic of colonialism lives heartily in the present-day.

What the coloniality of power framework suggests is a kind of historicism and macro-structural view of the formation of racial identities as a fundamentally colonial phenomenon. "Race" is not merely a contemporary phenomenon to be understood anecdotally or superficially, as only the concern of one particular national space in the Americas, or as a relatively recent phenomenon. Race is systemic precisely because of its construction during the very founding and settlement of what we now call the Americas. The facts and practices of our "new world" settler colonial status as nations within a region continue into the present day. What is macro-historical in the case of the analytic

space of the coloniality of power, which traversed the Americas as a whole, also has

profound implication for community-based and individualized meso- and micro-

phenomena. The structures of conquest, enslavement, and exploitation became global and

modernizing processes engendered in colonial space, were linked to the lives of

conquerors, settlers, the enslaved, and dispossessed Native peoples, and are wholly linked

to the lives of present day American individuals and communities, to questions of group

formation in the 21st century, and to issues of group- and individual-based experiences of

identity, domination, oppression, discrimination, and resistance which have plagued the

Americas for centuries.

"Race" in the Americas as it was constructed is and was intricately tied to

questions of culture, ethnicity, labor/class/social status, even as much as "race" popularly

signifies color, phenotype, and hair texture. While the concept today can be seen as a

cognitive and scientific falsity or untruth, the fact of "race" has created very real

implications for group membership and experience (Alcoff, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2001;

Moya, 2000 and 1997; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Smedley & Smedley, 2012). Race was and

is

> . . . both individual and systemic, interwoven into the fabric both of the
> psyche and the social system, at once grindingly quotidian and
> maddeningly abstract. It is not a merely attitudinal issue, but a historically
> contingent institutional and discursive apparatus linked to the drastically
>
> unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, the unfair
> apportioning of justice, wealth, pleasure, and pain . . . (Shohat & Stam,
> 1994, p. 23)

Historicist, systemic and contemporary understandings of race and racial identities will always need to link the social construction of race and practices of racism as deeply embedded components of the coloniality of power.

In light of the profundity of "race" used to structure colonial space and functions, the cultural spaces of the Americas are, in a large sense, hybrid and syncretic (Feracho, 2005; Shohat & Stam, 1994) as a result of forced encounters, and social interaction within schema of domination and unequal relations. The terms upon which this hybridity was formed were not necessarily celebratory ones; hybrid identities can often connote violence as a part of their formation. "Hybridity. . . is power-laden and asymmetrical":

> . . . hybridity has existed from time immemorial . . . [yet] it reached a
> kind of violent paroxysm with European colonization of the Americas . .
> . the colonizing process initiated by Columbus accelerated and actively
> shaped a new world of practices . . . of mixing, making the Americas the
> scene of unprecedented combinations of indigenous peoples, Africans,
> Europeans, and later of immigratory diasporas from all over the world
> (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 43).

Violence, hierarchical power, and social classification were important processes in America-making, the fact of cultural syncretism and "racial" mixing occurring as both trauma and in some cases resistance, we turn to the question of intersubjective formation that has been established through the coloniality of power in the Americas.

The emergence of new world identities as constituting a kind of "intersubjectivity," a relational processes of designating and governing the identities of subject peoples (and the identities of their dominators) in the formation of new "geocultural identities" (Quijano, 2000 a&b) shaped through the history and process of European imperial and settler domination. The uniqueness of the new world cultural/political/ economic phenomena vis-à-vis the coloniality of power brought about

new cultural formations and modes of existence that were previously unknown to many who would come to inhabit the Americas. What happened with the colonization of the Americas, and which had impact for most of the rest of the world which would also experience European hegemony in one form or another, was that there was an ". . . incorporation of . . . diverse and heterogenous cultural histories into a single world dominated by Europe signif[ying] a cultural and intellectual intersubjective configuration . . . " (Quijano, 2000a, p. 540). These intersubjective configurations corresponded to the colonizing Europeans' hierarchical social schema and imaginary. The concept of "race" as a predominant ideal for social classification was an important part of this schema, organizing disparate cultural-ethnic groups into new "racial" groupings according to the hegemony of European coloniality. In creating the experience and domination of "race", for instance, Quijano argues that "Europe's hegemony over the new model of global power concentrated all forms of the control of subjectivity, culture, and especially knowledge and the production of knowledge . . ." (2000a, p. 540). "[N]ew geocultural identities were being attributed in that process" (2000a, p. 541).

If we take a look at even present-day "racial" categories that were/are used in the United States—white, Black, Indian, for instance—we can see the continuity in how peoples are still classified in America. In Latin America, despite its plethora of racial/color categories— *blanco/a, moreno/a, mestizo/a, preto, negro/a, pardo/a, claro/a, indio/a, mulato/a*, etc.— a continuity of hierarchical racialization and colonial schemas continue to exist. What were once newly imposed geocultural identities in the 15th-19th centuries are still with us today, hence the coloniality of power and its continuity.

Intersubjectivity is also an important analytic turn in excavating the emergence of "race" in the Americas. While under a Euro-imposed, colonial imaginary, groups and individuals were/are labeled (and in some cases across the Americas, segregated) according to racialized schemas, racialized identities evolved in a profound relationality; these were social "identities-in-relation" (Shohat & Stam, 1994). On the one hand it appears that colonial racial categories and designations, for instance, serve to separate people from one another. However, what actually took place was that peoples were not wholly separate but instead functioned in complex social interactions in relationship— hierarchical and unequal social relation. In colonial capitalism, racial categories often corresponded with the designation of labor. Under colonialism, in North America and in Latin America and the Caribbean, the racial imposition of "Black/Negro" translated most often into "slave." "Indian" became peon/peasant. "White" signified multiple forms of "free" and paid labor, ranging from elite owning class to working class. All these social identities, however distinct, functioned to uphold a relatively coherent and interactional colonial system.

While in the United States we may often perceive and experience racial segregation (i.e., the idea of distinct racial categories and the racial organization of geography), the reality is that racialized groups have always functioned in relation to each other, in social spheres ranging from the intimate to the structural (Amott and Matthaei 1996; Brown, 1992; Davis, 1981; Hurtado, 1989; Mohanty, 2003; Quijano 2000a&b; Razack, 1998; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Stoler, 2002). Slaves, for instance, could not exist without slave owners who governed the day-to-day affairs of the enslaved. European Christianity could only be deemed superior in the Americas through active disavowal and

disdain projected upon Native, African and Jewish forms of spirituality, and in some cases, the outlawing of non-European spiritual practices. The notion of free white labor could only exist in contrast to a group of people who were laboring in bondage. And, in matters of gender, Black and brown womanhood was constructed in contrast to and alongside white womanhood (Brown, 1992; Caldwell, 2007; Davis, 1981; Grosfoguel, 2006; Hurtado, 1989; Lugones, 2007).

The Invention, Ideology and Legal Work of "Race"

In all cases, "race" is a historically specific idea, a figment of colonial imagination, an illusion, an invention. There are numerous ways by which to rank humanity; "race" was/is a powerful imaginary used to justify (settler) colonial power and domination. While in the course of America-making, there were numerous scientific claims regarding racial superiority/and inferiority, indeed "the classification and ranking of humankind into inferior and superior races profoundly influenced the development, . . . the very creation of the sciences" (Graham, 1990, p. 1), scholars have long since debunked the biological basis for "race" as indicative of inherent and immutable differences between humans (Herbes-Sommers, 2003). "Race" was/is an ideology in the service of the coloniality of power which was predicated upon domination, and "race" lived in multiple forms across American societies, in the racism that was/is experienced by people of African and indigenous descent, and in the privileges and possibilities afforded "white" and light-skinned people.

Thus far, I have offered an overview of patterns in the colonial process across the Americas and involving a long span of history, primarily to engage educators and thinkers in noting some of the shared trajectory of America-making throughout the

region. In utilizing these conceptual frameworks for thinking and teaching, a look at specific national and regional spaces, along with looking at different historical time periods can give us detailed examples of how colonialism, the coloniality of power, and the social construction of American identities emerged in particular. While "race" was a unifying concept across the Americas, racial definitions varied widely. In the United States racial categorization eventually emerged to be fairly rigid and segregationist. In Latin America and parts of the Caribbean race was and is more fluid and at times paradoxical. Often in studies of race, the overwhelming focus is on those who are deemed subordinate, racial Others. I argue, however, that the linchpin of racial categorization rested most squarely on "whiteness" that emerged in various parts of the Americas. The racial category of "white" was conferred in various ways to indicate higher status within colonial schema, and its particular invention and construction is worthy to hold in discussing and teaching matters of race in the Americas.

Whiteness: Racial Ideology, Customary Law and Racial Subordination

The foreshadowing of highly racialized societies was present at the beginning of the colonial encounter in the Americas. The evolution and concept of "race" flowed from European outlooks that had already been established in Europe pre-encounter, and were constructed and consolidated under the conditions of colonial rule. Clearly peoples of African descent and indigenous peoples in the Americas have borne the brunt of the folk ideology of race, being placed in the bottom of an imagined racial hierarchy and treated accordingly. New developments in critical race theory have shifted the gaze, so to speak, to the construction and experience of whiteness in the region, which has significant potential for noting continuities and connections across the Americas.

Whiteness studies have been established in the United States in the past decades, highlighting discussions of race around the experiences and social location of the dominant racial group (Frankenberg, 1994; Hartigan, 2005; Ignatiev, 2008; McIntosh, 2012; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2007; Wise, 2011). This work has shifted the scholarly discourse about race and its construction in meaningful ways. An examination of the benefits of whiteness that have been afforded to the descendants of settlers and subsequent European and Middle Eastern immigrant ethnic groups that were able to derive "white" status in the context of colonial hierarchies predicated on racism against non-white Others, gives new modes of thinking about how race was constructed and lives in the present day. This shifted gaze from a sole look at the complexities of the racial subordination of non-white peoples to examining the historical development of whiteness and the privileged positionality of whites, gives scholars, activists, and educators new ground upon which to understand the structures of power that shape American lives. Whiteness has conferred various kinds of freedom; these freedoms for whites are in contrast to the forms of domination that have shaped the story of Afrodescendants, indigenous peoples, and others deemed not white. Peoples who are the victims of racism are denied what is granted to those who are deemed white; whites in turn, are offered benefits and advantages on the basis of their dominant "racial" designation. Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples, since the founding of the Americas, have experienced violence, exploitation and other forms of domination *not* enacted upon whites. Therefore, studies of racial domination through the lenses of white privilege create a new conceptual space upon which to understand the social construction of race and the practices of racism in settler colonial societies.

Studies of race, colonialism, Black and indigenous struggle in Latin America are longstanding, and currently there is an emerging body of work that addresses what may have been omitted prior. Increasingly scholars are turning towards looking at Latin American whiteness (and lightness in the context of Latin American racial imaginaries), naming it, and formulating theses about its significance.

An interesting part of the regional interconnectedness of the Americas is often denial of its very connectedness. While the Americas share a parallel historical trajectory in matters of race, many popularly, and in some cases scholarly, eschew the idea that race relations across the Americas are similar and related. Under British-derived North America and Iberian-derived Latin America nuanced differences in the construction of race existed for sure. The United States established clear racial categories, engaged in relatively systematic racial record-keeping, and most often utilized segregation and outright hostility to maintain its "racial projects" (Omi & Winant, 1994). In Latin America, the ideology of *mestizaje*— race mixing—made some racial projects more blurred. However, the shared pathways of *racism* as a structuring dynamic of the interconnected settler colonial systems across the region are facts of history and contemporary social life. Racialized practices varied, most notably in the racial history of Latin America where racism was not enacted through statutory and case law as it was in the United States but was established through customary law, ideological and cultural work around the idea of racial mixture. However, actual, material differences in treatment and access to resources and opportunity were afforded to Black/Afrodescendant and

Native peoples versus what was afforded to whites and lighter-skinned, Hispanized or "Lusophonized" mestizos (Hernández, 2013).[3]

In many parts of Latin America, there is a powerful discourse that racism does not exist (Caldwell, 2007; Hanchard, 1994; Hernández, 2013; Telles, 2004; Telles & Flores, 2013; Wade, 2008) because its racialized systems are contrasted with how racism has lived in the United States. The United States' open and clearly articulated racial hostility toward non-whites allows for it to be held as wholly unique and characteristically racist. There is a sense of "veiling" of Latin American racial projects "with the notion that true racism can only be found in the racial segregation of the United States" (Hernández, 2013, pp. 3-4)." However, "[s]ince the early colonial period, whites have been the dominant status group and whiteness has represented power, wealth, privilege, and beauty in virtually every part of Spanish and Portuguese America, while Afro-descendants and indigenous persons have been at the bottom of the social structure," (Telles & Flores, 2013, p. 411). The power and privilege of Latin American whiteness has shaped the landscape of race relations, along with a "historical absence of state-mandated . . . racial segregation laws" (Hernández, 2013, p. 10), combined with a profound racial hierarchy replete with racialized stereotypes and class inequality that persist into the present day.

Racial hegemony exists throughout Latin America, shaped as it was through colonial imaginaries and forms of domination that were steadfastly racist. Amidst the idea of the non-existence of racism are very real "processes of socialization that promote racial discrimination" (Hanchard, 1994, p. 6). Everyday discourses and practices

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[3] A more in depth discussion of the ideology and practice of *mestizaje* in Latin America is to follow.

affirming the idea of Black and indigenous inferiority in Latin America through stereotypes of, for example, Blacks being "dirty", or indigenous people being "stupid." "[T]he very term "negro" (black/negro) is widely considered derogatory, because persons of African descent are stereotyped and referred to as inherently criminal, intellectually inferior, overly sexual and animalistic" (Hernández, 2013, p. 4). Discourses from the state, media and schools emphasize an ideal of "racial progress" linked to the notion of the civilizational superiority of European cultures (Andrews, 2010), connected to scientific racism and its eugenicist thrust (Graham, 1990; Hernández, 2013), and have in the past and present advocated for "whitening" Latin American populations through eugenicist, genocidal and immigration projects (Andrews, 2010; Graham, 1990; Helg, 1990; Hernández, 2013; Reggiani, 2010; Skidmore, 1990; Warren, 2001)[4]. Along with pervasive discursive and attitudinal expressions of white supremacy and non-white inferiority, are the social, economic and legal structures and practices that have established and enforced racist hegemony throughout the region, creating disproportionate discrimination against and poverty amongst Blacks and indigenous peoples.

Legal scholar Tanya Hernández's (2013) unique work in exposing how racial hegemony in Latin America was established through "customary law", i.e., the "Roman law concept of *ius non scriptum* (rights from the unwritten)" (p. 12) wss groundbreaking. Customary laws were social practices that were officially enacted, keeping

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[4] In many Latin American countries, the idea of "whitening" vis-a-vis the very "race-mixing"/*mestizaje* logic and/or through the displacement of and violence against Black and indigenous peoples were often matters of racial aspiration and state policy in favor of whiteness and Europeanness. Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Chile and others, at different historical moments, strategically advocated for immigration from Europe in order to counter the "browning-through-mestizaje" racial realities of their countries.

Afrodescendants, in particular, in their "proper" place at the bottom of racial hierarchies.

Hernández argued that "custom was a useful source of law in the development of colonial

Spanish legal history" and that "customary law has been an acknowledged source of law"

(p. 12). Customary law was used "*by the state* itself to enforce a particular social order"

and imposed "binding norms advanced by some people in relation to others" (p. 13):

> [W]hen customary law is fully integrated into a society as a matter of state
> practice, there is little incentive to have the customs codified. What is
> most salient is whether there is a sense of legal obligation to be bound by
> the custom and have it enforced. It then follows that the acceptance of a
> social norm as law is also evidenced by the use of state resources to
> enforce those norms broadly. In the Latin American context, the
> deployment of state resources (with policing of racial segregation and
> dedication of financial incentives for European immigration) is the key
> factor for transforming social convention into customary law (Hernández,
> 2013, p. 14).

In other words, the involvement of Latin American state actors in enforcing racial

hegemony through practice, custom, and a type of avoidance of codification, through

decrees and everyday enforcements both by the state and by ordinary citizens, was a form

of legal work that served to insure white advantage and non-white disadvantage.

Customary law at times avoided explicit statutes (in contrast to pre-1968 Jim

Crow laws that were actually "on the books" in the United States) against non-white

access to national benefits yet simultaneously created "white space" (Hernández, 2013),

resulting in, for example, immigration decrees that encouraged "white" European

immigration and in many instances gave them privileged access to land and professions,

sometimes in the form of actual grants and subsidies. In Brazil, "verbal designations" to

assure racial segregation were often used and enforced by state officials such as the

police, such as prohibitions that prevented Blacks from freely moving in public space, or

to be served in restaurants, or to rent housing in particular areas vis-a-vis "Foreigners

preferred" signs. Accompanying these everyday practices was de facto segregation and tracking of Blacks in schools under assumptions of their "racial"/intellectual deficiencies, as well as excluding Blacks from the teaching profession. In Brazil, the criminalization of African-based religious gatherings and practices served to suppress Black expression (Hernández, 2013). As such, though customary law functions somewhat differently from statutory and case law, legal and quasi-legal enforcement through the adaption of everyday racist practices and exclusions, and the support of these by state-run entities such as the police and schools constituted a certain *racist formality* in Latin American nations despite declarations otherwise. The colonial inscriptions of "race" continued throughout the Latin American polity over time, creating informal and formal structures for white advantage and non-white disadvantage in the omnipresent context of entrenched, psychologically internalized, and socially enforced racial hierarchies.

Statutory and Case Law and the Construction of Race

Historians of the United States have explored the ways in which "race" lived as an invention in the context of domination, and some have looked specifically at law and the ideological work surrounding the passage and enforcement of laws that served to privilege whiteness and to vilify non-whites. The United States' history of written law to inscribe racial hegemony is extensive. In the U.S., the coloniality of power and its racialized forms of capitalist hierarchy were, until the transformative social movements of the mid 20th century, documented, codified and generally straightforward.

Several historians note that in the 17th century establishment of colonies in North America, notably Virginia, that African and European servants shared roughly the same social status in shared social space (Battalora, 2013; Takaki, 1994; Walker, Jones & Bell,

2000) - a "'giddy multitude' . . . class of indentured servants, slaves, and landless

freeman, both white and black" (Takaki, 1994, p. 63). Legal scholar Jacqueline Battalora

(2013) writes that a "series of laws that asserted and imposed the human category 'white'

and its ideological underpinning . . . worked to discipline communities by transforming

relationships among laborers and imposing a hierarchy that had not previously existed"

(p. xxiii). In this manner, in the United States, law was a primary force of establishing

racial hegemony and to have social and segregationist customs enforced.

With the advancement of the colonial project in the early British colonies,

increasingly Black and white mutual cooperation would be deemed illegal, along with the

delineation of who would be a slave and who would be free, all enacted through the

courts and lived in the social structure. The earliest anti-miscegenation laws of Virginia

and Maryland began to shape the interactions between Africans and European laborers,

increasingly legislating the racial category "white" - a conglomerate designation that

served to structure the eventual privileges and advantages that those of exclusive

European ancestry would be granted. In colonies that were increasingly tied to making

more profit and convinced in the use of enforced African labor ongoingly, eventually

Blacks were deemed as permanently enslaved through law. One notable case that

highlights the process of permanent enslavement is evident in the Virginia statute of 1662

ruling that the status of Black children would be conferred through their mothers; this

was in absolute contrast to the legal status of white children which flowed from the status

of their fathers as a feature of English common law translated into the colonies

(Battalora, 2013; Davis, 1981; Takaki, 1994). In late 1600's Virginia the language of

legislation began to shift from the ethnic designation for most of the European

descendants – "English" to "white"— thereby signifying the construction of whiteness through legal maneuvers that transformed interracial social interactions (Battalora, 2013). After the entrenchment of the slave system in the United States and leading up to the Civil War which would end slavery, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1857 was involved in legislating racial hegemony in the Dred Scott case, with the majority opinion affirming that, Blacks were "regarded as beings of an inferior order" with "no rights which the white man was bound to respect." Post emancipation, the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court case enacted into law the Jim Crow era, under the guise of "separate but equal" which kept Southern Black citizens separate and profoundly unequal from whites in access to education, employment, public accommodations, and housing under systems of socially- and legally-sanctioned racism, in a socio-cultural context whose customs often involved violence to enforce white supremacy. These are but a few examples of how statutory and case law was used to construct race in the American territories eventually named the United States.

The importance of looking at law in charting the coloniality of power and its white supremacist rationale is to note the variety of ways in which race was constructed to oppress non-white peoples and to establish white privilege. Through the inheritance of the European sense of religious and civilizational superiority, to the establishment of forced labor that impacted African descendants for hundreds of years, to the ideological work of valuing whiteness and sanctioning white advantage through custom, to the use of law to consolidate racial subordination and domination in the settler-colonial experiments, new worlds, new identities, and new hierarchies were created.

*Afrodescendencia/*Blackness

> In Latin America
>
> persons of African descent make up more than 40 percent of the poor in Latin America and have been consistently marginalized and denigrated as undesirable elements of the society since the abolition of slavery across the Americas (Hernández, 2013, p. 1).

In the United States, explicit and legally codified forms of racial hegemony created a legacy of structural inequality that has oppressed and disadvantaged Blacks since its early colonial days. Throughout the Americas we see entrenched systems of racism, in particular, anti-Black/ anti-Afrodescendant racism that have had profound economic, social, and cultural affects upon Black communities. The racialized practices in Latin America may have somewhat different mechanisms and processes than those in the United States, yet they have a parallel history, a shared development in colonialism, and they have profoundly shaped the lives of Afrodescendants in Latin America who are ongoingly marginalized and oppressed.

Africans were initially culturally, socially, and religiously distinct from Europeans, were initially and for the most part non-Christian, were turned towards to fuel the growth of capitalist European settler societies through the imposition of forced migration/deportation from their homelands, they served as an exploitable labor force, and were the victims of racialized hierarchies that kept them dominated throughout the history of the Americas. Afrodescendants in the Americas have a distinct history of oppression, struggle and resistance as well as a distinct presence in the region. The significance of their/our presence was central in the making of what we now know as the Americas, and a far-reaching understanding of that significance in the region, not merely in one nation, is an important project for Social Justice Education.

Conclusion

In the coloniality of power and its social hierarchies, labor and cultural practices and its institutionalization of capitalism in the Americas, we see the establishment of forms of relational, interlocking intersubjectivities - raced, classed, and gendered identities formed in hierarchical relation through the processes of colonization. In the Americas, white identities, state- and socially-sanctioned white advantage, and valorization of whiteness/Europeanness could only have been formed in relation to imposed Black, *indio*, mestizo, etc. identities, their subordinated positionalities and racial projects to exclude and disadvantage them. "Whites" could not exist without racial Others to inform their own designations as white and to be involved in practices and customs that secured white racial hegemony. Colonial intersubjective creation and formation vis-à-vis "historical processes of differentiation" (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 19) built a sociality in which hierarchical relations and identities made dominating and dominated peoples intricately linked to one another. Questions of oppression, culture, cultural identity and cultural imperialism, along with color, phenotype and "race", for dominated and dominant groups is a crucial site of inquiry for scholars and educators as these are part of the fabric of social inequality and devaluation for peoples of color, accompanying the elevation of whiteness and lightness in settler colonial contexts. These issues have pertinence for the day-to-day lives and consciousness of Americans across borders, born are they were from the oppressive patterns engendered in the coloniality of power, a profoundly transnational, world-historical phenomenon.

The next chapter presents a discussion transnational thought and dimensions and further develops frameworks that affirm the shared hemispheric space of the Americas. It

focuses on the African diaspora as a transnational community and as a field of analysis. American racial discourses and their interconnected development in various parts of the Americas are evident through looking at aspects of Cuban history, Brazilian constructions of race, and the United States' racial peculiarity as case studies to highlight transnational similarities and differences. These three countries have large Afrodescendant populations and share important patterns regarding the social location and subordinate status of Black peoples, along with comparable mechanisms of white dominance, which provides the context for anti-black racism. The coloniality of power bears in a particular way on the American African diaspora, hence our need for global, transnational analyses of history, oppression, and power that centers the realities of Afrodescendants across the region.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSNATIONAL VISIONS: INTERAMERICANITY,
DIASPORA, AND BLACK PRESENCES

Introduction

The profundity of the coloniality of power that has shaped world systems and
global and local identities, combined with an increasing recognition of the forces of
globalization demands new modes of thinking and a farther-reaching sensibility in the
21st century. In this light, I engage with the ideas of globalization and the transnational in
terms that can be utilized by social justice educators. As teachers and students engaged in
unpacking the workings of oppression and communicating them in various educational
spaces, our work increasingly asks us to expand our understanding of oppression, social
group and social identity formation to become more expert with how these develop
within and across nations and borders, both historically and in contemporary
transnational expressions.

In contending with national, regional, and transnational historic and contemporary
patterns across the Americas, I look to conceptual frameworks offered by scholars who
deal with transnational racial, gendered, and classed constructions of identity that can
help educators hold a large, long, and contemporary view of nations and communities—
like the African diaspora— that were globally and transnationally formed. With the
insights offered from scholars of globalization and transnationality, our concepts for
teaching specifically about race, racialization, racism, along with our teaching of all the
other social justice issues can be extended to encompass more social contexts and utilize
more historical lenses. Conceptual tools such as globalization and transnationality help us

70

to include an understanding of global patterns in our teaching, how global patterns shape

questions of oppression within one nation, along with how patterns of oppression are

comparable across nations, particularly in the regional, transnational space of the

Americas.

This chapter charts the significance of globalization as a fact of world history and

contemporary world dynamics, and discusses transnationalism as a reality and a

framework. Working with transnational feminist conceptions and the idea of

"interAmericanity" that links the United States with the rest of the Americas, the writing

further examines the African diaspora as a transnational community that shares the

experience of subordinate racialization across borders. Racism is held as a transnational

problem and an interAmerican dilemma, evident in the history of social formation in

Cuba, along with historical and contemporary racial patterns in Brazil and the United

States. This chapter asserts that whiteness as a dominant racial category emerged across

the Americas in similar ways, even amidst varying racial discourses such as *mestizaje*

(race-mixing) which is found pervasively across Latin America.

The Significance of Globalization

In the 21st century, the phenomenon of globalization is discussed extensively in

the media, in school and in higher learning, and in the larger culture. As such,

> . . .[t]o many observers, the pace of globalization has accelerated over the
> last twenty years, bringing the entire world into a unified market, creating
> similar cultural practices, and a common set of institutional relationships
> (Strikwerda, 2000, p. 333).

While it is notable that processes of globalization have large-scale expressions in the

contemporary moment, involving shifting state formations, the mobility of transnational

capital and corporations, the unification of markets, emerging technologies and their

71

ability to connect people and ideas across the globe, some thinkers have noted that

globalization also involves powerful negative features (oppression, poverty, Western

hegemony, terrorism, environmental devastation, war) constituting what some would call

a new world order (Appadurai, 1996; Burbules &Torres, 2000; Hardt & Negri, 2001).

There are varying views about the economic, cultural, or the political nature of

globalization. Carl Strikwerda (2000), surveys a series of perspectives among scholars

who work with the idea of globalization, noting that discussions of globalization are a

"fractured debate:"

> For one group of writers, globalization means economic integration, the
> expansion of Western-style or capitalistic markets into more areas of the
> world and an increase in the flow of goods and investments. Most
> economists, business leaders, and politicians, at least in the industrialized
> world, welcome these changes (p. 335).

Other thinkers

> concerned about social welfare and national sovereignty, fear that
> globalization may lower the level of social welfare and employment in
> industrial countries, while it simply exploits the working poor elsewhere.
> Globalization also threatens the ability of citizens or national governments
> to control their own destiny (p. 335).

And that

> observers interested in cultural change interpret globalization differently.
> Focusing on popular culture—especially music and television—they see a
> movement that ostensibly breaks down nationalism, erodes ethnic
> stereotypes, and unites diverse peoples around common ideals (p. 335).

Livio Sansone (2003), who explores race relations in Brazil, notes that "[g]lobalization

occurs through an imbalanced exchange of goods, symbols, and cultural commodities"

(p. 95).

World systems theory and thinkers predated the contemporary debates about the nature of globalization; global processes and interactions have been recognized by scholars for several decades. The work of sociologist Immanual Wallerstein proposed a *world systems theory* and a view of world history, which highlighted the economic inequality between nations that have been in global exchange at least since the 15th century. In light of the conflicting ways in which the phenomena of globalization are held, it should be clear to social justice educators that the international human, cultural, and economic interactions that now span the globe are laden with the problems of power, domination, privilege, marginalization, and oppression.

Along with Wallerstein, several contemporary scholars have argued that globalization is not new, that the current discourses, policies, and economic and cultural configurations of contemporary globalization are merely an extension of practices that began with European colonization of the world in the 15th century. Within the theory of the coloniality of power,

> . . .[w]hat is termed globalization is the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of America and colonial/ modern Eurocentered capitalism as a new global power (Quijano, 2000a, p. 533).

A specific "global cultural economy" (Appadurai, 1996) developed amidst the influence of (European) Enlightenment thinking upon the world and with it, the idea of modernity. "Globalization's 'newness'" [has placed] modernity . . . at large . . . and unevenly experienced" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 3). Post-15th century shifts in the world with the "expansion of Western maritime interests" which led to an eventual ". . . intricate and overlapping set of Eurocolonial worlds" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 28) that are significant for contextualizing contemporary global cultures and processes. "[G]lobalization is far from

a new process" (Hall, 2007a, p. 19). In other words, conquest, colonialism/slavery, the

establishment of capitalism which has created economic inequality—all which set the

stage for the contemporary issues of injustice that social justice educators highlight in

their work—were global processes.

While global exchanges and transnational relationships—some neutral, many

involving domination and inequality—may have always been a feature of world cultures

and societies, we must admit a certain newness to globalization in the 21st century. In the

1990's Appadurai cited "motion" (i.e., consistent waves of migration, immigration, and

citizenship) as a feature of global dynamics, as simultaneously new and not new in the

contemporary discussions of globalization and its impacts:

> The story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new
> feature of human history. But when it is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of
> mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of
> instability in the production of modern subjectivities (Appadurai, 1996, p.
> 4)

In our present day, globalization's newness involves the increasing "consumption of mass

media" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7) which "compel the transformation of everyday discourse"

(Appadurai, 1996, p. 3) and the production of "modern subjectivities"/social identities

that are carved beyond the nation-state involving contemporary migrations of peoples.

Burbules and Torres (2000), in their work on globalization and education, wrote

of varied views of globalization that include

> the emergence of supranational institutions . . . the . . . impact of global
> economic processes . . . the rise of neoliberalism . . . [and] the emergence
> of new global cultural forms, media, and technologies of communication .
> . . (pp. 1-2).

Burbules and Torres also noted how globalization "has become an ideological discourse driving change because of a perceived immediacy and necessity to respond to a new world order" (p. 2). At the same time

> the effects of globalization are also sometimes exaggerated. Any good observer or world traveler will have noticed that the so-called process of globalization is not so global. Vast segments of the world are almost untouched by many of these globalization dynamics. What we are seeing is a segmentation (worldwide) between a globalized culture—for instance, the prevalence of an urban, cosmopolitan habitus—and the rest of the world, which sees few of the benefits . . . of access to the global market or to cosmopolitan cultures (p. 11).

When globalization is articulated in celebratory terms, there is a danger of masking two phenomena: that world-systems—both mutually sustaining processes of trade, commerce, technology, and travel, along with coercive systems of imperialism, colonialism, neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism— that brought nations, communities, and individuals in interactions across borders are longstanding. It can also be observed that the contemporary processes of transnational, economic, media, cultural and technological exchanges often happen among the most privileged inhabitants of nations and communities, reproducing already existing inequities, forms of oppression and marginalization, and differential access to power and privilege.

When looking at the historical formation of the Americas as originating in the European conquest and colonization of the region, some of the continuities of the new global world order can be attributed to an historical process that has implications for how we teach for social justice in the present. Globalization, while touted by some as a "new" and celebratory process, has long political, cultural and social histories and has been thoroughly intertwined with past- and present-day patterns of oppression. The emergence

of the conceptual framework of globalization compels us to examine the actual social,

cultural and economic processes are shaping our contemporary world. As social justice

educators, we can reflect upon how and whether the idea of globalization is historicized,

noting what stories are discussed and taught. When the idea of globalization is invoked,

educators can note which realities are highlighted or downplayed, along with the ideas

and experiences students bring to our learning spaces from their own national-cultural

heritages, family histories of migration, and amidst youth exposure (in the wealthier

countries and classes) to media and technology. Along with an acknowledgement that the

established idea of globalization is real and at work in academia and in popular discourse,

we can also raise awareness about dynamics of inequality and oppression that may be

revised, reproduced or emerging in a new world.

Transnational Visions for Thinking Beyond Nations

While the definitions and conceptual frameworks that have charted the term

"globalization" are varied, it can be argued that globalization pertains to macro-structural

internationalism dealing with large-scale institutions and processes such as economies,

markets, trade, supra-national workings of banks, finance, corporations, media and the

proliferation of technology (and the cultural forms that can be broadcast widely under

these circumstances), and international macro-political relations. The "transnational" is

related to globalization and globalized processes (past and present), yet pertains most

often to the human and community-level dynamics that are engendered by an

interconnected world, such as travel and migration, cultural exchanges, communications,

and in many cases intra- and cross-national identity formation (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001). Both modes of thinking beyond any one nation are important. For social justice educators, the notion of the transnational is an important conceptual framework.

The idea of the transnational that a number of scholars have worked on is important to social justice educators because it helps us to move beyond nation-specific studies and gives us a more global and intercultural understanding of systems of oppression and how they have emerged historically between and across national borders, as well as within them. For the purposes of this work, holding more globalized knowledge about race, racism, and racial identities as well as the presence of Afrodescendants across the Americas as example cases, transnational thinking can shift our work in teaching and learning.

Some important thinkers in cultural studies and feminism have mapped conceptual rationales for holding the idea of the transnational that can be useful for educators. Some highlighted the cultural dimensions of globalization and touched upon predictions about the potentially decreasing salience of the nation state as a political form, affirming that nations "make sense only as parts of a system" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 19). The nation-state appeared to be "poorly equipped to deal with the interlinked diasporas of people and images" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 19). Given the histories of nation-making in the Americas, with their overlapping processes of coloniality and their shared formations of racial, gender, sexual, and class oppression, perhaps educators can begin to embrace the notion of the transnational as a way to better excavate the dynamics of social identity, oppression, and possibilities for social justice. If the nation-state is only a part of a world system, then expanding our frameworks in teaching about *systems* of oppression

can include *studies across nations*. Expanding our analysis of systems to include cross-national processes helps contemporary educators move beyond the limitations of a nation-state framework.

Feminist writers have clarified the usefulness of transnational thinking in various works, particularly in addressing oppressive contexts and visions for liberation that impact the lives of women, most notably third world women/women of color. The work of Black feminists, U.S. women of color feminists, transnational feminists, and "third world" feminists provides important conceptualizations for educators who teach for social justice, as these thinkers have most comprehensively theorized the workings of race, gender, and class when looking to the realities of women of color across the globe. Feminist works deal extensively with the predicaments of women and frequently provide frameworks for helping educators to broaden our theoretical grounding and content-building in increasingly more sophisticated ways.

Transnational feminist thinkers offer much in the how and why of thinking about the significance of the transnational given the realities of human movements and migrations, processes of oppression and domination along the lines of gender, race, class, and sexuality, combined with important frameworks for thinking beyond and across national borders to advance feminist and social justice practice. Their concepts of history, forms of oppression that are highlighted in the lives of women, and their concern with how historical and contemporary globalized systems shape the lives of present-day women and the dynamics of gender are cutting-edge ideas that can be useful for social justice educators who work on framing and teaching about patterns of oppression.

78

Inderpal Grewal and Caran Kaplan (1994) worked with the idea that hegemony and domination have a "scattered," non-unitary character, and that patterns and interconnections can be mapped across borders. Through a holding of the transnational character of various forces of domination, these authors affirmed that accurate understanding cannot be contained by the "conventional boundaries of national economies, identities, and cultures" (p. 7), and held that ". . . we need new analyses of how gender works in the dynamic of globalization and the countermeasures of new nationalisms, and ethnic and racial fundamentalisms" (p. 19).

In their explorations, Grewal and Kaplan noted that patterns of ". . . transnational hegemonic 'borrowings' are the ways in which various patriarchies collaborate and borrow from each other in order to reinforce specific practices that are oppressive to women" (p. 24). In conceptualizing the existence of "various patriarchies" and "transnational hegemonic 'borrowings,'" they proposed a project of feminist solidarity across borders forged from awareness of the interlinked realities of gendered experiences and multiple forms of gendered oppression that surpass national boundaries. In light of transnational oppressive practices, they argued that dynamics of oppression have a "scattered," diffuse nature— they move and shift in response to contest—
and that "[f]eminists can begin to map . . . scattered hegemonies and link diverse local practices to formulate a transnational set of solidarities," (p. 19). They noted what they called ". . . operations of transnational culture . . . [as shaped by] the effects of mobile capital" (p. 7). They argued that since forms of oppression are transnational, that transnational feminist practices require comparative work that respond to ". . . multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions" (p. 18). In their work of looking at transnational

79

oppressive practices that impact women, Grewal and Kaplan also advanced the idea of feminist solidarity—a powerful contribution to imagining liberation as part of our teaching about justice—as a transnational, liberatory practice that could respond to oppressive forces across nations and borders.

Alexander and Mohanty (1997) challenged late 20th century "international" feminism with an updated and more fully elaborated notion of the transnational. They asserted the ideas of "shifting the unit of analysis from local, regional, and national culture to relations and processes across cultures" and the "need to understand the local in relation to larger, cross-national processes" (p. xix) as an important feminist practice that produces a larger and more nuanced view of oppression and ways to transform it. Alexander and Mohanty theorized their transnational outlook and praxis as a politics, a "paradigm of decolonization which stresses power, history, memory, relational analysis, justice . . . and ethics as the issues central to our analysis of globalization" (p. xix). These thinkers proposed a "comparative, relational feminist praxis that is transnational in its response to and engagement with global processes of colonization" (p. xx) for a more accurate understanding of questions of identity, oppression, and movements for liberation. Thus, Alexander and Mohanty's feminist notions of the transnational were rooted in an anti-colonial view, had an anti-oppression lens, and employed a contemporary paradigm for thinking, teaching, and learning about justice.

Ella Shohat's work addressing "Post-Third-Worldist Culture" (1997) addressed colonialism, the limits of the nation, and also explained her feminist conceptions of the transnational. In her explorations, she foregrounded a conceptual understanding of what she called "post-Third-Worldist feminist cultural practices" as "break[ing] away from the

narrative of 'nation' as a unified entity" (p. 184) while "reclaiming and reaccentuating

colonialism and its ramifications in the present in a vast project of remapping and

renaming" (p. 183). In her exploration of the narratives and images of filmmakers that

she identifies as 'post-third-worldist', Shohat noted a unifying theme among artists who

"do not so much reject the 'nation' as interrogate its repressions and limits, passing

nationalist discourse through grids of class, gender, sexuality, and diasporic identities" (p.

208).

Multicultural feminism is an inherently transnational project. "A multicultural

feminist critique, asks more than 'thinking globally, acting locally.' It asks for a

transnational imaginary," (Shohat, 1998, p. 52) that ". . . takes as its starting point the

cultural consequences of the worldwide movements and dislocations of people associated

with the development of 'global' or 'transnational' capitalism," (Shohat, 1998, p. 1).

Citing the conditions of multiple cultures, migrations and movements, and global

economic formations, Shohat taught us that

> . . . genders, sexualities, races, classes, nations, and even continents exist
> not as hermetically sealed entities but rather as parts of a permeable
> interwoven relationality. Instead of segregating historical periods and
> geographical regions into neatly fenced off areas of expertise, it highlights
> the multiplicity of community histories and perspectives (1998, p. 1).

This idea of "interwoven relationality" provides a context for educators' continually

evolving understanding of oppressions such as racism, sexism, and classism (among

others) as shaped under global and transnational conditions, with interlinked

manifestations, dynamics and consequences in various locations, communities, and

nations. Feminists and others asserted the necessity of a "transnational imagination" to

accurately chart the genealogies of oppression and identity, and they claimed that

81

transnational imaginary as an anti-oppression/anti-colonial mode of thinking, along with an historically-informed way of understanding how lives and struggles (by foregrounding the struggles of women and movements to dismantle sexist oppression) are shaped beyond national boundaries and nation-bound social identities.

Processes of domination are and have been global in scope; oppression crosses borders. Colonialism, coloniality, and global capitalism are transnational historic and contemporary phenomena that have shaped the dynamics of racialization, gender and sexual oppression, and class inequality, etc. Social identities are formed within the practical and cultural processes of movement and migration, not only within national borders. Therefore, transnational visions and familiarity with global processes are increasingly needed in our teaching and learning about justice.

Transnationalizing Black Experience/*Lo Afrodescendiente*: The African Diaspora

Socio-cultural and political phenomena across national borders foreground the realities of movement and migration as important processes in understanding global forces, identities, and patterns of power. Colonial forms of domination are continuous in the present day, and systems and workings of gender, race, class, etc. operate upon inequality, privilege, subordination, and oppression. Many individuals and communities existing in the transnational space of the Americas are impacted by pervasive realities of oppression. In fact, our very present-day social identities have been formed in a constellation of past and present systems of race/racism, gender/sexism/ heterosexism, and class/classism.

"[B]lack New World populations have their origin in the fragmentation, racialized oppression, and systematic dispossession of the slave trade," (Edwards, 2003, p. 45) a

profoundly transnational experience. Africans were brought to nearly every part of the Americas and experienced profound oppression, exploitation, and racism targeting their communities across borders. When educators look to the realities of Black/ Afrodescendant[5] life in the Americas in our teaching about history, racism, and oppression, it is without a doubt the existence of the African diaspora is inherently a transnational phenomenon. The forced movement and migration of sub Saharan West and Central Africans to the Americas during the Atlantic Slave Trade was a highly significant global process that was foundational in the coloniality of power (Quijano 2000a). The location of Afrodescendants across the entire hemisphere, the construction of race, processes of racialization, and the systems of anti-Black racism are examples of a transnational community experiencing transnational patterns of existence and oppression, which are worthy of note in our teaching and learning.

What is Diapora? Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley (2000) contextualized the meaning of "diaspora" beginning with clarifying the term itself, they wrote

> We must begin with the term diaspora. It originated in other historical and cultural contexts-namely Jewish and Greek history. Diaspora is essentially the Greek word for 'dispersal,' though its most common usage has been in reference to the scattering of Jews throughout the West (p. 14).

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[5] In this work I use "Black" and "Afrodescendant" somewhat interchangeably, though an argument can be made that there are important distinctions in this language. "Black"/"*negro*" were the terms across the Americas that collapsed Africans into an homogenous racial category. It has since become an important political term to connote the shared racialized and, in some cases, cultural experiences of Africans in the Americas. "Afrodescendant"/ "*Afrodescendiente*" are terms that have emerged from the late 20th/early 21st century social movements of communities in Latin America who claim elements of a shared cultural heritage and who have experienced racial discrimination. Many Afrodescendants, given Latin America's particularized notions of racial "mixture," are not always regarded as "Black;" they may be regarded as "mulato/mulata", "mixed" with other "racial" groups. Yet the affirmation of being descendants of Africans, most of whom were originally enslaved in the Americas, is the key point of connection of movement actors who generate and organize from a sense of "Black"/Afro consciousness. Also, in holding the notion of interAmericanity elaborated later in this work, the terms Afro-American and African-American can be applied regionally and not only to the United States.

Issues in Black life cast in a transnational frame focused on the dispersal of Africans from the Continent to various parts of the world have been extensively researched and explored in the scholarship of what comprises the field of African diaspora studies and Africana studies. Evolving out of pan-Africanism, Africana, Caribbean, and Black/Afro-American/African American studies, this interdisciplinary field has fashioned itself as a transnational space of inquiry that highlights the historical, cultural, artistic, and sociological study of new world people of African descent. Applying the notion of diaspora to the realities of Afrodescendants in the Americas casts that community in a transnational frame.

Patterson and Kelley framed their discussion of diaspora through grappling with the language and reality of globalization and the movement towards transnational thinking. Similar to other scholars working on transnational phenomena, they affirmed that "[n]otions of globalization are everywhere. More and more we read or hear about efforts to think 'transnationally,' to move beyond the limits of the nation-state, to think in terms of borderlands and diasporas" (p. 12). In their heeding the call for "transnational thinking" these authors also cautioned against the collapsing of diasporic/Black historical analysis within the confines of United States history and society. They problematized nation-centric understandings of Black life, noting ". . . the experiences of those located in the United States . . . have often come to stand for those not in the U.S. or used as the standard of comparison" (p. 21). African diaspora studies, they noted, have an important and complex intellectual genealogy and rest on the realities of the global formations of Black communities throughout the world. In clarifying our use of the African diaspora,

Agustín Lao-Montes and I wrote about ". . . the African diaspora as a multicentered historical field . . . framed by world-historical processes of domination, exploitation, resistance, and emancipation" (2014, p. 384). In the Americas we see:

> the international dimensions, commonalities, and discontinuities in the histories of diasporan communities of color. People of African descent in the New World (the Americas and the Caribbean) share a common set of experiences: domination and resistance, slavery and emancipation, the pursuit of freedom, and struggle against racism (McLeod, 1999, p. xviiii).

Some writers on the African diaspora observed that the original scholarly emphasis on the diaspora was seen primarily in a focus on the Atlantic World. Patterson and Kelley discuss how scholars ". . .seizing on the concept of a 'black Atlantic,' coined by Robert Farris Thompson [1983] and employed . . . by Paul Gilroy [1993] in his landmark text of the same name . . . contributed to a rebirth of African diaspora studies" (2000, p. 12). While the field of African diaspora studies expands to embrace the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, Asia, and the Middle East, and also works with diasporic communities of recent African immigrants to nations outside of the Continent, and the diasporas of Caribbean peoples to the metropoles of Europe and the Americas (Hall, 1990; Zeleza, 2010), the "Black Atlantic" is the focus of this work as it excavates the significance of diaspora and the patterns of domination that were engendered in the Americas.

My examples in engaging the Afro-Atlantic world as a transnational project for Social Justice Education is based on the emphasis of the world-historical processes of domination in the social construction of race, racialization, and racism in and across the Americas. Accompanying the interconnected experiences of oppression that Afrodescendants have endured are cultural forms linked to Africa, transformed and reshaped in the Americas, and contributing to liberatory consciousness among Black

peoples in the hemisphere. It is my view that a commitment to understanding world-historical processes will help those of us who teach about oppression, race, racism, cultural identity and resistance, particularly when foregrounding the experiences of Black people, and to be able to do this work by increasingly using an interAmerican frame.

Michael Hanchard's work on Brazil (1994) noted the significance of the African diaspora for the historical and contemporary problems of racialization and racism in the Americas. He acknowledged that

> . . . people of African descent, scattered about the Earth like all other
> diasporic peoples, had been subjected to a peculiar form of *racial* slavery
> and were members of a subordinated group in every nation-state they
> resided (p. 3).

Hanchard went on to explain that "this enslavement was part of a more comprehensive process of racial domination that had cultural, epistemological, and ideological consequences" (pp. 3-4). While the facts of historical *forced and involuntary* movement and migration of Africans across the Atlantic world was foundational to the process of race, racialization and racism in a Euro-colonized new world beginning en masse in the 16th century, "*diaspora* has only in the past forty years been a term of choice to express the links and commonalities among groups of African descent throughout the world" (Hayes, 2001, p. 45).

It is important to state here that while there are commonalities across nations in charting the racial projects and processes in the Americas, based on a shared historical trajectory of displacement and forced migration from the African continent among Afro-Americans and the forms of discrimination and marginalization that flowed from this historical reality, that these experiences are not identical among American nations. The thematics and patterns are conjoined: oppression, racialization, racial hierarchy, racist

practices of exclusion and cultural retentions/transformations along with resistance. Yet, the differences are salient. The British-derived system of racialization that developed in the United States, for instance, was distinct from the practices of Spanish-, Portuguese-, and French-derived racialization and racism in South America and the Caribbean can have different consequences for racial meaning, racial categorization, and struggles against racism. The diasporic communities in Canada have distinct histories and characteristics from those of the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The cultural heterogeneity of Africans brought to the Americas created new world forms of African-linked cultures which vary across regions and locations. So, while I claim the notion of the making of the African diaspora as a transnational historical phenomenon in the Americas, my intention is not to collapse the processes of racialization and the establishment of racial hierarchies, nor the formation of new world Black cultures as occurring in the *same* way in the various American societies. Makalani (2009) affirms that

> [w]hat stands out most about the African diaspora is not merely that the process of racialization was central to and concomitant with dispersion, but that dispersion involved *multiple racial formations* [emphasis mine]. . . (p. 1)

Patterson and Kelly also elaborated the fact of difference in their discussion of the diaspora in stating that

> Racial arrangements varied throughout the region [of the Americas] and can only be understood within specific historical spaces. Racial consciousness and the formation of identity is an historical process and comparative studies demonstrate the myriad ways these consciousnesses and identities have become framed historically. This new scholarship forces us to rethink the relationship between race and identity and demonstrates the importance not only of local histories but also of how these histories are connected to global developments. (2000, p. 24)

87

My contribution to Social Justice Education, particularly in our historical and contemporary formulations about race and Blackness (*Afrodescendencia* or *lo Afrodescendiente*—the formation of Afro-descendant communities in the Americas) is to draw from transnational imaginaries and African diaspora studies to further the work of learning and teaching about racial oppression and resistance to cultural imperialism in a cross-national frame. We can do this to better reach our students and to contribute to a more interconnected consciousness about the workings of oppression and potential for liberation. We can teach about similarities and differences in Black life and experience, in racial patterns and processes by including a pan- or inter-American frame in our understanding as educators.

The African diaspora and its various communities across the Americas give educators insights about the vibrant space of Afrodescendent cultures and their impacts on American cultures generally, as well as forms of resistance and movements for liberation that have emerged from communities and individuals who are descendants of the Africans who were brought to the Americas. The African diaspora is a great story of massive and multiple migrations, it provides the larger context for the stories that we construct and teach about race in our social justice learning spaces, and it is a site of profound cultural, historic, religious, political and social study of the Americas.

Americanity and Afro-"Americans." While many of us are accustomed to thinking in terms of the nation, we can also think beyond it. And, for those of us living and teaching in the United States, we may have internalized a U.S. focus in our teaching about American needs for justice. Scholars who work with the concepts of "Americanity" encourage us to think about the Americas as interconnected, sharing important historical

processes and contemporary issues. Americanity, an inclusive view that includes all of the Americas, is a transnational paradigm that can be useful for social justice educators who want to cross borders in their learning and teaching. By looking to the Americas as a region, rather than to the contained space of any one nation to frame our work, we can begin to teach more globally and transnationally. We can look to our neighbors in the hemisphere and to our shared and interlinked socio-historical processes into the formation of a so-called new world.

In his groundbreaking work on "interAmericanity" and "trans-Americanity," literary theorist José Davíd Saldívar (1993 and 2012), building upon the work of Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein (1992), challenged the worlds of American studies to open up to an analytics that holds the Americas as "a crucial geosocial space" and to turn to "hemispheric and trans-American studies" (2012, p. 2). Saldívar stated:

> 'Americanity' offers the area studies of Latin American studies and American studies an *outernationalist* [emphasis mine] approach to the cultures of the Américas in the modern world system" (2012, p. 2).

And, he advocated a "dramatic shift" from "thinking from the nation-state level to a thinking and acting at the planetary and world-systems levels" (2012, p. 13). Saldívar's Americanity is a transnational vision for framing the Americas as an interlinked regional part of a world-system, an interconnected region sharing a common legacy along with entwined contemporary problems of domination:

> Americanity [is] . . . a world-systemic unit of analysis [that] reflects the sense of immense enlargement of a planetary (trans)modernity, communication, and zone of the economy that began with the first Iberian modernity and hegemony of the Américas, as well as the beginning horizon of a . . . world-system (2012, p. 15).

In this frame, the Americas comprise a specific system, shared cultural spaces, shared hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality, along with other forms of oppression which have flowed from a shared colonial legacy and processes of conquest and enslavement across the region, along with the evolution of new world cultures formed through the complex processes of retention of ancestral knowledge in interaction with the multi-cultural (yet hierarchical) space of the Americas. Noting the Iberian (Spanish and Portuguese) foundational legacy in the Americas, Saldívar offers a vision for those of us in the United States to experiment with historical narratives of American history from the perspectives of Latin America and the Latin@ U.S. Framed by his own immersion in Chican@ studies and Latin@ literature in the United States, Saldívar shared his insights to advance a project of "post [US] exceptionalism" and a "mov[ing] away from a nationalist American studies to an outernational comparative critical U.S. studies" (2012, p. 31).

Influenced by Francophone Canadian theorists who began writing about an "American hemispheric framing" (Kurasawa, 2008, p. 349), Fuyuki Kurasawa discussed Americanity and its sensibilities found in Canadian thought (2008). He referred to americanity [sic] as "the socio-historical condition of inhabiting the Americas and the corresponding transnational and intercultural social imaginary shared across societies of the hemisphere" (p. 349). Kurasawa pointed to the work of Canadian scholars who have noted the

> shared features of a transnationalised American condition. Among these is the founding of the Americas through originary processes of mass violence, namely, colonisation, domination over indigenous populations and slavery (p. 350).

The frame of Americanity, Kurasawa argued,

> can push analysts to reconfigure societies of the Americas as porous
> spaces of engagement with ethno-cultural difference and globalizing
> tendencies, thus problematising the assumed boundedness of national
> cultures (p. 352)

and

> compels us to interpret the Americas as an intercultural amalgam, a
> creolized sphere of social relations produced out of the criss-crossing and
> articulation of global networks and forms of movement (p. 354). . . [and]
> provides some of the conceptual tools through which to recast socio-
> cultural and political processes in different terms – methodological
> nationalisms giving way to an analytical cosmopolitanism (p. 358).

Both Saldívar's and Kurasawa's Americanity, transnational, "outernational" frameworks

and "analytical cosmopolitanism" are useful to social justice educators, as we are

encouraged to join our Latin@ and Canadian colleagues to look beyond the nation, to

embrace the region as a conjoined, transnational space in our work to teach about systems

of oppression, and to expand our foci on socio-cultural and political processes that have

comprised the issues and discussions about oppression that we seek to generate among

our students.

Americanity can be a useful concept as it helps us to expand our understanding of

the African diaspora, for instance, as the site of multiple and conjoined experiences of

Black people and other Afrodescendants in different parts of the Americas and as

preparation for our building content around the workings of racism along with anti-racist

resistance. The frameworks of the transnational, the African diaspora, and Americanity

give us new material and new imaginaries upon which to analyze the realities of

Afrodescendant life in the Americas. The making of the Atlantic African diaspora was/is

a trans-American phenomenon, an "outernational" (beyond the nation) occurrence that

has engendered transnational Black experiences. As such, the use of diaspora as an analytic and imaginary through which to analyze Black/Afrodescendant life is to consider the transnational space of diaspora as a category of world-systemic historical analysis along with shared racialized, and in some instances cultural, experiences across the Americas.

Scholars of the African diaspora have noted interconnections –historical, cultural/linguistic, political, and social—between Afrodescendant communities across the Americas. While the landscape of interdisciplinary African diaspora studies is vast, one foundational fact that comes from the field and is a shared truth across the Americas, that is central to this work and important for social justice educators: *all Afro-descendant communities in all of their diversity have experienced racialization, racial subordination, and racial oppression.* The "tale of the diaspora,"

> suggests a transnational dimension to black identity: the African diaspora was a human necklace strung together by a thread known as the slave trade, a thread thrown across America with little regard for national boundaries (Hanchard, 1997, p. 238).

The African diaspora, as a central part of the dynamism of Americanity, can be argued to inhabit its own particular geosocial space, to be an important outernational phenomenon, and the Black/Afro-descendant communities that have been created from the experience of diaspora have suffered racist oppression that is particularly trans-American and hence, transnational.

The InterAmericanity of Anti-Black Racism

Noting the shared regional processes of the coloniality of power, transnational dynamics, and interAmericanity, it is clear that racism is not only a problem of the United States. The coloniality of power in the Americas established shared patterns, differently

similar trajectories in the construction of race in various countries in the region. The invention of "race" as a colonial project has been established. White supremacy is a shared feature of American settler societies and is the underside, so-to-speak, and the structuring narrative for practices of anti-Black racism and other racisms. Afrodescendant peoples have for certain been victims of racial hegemony throughout the entire region.

Because social justice educators teach about systems of oppression with the intent to work towards liberation, the historical and contemporary realities regarding Black/Afro-descendant peoples across the Americas are important for our work conceptualizing and teaching about racism. While many of us who work on racism and its effects upon Black communities in the United States have a wealth of interdisciplinary texts from which to build our curricula, there is also a wide variety of work in the field of African diaspora studies which teaches us about Black realities across the Americas and beyond that can extend our conceptualization and conveyance of race, racialization, and racism, and help us to transnationalize our work in Social Justice Education.

This work is concerned with the profound migratory experience, labor and gendered history of the Afro-American diaspora and subsequent struggles. Looking to the African diaspora allows for charting processes of social identity formation, the construction of race, the projection of race and the projects of racialization upon the humans who would come to inhabit the Americas, along with trans-American patterns of systemic racism that have shaped the lives of Afro-descendants. In the Américas, the story of mass migration and settlement of Africans largely begins with the transnational, inter-/trans-American experience of slavery, the launching system for the formation of ongoing and deeply entrenched anti-Black racisms in the region. Also, the story of

93

Afrodescendant American peoples and ongoing systems, and processes of anti-Black racism shift and change in a post-slavery historical trajectory. In both North and Latin America, including the settler-colonial Caribbean, Black identities have been central in the formation of separate nation-states at the same time that Black struggle is an interAmerican phenomenon. Anthropologist Peter Wade (2008) affirmed that "*[h]ablar de la identidad negra en América Latina implica hablar de la conformación del Estado-nación, pues es en relación a esto que la identidad negra usualmente se define. Sin embargo, hay que tomar en cuenta una dimensión transnacional también*/to speak of Black identity in Latin America implies speaking to the formation of the nation-state, which is the relation in which Black identity is usually defined. However, we have to notice the transnational dimensional as well [Translation mine]" (p. 119).

The transnational/interAmerican dimension of Black social identity is evident in the national histories of various American nations that are wholly comparable and worthy of notice in our social justice work to teach about systems of racism and potential for liberation from them. Their similarities and differences are worth investigating, as we grow our work in education to uncover the workings of oppression in regional and global contexts. I begin here with highlights of Latin American and U.S. racial histories and contemporary realities to ignite the transnational picture of African diasporic reality, giving us new terrain upon which to understand the social construction of Black identities in the context of interAmerican systems of white supremacy that developed in every American nation, and discourses and imaginaries that shaped racial hierarchies similarly and differently across the region.

Anti-Black Racism and White Supremacy: Discourses, Imaginaries and Practices

InterAmerican racism involved conglomerated European thought that traveled to the new world, which was applied and transformed in American colonial practices. The Spanish definitions of *raza/*race emerging first from the hierarchical ranking of animals and morphing into notions about humans who were imagined to be able to have *pureza de sangre*/blood purity uncontaminated with "Jewish" or "Moorish" blood (Fredrickson, 2002) first traveled. The work of scientists and philosophers such as Comte de Buffon, an Enlightenment naturalist who "assumed that Europeans were intellectually superior to Africans" (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 58); this too, traveled to the Americas. The conventions of science and postulations about physicality, intelligence, superiority and inferiority among humans that were being classified had a role in defining black racial identity, along with the posturings of European philosophers who grappled with fluctuating definitions of race and color (Blakely, 1999). "Europeans of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries valued extreme paleness, as well as the facial features and physiques thought to characterize the ancient Greeks and Romans" (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 60), therefore the assertion of white supremacist aesthetics was a reality across the region.

With the consolidation and transplantation of European thought, religion, science, and philosophy, "[i]n the New World . . . European pigmentation could be readily compared to that of black slaves or copper-toned Indians" that eventually "[t]here was little doubt among whites on either side of the Atlantic that Africans were currently less 'beautiful' than whites, more barbarous in their habits, and probably less intelligent" (Fredrickson, 2002, pp. 54 and 59), and that the "status of blacks as slaves and pariahs

highlighted the advantages of a white racial identity" (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 73). The migration of European racialist thought comingled with conquest and labor exploitation, and were founding features of American societies. These landed upon the backs of blacks and Indians whose structural positionality was already disadvantaged and oppressed in the settler-colonial new world.

In discussions about the histories and experiences of Afrodescendant people in the Americas and the development of racism, it is important to hold fairly consistently that Blacks were not racialized in a vacuum. As discussed, an accompanying dynamic of Black marginalization has always been the imaginary and practice of white superiority and supremacy. The settler-colonial projects in America-making that imported Africans to be bound laborers in early American local and transnational economies also brought European/white settlers to live and work in the Americas. The construction of race as an ideology of domination, based on a Euro-imaginary of superiority and the necessity to designate non-white Others as inferior and somehow deserving of the labor exploitation, characterized the building of American societies. Each American society that engaged in enslavement of Africans at whatever historical moments is implicated in the racial oppression of Afrodescendants.

In the Americas, the overwhelming condition of enslavement through to the 19th century was the experience of millions of Africans who were forcibly uprooted to the Americas.[6] American slave systems were systems of transnational labor, rationalized by Euro-/white supremacist narratives and imaginaries that justified brutality against people

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[6] While slavery was the overwhelming condition of blacks in colonial America, a number of scholars have studied the simultaneous existence of free/manumitted/escaped black individuals and communities, notably the existence of quilombos/palenques/maroon societies which profoundly influenced forms of resistance and cultures of the African diaspora. (Gonzalez Diaz, 2013; Landers, 2006b; Maris-Wolf, 2013).

of African descent who were bound to work and serve for the developing white-dominated settler societies that formed much of America. In what follows, I analyze Cuban/Caribbean racialized narratives ane their elements of social identity and oppression, established in ideology, discourse, and practices that were charted during the periods of enslavement. Cuba's history as a slavocracy created the landscape for the ongoing problems of racial subordination in that country.

Cuba, like many other American nations, was built upon the processes of conquest, enslavement, racialization, and global capitalism. The colonial/slavocratic history of Cuba provides an example case of white settlement, enslavement and cash-cropping, yet is unique in various ways. Cuba's involvement in slavery happened relatively late in the context of the history of the Americas. While the establishment of slavery began to shape America-making as far back as the 15th century, Cuba's social formation within these systems began to take hold in the 19th century. Cuba shared interAmerican, regional, colonial, transnational patterns of anti-Blackness that accompanied its dependence upon enslaved African labor. This slavocratic history of Cuba, along with the undeniable existence of large numbers of Afrodescendants post-emancipation, is a large part of its national story.

A Case Study: White Supremacy in Cuba

Over a million Africans were brought to Cuba during the Atlantic slave trade. It is noted by historians that in comparison to other Caribbean islands the mass importation of slaves began relatively late. "In most other West Indian islands the sugar revolution had occurred not long after the initial settlement" (Knight, 1970, p. 180), but Cuba's emergence as a slavocracy occurred after the Haitian revolution when Spanish colonizers

sought to gain dominance over the sugar trade in lieu of the French who had lost control over Haiti, an extremely profitable sugar colony. The pattern of importation of Africans to meet labor demands on colonial plantations happened after Europe's industrial revolution (Booth, 1979; Knight, 1970). "The Cuban plantation society based on slave labor reached its apogee between 1840 and 1860," (Knight, 1970, p. 179) and:

> [i]n the middle decades of the nineteenth century, as slavery was disappearing elsewhere in the New World, slave-based plantation production of sugar in Cuba reached remarkable heights . . . "(Scott, 1991, p. 454).

The rise of slavery in Cuba occurred during the period of European Enlightenment thinking. An Enlightenment-derived philosophical imaginary was accompanied by racialized, hierarchical discourses that were the foundations for global and interAmerican white supremacy.

Alongside the system of enslavement of Africans was the establishment of white communities in Cuba. These dynamics of European Enlightenment thinking, slavery and white settlement shaped the island's particular colonial, slavocratic trajectory that was somewhat historically unique (Knight, 1970; Scott, 1991; Sarduy and Stubbs, 1993). In the wake of the Haitian Revolution, where former slaves ejected France and established an independent Black republic at the height of slave systems across the Americas—an occurrence that reverberated among slavers across the Americas— "white Cuba shared with the rest of Caribbean planter society the great fear of the specter of black slave uprising" (Sarduy & Stubbs, 1993, p. 5). In addition to an imaginary shaped by fear of Black revolt among planters and settlers, a Cuban intelligentsia emerged and involved "[p]ositivist-inclined speakers [who] saw a racially mixed society as jeopardizing 'progress and civilization,' and [who] adopted a racist stand in favor of a white Cuba."

However, given its involvement in slavery, "a white Cuba was no longer feasible by 1840," (Knight, 1970, p. 181).

The forced migration of Africans, albeit late as laborers, shaped the racial landscape of Cuba in similar ways as it had in other parts of the Americas. "Slave labor was, to a great extent, unskilled labor . . . As long as the greater proportion of the laborers on the island were slaves . . . the institution of slavery generated certain peculiar social attitudes" (Knight, 1970, p. 182). The "peculiar attitudes" evolved from a complex formation of an already established transnational imaginary across the 19th century Americas. Existing across the Americas was the idea of "European ethnocentricity," (Knight, 1970), a developing global discourse of European supremacy that lent itself to pervasive trans-American ideas of white superiority in multiracial, settler-colonial societies with significant African presence. Connected to established notions of white advantage in relation to blacks, Knight argued, there had developed in tropical colonies a "myth . . . that white persons could not do certain types of works, and could serve only in managerial positions, because they could not endure prolonged exposure to the enervating rays of the sun," (1970, p. 182). Not particular to Cuba, "throughout the Caribbean, the planting of sugar cane and production of sugar, . . . any type of strenuous physical exercise, was considered work for black people" (1970, p. 182). Thus, the proscriptions of labor served to shape the racialized social identities of Blacks and whites in American slave systems, with discourses and practices that would encode who would be privileged and who was oppressed in the emerging colonial hierarchies in the region.

Cuba's white settler-colonial and slavocratic society resulted in the adoption of ideas about whiteness and ideas about Blackness or Africanness that shaped the treatment

and social location of Afrodescendants in that country. Yet, in the minds of whites during

the colonial period and in the deliberations about independence from Spain in the late

19th century, Tornero (2005) writes that:

> blacks were open to rebellion against the established order, not so much in amplified revolutionary movements, but with a determination that provoked what was called "fear of the negro" among the ruling classes, a fear rooted in the rebellion of slaves in Haiti. This posture determined that the history of Cuba was absolutely defined by the "black problem." All of the possible solutions for the Cuban question, as much on the Spanish side as on the Cuban side, inevitably wrestled with the solution to the slave issue, in its political, economic, and social facets [Translation mine]/ . . . *el negro mantuvo siempre abierta la rebelión contra el orden establecido, y no tanto en movimientos revolucionarios de amplio contenido, sino con una aptitud que provocó el llamado "miedo al negro" entre las clases dirigentes, sobre todo a raíz de la rebelión de los esclavos en Haití. Con esa postura determinó que la historia de Cuba estuviese absolutamente determinada por el "problema negro". Todas las posibles soluciones para la cuestión cubana, tanto desde el lado español como del lado cubano, pasan inexorablemente por la solución al tema esclavista, en sus facetas políticas, sociales y económicas* (p. 32).

Anti-Black racism, founded in both domination and fear of revolt (Castañeda, 1995), was

a function of the coloniality of power and was an important historical development in

Cuba.

In its wars for independence from Spain, race and racism also played a role in

delineating the bounds of Cuban nationhood and in establishing race-based customary

law in the island's dealings as a newly independent nation on the world stage. In their

volume on AfroCuban life and culture in the 1993, Pedro Sarduy and Jean Stubbs

foregrounded Cuban historical matters to elaborate their work on contemporary race

relations. In surveying dynamics that shaped AfroCubans, they write about the Cuban

trajectory and its dealings with the United States post-independence from Spain:

> The second war of independence (1895-8) liberated the colony from
> Spain, but led to US intervention in the war and subsequent military

occupation. The occupation, accompanied by massive foreign investment, had implications not only for sovereignty but also race, as there was an attempt to introduce into Cuba a segregation system not unlike that of the US South (p. 5).

After two wars of independence from Spain, slavery in Cuba "was abolished on paper in 1880, in reality by 1886" (Sarduy and Stubbs, 1993, p. 5). However, Cuba's systems of racialization and marginalization of Afrodescendants did not emerge in a contained space of a unified nation-state or solely under its historic Spanish colonial-slavocratic influence, nor did they end with the abolition of slavery. Cuba's own brand of Iberian-derived white racial hegemony and anti-black racism intersected with its position on the world stage and in the hemisphere. Cuba's national development included troubling overlaps with the United States, which by the late 19th century had long established explicit anti-Black racial politics and practices that were clearly articulated and enacted in many cases in statutory law.

Located 90 miles off the coast of Cuba, the United States' interventionist role on the island and the traveling of its own Jim Crow racial imaginary, served to provide overlapping imaginaries and discourses about race, which meshed with Cuba's own Ibero-colonial processes of racial hegemony in relation to Afrodescendants who inhabited the island. While emancipated AfroCubans were active in the independence struggle, labor and nationalist struggles and could have been embraced as full citizens in the processes of nation-making, the practice and discourse of white supremacy presupposing Black inferiority had been firmly entrenched in Cuba as it had been in the Americas as a whole, and was then further elaborated in its relationship with the United States. The social construction of race evolved continually within the spaces of national and transnational developments. "[R]ace politics in Cuba meshed with class and national

101

politics," (Sarduy & Stubbs, 1993, p. 8) as well as regional/transAmerican politics. Approximately sixty percent of present-day Cubans are Afro-descendants whose ancestors were initially brought to the Americas vis-a-vis the transAtlantic slave trade while global discourses of white supremacy engendered in the profoundly transnational power of coloniality, shaped Cuba as it did every other American nation.

Sarduy & Stubbs (1993) argued that

[w]hile 20th-century pre-revolutionary Cuba did not evolve into a US South or South Africa, it was considered to be the most racist of the Hispanic Caribbean territories. At the same time, its race dimension was comparable to Brazil's, in that the color spectrum ran from black through varying shades of brown to white. The 'whitening factor' continued to give those of mixed race greater social mobility than blacks within the broader society, and shaped socio-psychological aspirations (p. 9).

Even after the Cuban revolution in 1959, "race runs deep" (Sarduy & Stubbs, 1993, p. 7), in light of and in spite of Cuba's official policies of racial equality and legal and discursive maneuvers to end to racial discrimination. Like many Blacks/Afrodescendants in the Americas, descendants of Africans in Cuba began their trajectories in new world societies as bound laborers and were imagined to be inferior humans in relation to Euro-descendant settlers, and have been subjected to numerous racist discourses and practices that are oppressive. Discourses of white supremacy (and in the case of labor systems, whites being spared certain kinds of labor which was expected and demanded of Blacks) and practices of non-white marginalization characterize the historical and present-day landscapes of Cuba as they did in many American nations. Covert systems and practices of discrimination, along with elements of the colonial social and economic marginalization of AfroCubans persist into the present-day, even under a revolutionary socialist government that condemns racism.

102

Post-revolutionary Cuba has seen significant shifts in racial narratives and imaginaries since 1959. A strong contribution to new patterns in Cuba was the fleeing from the island of significant numbers of the white Cuban elite in the wake of the overthrow of dictator Fulgencio Batista and the establishment of a socialist government. Under socialism, state actors enacted policies outlawing racial discrimination and included Afro-Cubans in the island-wide programs for universal access to education, including higher education (to which most Afro-Cubans pre-1959 were denied entry), access to professions, housing, medical care and food subsidies, and in some cases, government posts. Along with these late to mid 20th century structural and economic shifts, changes in how the Cuban nation now holds its racial and cultural identity are apparent. There is an acknowledgement of AfroCuban presence, AfroCuban culture as core to Cuban culture generally, and an upholding of AfroCuban arts, music, and religion as a project of the revolutionary nation. Popular Cuban artists like the salsa group Los Van Van, uphold a definition of *Cubanidad*, as simultaneously *mulato*, Black, *Afrodescendiente*, evident in their 1999 song, "*Somos Cubanos*" which celebrated the idea that Cubans were "*Español y Africano*" (Spanish and African).

Yet, why does race run deep in Cuba and in the Americas generally? Allison Blakely (1999) posited that ". . . the assertion that peoples of black African descent constitute a distinctive racial group was first advanced by Europeans and not by African peoples themselves," (p. 87). In Cuba as elsewhere in the Americas, historically white Cuban anxiety settled on "the stigmatization of blackness; and the promotion of racism as a science" (Blakely, 1999, p. 87) establishing a highly racialized imaginary that privileged whites, whiteness, and lightness, structuring the lives of non-whites in

103

profound and oppressive ways. Flowing from Europe as early as the medieval period and combined with some of the binary imaginaries of Western European Christianity, "the theme of black skin color as fearsome" and the "color and concept of blackness . . . has been the real focus of attention" (Blakely, 1999, p. 89-91). The case of Cuba's trajectory as slavocratic colonial project and the continued entrenchment in the thought structures of the coloniality of power, speaks of the positionality of present-day blacks as having roots in the anxiety that was first engendered among slaveowners, and which fueled the colonial-construction of race and its internalization of white/light superiority in the culture generally. These have all shaped the significance of Blackness/*Afrodescendencia* in determining Cuban nationhood ongoingly, even in its modern day revolutionary ethos. Simultaneously amidst the pervasive patterns of race and racism, "[t]he African presence in Cuba is of vital importance among other factors that had fundamental impact in the formation of contemporary Cuba/*la presencia del africano en Cuba es de una importancia trascendental para otros factores de incidencia fundamental en la conformación de la Cuba contemporánea*" (Tornero, 2005, p. 32). So, while Cuba as an American society is a highly racialized one, the cultural and social presence of the descendants of Africa has very much shaped the country's identity.

With respect to imagining who would belong to pre- and post-independence Cuba, Pablo Tornero writes that "these Africans that the sugar oligarchy never admitted as Cuban, in the end [AfroCubanness] became a social and cultural contribution that was one of the most important received by the island/*[e]sos africanos que la oligarquía azucarera nunca admitió como cubanos, al final se convirtieron en el aporte social y cultural más importante que recibiera la isla*" (Tornero, 2005, p. 31). In this way, the fact

of Afrodescendants living in large numbers in Cuba created a kind of specter for whites, yet simultaneously shaped the island nation of Cuba in many ways— socially, culturally, and economically— into a multiracial nation characterized by the cultural and social contributions of AfroCubans living within a racialized hierarchy that disadvantages them.

While eventually, notably in post-emancipation periods, a discourse and claimed practice of holding Cuba as a "raceless nation" (de la Fuente, 1998), a general feature of the Latin American paradox of both denying and upholding race and color, Blackness and Afrodescendant people have been historically stigmatized in Cuba. The historic valorization and privileging of whiteness, attempts at whitening through encouraging European immigration (de la Fuente, 1998). and the dynamics and imaginary of racial assimilation and upholding of a not-Black, white, *mulato* (African and white) or *mestizo* identity has shaped the national discourse of belonging and Cubanidad. "Even socialist Cuba continues to manifest a preference for whiteness and a white opposition to interracial marriage" (Hernández, 2013, p. 3), and in the present day, the practice of including Afro-Cubans into the national imaginary is significant, while embedded structural and attitudinal patterns regarding the inferiority of Blacks still runs deep.

Black people, while having more access to opportunity in Revolutionary Cuba than they ever did prior are still structurally positioned within the dynamics of the coloniality of power, where a still shared national narrative of lightness and mixed-ness and its aesthetic and cultural preferences disadvantage Blacks and still pervade the country. Without national and transnational projects to highlight the colonial origins of race and anti-racist projects that address the psychological and behavioral dimensions that are embedded in settler-colonial cultures, patterns of inequality and racism will exist

despite the ideological and economic re-organizations of societies. Since anti-black racism was created within the contexts and cognitive structures of the coloniality of power, the fact of present-day Afro-Cuban struggles against marginalization are to be understand in the frame of interAmerican hierarchical functions around race. Cuba, in its own historically specific trajectory as a nation-state, followed many of the patterns seen across the Americas, where the convergence of European settler consciousness, ideologies of extraction and profit that characterize American capitalist systems, the historical practices of slavery and exploitation, along with the attachment to the idea of race and white/light supremacy were shaped in the coloniality of power.

Mestizaje/Mestiçagem in the Américas

While I have argued that white supremacy is a unifying construct in interAmericanity and that transnational race relations affirm an anti-Black and often anti-indigenous thrust, the ways in which white/light "racial" hegemony has lived differs significantly across the region. The predicaments of race, racial categorization, and racial imaginaries have historically and currently do vary across the Americas. Particularly in Latin America, the idea of hybridity and racial "mixing" is prevalent throughout that part of the region, has served various functions in shaping that part of the world, and constitutes an American discourse about race that has profoundly shaped American lives.

"*Mestizaje* can variably be translated as miscegenation, racial amalgamation (as in *blanqueamiento*, whitening), creolization, racial mixing, inter- or transculturation," (Kutzinski, 1993, p.5). Conceived, in many ways, in contrast to the United States' more clear delineation of racial categories, social privileges and disadvantages based on explicit ideas of white supremacy, the racial discourse and lived practices in Latin

106

America of *mestizaje* have their own particularities in the realities of "race" in the hemisphere. In many parts of Latin America, "[c]oncepts of mestizaje stress racial fusion and the inclusion of diverse racial elements as essential . . .; hence mestizos, or mixed-race people, are considered the prototypical citizens" (Telles & Garcia, 2013, p. 130). While racial hierarchies and white supremacy live in similar ways across the Americas, particularly in their valorization of whiteness/lightness and their marginalization of Blackness and Indianness, the racial discourse of mestizaje - "race"-mixing/"racial" hybridity - is an important and differential development in Latin America in comparison with the United States.

The discourse and imaginary of *mestizaje* is a shared feature of Latin American racialization, expressed within a discourse and ideology of racial fusion, yet predicated upon notions of white supremacy and Black and, in some cases, Indian inferiority. Latin America's pattern of upholding *mestizaje* as a visible social dynamic blurs some of the mechanisms of racialization that are more stringent and apparent in the United States, for instance. Yet, "*la ideología del mestizaje es una ideología racial que jerarquiza a los grupos 'raciales' que component la nación, privilegiando e idealizando lo 'blanco'*"/the ideology of mestizaje is a racial ideology that hierarchalizes 'racial' groups that comprise the nation, privileging or idealizing "whiteness" [Translation mine] (Hellbrandová, 2014, p. 87). Therefore, an examination of Latin American "whiteness," provides a backdrop for understanding transnational patterns of racism that have shaped people of the African diaspora and indeed all New World inhabitants.

As argued, elites stewarding the settler-colonial projects across the Americas constructed the idea of race as an imaginary that justified and inscribed domination.

"Race" as a way to understand humanity is in and of itself is a Eurocentric cognitive construct engendered in colonial relations. While some scholars utilize Latin America's discourse and practice of *mestizaje* and presuppose it as somehow better or more liberatory in comparison with the United States' systems of racialization and racial hegemony, several contemporary scholars contest this idea. Arguing instead that while the idea of *mestizaje* is different from North America and is particular to Latin America, the notion of *mestizaje* is dependent upon logics of "race" in the first place. The discourse and imaginary of mixing exists amidst pervasive and structural, aesthetic, cultural, and economic discrimination against Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples. A number of thinkers work with *mestizaje* to describe Latin America's specificities yet do not deny the impact of racism in that part of the hemisphere (Catelli, 2011; de la Cadena, 2001; Jerry, 2013; Safa, 2005; Sanjines, 2002; Telles & Garcia, 2013;Wade 2004 and 2005). "The very idea of mixture," Peter Wade argues, "depends fundamentally on the idea not only of whiteness, but also of blackness and indigenousness" (2005, p. 243). Latin America's *mestizaje*, many argue, has not necessarily led to "milder forms of racism" (Telles & Garcia, 2013, p. 132) particularly when holding the realities of social structure, economics, class and gender where the pattern of Afrodescendant existence across the whole of the Americas consistently places these communities at the disadvantaged end of social and economic hierarchies.

Racial discourses and practices were born in the coloniality of power, and changed over time in the Americas. In the 19th and 20th century nation-building projects throughout Latin America (involving struggles for independence from Spain and Portugal and by the end of the 19th century, the abolition of slavery) saw shifts in racial discourse.

While European-derived and transported scientific racism and eugenics were embedded in hemispheric racial logics generally, by the 20th century in Latin America these began to subside "when nation building elites sought narratives to create homogenous national populations . . . while downplaying racial and ethnic identities" (Telles & Garcia, 2013, 132). With the United States growing as a global and dominating power in the region "new ideologies were promoted as a moral high road for Latin America" (Telles & Garcia, 2013, 132).

José Vasconcelos, Mexican Minister of Education after the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910, wrote a celebratory treatise (1997) claiming that the peoples of Mexico and Latin America generally could claim to be "a cosmic race," predicated on an idea of racial and cultural mixing meant to distinguish these regions from the particular kind of dominating racial projects found in the United States. Vasconcelos cited a "mission of fusing all peoples ethnically and spiritually" (p. 19) in contrast to the United States' presumed want for "exclusive domination by Whites" (p. 19). The "Latin continent," Vasconcelos imagined, was "shaping a new race, a synthetic race that aspires to engulf and to express everything human in forms of constant improvement" (p. 19). In Latin America, Vasconcelos presupposed, a "mixed race that inhabits the Ibero-American continent" (p. 21).

In 2005, Peter Wade noted that "[s]cholars have recognised that mestizaje does not have a single meaning within the Latin American context" (p. 240). While "race" was an important interAmerican cognitive construct in the interest of domination, various nation-states have responded according to localized phenomena as to the meaning of mixing. In Mexico and Peru, for instance, indigeneity was claimed as central to the

project of mestizaje (Safa, 2005). In particular in Peru, "trigueño [brownish] whiteness provided racial sanctuary to mostly brown-skinned elites" (de la Cadena, 2001, p. 18). Where Afrodescendants were present in large numbers in countries that also had "whiter" populations, "[t]he mulatto [the mixture of Black and white] . . . never achieved comparable status in terms of state policy . . . even in Brazil and Cuba with their large Afrodescendant populations" (Safa, 2005, p. 310). In the Dominican Republic, a majority Afrodescendant nation bordering Haiti (an undeniably Afrodescendant country), various state projects of whitening, association of Blackness almost exclusively with Haitianness, and persecution of Haitians have led to the categorization of much of the Dominican Afrodescendant population as "indio" (though no significant indigenous population currently exists) as a peculiar project of *mestizaje* (Gates, 2011). In the Southern Cone of South America, notoriously characterized as "white" nations, racial discourses in Argentina (which until a sharp decline in the 19th century, had a significant involvement in slavery which resulted in a vibrant population of Afrodescendants), Chile (also, at one time had a significant Black population), Uruguay (which has a small but significant and politically active Afrodescendant community) (Andrews, 2010) and Paraguay (also has a formerly enslaved, Afrodescendant community) may hark to an romanticized sense of an indigenous past, yet the projects of whitening in those countries were imagined to be quite successful. Sanjinés (2002) looks at Bolivia claiming that "the paradigm of mestizaje is no more than a cultural discourse . . . to justify the hegemony of a mestizo-criollo liberal upper class" (p. 39) and that what emerged there was a "mestizo-criollo hegemonic idea" (p. 44). In most countries, "[m]estizaje celebrated racial and cultural mixture . . . at the same time that it reasserted the supremacy of the European race and

110

civilization by favoring blanqueamiento or whitening" (Safa, 2005, p. 307). Though

attempting to contrast itself to the United States, colonial-modern Latin American elites

still in many ways longed for "a whitened homogenous future" (Wade, 2004, p. 361)

even while imagining the inclusion of non-white racial Others into the body politic of the

region.

The logic of mestizaje and its presumed affirmation of "racial democracy" and/or

"racial innocence" proliferates throughout many parts of Latin America, yet the idea of

mestizaje is "[t]ied to Eurocentric thought . . . [and is] inadequate . . . to account for . . .

'colonial difference'," (Sanjinés, 2002 p. 57). The settler-colonial-modern hierarchies

that ranked humanity also contribute to social, economic, and governmental systems that

distributed material and psychological resources unevenly, with Black and indigenous

peoples remaining among the most disadvantaged in American societies. For the

purposes of this work, the emphasis on the inequitable experiences of Afrodescendant

communities, in spite of and in light of the Latin American idea of "mixing," is important

in charting important dynamics, along with the significance of an interAmerican African

diaspora and its "racial" and cultural presence across the region.

*Mestiçagem***'s World Capitol**

Brazil's racial system has been extensively researched by scholars of the African

diaspora. Brazil imported the largest numbers of Africans during the slave trade

(Skidmore, 1992), bringing "eleven times as many Africans as their North American

counterparts" (Telles, 2004, p. 1), while "race mixture or miscegenation . . . forms the

foundational concept of Brazilian racial ideology" (Telles, 2004, p. 4). Yet, "it is

common to hear Brazilians speak of their country as being the world's most

miscegenated country and the world's most unequal country, in the same breath" (Telles,

2004, p. 5). Many justice-inclined scholars of race relations in Brazil tend to focus on

macro-historical analysis using the lenses of critical race theory (Silva & Ries, 2012), and

many long for racial politics that can engender Black solidarity and struggle (Pinho,

2009; Silva & Reis, 2012). However, the realities of blurred and complex ways of

understanding race and color in Brazil are very real for that nation and its inhabitants.

Today

> Brazil is a very unjust country for the poor and especially for the black poor.
> Racialized inequality in Brazil is part of a larger and more complex
> phenomenon with roots in the past—slavery was massive, starting early and
> finishing very late, in 1888 (Sansone, 2004, p. 26).

Part of the complexities of Brazilian race relations, as they are across the Americas, are

the realities of social stratification and oppression given the coloniality of power and its

slavocratic and capitalist hierarchies. Yet, in Brazil the lived experience and meaning-

making of race and color have made racial discrimination somewhat hard to name. What

is particular about Brazil, however, is that "widely shared popular understandings of

inequality, race and national identity . . . appear to play an important role in tempering

race relations and race politics" (Sansone, 2004, p. 27). *Mestiçagem* in many ways

defines Brazilian national identity. "[R]acial mixture is perceived as a taken-for-granted

element of interpersonal relations" and "allows for a non-essentialist understanding of

race" (Silva & Reis, 2012, p. 383-384). National identity is built upon the idea of mixture

(Caldwell, 2007; Pinho, 2009; Silva & Reis, 2012) where "'whiteness in Brazil is not

necessarily equivalent to whiteness in the United States" (Marcus, 2013, p. 1290).

Brazilian whiteness. As in the rest of the Americas, whiteness and its elevated

status in settler-colonial societies shapes the racialization and social positionality of those

considered not white. Nineteenth and early 20th century Brazilian intellectuals and state actors "seemed to accept the theory of Aryan (or at least white) superiority and then promptly escaped the seemingly determinist trap by implicitly denying the absoluteness of racial difference. The whiter the better" (Skidmore, 1992, p. 17). Under post-emancipation policies of encouraging European immigration, Brazilian officials imagined that the country was "progressively whitening" (Skidmore, 1992, p. 19). Brazil "shied away . . . from . . . overtly racist gestures as an absolute color bar. They believed in a white Brazil and thought they were getting there by a natural (almost miraculous?) process" (Skidmore, 1992, p. 24). Thus the imaginary of European cultural and "racial" superiority is one that has shaped Brazilian race relations overall; within the national ideology of *mestiçagem* was a not-so-subtle discourse of white superiority. Brazilian culture was acknowledged "as a result of mixing . . . but the European contribution [was seen] as the most . . . important" (Hernández, 2013, p. 67). In the present day, whiteness has its own complex definition in Brazil and varies across regions of the country (Marcus, 2013). Amidst the pervasive 20th century idea that most Brazilians are "mixed" and a general inability across the nation to claim "white racial purity" (Skidmore, 1992, p. 17) has been a history of an inscription of whiteness as *white-enoughness* that undergirds race relations generally in the country. In Brazil, there has been "the establishment of a somatic norm praising the Caucasian and downplaying the value of the *mestiço*, *indio*, and black" (Sansone, 2003, p. 188).

Within Brazilian racial and color schemas that overvalue somatic whiteness and white-enoughness and exist simultaneously with a general national recognition of *mestiçagem* and the reality of African "racial" presence. Thus:

measure[s] of whiteness . . . [are] not defined only by skin color. [Instead] a much wider economy of signs with other bodily features, hair texture is almost as important as epidermal tone (Pinho, 2009, p. 40).

In her explorations about discourses of color, features, and hair and how the "reading" of these on the bodies of Brazilians is a function of a particular racialized system, Patricia de Santana Pinho (2009) discusses how her father, a light-skinned mulatto, upon preparing to marry her mother, was seen as having the "'right color'" but the "'wrong hair'" (p. 40). In sharing this example of the way whiteness is held in Brazilian society, she goes on to explore, in her piece "White But Not Quite," the nuanced evaluations that exist among everyday Brazilians in what is fundamentally a mixed-race society with large numbers of people who are visibly Afrodescendant. While the idea of "whiteness . . . [functions] as an interconnected global system . . . [and is] associated with European and North American theories of scientific racism" (Pinho, 2009, p. 42), "whiteness in Brazil has never been constructed as 'the oppositional' identity (Pinho, 2009, p. 44). Instead, Pinho argues that

> whiteness has silently become hegemonic through discourses of mestiçagem/mestizaje . . . and is less frequently explicitly marked than it is more commonly implicitly and carefully manipulated by individuals and groups in their ongoing microstruggles for power (p. 44).

In Brazil, "whiteness can be composed of nonwhite elements" (Caldwell, 2007, p. 37). One can be white *and* have African ancestry (Pinho, 2009). A constellation of color, facial features, hair texture, along with the idea of "'behavioral whitening' . . . [the] discarding of African and indigenous cultural practices" (Pinho, 2009, p. 42) contribute to fluid conceptions of whiteness (and not-whiteness) that pervade

Brazilian society. Simultaneously amidst this fluid definition of whiteness, Pinho

argues, there is a "hypervaluing of whiteness . . . as a central pillar for the creation

of a modern civilzation in the tropics" (2009, p. 49) in a country whose

predominant racial/cultural identity is acknowledged as being "mixed".

　　　Brazil is a large country with significant regional differences regarding

racial/color designation:

> If São Paulo is among the whitest regions of the country, it is
> therefore "harder" to be considered white there. At the opposite pole
> of São Paulo's whiteness is [Northeast] Bahia's blackness. If Bahia
> has been represented as the blackest of all Brazilian states, it is thus
> more common there for a mestiço to be seen as white (Pinho, 2009,
> p. 50).

The "subtle undertones of [a] multipolar system" (dos Santos, 2008, p. 269) characterize

the designations of whiteness in various parts of the nation. The claiming of whiteness

and the benefits given with that categorization, as is the functioning of "race" generally,

has impact upon individuals and communities regarding whether one can be white and

treated as such and whether one is not white, suffering those particular consequences.

Engendered from macro-level conceptions of race, "most Brazilians have a preference for

whites" (Silva & Ries, 2012, p. 386) as whiteness is "not merely a neutral standard"

(Pinho, 2009, p. 40) in a racially mixed country, "but something that stands out as a

symbol of status in Brazilian society" (Pinho, 2009, p. 40).

　　　Non *brancos.* In Brazil, *pretos* (Blacks), *pardos* ("browns"), and *morenos*

("tans") are defined nationally as products of *mestiçagem*, and are positioned interstitially

and sometimes in contradictory ways in Brazilian society. As "[s]ome 'types of mixture'

are clearly preferred to the detriment of others" (Pinho, 2009, p. 40), on the one hand

brown and black people can recognize their African ancestry while they also participate

in the nuanced systems of racial ranking among individuals, the physical manifestations

of color and hair texture, gestures and discourses, practices that live in everyday Brazil

(Pinho, 2009).

Marcus's study of sex, color and geography in Brazil (2013), examined Brazilian

census categories and their correspondence to the workings of race and color, and reveals

a complex intersection of class, color, and racial identity development in how everyday

Brazilians make meaning of race amidst cultural and racial discourses of *mestiçagem*. In

this work the structural realities of race are revealed

> the darker the skin color in Brazil, the more likely those populations will
> also be marginalized, disenfranchised, and carry a negative social stigma
> (despite the existence of cordial interracial relationships in Brazil . . .).
> Conversely, the whiter the skin color, the more likely those populations
> will have access to better life chances, higher educational attainment,
> and full enfranchisement and assimilation (p. 1294).

High poverty and infant mortality rates, lower life expectancy rates, rates of

homicide, practices of police violence, etc. exist disproportionately among Black

Brazilians in comparison with other groups. In addition to institutional and structural

discrimination experienced by the darkest Brazilians, everyday discourses that

presuppose Black aesthetic and cultural inferiority abound in media and popular culture,

in families, and across the country at large (Caldwell, 2007; Hanchard, 1994).

Amidst the complexity of race in Brazil are the daily negotiations and

understandings that Brazilians hold about racial identity. Many non-white Brazilians

recognize racism and simultaneously embrace an idea of racial democracy, interracial

harmony and mixing as key features of Brazilian national identity overall (Silva & Reis,

2012) in which they see themselves included. Depending upon class, Silva's & Reis's 2012 study interviewing Brazilians about racial perceptions and identity showed that working-class interviewees were more apt to claim mixed race identities that separated themselves from blacks, and that middle-class respondents could simultaneously claim mixed-ness and affirm blackness as a point of pride. Brazilian blackness, they argued, was generally defined as multiracial/multiethnic (p. 392). The context of increasing pride in blackness found among middle class respondents in Silva's & Reis' work study coincides with the rise of the late 20th/early 21st century black movement in Brazil which has brought attention to the structural facts of racial discrimination along with increasing willingness among Afrodescendants (of various shades) to claim themselves as *negro*/black (Caldwell, 2007). Brazil's contemporary movements on the part of Afrodescendants have brought about a new national conversation about racism, have inspired affirmative action policies that allow Afro-Brazilians more access to education and jobs, and have been linked to national and transnational black movements across the Americas for equity, justice, and pride in African ancestry.

The United States: One-Drop Blackness and Über Whiteness Politics

"When compared to the United States, racial dynamics in other parts of the New World have seemed tame" (Hernández, 2013, p. 45). However in noting the shared settler-colonial formations and the oppressed structural positionalities of Afrodescendant peoples across the Americas, perhaps it more accurate to say that in some Latin American countries racial politics may be not as historically *scary* as they have been in the United

117

States[7]. As with the rest of the Americas, the United States' formation was established fundamentally in violence. Conquest of indigenous peoples, Mexicans in the Southwest, takeover of Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico and Alaska, along with the legacy of enslavement of Africans are core elements of its coloniality of power, as conquest and European settlement were for much of the Americas. The United States is notorious for its brand of racism and its persistence of racialized violence against those perceived as racial Others. With respect to Afrodescendants, U.S. racial politics have been recognized for being historically segregationist and overt. The U.S.' post-emancipation realities are rife with anti-black racism, where more subtle and embedded forms of racism exist more predominantly. Yet, even in the present day, instances of white supremacy and systematized, terroristic violence occur against non-white peoples (Moore, 2014). A peculiar kind of white anxiety characterizes the formation of the United States, somewhat in contrast to its American neighbors, having involved a passionate white supremacist racial imaginary and a steadfast policing of the boundaries of race.

Fundamentals of U.S. whiteness. In North America, "'white' people as a designation of a group of humanity, much less as a race, never existed until late in the seventeenth century" (2013, p. 1), affirmed legal scholar Jacqueline Battalora. Several scholars point to the invention of "race" and particularly to the invention of whiteness as a conglomerated social space to which various peoples of European descent could eventually assimilate. Studying the 17th century colonial U.S., it is noted by many that the conditions of English indentured servants were not markedly distinct from the

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[7] *Some* Latin American countries is an important emphasis. Periodic massacres of Native communities occurred from conquest to the 20th century (e.g., Guatemala's attack on whole communities of the Maya during the eras of military repression in the 1970's and '80's) and in some cases, Black communities. The Dominican Republic's slaughter of Haitians in 1937 and the massacre of Black political activists in 1912 in Cuba are examples where the notions of "milder" or "tamer" racism do not apply.

conditions of African laborers in the early colonies of Virginia and Maryland, that "[i]ndentured servitude in America steadily evolved into slavery" (Desmond and Emirbayer, 2010, p. 61). A shared reality of poverty and exploitation of European and African laborers resulted in various forms of racial mixing, intimate and otherwise. The occurrence of black-white solidarity that characterized Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 Virginia is seen as a turning point in the invention of race, the rise of the idea that European descendants were "white," and the entrenchment of black slavery in what would become the United States (Battalora; 2013; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Smedley & Smedley, 2012; Takaki, 1994).

The rise of tobacco profits in the 17th century North American colonies were accompanied by an interracial coalition of black and white workers during Bacon's uprising in Virginia. However, through law and ideological work, "the majority of free Americans began to view white servants as people who could be assimilated into American citizenry and black servants as slaves for life" (Desmond and Emirbayer, 2010, p. 61). This racialized distinction between enslaved, and later, impoverished blacks, and the white poor and working class persists into the present day in the United States. In the United States a "psychological wage" and some material benefits, offered to English and other "white" workers in the colonial periods inspired in them an imaginary of white solidarity, even with their wealthy exploiters, where enforced social deference required of non-whites and preferential treatment would allow "whites" to re-imagine their status to be higher than that of enslaved and impoverished blacks (Battalora, 2013; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010).

The invention of U.S. whiteness began in the early colonies and was established through statutory and case law (e.g., anti-miscegenation laws, harsher punishment laws for blacks, etc.), persistent ideological work to instill superiority among whites, psychological benefits, and eventually social distance, custom and daily practice. Along with the violence and abuse meted out by upper class slave owners and other whites of means against Afrodescendants, racial benefits for the white poor and working class eventually included the right to humiliate, intimidate, brutalize, and terrorize black individuals and communities with impunity.

While in many Latin American societies, miscegenation was tolerated and expected, even amidst the particular kinds of white superiority that emerged in those parts of the Americas, North American whiteness depended upon the idea of purity. Anti-miscegenation laws in the United States served as the tool for the ideological anchor of imagined white purity. And while officially, mixed race unions were outlawed and not formally recognized, they frequently occurred in the form of sexual exploitation and assault of Afrodescendant women by white masters, overseers, and employers, or in perhaps less violent forms of consensual relations, concubinage in some cases, still in the dominating context of U.S. slavocracy and post-emancipation systems of racial segregation with their class, gender, and white supremacist hierarchies.[8]

The coloniality of race in the United States. What is unique about the coloniality of race in the United States is that miscegenation involving Afrodescendants did not usually change the racial categorization of mixed race offspring, nor did it officially create somewhat fluid hierarchies of white enough-ness as it could in some

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[8] Sexual exploitation and concubinage existed, also, in Latin America and in many cases were also rooted in violence against non-white women.

Latin American societies. Definitions of blackness varied across regions (Louisiana, originally colonized by the French, is a somewhat differential case, in which a class of mixed race people lived in the interstices of blackness and whiteness.), yet visible traces of African ancestry and/or location in segregated black communities and families would for the most part designate even lighter-skinned Afrodescendant individuals as black and subject them to racist hostility. Whiteness in North America depended upon a notion of European-derived purity, therefore any biological mixture with blacks simply and for the most part—in that particular social construction of race— created more blacks. Generally, any visible and/or acknowledged Black ancestry indicated the impossibility to claim whiteness or to reap its benefits, even when European descendancy was a large part of a person's or a community's genetic heritage. One exception to the general trend of Afrodescendants of mixed-race backgrounds are the instances of post-emancipation Afrodescendants who were white-looking-enough to pass into the white mainstream. "Passing" required a cutting of all familial and cultural ties, and could be a painful and profound choice for those "blacks" who preferred to access the material-psychological benefits that white racial identity gave consistently and quite generously to those designated as white in U.S. society.

In the U.S., Afrodescendants across a range of skin color, facial features, hair textures, and cultural practices have been largely seen historically as not white, as black. Being black in the United States meant that individuals and communities were subject to violence, segregation, economic exploitation, and criminalization, along with profound structures of social and economic inequity that still characterize the 21st century United States. Being black in that part of the Americas has involved living under a colonial-

121

racial hegemony that was often terroristic, consistently throughout the South (Rice, 2011), with violent episodes of white attack also shaping black experiences in the Northern part of the country (despite being popularly believed to be more racially tolerant than the South). Assaulted with everyday discourses and media images that subordinated them, laws, practices, and policies that excluded them from full economic and political opportunity, Afrodescendant U.S. Americans have also struggled to free themselves from white terror and repression.

U.S. whiteness was defined wholly in opposition to blackness. Official and legal whiteness would not incorporate any element of Afrodescendancy. Whiteness was an official legal status, charted by the census, regulated by the courts, and afforded specific economic and political benefits such as the right to become naturalized citizens, to vote, to hold certain kinds of work, land, or property, to live in certain neighborhood and to attend certain schools etc. that were held exclusively for whites and stated as such in law (Herbes-Sommers, 2003; López, 1996).

What is most notable about race in North America is, as it was across the Americas generally, was that whiteness was the common point from which to decipher the racialized experiences of non-white others. White privilege, engendered as it was in colonial-modern white-settler societies, was and is the common denominator in factoring matters of race. In the United States historically, white privilege offered whites a range of material and psychological benefits along with the ability to enforce their sense of individual or communal supremacy by actively attacking blacks and other non-whites. As Hamden Rice exposes, in his 2011 article charting the significance of the mid/late 20th century Civil Rights Movement to his family, is a recognition that what often defined

"race" for black people were the prerogatives of white people who could go "berserk." Until the civil rights struggle pushed back against such forcible white supremacy insistent upon its own imaginary of purity, what existed was a "constant low level dread of atavistic violence . . . . [that] made life miserable, stressful and terrifying for black people" (Rice, 2011).

While there are many aspects of whiteness that are extreme in the United States, definitions of whiteness have had their own evolution. The category of whiteness has expanded throughout U.S. history, initially incorporating the descendants of England, France, and initially, begrudgingly the Dutch colonists in North America (Smedley & Smedley, 2002). Eventually the Irish, who themselves had a colonial experience under English rule, would become white in America. Italians and other Southern Europeans, Eastern Europeans, and Jews (Europe's racial Other) would over time become "white" in the United States (Brodkin, 1998; Guiglielmo & Salerno, 2003; Ignatiev, 2008).

There is some speculation that in the 21st century we may see people of Latin American heritage, who may already be seen as white in alignment with Latin American racial schema, "become" white given the evidence of the U.S.'s periodic expansion of the category of whiteness. Like in Latin America, whiteness in the U.S. has a conglomerated quality, even though it has historically claimed racial purity on behalf of those who inhabit the "white" category. In the present day United States, white roughly means of European descent untainted with the genetic material of black or other visible racial Others. Anti-miscegenation laws were not overturned until the 1960's. And in the late 20th and 21st century, emerging voices of mixed race individuals wanting to remake the national conversation about race, whiteness and blackness is an interesting development

that in many ways echoes the discursive maneuvers of *mestizaje* in Latin America, where mixture can indicate the possibility of distancing Afrodescendants from blackness en route to a kind of whitening.

What is uniquely interAmerican about race, rather than any kind of inherent unity or sameness with respect to the construction of non-white identities, especially Afrodescendant identities, is that the core of the colonial business of race-making rests most squarely on the anxious creation of white racial identities as varied and changing as they have been historically. Whiteness is and has been unstable, it has been constructed in the space of negation, and its power is lived by everyone (Pinho, 2009), as it "operat[es] either in opening or closing doors of opportunity and achievement" (Pinho, 2009, p. 53) for Americans across the region.

Mestizo America

While whiteness lived/lives powerfully and violently in the United States, the irony of the idea of U.S. racial exceptionalism (held by Latin Americans and in the U.S. itself), is that "race" overall is a fictionalized character of human history, a profound social construct written indelibly in the whole of America's coloniality of power. Legal scholar Dorothy Roberts (1997) writes that "[w]hites invented the hereditary trait of race and endowed it with the concept of racial superiority and inferiority to resolve the contradiction between slavery and liberty" (p. 9). While Latin Americans may hold the idea of "mixing" alongside their white racial hegemonies, the U.S. holds the racial idea of "purity" in its. However, "mixing" is a reality of the entire region of the Americas, a shared feature of our interAmericanity.

Mixed "racial" and cultural formations characterize much of American life (Manning, 2010). The implantation of European languages and cultural practices, the continuation of indigenous life and in some cases sovereignty, and the melding of territories, peoples, languages and religions are evident even amidst the U.S.' notions of "purity." Processes of immigration have informed the Americas— the involuntary immigration of enslaved Africans during colonial periods, and waves of immigrant communities from Asia, the Middle East, voluntary immigration from Africa in the late 20th century to the United States, along with interregional movements from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America. Immigration has been an important development in the making of the new world settler colonies. While degrees of separation and segregation have existed in many parts of the Americas, the blending of cultural forms and human lives have created new peoples, uniquely American across the region. African intermixing with Native populations, "white" influences all around, Asian presences, etc. have shaped national and regional cultures.

So while the fictions of "race" and the coloniality of power have structured American lives profoundly, so have the realities of cultural exchange and intermingling. In spite of the U.S.'s paradigm of purity, even the U.S.' cultural and "racial" landscape, when held in an interAmerican frame, can be seen as a product of— for better or for worse— *mestizaje*, movement, hybridity and diaspora.

Afro/Black Presences in the Americas

The coloniality of power structures the lives of all who are in the Americas in "similarly-different" ways and the brunt of oppression, discrimination, and white racial hegemony in all of its various definitions across the Americas, has been and is borne by

125

Afrodescendant and indigenous communities (and in some cases, non-European immigrant and other communities of color, particularly in the U.S., who came to the Americas at different junctures). However, true to the idea of *mestizaje* in cultural and relational terms, the Americas are a mélange of peoples, a montage of ancestries, constituting multicultural/multiethnic— though unequal and hierarchical— national and transnational spaces. The transnational, diasporic, interAmerican social spaces are, in the context of human history, a new world, a polyglot, a new intersubjective constellation of peoples whose identities were fashioned under the tutelage of European settler-colonial domination. American cultures are multicultural, and though this configuration was created through violence, it is an unchangeable reality.

National and transnational communities of the African diaspora with their shared continental origins and shared structural positionality in the region, are in and of themselves multi-cultures, formed at the juncture of acculturation from different ethnicities, language groups, and territories on the African continent, enslavement in white-controlled societies, and transplantation to a new world. All of these dynamics required the remakings of self and community among Afrodescendants in the Americas. So, while for most Afrodescendants in the Americas enslavement in colonial space and racialization in settler hierarchies was an important part of the construction of our identities, given our intersubjective relationships with others in the Americas including those who dominate and oppress us, our presence in the region is not defined *solely* by our oppression. Afrodescendants carry cultural presences in the Americas, which cannot be contained wholly within the stories of our racialization and oppression under new world white racial hegemony. While it is important to hold the overwhelming influence

of the coloniality of power, educators can think about Blackness/Afrodescendencia "as a narrative not [only] about slavery, lack, and open-ended neediness, but rather as a journey propelled by *uprootedness* and expressed with *improvisation*" (Fox, 2006, p. 4).

The African diaspora has profound cultural and resistant presences in the Americas, carrying forward African cultural origins and sensibilities retained, refashioned and improvised amidst cultural exchange with all of the peoples inhabiting the region. Created in the condition of uprootedness and in a spirit of resistant transformation, African-descended peoples and hence *Blackness* "'locates' and 'transforms' the experience of peoples of African descent" (Fox, 2006, p. 3) across the Americas and constitutes a multicultural, multiethnic, multi-"racial" space of creation, survival and improvisation that is uniquely new world. In many ways, the past and present claiming of Blackness by individuals and communities is a cultural and social politics. While the coloniality of power projected "race" upon all the people of the Americas—an essentialist idea predicated upon the notion of European superiority— contemporary Afrodescendant movements, amidst all the various discourses about race and belonging across the Americas have also carved cultural and political spaces that are specific, culturally "mixed" and in many cases, new world African.

Earl Lewis (1999) writes that "[q]uestions of consciousness, identity, and community will demand greater attention" (p. 21) when charting the meaning and significance of the African diaspora. Elements of culture, cultural fusion, creation, and resistance are what perhaps defines the presence of Blackness in the Americas. In addition to our work in teaching about histories, systems, and identities, further explorations of Afrodescendant consciousness, identity, and community, we must teach

about "race." However, beyond the impactful experience of racialization and racial subordination are the decolonial/resistant possibilities in the interAmerican existence of Black peoples. While there is no one unified Black cultural presence that is singularly interAmerican, perhaps to describe the situation of Afrodescendants in the Americas it is "more adequate to talk about diasporic conditions" as well as "transnational relocalization of kinship bonds" (Lao-Montes, 2001, p. 13) as they traveled and were transplanted with Afrodescendants amidst the cultural montage that constituted the Americas.

Several scholars have found "commonality within differentiation" among new world Afrodescendants, noting a "continuity of African traits even in westernized Black Atlantic manifestations" (Sims, p. viii). In other words there are Black cultural presences that have been "created and redefined through a triangular exchange of symbols and ideas between Africa, the New World and the black Diaspora to Europe . . . creating the contours of a transnational, multilingual and multireligious culture area" (Sansone, 2004, p. 1- 2). Aside from the proscriptions of race, Black peoples across the Americas exist in national and transnational "diasporic public spheres" (Appadurai, 1996). The African diaspora is a "world historical formation" (Lao-Montes, 2005), a constellation of interAmerican communities that can be studied and taught as what they are: transnational, border-crossing social, cultural, and resistant spaces of interconnection, commonality *and* differentiation, shaped by the shared experience of forced uprootedness, victims of the interAmerican coloniality of power, yet not exclusively defined by these. Afrodescendant agency, cultural retentions, Black consciousness, Afro-American meaning-making, and transnational forms of resistance and struggle can be

learned and taught as a politics of liberation, as justice-seeking improvisations in the "racial", cultural, social, and political quagmire that is the colonial-modern Americas.

Conclusion

As we more fully map the realities of Afrodescendant peoples in the Americas using global/transnational frames, along with noting our cultural, resistant improvisations amidst the structures of domination that have shaped our identities and experiences, we more fully "historicize the processes of racial formation and identity construction" (Lewis, 1999, p. 5). We open new questions about historical processes that "[situate] the African diaspora as a unit of analysis" (Patterson & Kelly, 2000, p. 13) and as a transnational community with notable shared experiences across contexts. In addition to acknowledging the white settler-colonial heritage of the Americas, working with Americanity as a hemispheric, transnational concept, and expanding our knowledge of the racialized realities of the transnational African diaspora, social justice educators also have the opportunity to work with the entanglements and intersections of multiple axes of identity formation and experience that feminist theorists have foregrounded.

The practice of settler-colonialism created in the Americas established a profoundly new world, interAmerican system where geocultural identities were formed and produced in the context of hierarchical and oppressive socio-structural and relational interactions. In real life terms, individuals and communities in differently positioned social identity groups were formed in relation to one another, a reality that has enabled complex forms of cultural and ontological exchanges, as well as to expose both the coherencies and the contradictions of colonial schema that sought to differentiate people

from one another. Along with race, the coloniality of power did/has weighty dealings with gender, class, and sexuality (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 2002). In the Americas, shaped in the structures of settler-colonial domination, new world identity constructions were relational and were profoundly gendered and classed.

Thus far, I have worked to map historical legacies and interAmerican analyses of race, racism, and *Afrodescendencia*, yet as an educator I am most fully rooted in feminist frameworks and consider them to be the most comprehensive for Social Justice Education. Black people are gendered and classed amidst our racialized oppression, hybridity, cultural forms, and presences across the Americas, and feminist thought offers educators more tools by which to understand the interlocking systems of oppressions that have shaped Afrodescendant life, and indeed all of life, in the Americas.

To understand and teach well about the histories and structures that have shaped social identity formation, in addition to learning about present-day struggles and resistant practices among oppressed communities, involves considering some of the following: 1) identitfying who is oppressed and who is privileged in settler-colonial contexts in structural and in real life terms; 2) on what terms peoples have been/are oppressed given the structures of domination that have characterized America-making, and; 3) what kinds of knowledges and possibilities are linked to the social classifications and systems of dominations, such as race, gender, and class that we have to contend with as educators. With the use of feminist theories and their contributions to education and activism, we have the opportunity to teach how gender, race, color, class, culture and sexuality, along with other forms of classification and domination/privilege, are interlinked and wholly inform each other. A full understanding of the coloniality power and how it structures

130

oppression, particularly for Afrodescendant women in the Americas, necessitates an analysis of "gendered and sexualised racialization" (Mirza, 2009, p. 6), along with analyses of class.

In order to more fully know the transnational, interAmerican African diaspora, and the workings of the coloniality of power overall, we would have to know gender. Knowing gender, in the context of America's colonial heritage, compels educators to know about gender's overlaps with race, class, sexuality, and nation. Working with gender as a category of analysis invites educators to center the experiences of Afrodescendant women in the Americas, to analyze their predicaments using the transnational and diasporic frames proposed thus far in this work, and to develop an analytical "matrix" that notes the intersectionality of forms of oppression and social identities that can includes and goes beyond explorations of Black women's lives. Feminist-inspired scholarship and theorizing encourages educators to "gender" their frameworks generally and to teach and learn more comprehensively about oppression and visions for liberation across the Americas.

CHAPTER 4

INTERLOCKING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION:
INTERSECTIONALITY AS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction: Gendering the African Diaspora

While many scholars of African-American and Afro-diasporic history, life, and

culture have discussed the primacy of race in Black people's lives, it has mostly been

Black women and multicultural feminist[9] scholars who have noted the importance of

gender. Feminist[10] historians have looked at Black women's lives, labor, struggles and

social location through the various epochal periods of American histories. Joining

historians are sociologists, anthropologists, writers, literary theorists, activists and

educators across disciplines who have dedicated themselves to the work of excavating the

details of Black women's lives, as members of a transnational diaspora and in light of our

structural predicaments in settler-colonial societies. Gunning, Hunter & Mitchel (2004)

suggest that to chart " . . . a vastly complex and barely containable field of human

experience that is the mark and measure of the African Diaspora" that the . . . "use of

gender as a category of analysis remains something of a challenge for African Diaspora

studies" (p. 2). However, "[g]ender . . . [is] an analytical tool requir[ing] academic

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[9] Here, my reference to multicultural feminism utilizes Ella Shohat's definition. (1998). Her idea of multicultural feminism brings the insights of Black feminisms, U.S. Third World feminisms, and transnational feminisms into coalition and interrelationality.

[10] While the term "feminist" is much contested, I claim feminist thought particularly in its racially-aware, anti-colonialist, anti-patriarchal, and intersectional forms. The problems of middle class white feminism, Euro-American and European international feminism have been extensively documented in women's and gender studies spaces for decades, resulting in some scholars and activists to reject to the word "feminist" to describe their political commitments. I am among Afrodescendant and other women of color scholars who have claimed and recast feminism to be in alignment with the realities and circumstances of non-white women in national and transnational spheres.

specification" (Beckles, 1995, p. 127) and is a crucial lens for social justice educators for their teaching and learning projects.

Feminist scholars and others concerned with the particularities of Black women's histories have encouraged scholars of the African diaspora to account for the workings of gender in studies of African diasporic histories, identities, movements, and cultures (Beckles, 1995; Gunning, Hunter & Mitchel, 2004; Guy-Sheftall 1998 and 2005; Terborg-Penn, 1995). We have been encouraged to work with an intersectional/ integrative analysis to center the experiences of Black women along with theoretical frameworks that extend our understanding of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation to our studies of the African diaspora and Americanity generally. We can engage in projects of creating new and radicalized understanding of situated knowledge in working and reworking questions of identity, power, and transformation at the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation that are part of a broad-based project of decolonization that transnational feminisms propose (See chapter 3).

Through a revised, gender-concerned historiography, scholars have charted the specificity of Black female existence in the Americas. Black feminist and women's historians working across the African diaspora have involved themselves in the telling of history, in the words of historian Elsa Barkley Brown (1992), as "multiple rhythms being played simultaneously" (p. 297). I see the possibility for conceptualizing interAmerican genealogies and transnational historical processes of Afrodescendant women's subjectivities in the Americas. This would include analyses of women's lives in specific geo-political locations across nations, along with noting the systems of raced, gendered, and economic organization which remain entrenched within the frame of colonial

relations—the coloniality of power—under global capitalism and within varying national dynamics. In order to deal with the complexity of the historical processes of America-making, including the making of the African diaspora which is a story of gendered subjects, we would have to allow for a cacophony of voices that characterize, and theorize, the transnational dynamics of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation in America.

Black women's experiences are multiple and our social locations are polyvocal— we occupy multiple social locations/ "voices" simultaneously. As Rose Brewer (1993) asserted, ". . . this polyvocality of multiple social locations is historically missing from analyses of oppression and exploitation in traditional feminism, Black Studies and mainstream academic disciplines" (p. 13). A deep and rigorous conception of the polyvocality/intersectionality/entanglements of oppression and resistance, and the experiences of Black women in particular, is often missing from general understandings of how American societies are constituted and imagined. It is in this way that the material and psychological circumstances of Black women's lives are overlooked, the uniqueness of our experience under-contemplated, producing a kind of epistemic erasure and perpetuating our continued oppression and marginalization.

Afrodescendant women are constructed in the American context by race, gender, sexuality, religion, and nation. Our marginalization has been enacted on these terms; we have been regarded as an inferior caste/class of humans based on these very social categories. Therefore, we need frameworks that address the overlapping nature of

systems of oppression that structure our lives, the polyvocality of our identities, and opportunities to learn about our complex conditions and social locations in Social Justice Education.

As "products of separations and dislocations and dis-memberings, people of African descent in the Americas historically have sought reconnection" (Davies, 1999, p. 17). To center the histories of Black women in different locations and to theorize the meaning of their lives, identities, and politics is a project of re-membering and reconnection, a practice of "diasporic activism" (Shohat, 1998, p. 2) and education, an extracting of conceptual tools and metaphors that allow for an expanse of African diaspora studies as well as interAmerican and transnational studies overall. The transnational character of Black womanhood, particularly in the Americas, gives educators conceptual fuel to extend their teaching to a global, transnational frame.

To "gender" is to not only insert women's histories and experiences into the story of Americanity. To "gender," utilizing the theory of intersectionality, is also a methodology and way of understanding the interlocking nature of gender, race, and class in shaping the societies and subjectivities of new world inhabitants generally. It is also a framework that is useful for educators in teaching for social justice, both in transnationalizing our understanding of different systems of oppression and of teaching more expansively about myriad systems of domination that are salient and present in the lives of Afrodescendant women, but also speak to the general workings of systems of race, class, and gender, how they have shaped American sociality and social identities overall. Recognizing the plurality and multi-locality of Black histories, politics, and

experiences, and making linkages with the realities of diverse black women in the hemisphere, in my view, is important work in Social Justice Education.

This chapter offers a transnational discussion of the phenomenon of interlocking oppressions and is rooted in intersectional feminism. It offers historical and contemporary examples from the U.S. and Latin America regarding the common predicaments of Afrodescendant women across American contexts. Beginning with the legacy of slavery, this chapter demonstrates the realities of patriarchy that enacted "gendered racism" that structured Black women's work along with the deployment of various tropes about Black women's bodies and sexuality. Showing how the identities and and realities of Afrodescendant women were constructed by the coloniality of power, through multiple axes of social identity and subordination, this work affirms intersectionality as a framework and methodology through centering the lives of Black women. In closing, the signicance of women of color feminist thought as a liberatory politics is explored.

InterAmerican Gendered-Racialization:
The Shared Positionality of Afro-American Women

There are numerous issues and stories with which to chart the second and third class citizenship of Afrodescendant women in the Americas. Within settler-colonial societies, for the most part, Blacks and indigenous people live at the bottom of social hierarchies and are among the most disadvantaged groups in society. Afrodescendant and indigenous women are subject to multiple systems of oppression; at the very least they are oppressed by the forces of gender, race, class, and nation. The patriarchal ordering of societies, along with the continuous colonial designations of race correspond with the economic disadvantage that is found among these groups in the Americas, rendering

them in the margins of national belonging and bearing the weight of social and economic disenfranchisement.

For the first centuries in the new world, most Afrodescendant women labored as slaves, displaced from their original homelands and cultures, alongside Black men, a profoundly exploited and abused class/caste largely alienated from the fruits of their work. In post-emancipation eras, many Afrodescendant women still exist disproportionately among the poor, and as workers, few Black women find a range of job opportunities available to them, adequate compensation, or freedom from harassment or undue stress in their work (Caldwell, 2007; Harris-Perry, 2011; Telles, 2004). Afrodescendant women have historically borne the brunt of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual stereotyping, their bodies subject to attack, appropriation, coercion, projection and aesthetic devaluation (Caldwell, 2007; hooks, 1981; Lerner, 1973; Roberts, 1997). For most of our history in the Americas, Afrodescendant women have been on the farthest margins of national citizenship first as slaves and then as 'free', denied full valuation and opportunity in society, often excluded from mainstream political participation, alienated from land, labor, access to healthcare, education, and rights (Conofre, 2013; Molina & Wilson, 2012). In the terms established by the dominant society, Black women have historically been positioned as always, already other, exploitable, inferior, unworthy, are structurally marginalized across American contexts, and are oppressed by the interlocking dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation.

While within the structural sense of white-settler societies, Black women as a group have occupied marginal and victim status in the context of the overarching systems

of white supremacy, patriarchy, and exploitative capitalism, Black women have also been pillars of resilience and spiritual fortitude, purveyors of the creative culture-making and improvisation among Afrodescendants in the Americas. They have been involved in movements for change, have challenged and resisted injustice, and have exerted significant power and influence in Black communities and institutions. The perseverance of Afrodescendant women is both a reality and a trope, both an idealistic conception and an accurate view in many cases. At the same time, many Afrodescendant women and Afrodescendant people in general, have been partially or completely destroyed by these oppressive forces, by the brutality of our positionality and experiences in American life and history. Survival, trauma, and internalized oppression occurred simultaneously in Black experiences, and these dilemmas prompt us as educators to more broadly analyze and understand the multiple and *gendered* realities of Afrodescendants.

Overlapping Realities

Most of the notable scholars in African diaspora studies, Black history, Black feminism and critical race scholars have affirmed that the legacy of slavery informs a continuity that explains the social location and experiences of Black people and hence, Black women, in the Americas (Blakely, 1999; S. Butler, 2012; Caldwell, 2007; Carby, 1985; Castañeda, 1995; Davis, 1981; Fredrickson, 2002; hooks, 1981; Lerner, 1973; Roberts, 1997). However, as discussed, while the experience of enslavement and racialization have profoundly shaped the African diaspora in the Americas, Afrodescendant history and culture precedes the histories of settler-colonial societies.

Some scholars of the African diaspora have noted some of the West and Central African cultural retentions that characterize Black life in the Americas (Heywood &

Thornton, 2007; Manning, 2010; Ortíz, 1973; Sims, 2011; Thompson, 1983). In looking

at multiple patriarchies in the lives of Black women, for instance, Claire Robertson

(1996) argued that there were traces of West African patriarchies that were retained in

slave family/kin structures with implications for present day Afrodescendant

communities. Robertson explained:

> Patriarchal ideology that stigmatized women as 'other' -- left, bad,
> awkward, wrong, stupid, and so on -- was widespread in Africa . . . on
> both sides of the Atlantic patriarchal ideology has contributed to blaming
> women for socioeconomic problems created by exploitation from the
> upper classes, with the added oppression in the United States [and in the
> Americas generally] of caste creation according to race (pp. 12-13).

This recognition that patriarchal ideologies characterized pre-colonial West Africa and

colluded in some ways with Western patriarchal ideology suggests the complexity of

cultural and social existence of Afrodescendants in America and has implications for

Black women's status in new world African communities that emerged within Euro-

dominant settler societies.

Along with patriarchy and particular gendered divisions of labor, Africans

brought their own indigenous spiritual traditions and sensibilities with them (Manning,

2010; Thompson, 1983), different ideas about women and men's capabilities and roles,

ideas about child rearing, hygiene, diet, music, etc. These African sensibilities

simultaneously clashed and converged with the sensibilities of Native Americans and

Europeans, creating a new cultural space, one that absorbed, collided, and overlapped

with the old and the new.

Afro-American women's identities then, have been historically constructed and

formed by these multiple processes: the Middle Passage; intermarriage and interethnic

blending of West African and in some cases Native American ethnicities, along with

"mixing" with whites; clashing and overlapping patriarchies (i.e., West African

patriarchal traditions colluding with or contrasted with European patriarchies);

continuities and discontinuities regarding conceptions about work and familial roles;

patriarchal conceptions of women's sexuality; clashing and converging religious views,

practices, and sensibilities; and Euro settler-colonial ideas about race, gender, economy,

work, and belonging. In the words of literary scholar Anne McClintock (1995),

"colonized women had to negotiate not only the imbalance of their relations with their

own men but also the baroque and violent array of hierarchical rules and restrictions that

structured their new relations with imperial men and women" (p. 6).

Imperial Patriarchy

While the settler-colonial capitalist enterprise was a masculinist endeavor, its

bearings upon the bodies of women, particularly Afrodescendant women was profound.

In the processes of colonization, European men brought their ontological leanings in

Christianity, their lust for profit, their socialization and motivations to conquer and

subdue land and human subjects, along with the subjugation of European women,

resulting in a man-driven colonial system that also involved the control of women's

bodies, in particular the bodies—in terms of sexuality and labor— of colonized women

(Federici, 2004; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 2002). Anthropologist Ann Stoler (2002)

asserted that in colonial contexts "racial distinctions were fundamentally structured in

gendered terms" (p. 42). Thus, the distinct experiences of colonized women in the

Americas involved dynamics of overlapping patriarchies, with the patriarchal

predilections of Euro men—driven by colonial racial imaginaries— predominating and

shaping the lives of Afrodescendant women. Given the predominant colonial experience of Afrodescendant women in the system of enslavement/bound labor and the continuous colonial forms of gender and racial oppression that flowed thereafter, there are recognizable and shared historical patterns of oppression across the Americas involving Afrodescendant women.

Gendered racism. Several inhabitants in the intellectual neighborhoods of historians, legal scholars, social scientists, literary theorists, journalists and interdisciplinarians have researched the realities of Afrodescendant womanhood in the United States and the Caribbean, in all of its epochal periods through the present-day. Increasingly scholarship on AfroLatinas is emerging and accompanies Afro diaspora scholarship on the Americas overall. What has been uncovered over decades of research is the phenomenon of gendered racialization and how it shapes the lives of Afrodescendants generally and serves as a source of exploitation, marginalization and devaluing of Afrodescendant women specifically. Race, as a powerful social construct brought forth in the colonial formation of the Americas and its ongoing coloniality, has gendered components. The ways in which racism contains gendered elements is a shared reality of the Americas. In other words, *gendered-racism* is a fundamental way in which race and racism were constructed in settler-colonial societies.

Historian Digna Castañeda (1995) writes of female slaves in 19th century Cuba, showing how in light of the late development of Cuba's slavocracy, an interest in increasing the numbers of females imported from Africa emerged. On estates and sugar mills, Black women joined Black men in the harsh working conditions of sugar and agricultural production. This was a common experience across the Americas of enslaved

black women subjected to the harshness of life under slavery, not shielded by or cloaked within ideologies of womanhood that were applied to Eurodescendant women which their imaginaries of purity, virtuousness, and domesticity (Guy, 2002; Jones, 1985; Rahier, 2011; Roberts, 1997; Welter, 1966). There were also dynamics particular to Afrodescendant women, involving projections and exploitation regarding their sexuality and involvement with white/light men. Throughout the Americas slavery was a system of economic/classed and sexual oppression (Caldwell, 2007; Davis, 1981; Hine, 1979; hooks, 1981; Kuntzinski, 1993; Roberts, 1997). Slavery, as a system embedded in colonialism and its capitalist commitments, involved the interlocking imaginaries of race and sexuality.

The coloniality of images, ideology and discourse. Slavocracy, a colonial system impacting much of the Americas, for all of those involved—white men and women, Afrodescendant men and women, "mixed" men and women—was a profoundly sexualized system. The continuity of colonial forms and practices in the periods after the end of slavery demonstrate the longstanding stereotypical images and myths projected onto Black people generally, and onto women in particular ways, that have an embedded quality in contemporary discourses and ideologies steeped in racial determinism and racial oppression (King, 1973; Staples, 1991). These gender-based and sexualized stereotypes characterized how race was socially constructed, lived, and enacted in the Americas, denying black women an autonomous sense of their womanhood and self-respect (King, 1973). Colonial projections and devaluation are core to the experiences of Afrodescendent women in the oppressive systems of white settler-colonialism and its hemispheric impacts. Colonial logics that imagined Black women as sexually lascivious,

as exhibiting an uncontrolled, hypersexuality, became an entrenched ideology about

Afrodescendant women who were seen as a class of women existing outside of an

imagined Christian-domestic notion of sexual purity reserved for Eurodescendant

women. These logics and ideology were/are found pervasively throughout the Americas

(Caldwell, 2007; Irving, 2007). Jean Rahier's work on Ecuador (2011) notes that

> References to sexuality serve either to construct brown and black peoples
> as savage-like individuals whose character is denoted by "immoral",
> "abnormal", and "obsessive" sexual practices or, by contrast, sexuality
> appears as the very metaphor of the imperial enterprises where white
> males conquer foreign and far away lands that are symbolized by available
> brown and black female bodies waiting to be penetrated (p. 62).

This pattern was and is found in many parts of the Americas. In Uruguay, a largely white

country with a small Afrodescendant population, sexualized stereotypes in performances

of black women can be evident, particularly in the AfroUruguayan cultural forms of

carnaval which have a high degree of visibility in that nation (Andrews, 2010; Sztainbok,

2013). In Brazil, "the bodies of African and Afro-Brazilian women were appropriated by

colonial society . . . [where their] sexual objectification has been naturalized" (Caldwell,

2007, p. 53 & 55). In Cuba and Brazil, the figure of the *mulata* serves as a national

symbol of sexual prowess and simultaneously a symbol of the *mestizaje/mestiçagem* that

are claimed to be core to the national/racial identities of those countries (Caldwell, 2007;

Kutzinski, 1993).

Motherhood, reproduction, work and labor. Angela Davis' classic work

Women, Race, and Class (1981) discusses the fundamental relationality between white

women and enslaved Black women in the United States through looking at the ideologiy

of the cult of true womanhood and how it existed to shape white female gender roles and

experiences while simultaneously excluding black women from this construct of

"womanhood." In exploring this relationality, Davis claims that ". . . slave women were classified as 'breeders' as opposed to 'mothers'" (p. 7); Black women were regarded for their reproductive capabilities but were not afforded the construct of motherhood as a nurturing, protective role in relation to their own children. Instead, they were often expected to bear children to continue the slave system in the provision of bound laborers through motherhood. In Brazil, parallel patterns existed where Afrodescendant women's domestic functions were often appropriated for the service of white families, including white women and children (Caldwell, 2007). So, while "women" generally were seen as holding a reproductive function under colonial patriarchy, the contrasting construct of how this function would be regarded with respect to race, allowed white women to be afforded the status of "mother" denied to Black women. Often, under systems of enslavement, white mothers were dependent upon the services of enslaved Black women who nursed and cared for their white children (Caldwell, 2007; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981). Thus the relational aspect of differently experienced "womanhood" is evident in the hierarchical nature of the white-Black/brown woman relationship in the interplay of servitude and privilege, engendered as many would argue, in colonial relations (Brown, 1992; Caldwell, 2007; Davis, 1981; Lugones, 2007; Stoler, 2002).

Historians and economists have long charted the trajectory of Black women's wage work and its interconnections with structures of gendered-racism that also interlocked with class inequality. Black women's class status was during enslavement and for most of the post-Emancipation period a *caste* positioning, a designation to the lowest rungs of society by virtue of race combined with gender, with their labor extracted from them initially without compensation, under abusive, coercive, and restrictive

conditions. Enslaved Afrodescendants were made into a hyper-exploited class of people based on the dominant ideology about their "race," and this hyper-exploitation amounted to Blackness being associated with a low-caste/class position. Though individuals and eventually sectors of Afrodescendant communities might achieve more empowerment in their work and earning experiences (through migration, manumission, emancipation, achievement of higher wages as labor was transformed, adopting middle class values and outlooks, etc.), Black people began their lives in the Americas as enslaved, as an inferior caste that was stigmatized, marked by Euro-colonial imaginaries of inferior "race" for the purpose of unpaid menial labor. Black labor, relationships, and social positioning have been and are currently informed by this initial historical positioning in many parts of the Americas, exploited as workers and capitalist, hierarchical class relations.

Afrodescendant women's labor has been informed by the legacy of slavery, the institution of racial caste/racial subordination, in light of the longstanding landscapes of white/light supremacy across the Americas and the anti-black racism that has persistently affected Black communities. Historically, most Black women carried at minimum the triple burden of subordination by way of gender, race, and caste/class; these categories structured Black women's experiences and characterized Black women's work. As Black women labored at domestic work, as field hands, as nannies, wet nurses, cooks, laundresses, in their own homes taking care of their families, as the lowest level factory workers, picking tobacco, cotton, cutting and grinding sugarcane, as underpaid, under-resourced teachers, as singers, dancers, actresses, prostitutes and concubines, (Caldwell, 2007; Jones, 1986; Harley, 1995; Hunter, 1995), they lived out the interwoven social constructions of gender, class/caste, race, sexuality, and nation.

Black and multicultural feminist scholars and activists have emphasized the intersections of Black women's experiences through discussing the material and ideological conditions of their lives. The histories of Afrodescendant women are unique and specific labor histories, illuminating the workings of class/caste with race, gender, and sexuality in the lives of Black women. Marxian metanarratives about class as the overarching nexus of social oppression found in many white and *mestizo* left theories in the Americas prevail, and it is also important to note that the formation of class relations and class struggle in the new world was profoundly shaped by the coloniality of racial and gender categories and experiences.

Afrodescendant women's social identities and experiences in the Americas have been constructed through some of the major axes of oppression/social categories that structure Western, imperialist, settler-colonial societies: "race"/ethnicity, gender, caste/class, sexuality, religion, and nation. Afro women have been made to occupy an inferior caste status based on Euro-colonial ideas about race and Blacks' racial inferiority (Amott & Matthaei, 1996) combined with a Euro patriarchal imaginary that differentiates females/women on the basis of race and color. As members of communities positioned as a subordinated caste/race, Black women are also oppressed as women, enduring multilayered patriarchies – the localized and familial patriarchies perpetuated by Black men and the overarching structures of Euro-patriarchal domination made in the image of white settler-society. As workers, Afrodescendant women's identities have been shaped by gender hierarchies, race/caste, and class in that Black women (and non-white/women of color in general) often have done and still do the most menial of work, the work of service, the least valued work across most of the Americas.

Across the Americas, Afrodescendant women (and men) have been subject to particularized kinds of racism by way of their gender. The overlapping nature of racism and patriarchy was a shared feature of new world sociality. In the case of colonized women, sexualized stereotypes and sexual exploitation were part and parcel of colonial systems. Control of and projection upon Black women's lives as bodies was a central part of the coloniality of power, along with many instances of resistance against these very forms of oppression by Afrodescendant women.

Tropes and their significance. Whether through devices projecting hypersexuality onto Afrodescendant women, or through stereotypes that relegate Black women to roles of service and domestic labor, one can see shared patterns in the colonial imaginary about Afrodescendant women. In the U.S., there are long-established tropes about Afrodescendant women as Jezebel (sexually licentious, available to and tempting of white men), Sapphire (angry, loud, and aggressive), or Mammy (servile, available for the nurturing of white families, often to the neglect of her own) (Harris-Perry, 2011; hooks, 1981; Roberts, 2007). In Brazil, *mães pretas*/black mothers/mammies figure in the national consciousness, with real consequences for Afrodescendant lives and access to opportunity (Caldwell, 2007). Oppressive discourses about Black women combined with patterns of patriarchal domination and control of women's bodies, initially made enslaved Afrodescendant women subject quite systematically to sexual assault, exploitation and other forms of abuse at the hands of Eurodescendant men who were in control of or beneficiaries in slavocratic cultures (hooks, 1981; Jones, 1985). In post-emancipation periods, stereotypes continued and only slightly shifted, relegating Afrodescendent women to subordinate status based on gender, race and class simulatenously. These

tropes figure deeply in American imaginations, they have been explored by a range of scholars, and they are points of struggle and resistance in liberatory anti-oppression movements.

The Significance of Afrodescendant Women's Realities

Black women's histories tell a story of the formation of multiple structures and intersecting social identities based on socially constructed categories which have defined Afrodescendant women's lives in the Americas. Afro-American women's stories and modes of resistance are parallel, interrelated, and in some cases similar across the Americas. Our shared potential for resistance can be theorized, our subaltern existence in the diasporas that have shaped us in the Americas provides a space for comparison, for holding our ties to each other and for shaping a liberatory politics useful for teaching for social justice. By understanding the specific dynamics of the how Black women were and are socially constructed, how Black female subjectivities were formed through a complex matrix of oppression and resistance, we can gain knowledge about the particularities of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation and the formation of multiple identities as part of the formation of African diasporic identities.

Studying Afrodescendant women's histories and lives provide poignant examples for how all people's identities and experiences are multiply constructed at the intersections in America. All who have been deemed racially subordinate in the Americas have not experienced that subordination in equivalent ways. As such, those who are racially dominant in the region are also shaped by the forces of race, gender, and class. Since it is undeniable that Afrodescendant women have been historically oppressed from many angles— based on gender, race, caste/class, sexuality, and nation— it is also

148

undeniable that since these experiences marked by categories of identity shaped in

colonial sociality contain the potential for privilege and domination as well as oppression

and resistance, that these very social realities and groupings can inform how we think

about questions of identity formation generally and diasporic subjectivities in particular.

Feminists have proposed that in understanding the gendered nature of Black experiences

both in history and in the contemporary, new questions concerning epistemology and

knowledge are raised. In transnational African diaspora studies, we would need to

excavate the complex workings of race, cultural and ethnicity, and class with an

integrative analysis of the gendering of blackness/*Afrodescendencia*

Even in discussing the intersectionality of Black women's lives and subjectivities,

there are many omissions. Because scholars often access to the social realities and

experiences that are most glaring and visible, the categories of religion, sexual

orientation, and ability also necessitate unpacking. I have discussed some primary themes

found in feminist-inspired work on Black women to show how we cannot understand

Black women's experiences without accounting for the every site of categorization and

oppression that structure Black women's identities and positionings in white- and

mestizo-dominant capitalist societies structured by the coloniality of power. The overall

point is that of polyvocality, simultaneity, relationality, and intersectionality. We cannot

extract Black women's history and experiences in any kind of linear fashion. To tell

Black women's stories, we have to talk about relationships, about identities-in-relation

(Shohat and Stam, 1994). We have to use comparison to illuminate the overlaps.

Black women's historical and contemporary social location and experiences

necessitate a pervasive intersectional analysis. If Afrodescendant histories and identities

149

are comparative, relational, formed alongside, overlapping with, and informed by the histories of racialization, transculturalization, class, and gender, then necessarily the terms of African diasporic thought would need to include this integrative understanding of racial and cultural formation and the creation and articulation of new world Afrodescendant identities. Though it is most clear, because of the multiple stigmas that Black women endure, that intersectionality/polyvocality applies to us, intersectionality/ polyvocality is also a framework for how to understand transnational American experiences generally. Thus, Black women's experiences inspire a framework and methodology for how we can understand identity formation and structures of oppression in general in the historical context of the Americas.

In addition to the conceptual frameworks thus far offered to social justice educators, the insights of Black and other women of color feminisms, particularly in developing the conceptual lens of intersectionality—the interlocking ways that systems of oppression work together, through and with each other—is also crucial for educators wanting to work with a world-historical and transnational frame. The theory of intersectionality does at least two things: it foregrounds the experiences of Afrodescendant women and analyzes them in a multiplicitous frame, and highlights the facts of the intersectionality of social identities and patterns of domination generally.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2000) affirmed that ". . . Black women's experiences serve as one specific social location for examining points of connection among multiple epistemologies." (p. 270). From the very 'stuff' of Afrodescendant women's existence – being racially gendered, sexually classed, nationally sexed – the shifting selves and priorities of Black American women who have to negotiate their

communities of origin, their histories, their coming to know and identify *in relation* to a world predicated on privileged whiteness, maleness, heterosexuality, and patriarchal nationalisms are significant and may provide conceptual tools to help us rethink a whole host of concerns. When we are cognizant of these multiple forces that constitute social identities, we are often able to move beyond binary, unicentric, one-dimensional thinking – *from mapping and theorizing the experiences of Afrodescendant and other women of color* – to recognize the possibilities and to shift the paradigms of thought that shape our understanding of our lives in the Americas. This mapping of the lived experiences of Afrodescendant women contributes to the theoretical project of intersectionality that accurately describes the forces of oppression and privilege/domination that characterize the settler-colonial Americas.

The Theory of Intersectionality: A Conceptual Framework, Matrix, and Methodology

"[T]he concept" of intersectionality "has found a place in the intellectual toolkit of scholars around the world, whether they live in their home countries or in national diasporas, and is used to interrogate problems and policy issues in their national or regional settings" (Bose, 2012, p. 67). Feminist theories of intersectionality give us tools for precisely how to expand our work around oppression and liberation, working with the notion of interlocking forms of victimization and marginalization that move us into more accurate readings of race, coloniality, and the diasporic space of Afrodescendant presence in the Americas. In this fashion, the schools of thought largely defined as women of color/U.S. third world/Black feminism/ womanism/multicultural feminism, by elaborating the theory of intersectionality and by foregrounding the social location and experiences of racially subordinate women, in my view, provide us with some of the most

complete analyses for unpacking oppression, for addressing the dynamics of discrimination and marginalization, allowing us to multiply our analyses of systems and places of individuals and communities in them, our understandings of racial/cultural communities in struggle like the interAmerican African diaspora. The reality of Black women's lives that shapes the theory of intersectionality offers important transnational, anti-oppression/social justice frameworks (Collins, 2000).

Coined initially by legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (2001 and 2008), the notion of intersectionality was first mapped as an epistemology/way of knowing based on the structural positionality and experiences of Black women in the United States. Since African-U.S. American women were at least "doubly marginalized" on account of race and gender, intersectionality began as a framework that allowed for an explanation of the multiple forms of oppression that "intersected" in the lives of Black women. In short, intersectionally was held as "an analytical tool to capture and engage contextual dynamics of power" (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013, p. 788), initially with the ways that these played out in the lives of Black women. The concept of intersectionality emerged to challenge the "single-axis frameworks" (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013) that seemed to live even in progressive, and social justice circles that attempted to "hold still" a particular form of oppression, foregoing an analysis that in the lives of Black women at least, the exclusive focus on one particular dynamic of oppression, e.g. race, was limited and incomplete. As Crenshaw argued in 2001, the adoption of a single-issue framework marginalized Black women whose structural location and lived experienced necessitated an understanding of how race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. were interlocking and simultaneous. In other words, "racism, patriarchy, social class and other systems of

oppression simultaneously structure the relative position of these women at any one time"
(Mirza, 2009, p. 3).

The shared positionality of AfroAmerican female experience is a transnational and clearly intersectional one. Black women (and other women of color for that matter, though differently in history and context) have been constructed within the dominant society by multiple axes of oppression/social categories simultaneously:

> . . .race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other – if in contradictory and conflictual ways (McClintock, 1995, p. 5).

At no point would it be possible to extract any of these from the other; Afrodescendant women are shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and nation in any order *all at the same time* which each social structure/form of categorization/experience of oppression being informed and shaped by one another. Because we are shaped by all of these forces simultaneously, Black women's experiences show us the importance of developing an intersectional understanding of oppression and identity formation as we think in social constructionist and social transformative terms.

Experiences shaped in structures of oppression construct American social identities, and the multiple navigations that often constitute the experiences of women of color provide theoretical and epistemological interventions into our frameworks for multicultural teaching and for diaspora studies. The intersectional oppression that women of color experience may often seem paradoxical within conceptual frameworks that seek to extract a social category (i.e., gender or race) and to theorize on the basis of only one axis of privilege-oppression. Afro-American women's historical predicament often

results in the necessity to shift positionalities and priorities – to affirm Black experience in two- and three-dimensional discussions of race, to acknowledge womanhood (and masculinity) in discussions about gender, for instance. The facts of the intersectional nature of oppression in the lives of women, however, suggest a new framework, one that can embrace simultaneity and polyvocality rather than linearity. Fully grasping the historical predicaments that have informed our multiple identities and experiences suggests new modes of temporality, of living and seeing.

The lived experiences of Black women and the structural positionality of women of color provide the conceptual impetus for the theory of intersectionality. Taking into account our existence has the potential to subvert binary and unicentric thought and offers a "complex web of factors ranging from race and class to historical context, sexuality, and religion" (Feracha, 2005, p. 1) that increase our understandings of identity, history and subjectivity, based on the examples and metaphors of Black women's unavoidable multiple identities and experiences of multiple oppressions.

At the same time, this conceptual frame is not limited solely to situating the realities of Afrodescendant women, though it certainly pays homage to the significance of Black women's lives in the Americas. All American social identities are intersectional (Brewer, 1993; Crenshaw, 2001 and 2003), and the theory of intersectionality can give scholars and educators tools for excavating the complex construction of social identities in the contexts of settler-colonial societies. As a methodology and lens, the theory of intersectionality conceptualizes the simultaneous construction of identities based on the structures of gender, race, class and sexuality and involve the following conceptual moves mapped by Rose Brewer (1993):

1. critiquing dichotomous oppositional thinking by employing both/and rather than either/or categorizations
2. allowing for the simultaneity of oppression and struggle, thus
3. eschewing additive analyses: race + gender + class
4. which leads to an understanding of the embeddedness and relationality of race, class and gender and the multiplicative nature of these relationships: race x class x gender . . . (p. 16).

The theory of intersectionality is a relational conceptual framework. And, holding the theory of intersectionality is a crucial step in transnationalizing, decentering, and multiplying social justice lenses with respect to looking at American forms of oppression. The theory of intersectionality is also a useful transnational frame, as "[i]ntersecting oppressions do not stop at U.S. borders" (Collins, 2000, p. 231). The theory and praxis of intersectionality is a core perspective that can help educators enlarge our teaching/learning projects around race, class, and gender in American contexts.

In what follows, I explore more of the coloniality of power analytical frame in order to work with the question of multiplicity and intersectional nature of power, oppression, and social identity, looking specifically at questions of gender and their formation in capitalist settler-colonial/modernity.

The Coloniality of Power and Intersectional Feminist Analytics

There is a continuously developing body of work that deals extensively with the historical, theoretical, and interpersonal formulations garnered from women of color's "on the ground" realities. I am interested here also in joining in the discussion that bridges the coloniality of power framework as a way to examine the formation of non-white, female identities linked to the politics of U.S. Third World, Black, multicultural and transnational feminism. As"[f]eminists of color have made [abundantly] clear what is revealed in terms of violent domination and exploitation once the epistemological

perspective focuses on the intersection of . . . [social] categories (Lugones, 2007, p. 188),

it is my task to see where the framework of the coloniality of power meets feminism in

excavating the complexities of domination, as feminist of color articulations have focused

relentlessly on the question of the intersections of social power, identities, and

oppression. In the words of Argentinian philosopher María Lugones, the theory of

intersectionality

> reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are
> conceptualized as separate from each other. The move to intersect the
> categories has been motivated by the difficulties in making visible those
> who are dominated and victimized in terms of both categories (2007, p.
> 192).

Thus, it is important to look at what the overwhelming focus on race, capitalism, and

modernity in Quijano's work does not fully elaborate.

Two theorists of the coloniality of power, Ramon Grosfoguel (2006) and María

Lugones (2007) have elaborated Quijano's theses further by complicating his world-

historical theory of the formation of coloniality and capitalism vis-à-vis the construction

of race. Both of these scholars discuss dimensions of gender, sexuality, questions of

cosmology, and the construction of knowledge in their utilization of the framework of the

coloniality of power. I believe that the expansion that these thinkers offer to those

wanting to work with the notion of coloniality and power makes a powerful bridge to the

work of feminists who have foregrounded the notion of the intersectional nature of

oppression in shaping the multiple identities and realities of women of color. Working

with the coloniality of power as an explanation for how American identities have been

historically and socially constructed, we are offered more tools with which to explore the

social and questions of power and identification

Many who utilize the coloniality of power framework tend to privilege class analysis and race over other power relations (Grosfoguel, 2006). In light of this, Grosfoguel asks us to turn the locus of investigation to a generalizable "epistemic location" of an indigenous woman in the Americas. There, he argues, we are able to see that the coloniality of power not only established a powerful system of racial formation in relation to colonial, capitalist expansion and the establishment of modernity but that it involved a number of "entangled" modes of power and engendered multiple social hierarchies. Grosfoguel explains that global class formations involved diverse forms of labor including slavery (for Blacks), serfdom (for indigenous peoples), and wage labor (initially for whites and then gradual shifts within hierarchical systems of labor for workers of color); an international division of labor; militarization; global racial hierarchy predicated on European supremacy; gender hierarchy which makes European patriarchy dominant; sexual hierarchy that is based on heterosexism; a spiritual hierarchy in which Christianity dominates indigenous and other spiritualities; a hierarchy of knowledge in which Eurocentric knowledges and cosmologies are dominant; and a linguistic hierarchy where European languages structure communication on a world scale (Paragraph 14). In other words, colonial relations of power are multiple, and the task of excavating its multiplicity is at hand (Lugones, 2007).

Working with Grosfoguel's formulations, it is possible to see a powerful affinity between his expansion of the framework of the coloniality of power and the work on the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation that has been extensively articulated by women of color feminists. In this vein, we are not only dealing with the colonial legacy of race and class/labor, but we are asked to look at the multiple

entanglements that European colonialism transplanted and transformed in its imperial

endeavors (Grosfoguel, 2006). If the coloniality of power engendered multiple kinds of

social hierarchies, including gender, sexuality, spirituality, and knowledge, then these

same formations on the macro-historical level have surely shaped the social identity

categories that feminists of color have insisted were interlinked and needing of our

attention as justice-focused scholars

María Lugones' intricate work with the framework of the coloniality of power

(2007) compels us to further develop a complex lens with respect to the interdependent

construction of the categories of gender and sexuality and the overarching histories and

systems that have shaped their formation. She asserted that gender, as we know it, is in

itself a colonial construction, and her work examined the fusing of race with gender as a

fundamental dynamic of the coloniality of power (p. 186). Lugones argued that a new

gender system was set into motion with coloniality (p. 201), born out of the imaginaries

of European "heterosexualist patriarchy" (p. 187), that transformed indigenous and

African (specifically Yoruba[11]) gender systems and created new forms of gender relations

in the Americas.

In connecting the formation of race with the formation of gender systems,

Lugones argued that there is/was a light side/dark side to gender (p. 202). She stated that

> the cognitive production of modernity that has understood race as
> gendered and gender as raced in particularly differential ways for
> Europeans/whites and colonized/nonwhite peoples (p. 202).

The creation of a dark side/light side of gender in the Americas and its system of

differential treatment and positionality of white women and women of color established a

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[11] In Lugones' work the focus on systems of gender among the Yoruba ethnic group of West Africa
provides her with analytical examples of contrasting gendered relations.

distinctly colonial gendered quagmire in the Americas where race and gender clearly

overlap. The modern/colonial gender system "constructs gender relations hegemonically"

and creates a complex entangled ideological system that wholly intersects with race and

the imagining of "women" and "men" (p. 206). Lugones elaborated that

> only white bourgeois women have consistently counted as women so
> described in the West. Females excluded from that description were not
> just their subordinates. . . They were understood as animals in the deep
> sense of "without gender," sexually marked as female, but without the
> characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned
> from animals into various modified versions of "women" as it fit the
> processes of global, Eurocentered capitalism. Thus, heterosexual rape of
> Indian or African slave women coexisted with concubinage, as well as
> with the imposition of the heterosexual understanding of gender relations
> among the colonized—when and as it suited global, Eurocentered
> capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women (pp. 202-203).

Lugones' theorization of some historic examples of the experiences of Native and

African women under colonial relations shed light on the differential position of women

of color and white women within the matrix of the coloniality of power, within the

schema of entangled hierarchies of gender and race. With the implantation of European

logics about gender entangled with logics about race, and the subsequent social

transformations that created the modern/colonial gender system, women of color were

positioned as not-"women" or not-quite "women" in relation to white women and men.

Standards and discourses of womanhood were generated from the ideological and social

location of bourgeois white women and the social expectations of them under European

colonial patriarchy (Davis, 1981; Lugones, 2007; Rahier, 2011; Roberts, 1997; Welter,

1966). In this sense, white women have historically and in the present day occupied a

contradictory status of privilege and dominance over women and men of color under

white supremacy and oppression under the European strictures of patriarchy. In this

sense, there is indeed a dark/light side of gender relations and the social construction of gendered identities in the Americas. Black feminist historian Elsa Barkley Brown sums up this situation in her groundbreaking article, "What Has Happened Here: The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics", arguing that "all women do not have the same gender" (1992, p. 298).

In light of Quijano's thesis that coloniality is continuous with colonial relations (Quijano, 2000a&b), the work of women of color feminists, including Lugones, maps the continuity of unequal relations between women as part of their overarching work on the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and nation.

Intersubjectivity

Settler-coloniality involved the development of relational subjectivities (Quijano, 2000a; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Shohat, 1998). None of the racialized-gendered-classed identities that were born in America-making exist in isolation. They were shaped systemically through history, structure, discourse, and practice, and in the Americas the categories of social classification were formed in the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000b). Systemic oppression and social identities intersect and influence one another. Race is gendered. Class is sexed. Nation is racialized. Social identities interconnect with each other in terms of how people were differently located in structures of domination and the experiences that different locations engendered. An examination of interlinked categories gives insight into how people were differently compelled to move and to negotiate complex hierarchies and diverse modes of power. It was within these categories and their corresponding and simultaneous systems of oppression within which social identities formation were constituted.

Axes of oppression are also axes of privilege and domination, and when privilege and domination are marked they too can be mapped using the feminist formulations of interlocking gender, race, sexuality, nation, class, and religion. Black women's identities were formed in relation to the social actors around them— Black men, white men, white women, the rich, the poor, the laborers, immigrants, Native people, mestizos, mulatos, etc. *If Black women are formed and live at the intersections, so does everyone.* These intersections—gender, race, sexuality, class, nation, and religion—are simultaneously social categories born from hierarchical social structures, sites of oppression, sites of privilege and *descriptors of experience* and they provide a framework for how we can understand interAmerican history, the complexities of oppression, the simultaneity of dominance and privilege, and the formation of myriad American identities overall. Knowing these and teaching these are central to our Social Justice Education projects.

New World Oppression/New World Feminisms

As argued throughout this study, the Americas as an interconnected geo-political and geo-cultural location share parallel and particular new world historical and colonial legacies of migration, settlement, oppression and displacement. The forced encounters and voluntary liaisons which characterized various projects of America-making provide a backdrop for how we can understand in the contemporary the processes of coloniality, multiple trajectories of arrival, and varied conditions of dwelling in Latin America, the United States and the Caribbean. The forms of new world oppression engendered in the coloniality of power include racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ethnoreligious oppression, to name a few systems of domination that characterize American life. An understanding of the colonial origins of these systems of domination is helpful to

161

educators, as well as embracing a transnational and intersectional framework in addressing the contextual dynamics of racial subordination that have shared patterns across the Americas. Here, I have worked with the notion of interAmerican realities, to foreground the experiences of U.S. African-American women and Afro-Latinas, to link discussions regarding diasporic subjectivities, and the effects of historical construction of Blackness, the backdrop of white superiority in settler-colonial societies, on the experiences of women.

Black feminists have written about and theorized Black women's experiences and have proposed new frameworks for how to understand history and society based on the polyvocal and intersectional nature of those experiences. These feminist works have contributed to a powerful intellectual neighborhood that has resulted in a movement of women of color in the United States – including Afrodescendant women across the diaspora, Latinas and Chicanas, along with women of Asian and Middle Eastern descent, and women indigenous to the Americas. This movement in thought and in activism pioneered by diverse women of color has created new conceptual and analytical tools for deciphering the workings of society, oppression, and history and for formulating new ways of being and knowing in the contemporary.

Multicultural/transnational feminisms challenge us to process historical knowledge in a new way. In our teaching about oppression, we can take into account the fact that social groups and social identities are shaped in a dialectical historical process, as Freire has taught us, that the oppressed and the oppressors identities are interlinked, that relations between oppressed groups are important to note, and that relational analysis helps us to better teach about the totality of oppression, rather than only in its fragmented

forms. Recognizing interlinked histories and "forging alternative epistemologies and imaginative alliances" (Shohat, 1998, p. 2) is a pedagogical strategy that can be useful for transnational activist connections and for teaching about diverse forms of oppression and visions for liberation.

Liberatory Visions

Chicana feminist and writer Gloria Anzaldúa, along with myriad feminists of color including and building upon Afrodescendant feminism, took on the work of theorizing and teaching the connections between the macro-structural and the meaning that this makes in the lives of women of color. This has been the thrust of women of color/U.S. Third World feminism and transnational feminism, to utilize gendered lenses by which to explore and explain non-white identities, cultural production, and liberation struggles in the U.S. and beyond (Alcoff, 2006; Alarcón 1990; Anzaldúa 1987; Anzaldúa, 1990 a,b & c; Christian, 1990; Davis, 1981; Davies, 1994; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Gunning, Hunter & Mitchell, 2004; Hewitt; 1994; Hill Collins, 2000; Lugones, 1990 and 2007; Minh-ha, 1997; Mohanty, 2003; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002; Moraga, 1983; Sandoval, 1991; Shohat, 1998).

Gloria Anzaldúa wrote of 20th century women of color as engaged in processes of " . . . uncovering the inter-faces, the very spaces and places where our multiple-surfaced, colored, racially gendered bodies intersect and interconnect," (1990a, p. xvi) creating sites of knowledge where our histories and our social identities meet and inform one another. Recognizing the heterogeneity within one's life and the heterogenous experiences that one woman of color may have in her attempts to negotiate a world in which her being of color and woman affects how she may be treated and mistreated, give

insight into what is at stake in the social location and negotiations that many women of color make in their day-to-day living. The interconnected intellectual neighborhood of women of color/multicultural feminist thought, in theorizing and outlining the realities of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation in the lives of women, establish a feminist praxis and liberatory politics rooted in desire for decolonization (Lugones, 1990 and 2007; Mohanty, 2003; Mohanty & Alexander, 1997; Sandoval, 2000; Shohat, 1997 and 1998).

Multicultural feminisms are rooted in the politics of social justice. For instance, South Asian transnational feminist educator Chandra Mohanty (2003) describes her feminist vision for social justice in these terms:

> . . . a vision of the world that is pro-sex and [pro]-woman, a world where women and men are free to live creative lives, in security and with bodily health and integrity, where they are free to choose whom they love, and whom they set up house with, and whether they want to have or not have children; a world where pleasure rather than just duty and drudgery determine our choices, where free and imaginative exploration of the mind is a fundamental right; a vision in which economic stability, ecological sustainability, racial equality, and the redistribution of wealth form the material basis of people's well-being (p. 3).

Mohanty also affirmed her feminism as

> a racialized socialist feminism, attentive to the specific operations and discourses of contemporary global capitalism: a socialist feminist critique, attentive to nation and sexuality and to the globalized economic, ideological, and cultural interweaving of masculinities, femininities, and heterosexualities in [colonial-]capital's search for profit, accumulation, and domination (2003, p. 9).

Along with Mohanty and many others, women of color/multicultural/transnational feminisms re-affirm a visionary progressive and perhaps revolutionary politics that seeks to liberate all people from the multiplicity of oppressive forces through concerted research, vision, activism, and theory. What women of color/transnational feminism proposes for social justice educators is a complex and comprehensive understanding of

oppression and a holistic, liberatory praxis—an end to exploitation, new cultural expressions, and new freedoms. By making historical connections about multiple oppressions and their interactions, and by centering the lives of women in order to theorize about the nature of sociality and inequity, these kinds of comprehensive feminist frameworks expands how social justice educators might revisit and renew their practices, by stressing the interactions of gender, race, class, sexuality with transnational capitalism, cross-national movements/cultural encounters, diaspora, and coloniality.

Conclusion

Elements of Black women's histories serve as a notable case study. To foreground Afrodescendant women's historical and contemporary realities demonstrates the relational nature of experiences that are constitutive of a transnational African diasporic reality, shaped are they are in the coloniality of power. Centering the lives of Black women can give us powerful examples of how the categories of race, class/caste, gender, sexuality, and nation are crucial sites of inquiry that open up new questions about the Americas. With the use of the theory of intersectionality and the coloniality of power as frameworks and methodologies, educators are better able to teach about the interconnections between American societies, about the 'overlapping diasporas' which are characteristic of Afrodescendant and other American experiences, and about the development of social identities that are shaped within settler-colonial societies.

The choice to place the social location and realities of Afrodescendant women at center is a social justice politics in itself. What is revealed by putting Afrodescendant women at center is a powerful conceptual framework that is useful for excavating, researching, and teaching about *all* forms of oppression and marginalization, applicable

to any community of social group. This conceptual framework was made possible and emerged from a focus on the experiences and positionalities of some of the most marginalized people in the Americas. The matrix of the interlocking nature of gender, race, and class is a needed theoretical and conceptual lens, born from interdisciplinary scholarship that looks at the facts of Black women's lives and struggles. Holding integrative perspectives can give us conceptual and pedagogical clarity about how to teach about history, contemporary dynamics and social justice overall, to encourage new modes for ourselves and our students of seeing, thinking, and moving across identities, structures, nations, and diasporas.

CHAPTER 5

BRIDGES AND COALITIONAL THINKING:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORKS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS

In the previous chapters, I have charted an interdisciplinary, multi-scholar

historical and conceptual framework that I think is useful for educators who want to

include more global perspectives and transnational realities in their teaching and learning

projects. I consider the bringing together of numerous conversations across a range of

fields and disciplines enacts a coalitional way of thinking that is already characteristic of

the field of Social Justice Education, which combines interdisciplinary scholarship –

history, psychology, ethnic, gender and queer studies, cultural studies, and the social

sciences—with engagement of a range of pedagogical practices in critical education.

Here, I have put together a world-historical frame of colonialism and coloniality and the

Americas, and worked with the insights of multiple scholars to emphasize the oppressive,

power-laden origins and legacy of inequitable social formation in the Americas. I have

focused on the interAmerican African diaspora through which to chart some key

explorations in this racialized and distinct community, I have discussed and posed a

transnational imaginary for educators, and I have looked to various American locations

and intellectual neighborhoods to expose the complexities of a shared, regional historicity

that informs the present.

This work holds racism as a foundational system of oppression, and more

specifically the anti-Black/anti-Afro/white supremacist leanings of American racism, and

I have have shown how shared historical and structural predicaments have shaped

Afrodescendant realities in and beyond the United States. In addition to these overarching

moves, I have foregrounded some of the realities of Afrodescendant women in the Americas, including the theoretical and political project of intersectional methodology, which allow thinkers to better conceptualize the gendered reality of Black American lives and their intersections with the colonial and racist ideologies, practices, and mechanisms that have shaped oppression in the Americas.

Why the African Diaspora?

I have intentionally chosen to engage in interdisciplinary African diaspora studies and the social realities of the interAmerican African diaspora. In our current milieu in the United States, the slogan "Black Lives Matter" along with new activist communities and organizations have emerged in response to numerous incidents of violence against Afrodescendants by the state (i.e., at the hands of the police and adjudicated ambiguously and, in many cases, negligently by courts of law). My commitment to African diaspora studies affirms the importance of Black/Afrodescendant life, and in doing this work I urge educators to look to the field of transnational African diaspora studies for insight and perspective on how to engage the plurality of Afrodescendant experience in multiple social and national locations. African-U.S. American studies, in my view, could be increasingly considered to be a subfield—a crucial one— of expanded, more globalized scholarship on the experiences of African-descendant peoples, our many movements across the globe, along with our social and cultural salience in the regions of the Americas that this work is concerned with. And, further, African diaspora studies, is an important subfield of diaspora studies at large. The dynamics of the movement and migration of peoples generally, their historically specific contours and flows, and the questions of ethnicity, race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, group membership, power

and oppression that accompany social, cultural, and political situations of migration and immigration are certainly enduring matters of inquiry pertinent to Social Justice Education. In this work, the interAmerican African diaspora is presented as an illustrative, to illuminate both the interlinked realities of Afrodescendant peoples in a transnational sense and to offer conceptual frameworks to educators that can enhance and grow our critical work with students. Through this examination, I offer historical lenses as well gendered conceptual frameworks by which to multiply educators' understanding of Afrodescendant realities.
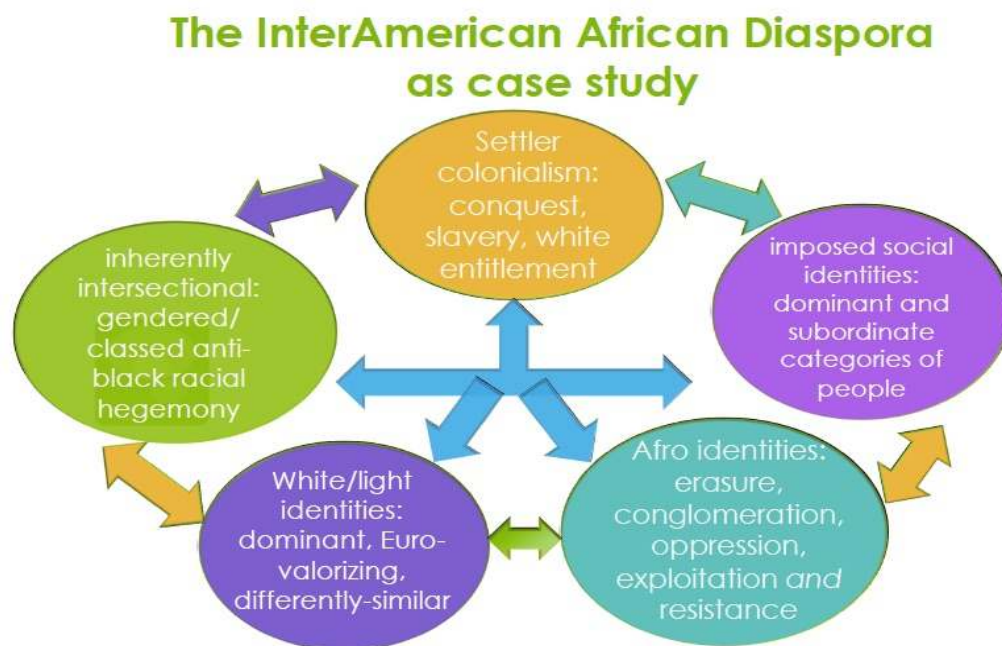

Figure 2. Visual map of conceptual elements

The above figure maps the interlinked conceptual and historical frameworks that I have discussed in this work. It shows the shared trajectory of the social construction of race across the Americas, affirming settler colonialism as an interAmerican dynamic that has impacted and shaped Afrodescendant identities within the hierarchical schemas of

race and racism produced in the coloniality of power across the Americas. This figure notes the interconnections between a cluster of historical and social patterns that can be seen pervasively across the settler-colonial Americas, highlighting the African diaspora as the case in point upon which I explain the workings of colonial legacies, the social construction of race, and intersectionality to highlight dynamics of oppression of Afrodescendants in American contexts.

While more globalized and interconnected studies of the African diaspora are important to me, the *category of diaspora* and *analyses of diasporic conditions* can be applied as transnational conceptual frameworks to examine the realities of peoples who are not part of the African diaspora. For example, the diasporic experiences of Jews generates many questions for educators about the social construction of race, ethnicity, ethnoreligion, etc. in a world-historical context of persecutory as well as embedded discrimination and oppression. The diasporic condition of Asians in the Americas and in many parts of the world outside of Asia, inspires numerous questions regarding oppression, racialization, gendered practices, ethnicity and belonging. Even the migration of peoples eventually designated as white in the Americas, especially considering the amalgamated categories of new world whiteness, could be cast in a diasporic frame, inspiring investigations around the construct of multiculturalism, power and privilege, world-historical shifts in the construction of race, etc. All in all, this work asks educators to contend more broadly with Afrodescendant reality in the Americas, *and* to borrow from the formulations here to expand the categories of analysis along in order to work with a transnational methodology to learn and teach about numerous communities that may have diasporic and other migratory experiences.

Intersectionality as a Framework

The theory of intersectionality and scope of empirical and conceptual work offered by women of color/multicultural feminisms, produced in and outside of the Americas, and involving scholars and activists with diasporic and colonized communal experiences is very important in this work and in the proposal for furthering the field of Social Justice Education and related liberatory educational projects. While the works which advanced greater complexity, polyvocality, and "gendering" of our understanding of social and political phenemona are well-known in feminist and gender studies, an engagement in this political perspective can enhance the work of educators as well. Intersectionality moves our thinking beyond an additive approach to understanding the connections between systems of oppression (Spelman, 2008) and asks us to overlay and multiply the categories, systems, and identities that we work with, noting their interrelationships and how they are constitutive of each other. In so doing, educators who select content and concepts for engagement by their students, put themselves in coalition with feminist liberatory movements and activities that are wholly aligned with social justice leanings and that demand a pervasive kind of understandings of power, domination, systems, identities, and blueprints for liberation and transformation. What an intersectional methodology asserts, is that single-focused justice studies allow for too many omissions. There is a danger when we imagine systemic oppression through only one category or identity. Women of color, queer people, poor people are forgotten, for example, when we foreground race without holding the intersections of race with gender, class, sexuality, nation, religion, etc. Third World/multicultural feminisms have long exposed and critiqued the single-focus theorizations of "women," which centered the

realities and social location of white, middle class, Western women in feminist analytical works that failed to recognize the interlocking systems of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation.

As argued, along with centering the experiences of Black women/women of color in alignment with this particular work, the theory of intersectionality provides a powerful conceptual frame and methodology. Intersectionality as a framework complicates our understanding of systems of oppression and of how differently socially located groups and individuals, including members of dominant/privileged social groups, are all constructed along the axes of gender, race, class, sexuality, nation, etc. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation are clear challenges in worlds like the Americas where mobilization of those very modes of social classification constructed hierarchical, colonial, and oppressive settler-societies. Intersectionality as a political project and methodology extends also beyond the Americas to other regions of the world, where matters of gender oppression, ethnic domination, unequal class and caste relations, homophobia, heterosexism, transgender oppression, religious and ethnoreligious oppression, and questions of national and local belonging are salient problems in many worlds and locations and are interlocking and mutually constitutive in their workings.

A World-Historical Framework: The Coloniality of Power

This work clearly holds the coloniality of power as a paramount dynamic across the Americas and that various kinds of coloniality have touched every part of the globe. Empire and imperialism have been profound features of world historicity, including the sweeping imperial dealings of Western Europe, along with other imperial formations in various epochs of human history. The United States, while a part of the Americas, has

been a dominating and imperial force in region specifically and across the world generally. While this work argues that the Americas share an interconnected legacy with respect to the construction of systems of oppression particular to new world settler societies, the United States' hegemonic presence in the region has produced an *intraAmerican* neocolonial and interventionist force in Latin America and the Caribbean, created overlapping and ever more intricate forms of oppression flowing from the imperial dealings of a rich nation intervening in the affairs of the poorer nations in the hemisphere. The Unites States' support of the Right in Latin America and the Caribbean has been detrimental to popular movements for liberation based on visions for social justice. The United States' military presence and military aid to Latin American and Caribbean countries, its alliances with Latin American and Caribbean elites and business interests, and its Jim Crow-type/Anglo-dominant racism have further fueled the colonial patterns already in existence across the Americas. This work notes the dominating position of the United States on the world and regional stage, yet it does not see U.S. imperialism as *the* source of the coloniality of power in Latin America and the Caribbean. European conquest and settler colonialism in the region overall are held to be the birthplace of the coloniality of power that plagues the region and that has resulted in the uniquely interAmerican forms of racist oppression and their intersections with gender and class oppression.

The coloniality of power political project has its gaze quite rightfully on the settler-colonial Americas, however, the coloniality of power as a conceptual framework for educators and scholars can surely be extended to explain legacies of colonialism in the worlds beyond the Americas. The idea that colonialism has crafted a legacy of

unequal power and oppressive systems is core to transnational studies that include the Americas and beyond.

The table that follows is a summary of proposals, based on the content explored in this dissertation, that I have affirmed for transnational thinking, diaspora studies, world-historical analysis, and the theory of intersectionality to help frame and constitute new teaching and learning projects in Social Justice Education. Resting on the interAmerican African diaspora as the site of exploration of the four conceptual frameworks offered, the phenomena of the coloniality of power, the forced migration of Africans to the Americas, and analyses of race, gender, class, etc. are foregrounded to illuminate the complexities of histories and systems of oppression and their impacts in local, national, regional/hemispheric, and global space.

Table 1

A summary of conceptual content

Transnational Thinking	Diaspora Studies: Communities And Identities Formed Across Borders	A World-Historical Framework	Intersectionality
In this work the Americas are held as an interconnected region, thus interAmericanity is the chosen framework.	Movement, migration are transnational processes. Diaspora is a transnational dynamic of cultures and identities.	This work's world-historical framework is the coloniality of power specific to the Americas. Various forms of colonialism, including settler colonialism, have global reach.	The theory of intersectionality a conceptual framework and political project useful for • Gendering (and queering) and understanding of diaspora • In this work, intersectional theory and methodology foreground the specific systems of oppression that impact Afro women (and perhaps American women of color generally)
Globalization and the human issues that surround it are important for educators to theorize. There are a number of perspectives about how global forces shape our current world.	The African diaspora was a community formed amidst forced migration, enslavement and oppression in the Americas. Other diasporic communities will have differing experiences.	The coloniality of power framework/political project affirms that colonial forms of domination are longstanding and continuous.	A methodology and matrix for conceptualizing the interlocking nature of systems of oppression
Globalization is not new, for example colonialism and the Atlantic Slave Trade were global processes. Transnational feminists and other thinkers have long encouraged us to move beyond nation-centric studies.	New World African cultures and sensibilities emerged from the conditions of uprootedness experienced by Afrodescendants in the Americas, some of which influence liberation movements.	Coloniality included social classification schemas based on domination and subordination, constructing social groups. Conquest, slavery, "race" and racism were/are functions of the coloniality of power, social hierarchy, supremacist and hegemonic patterns of domination/subordination. Settler coloniality is a shared historical reality of the Americas. Other societies also share a settler-colonial legacy.	Black/women of color/U.S. Third World/multicultural feminism provide frameworks that trouble a "single issue" focus
Racism is a global phenomenon. White privilege and anti-black racism are interAmerican and have various historical and contemporary expressions in Cuba, Brazil, the United States and other parts of the Americas.	The social construction of race, systems and practices of anti-Black/anti-Afro racism impact Afrodescendants in similarly-different ways across the Americas. The racisms experiences by ethnic minority and non-white members of diasporic groups may be related and/or distinct from the specific dynamics of anti-Black racism	Sexism and heterosexualism, along with language, class, knowledge, spirituality interact with race in continuous colonial forms of oppression, domination and hegemony.	Overarching systems of oppression (and privilege) that impact whole socio-cultural communities are always intersectional - Racism is gendered and classed, sexism is classed and raced, class is sexed and raced, etc.

Intellectual Cosmopolitanism/Coalitional Thinking

Fueled by my interdisciplinary training in historical, gender, Black, and Latin American studies, and my work as a social justice educator, this intellectual project is a culmination of sorts of many years of experience, thinking, teaching, and learning. It brings together multiple worlds that constitute the "new world," it engages multiple fields of study, many different kinds of critical theory, and attempts to provide conceptual and frameworks that I believe can be utilized in practical teaching and learning projects, with all kinds of students engaging numerous topics and issues related to struggles for social justice. Informed deeply by multicultural feminist thought—which has taken on the world literally and analytically in its far-reaching efforts to excavate injustice— I offer this work also as an updated model for coalitional thinking, or "coalitional consciousness" (Sandoval, 2000) that can be held as a 21st century matrix for social justice in education. Of course, no field of study can engage in any and everything, yet Social Justice Education does have the potential to embrace expanded conceptual coalitions among various fields of study. This is something that is largely done, as our work in teaching and learning involves social justice educators in historical studies, in the fields of psychology, social sciences, ethnic, gender, and queer studies, etc. Social Justice Education as a field already employs intellectual cosmopolitanism and coalitional consciousness. What these transnational and intersectional conceptual frameworks and their related cases and content offers the field are additional conversations, literatures, studies, realities and examples that may help us to teach more and to "do more justice" with the interconnections that our multidisciplinary approach already inspires.

Why Coalitional Thinking Matters for Educators

The idea of "bridging" invoked by the title of this chapter emphasizes the work of educators who have to both craft teaching content and to attend to pedagogical work in transmitting content and involving students in learning processes. As this work intends to inspire educators, attention to the bridges that can be built between content knowledge and teaching practice, how these overlap and inform each other are the focus of the following chapters. How we teach is as important as what we teach (Adams, 2007). As a social justice educator who employs and advocates for transnational and intersectional frameworks through which to distill the content knowledge that I seek to bring to my students, the application of the multiple conceptual frameworks to pedagogical concerns in Social Justice Education learning spaces also enacts a kind of coalition. As educators, we need coalitional, interdisciplinary frameworks through which to explain the workings of our world and we need coalitional, overlapping pedagogical insights in order to construct engaging opportunities for social justice learning. Through schools of thought put in conversation with one another, educators are offered theoretical insight, and revised pedagogical implications, for our teaching and learning about the complex and multilayered nature of oppression and the potential for its transformation.

CHAPTER 6

**ELABORATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION FROM A
TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE AMERICAS**

Introduction

This chapter presents some of the core ideas informing the field of Social Justice

Education (SJE) as it has developed in the United States (and specifically connected to

ideas and practices at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst). As a field, Social

Justice Education emphasizes teaching through the lenses of social oppression and

visions for liberation. I am influenced by central formulations in SJE and I elaborate

further by looking to interdisciplinary theories of oppression, accentuating the socio-

structural construction of social identities, and reviewing the theory of post-positive

realism put forward by literary scholars and others (Haimes-Garcia, 2000; S. Mohanty,

2000; Moya, 2000). The salience of world-historical analysis, exploration of historical

legacies across the Americas, and general dynamics of privilege and subordination are

analyzed here. By utilizing a groundwork of core texts in Social Justice Education from

my training, this research emphasizes the importance of particular conceptualizations

about power, oppression, and social identity, and asserts that the lenses of SJE can be

further elaborated with the use of a transnational frame.

From my standpoint, the interdisciplinary/coalitional/bridging perspective that I

embrace encourages me to converse with some core premises in Social Justice Education

and to further the field by posing new conceptual frameworks that equip educators to

expand their theoretical outlooks and to potentially revise their repertoire to include

teaching and learning across borders. I use the political perspective of the coloniality of

power as a foundational world-historical phenomenon that created social hierarchies and new world identities, and that structures present-day patterns of oppression. Along with the use of transnational and intersectional frameworks, this work overall offers concepts and some content that expands the terrain of Social Justice Education and can be helpful in the work that we do with our students. In our settler-colonial societies with their multilayered forms of oppression, education is a contested terrain. Shaped as they are in the historical and present-day realities of settler colonialism and coloniality's gendered, raced, classed, complex, and persistent power, how our educational projects are conceived are also profoundly affected by legacies that have constructed transnational, regional, national, and localized contexts. What, how, and whom we teach are crucial sites of inquiry for those interested in education for social justice.

I see SJE as aligned with and in some cases influenced by work in multicultural and intercultural education in Latin America and Canada and by progressive social movements across the Americas. In presenting these ideas in this field of education, I discuss transnational, diasporic, and intersectional frameworks that I consider important for contemporary teaching and learning about social justice issues in the Americas. The field of Social Justice Education is vast, and its conceptual and theoretical frameworks grow, including the definitions and theories of oppression that are used. In presenting this 'intersection' of Social Justice Education in conversation with interAmerican frameworks and the realities of the African diaspora, I hope to engage those teaching in K-12 and higher education contexts, along with adult, popular, and community-based educators in some of the overarching frameworks and outlooks in the field, presented in the transnational and intersectional frames that I hold as important for 21st century

education. This chapter explores general questions about the purpose of schooling, and links some shared ideas in multicultural education and Social Justice Education—two related, though somewhat different fields in teaching and learning. My work with the concept of oppression, highlights some of its basic dimensions put in conversation with new world Afrodescendant realities, along with a transnational historicism. And, my exploration of the salience of teaching about social identities—linked as they are to systems of oppression—involves a dialogue with interdisciplinary thinkers who have reaffirmed the importance of *identity* as a category of analysis useful for teaching and learning.

Educator Mike Rose, in his book *Why School?* (2009) discussed broad and specific questions regarding the nature of education in U.S. society, and utilized an understanding of working class life to undergird many of his formulations, his 'big questions' about the nature and purpose of education. "A good education," he argued, "helps us make sense of the world and find our way in it" (p. 31):

> We are driven . . . to find meaning in our lives, to interpret what befalls us
> . . . [W]e are getting educated all the time . . .: by family, community,
> teachers, pals, bullies, and saints. Our education can be as formal as a
> lesson or as informal as a lesson learned (p. 31).

Rose admitted that "[w]e educate for a number of reasons . . . to pass on traditions and knowledge, to prepare the young for democratic life, to foster moral and intellectual growth . . ." (p. 32). I, and my colleagues, hold that an important reason, also, to educate is to encourage teaching, and learning for social justice and equality as way to prepare citizens for more democratic possibilities.

Teaching and learning for social justice encourages the development among individuals and communities who can increasingly be engaged in the work of supporting

the self-determination of marginalized and oppressed groups, establishing local, national, and global systems based on shared power, equitable access to resources, and psychological actualization that can lead to all people having the opportunity to live productive and full lives in a societal ethos of equality and equilibrium. It is my view that educational programs and opportunities to teach about the past and present, particularly teaching that helps marginalized and oppressed groups to understand their place in history and society, and education that helps privileged groups to do the same plus to unlearn domination (Goodman, 2001), is a priority for Social Justice Education. Knowing the past and how it has shaped various identities, experiences, life chances and social systems can set the stage for liberatory work to transform oppression and to shape alternative futures. When considering the coloniality of power and its intricate forms of hierarchy and discrimination, there is a place for educating for justice in various kinds of learning spaces. The knowledge gained through education for social justice, through the work of naming and teaching about the dynamics of oppression and their effects on people's lives, communities, and consciousness is a first step towards liberation.

What Do Social Justice Educators Do?

In addition to embracing the general notions of diversity and multiculturalism, educators for social justice are most squarely rooted in issues of equity. We recognize that realities of inequity and discrimination - historical, systemic, and interactional - are embedded in educational settings and in the wider world. Thus, educational projects designed to help students critically engage in pressing social issues and reflection about their place and presence at school and in the world are at core to the work of teaching and learning for social justice.

A vision for SJE is grounded in the work of one of multicultural education's premier scholars Sonia Nieto along with her colleague Patty Bode (2008) who insist that educators hold the "socio-political context of education in their work" (p. 5). In their writings, Nieto and Bode explicitly named their view of the possibilities of critical multicultural education, an educational vision based on exposure to issues of justice and to transformation of unequal structures and patterns:

> . . . multicultural education must confront inequality and stratification in
> schools and in society. Helping students get along, teaching them to feel
> better about themselves, and sensitizing them to one another are worthy
> goals of good educational practice . . . [b]ut if multicultural education
> does not tackle the far more thorny questions of stratification and
> inequity, and if viewed in isolation from the reality of students' lives,
> these goals can turn into superficial strategies that only scratch the
> surface . . . (p. 8).

Nieto and Bode shared that "multicultural education began as a reform movement with a powerful commitment to educational equity and an unequivocal stance against racism" (p. 24). Yet they had concerns that in many places multicultural education has been reduced to what some called a "heroes and holidays" model:

> The simple slogan 'Celebrating Diversity' that is part of many multicultural
> education initiatives, although it may be well-meaning, glosses over severe
> structural inequalities that are replicated . . . every day through the
> combination of uneven access, unfair practices, and harmful beliefs (p. 50).

"Multicultural education, and all good teaching," Sonia Nieto argued "is about transformation . . .not . . . just individual awareness but . . . a deep transformation on a number of levels – individual, collective, and institutional. Each of these levels is needed to foster student learning" (2011).

In the context of educating within societies that have inherited settler-coloniality such as the Americas, multicultural education is at first antiracist, is basic, provides

important perspectives for all, should be pervasive, is rooted in concerns for social justice, is a process, and is a critical pedagogy. Social Justice Education, sharing some of the core goals of multicultural education, centers around learning spaces that use explicit content focused on inequity, teaching and learning about the unequal reality of society, and includes possibilities for transformation and liberation.

Social Justice Education holds the premise that much of our world's social reality is unjust and unequal. Therefore, Social Justice Education involves teaching and learning about the historical and present-day realities of society and the experiences of particular marginalized groups. Educational opportunities that are proactive in teaching about inequity, injustice, and the potential for liberation helps students develop into more informed citizens who can develop critical awareness of the systems and histories of oppression in the learning spaces of classrooms, seminars, workshops, and intergroup dialogues. Social justice educators reach people who may have already been exposed to issues of inequality, historical and present-day power relations, and many who have never thought about hierarchy and inequality. Regardless of prior exposure, all students in a social justice educational space can be asked to grapple with the social problems and issues faced across the Americas and the world. In American contexts, Social Justice Education content, pedagogy, and praxis is that work in education that is anti-oppressive— anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic/heterosexist, anti-ablelist, anti-religious oppression, etc. (Kumashiro, 2000) — and that exposes the brutality and pain of various kinds of oppression found in our worlds.

Social Justice Education gives students opportunities to examine and re-consider certain hegemonic beliefs and values in various societies that mask inequality, including,

for example, the myths of meritocracy that are foundational elements of the national narrative in the United States (Adas 2001; Keating, 2007; Tatum, 2000) or idea of "racial innocence"/"racial democracy" that pervades Latin America. Social Justice Education involves teaching that uncovers and explores with learners the complex dynamics of unequal power that characterize much of civic, cultural, social, economic, political, educational, community and personal life. Social Justice Education engages students— children, adolescents, and adults—in learning about the reality of inequality in order to empower them with knowledge about how their worlds and experiences, and those of others different from them, have been shaped by larger systems and histories. In the best of worlds, Social Justice Education has the potential to move and inspire individuals and communities to work for social change.

In a social milieu where academic and school-based knowledge are often imagined or desired to be neutral and apolitical, and in the context of entrenched hierarchical cultures, the work of educating citizens around issues of social justice is a complex, strategic, and simultaneously hopeful and visionary work. Teaching and learning for social justice is an inherently political project, as it encourages in depth exploration of social and cultural power relations. My use of "political" here is not limited to the purview of national, political parties, partisanship or electoral politics, but is instead an acknowledgment of interpersonal and intercommunal *power relations* as a primary form of *politics* in any society. The presumption that education is and should be politically neutral is a falsity. Education is fundamentally conceived and constructed within hegemonic ideologies, histories, and the specific cultural assumptions of individuals, communities, nations, and states. Education transmits selective values,

perspectives, and encourages students to draw particular conclusions – conscious or unconscious – that are culturally and politically specific. Education for social justice is a transparent political and cultural project that works to consciously unmask and expose social realities, particularly the realities of injustice and the experiences of the oppressed.

Social Justice Education is the practice of teaching about social inequality and oppression, along with the work of modeling alternatives to an unequal status quo, with the intent to build critical consciousness, self-awareness, and a desire for change among students. In its most hopeful, Social Justice Education can inspire students to sustained awareness, lifelong learning, personal and social transformation, and involvement in liberation.

Utilizing the particular definition of Social Justice Education that informs this work, it is my view that the work of educators is to raise consciousness and to place the reality of social inequality at the center of teaching and learning. "[P]romot[ing] social justice through education" (Bell, 2007, p. 2) names systems of oppression as a primary focus of teaching, with the intent to expose students to the workings of power in society. In doing this work, educators "challenge oppressive systems" (Bell, 2007, p. 2) by providing students with information and knowledge about social inequality as an academic, reflective, and/or practice-oriented enterprise and to "[develop] educational processes" (Bell, 2007) that contribute to social justice goals.

In her work "Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education" (2007), Lee Ann Bell provided a general framework as well as a clear explanation of many of the

185

underlying assumptions of the vein of Social Justice Education that is the focus of this

work. Bell states that a primary goal for the field of Social Justice Education is

> . . . to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part (p. 2).

Thus,

> Social Justice Education is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. We envision a society in which individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with other). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole (Bell, pp. 1-2).

   As Bell described the idea of social justice as process and a goal, particular

processes and goals are also embedded in the conceptual and pedagogical frameworks

and practices of Social Justice Education. Teaching for social justice is a

multidimensional process, involving the consciousness, personal and group identities of

teachers and students alike, is rooted in Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's notion of praxis

as a merging of theory and practice (1996), and involved itselves openly in "interactive

and historical process" (Bell, 2007, p. 2) that shape the educational experience. Social

Justice Education is rigorous, noting the root causes of oppression as historical and

structural, yet simultaneously individual and cultural, as "[o]ppression encapsulates the

fusion of institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social

prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that shade most aspects of life

in our society" (Bell, 2007, p. 3). Therefore, historical knowledge about the origins and dynamics of systems of inequality are of crucial importance in teaching and learning, as historical matters filter into the present-day and shape how we can make meaning of contemporary dynamics of inequality and oppression.

Examining issues of oppression, history, contemporary realities, and social identities leads us to deal with dynamics of subordination and domination on multiple levels. Historical studies and understanding the systemic quality of oppression and oppressive dynamics can give students an overarching sense of social dynamics that support inequality. Simultaneously and relatedly, the naming of dominant/privileged groups and subordinate groups in the dialectic play of history and oppression (Freire 1996) and in teaching about them, are important practices in Social Justice Education. Bell explained that is it is important to " . . . examine the roles of a dominant or advantaged group and (a) subordinated or targeted group(s) in each form of oppression" (2007, p. 4).

Social Justice Education also incorporates Paulo Freire's notion of dialogic engagement which enact equalizing pedagogies where students and teachers are together engaged in a democratic teaching and learning process (Adams, 2007; Freire, 1996 and 2008; hooks, 1994). The practice of Social Justice Education includes developing content for use with students and it also utilizes innovative pedagogical practices to enable students to be engaged and active learners.

In "Pedagogical Frameworks for Social Justice Education", Maurianne Adams (2007) affirmed that ". . . *how* we teach [is] distinct from *what* we teach" (p. 16). In this sense, strategies that are used to help students learn about intensive topics such as

oppression, historical and contemporary realities, social identities, and dynamics of domination and subordination include particular pedagogical frameworks that allow for integrated learning. In her work, Adams proposes teaching frameworks that balance emotions and cognition; making connections between systems and personal identities, beliefs, and behaviors; paying attention to the learners' group dynamics; using reflection and reflective exercises for learning; and rewarding changes and personal growth among learners as a result of their learning process (2007). These reflective and experiential processes can also include crafting integrative strategies for students to examine and understand the concept of social identities including opportunities to examine their own identities; listening and reflecting upon their own experiences and those of others; understanding the process of socialization and how oppressive practices are often maintained on the level of the unconscious (Dovidio, 1993; Harro 2000) and exploring action steps and continued involvement in learning and in liberation processes.

Social justice studies are rigorous, noting the root causes of oppression as historical and structural, yet simultaneously reflexive, individual and communal. Therefore, historical knowledge about the origins and dynamics of systems of inequity are of crucial importance in teaching and learning, as historical matters filter into the present-day and shape how we can make meaning of past and present dynamics of inequality and oppression, along with movements for change and liberation. Historical study and study of systems can give students an overarching sense of social dynamics that support inequality. Work around the politics of social identity and the naming of dominant/privileged groups and oppressed/subordinate groups and in teaching about them, are important practice in Social Justice Education, as an examination of the

structural-systemic workings of society includes a look at interactional and personal processes that are involved in larger dynamics.

In the sections that follow, I work with interdisciplinary theories of oppression and integrate concepts drawn from Social Justice Education with concepts and examples generated from transnational realities that are elaborated in this work. This can potentially help orient social justice educators through presenting various American experiences that illuminate the salience of social identities and the forces of domination/subordination in the region. I extend some of the core frameworks in Social Justice Education to begin a more transnational, relational, and intersectional discussion of oppression and its workings in order to expand the conceptual base and content possibilities that can be used for teaching and learning.

The coloniality of power analytical perspective is foundational to how systems of oppression work in the past and present, an historical approach to understanding the regional and shared roots of oppression is helpful for educators, the facts of diaspora and how oppressive forces shape diasporic communities help us to teach more expansively about racialization, culture and resistance, and the framework of intersectionality that 'genders' our outlooks and notes the interlocking nature of systems of oppression, social groups and communities, and the dynamics of social identity. All of these can multiply our understanding.

Oppression

Dynamics of oppression are recognized as having multiple dimensions and mechanisms, to be pervasive, longstanding, and require powerful strategies to transform.

This understanding of the stubbornness of oppressive forces disrupts popular notions, for

instance, about racism and sexism. Racism and sexism are often understood to exist

within realms of mere feeling, individual attitudes, and identifiable acts of bigotry that

miss the facts of multilevel and multidimensional historical, social, and cultural frames

by which patterns of discrimination, prejudice, and bigotry *as contained within* larger

systems of oppression can be more adequately understood. It is my view that many are

miseducated about oppression, what it is, how it developed, how it works, and how it is

everywhere. The term "oppression," to many, may sound like a dated word, harking back

to a human past where obvious and unmistakable forms of misery and domination—

juggernautish dynamics— that characterized the lives of many. In our contemporary

moment, many would like to imagine that some of the harsher forces of domination and

inequality have been quelled. The concept of oppression, however, still has relevance for

how contemporary scholars and teachers can explain the myriad patterns of inequality,

marginalization, exclusion, discrimination, and bias, and how they are reproduced and

internalized, knowingly and unknowingly across the globe. Thus, a major project of

Social Justice Education is to teach about the nuances of oppression and the inequity and

discrimination that it causes.

Excavating Oppression

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines oppression as "an unjust or cruel exercise

of power" and "a sense of being weighed down in body and mind" (Oppression, 2015).

Tyranny still lives in many obvious forms in human life. However, in certain parts of the

Americas—the socio-historical field with which this dissertation is concerned—

oppression's cruel exercises of power, even when not tyrannical or overt, continue to live,

weighing down the bodies, minds and spirits of members of social groups, impacting

multiple communities. As this definition of oppression, in a basic sense, indicates both an

unjust exercise of power which produces a sense of being constrained or weighed down,

the use of the term oppression to describe the effects of unequal societal mechanisms is

relevant still for the present-day. Hierarchical and unequal patterns of power impact

people all over the world; they weigh heavily on the human spirit.

For those of us who study history and society and teach about them, it is evident

that there are numerous forms of tyranny, exercises of power and privilege, practices of

domination, and experiences of subordination that keep members of particular social

groups at the margins or at the bottom of social hierarchies, while members of other

groups are located at the center or top of social systems. Systems of social classification

established identifiable social groups that function within social hierarchies, creating

unfair access to resources, self- and community-actualization for groups and individuals

who inhabit those groups that are granted less privilege in stratified societies. The

designation of some social groups who exist within schema of privilege and domination

(dominant social identity groups) and other groups who exist within schema of

subordination and lack of social privilege (subordinate social identity groups) constructs

the structural realities of social injustice (Goodman, 2001; Tatum, 2000). While it can be

argued that humans may be psychologically inclined or even biologically motivated to

create in-group/out-group arrangements that have unequitable social effects, may imagine

social groups as unequal, and may allocate resources and opportunities unjustly, I am

most interested in working with theories that explain oppression in relation to historically

and contextually specific dimensions. The systematic reproduction of relations of

oppression/domination is predicated on social power which grants social advantage to some groups and individuals members of groups over and in relation to social groups who are denied those very advantages and access to power. Groups and individual members of groups who hold social power and advantage are given voice, visibility, agency, access to resources, political participation and economic advantage. The social power that dominant groups are given in society constitutes the supremacist forces that fuel oppression, as oppression entails myriad practices of domination and subordination, enacted on institutional, communal and individual/personal levels, and has been theorized by scholars across disciplines. Oppression cannot exist without the mechanisms of dominating, or supremacist forms of power (Suarez, 2015) that give advantage and license to some and disadvantage and degradation to others. In this sense, an analysis of power helps educators to elaborate the theories of oppression that are helpful in our work.

Power, Domination and Oppression

In her explorations of the complex dimensions of interactional power, feminist theorist Cynthia Suarez (2015) works with bell hooks' notions of liberatory power which is seen to be distinct from the workings of supremacist power. Supremacist power engenders domination, whereas other, intrinsic forms of power and *empowerment*—the development of inner and communal resources that support groups and individuals in a spirit of equilibrium— can be used for liberatory and egalitarian aims (Batliwala, 2010).

In alignment with feminist critiques of supremacist power, psychologist Jim Sidanius and his colleagues have worked extensively with the concept of "social dominance," have theorized its salience and persistence in societies, and have argued that "psychological, sociostructural, ideological, and institutional forces jointly contribute to

the production and reproduction of social oppression" along with the "institutional and ideological underpinning of . . . oppression" (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin, 2004, p. 846). These authors asserted that

> social dominance theory is not simply focused on the extreme yet all-too-common forms of intergroup truculence (e.g., mass murder and genocide) . . . but rather on the universal and exquisitely subtle forms of discrimination and oppression that large numbers of people face in their everyday lives all over this planet (p. 847).

Working with this vein in social dominance theory allows educators to define oppression— social processes that enact supremacist social power and dominance for some groups and not others— as multifaceted, complex, overt, and subtle simultaneously.

Philosopher Michel Foucault's (1980) theorizations of power are also useful in charting a contemporary and multidimensional understanding of oppression. In Foucault's formulations, power is exercised; it involves action. He argued that "there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body" (p. 93). Foucault alluded to "old" systems of power, that literary scholar Robert Young (1995) explained as Foucault's idea of a "sovereign model of power . . . that . . . has a single source in a master, kind, or class" (p. 5). Sovereign, supremacist, centralized sources of power can most apparently become oppressive. Yet, Foucault argued that newer modes of power in the form of "ongoing subjugation" (1980, p. 97) have a dispersed, ubiquitous quality, where dynamics of domination and subordination become internalized, may not appear to be abusive, operate seemingly automatically and are the "effect[s] and continuation of a relation of domination" (p. 92). Foucault elaborated that

> power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that

193

which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must by analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain… Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization (p. 98).

Foucault's formulations, therefore, in conjunction with other thinkers, asserts that power-over/supremacist power may not almost appear in forms of obvious tyranny. The proliferation of dominating power can also be embedded, mobile, and subtle.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2001), held the idea of "symbolic violence" as part of his theory of domination. Domination, according to Bourdieu, can become entrenched in everyday life, notably in gender relations where intimate and familial connections contain patriarchal dynamics and patterns of male domination. Bourdieu's theorizing speaks to how the idea of oppression remains relevant for the excavation of contemporary forms of inequity, even when systems and mechanisms of unequal power –e.g., intimate, familial gender relations— are normalized, unrecognized, unnamed, suppressed or denied.

Political philosopher Antonio Gramsci's articulated the concept of hegemony to denote the workings of power as pervasive rather than obviously coercive. In the Gramscian sense, *domination* conveyed coercion, while *hegemony* operated through embedded social processes of unequal power and inequitable access to resources. Hegemony can be identified in patterns of daily occurrences, in discourses that generate social control and in tacit, accepted, regularly occurring practices that privilege some individuals and groups over others. In Gramsci's schema, social hierarchies and the workings of power create a kind of taken-for-granted logic and order, and compel a kind of consent to everyday forms of inequality.

Sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard (2010) made a distinction between domination and hegemony. "One could say that hegemony is the ultimate stage of domination," he argued, while asserting that "[d]omination is characterized by the master/slave relation . . . a relationship of force and conflicts" (p. 33). "Hegemony," he argued, involved "the disappearance of the dual, personal, agonistic domination" (p. 33). Yet, dynamics of coercive and supremacist power are still at play even in the embedded power dynamics that characterize hegemony.

Social dominance theory (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin, 2004 and others), feminist empowerment theory and critiques of supremacist power, along with philosopher Michel Foucault's notions of power as fluid and dispersed are influential this this work. Pierre Bourdieu's ideas about embedded structures and practices of domination and "symbolic violence," along with political philosopher Antonio Gramsci's articulation of "hegemony" as a pervasive pattern of social power, philosopher Jean Baudrillard's work with the ideas of domination and hegemony (2010), along with myriad thinkers who excavate colonialism and the coloniality of power have shaped my thinking about the mechanisms of inequity, power, domination, and oppression that have been useful in my SJE practices. As the myriad and complex workings of power

Along with other thinkers, I conceptualize oppression as being able to express itself in various ways: 1) in the "master/slave" dialectic—designated groups and individuals who are held as superior and have the power to suppress the lives of other groups and individuals who are deemed inferior— (what Baudrillard believed was a diminishing form of unequal power); 2) in the embeddedness of hegemonic practices, internalized and enacted in everyday life; 3) in obvious forms of domination and

195

violence; 4) in the "symbolic" forms that Bourdieu held in his work, along with Foucault's notion of "discursive regimes"— language, ideologies that are articulated, enacted and *believed* in society that involve hierarchical power; and 5) policy and law that assume neutrality but result in discrimination against groups and individual members of subordinate social identity groups. I also hold feminist conceptions of power that distinguish between empowerment and supremacist/power-over to highlight the contrasts between forms of power that fuel oppression vs. intrinsic forms of power that can inspire equity and horizontal, shared power (Batliwala, 2010; Sandoval, 2000; Suarez, 2015). Oppressive systems and dynamics are characterized by unequal status, dominating power and unequitable, disproportionate access to resources among social groups and individual members of those groups, which can be expressed societally through clear forms of top-down, supremacist, coercive power and/or through more subtle symbolic/ideological/discursive forms of cultural, institutional, individual, policy-level, and community-based domination and subordination.

Colonial Power-Oppression

Colonialism was/is a profound system of power and domination, incorporating tyranny, supremacist forms of control and social regulation, multiple forms of domination, and embedded mechanisms of hegemony in the societies affected by colonial rule. Centuries of European colonial domination have profoundly shaped the sociality of the entire world. Cultural theorists Ella Habiba Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) affirmed that "virtually all countries have been affected by colonialism, whether as colonizer, colonized, or both at the same time" (p. 38). In their summary of the impacts of colonialism, Shohat & Stam made its dominating practices clear. They noted

Some of the major corollaries of colonialism were: the expropriation of territory on a massive scale; the destruction of indigenous peoples and cultures; the enslavement of Africans and Native Americans; the colonization of Africa and Asia; and racism not only within the colonized world but also within Europe itself (1994, p. 16).

Psychologist and philosopher Frantz Fanon discussed the "lines of force" (1963, p. 38) that were drawn in European colonialization which were fundamentally based on violence and exploitation, overt forms of power and domination that were clearly oppressive. Fanon's work also dealt with the psychological manifestations, the impact of cultural impositions, colonial governance and economic usurpations that were involved in European colonialism. In Fanon's view, the colonized mimicked and internalized many of the values of colonialists because they were compelled to through the processes of takeover and colonial rule, which contributed to a loss of self-determination and empowerment among the colonized. Fanon's influential works exposed the effects of colonial domination on the mindsets and cultures of the colonized, who have endured and adjusted to dominating governmental, economic, and cultural-ontological impositions of Europeans colonizers.

Albert Memmi (1991) accompanied Fanon in acknowledging how the effects of colonialism resulted in "the colonized's culture, society and technology [being] seriously damaged" (p. 144). Colonized peoples had to adjust and assimilate to the structures, tendencies, and outlooks of colonizers and to be subject to their economic, social, and legal systems. While many initial colonial encounters were unapologetically tyrannical and coercive, the *longue durée* of colonialist presence, control, and rule transformed indigenous societies, groups and individuals, and saw transformations in how colonizers presented themselves and their projects. Overtly violent coercion over time could shift to

hegemonic practices, to "symbolic violence," embedded domination, and normalization of unequal power relations. The workings of oppression can be located and analyzed in all of these varied, overt and subtle social and cultural dynamics in societies shaped by colonialism.

In the Americas, the coloniality of power established social hierarchies and social systems of classification that designated some groups as superior over others. Colonial practices could be extremely supremacist, abusive and tyrannical; there were many clear forms of domination and oppression during periods of colonial rule. The legacy of colonialism in our present-day, i.e. the continuous relations of power flowing from colonization projects, has created increasingly hidden, internalized, and embedded forms of hegemony that also have oppressive effects. For the purposes of this work, the context of the Americas as a case study presents educators working with definitions and dynamics of oppression, to also be informed by the work of anti-colonial scholars working across disciplines who have studied and written about the operations of oppression garnered from the contextual realities of colonialism and imperialism.

Ultimately in our efforts to expose and transform oppression, justice-minded educators and scholars hold the facts and intricacies of the workings of unequal power in society that inform tyranny, domination, hegemony, submission, systems of hierarchical rule, symbols and knowledge. Systems and practices of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ethnoreligious oppression, gender oppression, etc. have been extensively studied by scholars across a range of disciplines and fields. The systemic and institutional nature of inequality, with observable mechanisms that weigh down the bodies and minds of so many, is a key dynamic of oppression.

Dynamics of oppression can also be charted transnationally by looking at experiences of connected communities across nations, such as the African diaspora in the Americas and the shared patterns of domination experienced by these communities beyond any one nation-state. In the sections that follow, I explore some key works in the conceptualization and theorization of oppression as utilized in the field of Social Justice Education– at various times looking to some of the racialized/gendered experiences of Black people in the Americas as examples – within various related fields in and relevant to Social Justice Education.

A View of Oppression: Five Faces/Forces and Barriers

As educators, it is necessary to unpack – to be able to effectively teach— the specific structural and cultural dynamics of oppression that are part of American social life. It is important to be schooled on how oppression is multiple and complex. Iris Marion Young's classic piece, "Five Faces of Oppression" (2000) provided an important framework for how to understand various categories of experience to explain the varied dynamics of oppression. Young argued that oppression is a structural and experiential reality that needs a more nuanced understanding beyond the traditional definitions of oppression as the "exercise of [overt] tyranny by a ruling group" (p. 35). Oppression, she stated, ". . . designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned . . . society" (p. 35). In the 21st century, the coloniality of power and the oppressions that flow from it often function as *hegemony*, the embeddedness of power and domination in subtle and covert ways, along with contemporary types of overt

domination and stereotyping, different than the outright brutality of oppressive practices of earlier centuries.

Oppression - as a profound organizing principle of social dominance (Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006) - is embedded in histories, ideologies, discourses, practices, institutions and structures that have been established over time, that involve social hierarchies which disadvantage certain groups and offer privilege and advantage to others. As an embedded social dynamic, oppression then is ". . . a consequence of often unconscious assumptions" (Young, 2000, p. 36) that become part of the ". . . normal processes of daily life" (Young, 2000, p. 36). Oppression entails ". . . the living of one's life . . . confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental . . .[where] motion and mobility are restricted . . . " (Frye, 2000, p. 12). Oppressed peoples ". . . suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings" (Young, 2000, p. 36). In this sense, oppression is conceived of as restricting and inhibiting, in both subtle and overt ways.

In looking at the structural and pervasive dynamics of oppression, various social groups are often oppressed in society and oppressive experiences will not be identical among various groups and individuals:

> . . . different factors, or combinations of factors, constitute the oppression
> of different groups, making their oppression irreducible, I believe it is not
> possible to give one essential definition of oppression (Young, 2000, p.
> 36).

Because experiences and histories of oppression vary, Young offered us five different dimensions or categories of oppression, each that have their own dynamic and possible applicability to differently oppressed groups. These categories are *exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism*, and *violence*.

Exploitation involves the ". . . transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal distributions" (Young, 2000, p. 38). The history of the United States and the rest of the Americas provides numerous examples of how exploitation originally structured the lives of Black and indigenous people. Using the example of Black people in the Americas, the institution of chattel slavery that was the most common entry point of Africans into the Americas, was a profound system of economic exploitation, involving forced, unpaid labor which provided enormous profits to the exploiters. Slave labor created the foundation for the growth of cotton/textiles, sugar and rum, tobacco, mining and other cash-generating industries that resulted in the economic and social development of various American nations.

There has been a trajectory of exploitation of Black people, even after the end of enslavement in the Americas. Historians and other scholars provide numerous examples of continuous and continued economic exploitation in the U.S. vis-à-vis the institutions of sharecropping, peonage, prison labor, exclusion from higher-paying factory work and union participation (Amott & Matthaei, 1996; Davis, 1981; Zinn, 2003). Across the Americas there is evidence of disproportionate numbers of Afrodescendants in low wage service, industrial and agricultural professions, de facto and de jure/customary legal segregation and officially sanctioned denial of equal opportunity (Caldwell, 2007; Molina & Wilson, 2012). For example, in Brazil, a "de facto preference for white labor" (Caldwell, 2007, p. 29), serves to prevent Afro-Brazilians from accessing higher status occupations, contributing to their disproportionate poverty and economic exploitation. Throughout the region, the profound present-day gap between white/light and Afrodescendant Americans in income and wealth, the particular economic exploitation of

Black women as well as Black men, and the hindering of the economic growth of Black communities are evident. The profound legacy of the economic exploitation of Black people in various parts of the Americas, has been discussed in depth (Amott & Matthaei 1996; Caldwell, 2007; Davis, 1983; Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Giddings, 2006; Jones, 1986a & b and 1999; Takaki, 1994; Telles, 2004; Zinn, 2003).

Marginalization was explained primarily in material terms as a form of oppression happening to people who are " . . . expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination" (Young, 2000, p. 38). Marginalization, I argue, includes this kind of expulsion from social life and also the experience of existing on the margins in which one's image and subjectivity are cast outside of the mainstream of recognition and value in societies. Again, using the example of Black people, along with disproportionate numbers of people in Black communities suffering severe material deprivation across the Americas, there is with this also a generalized experience of existing on the edges, out of the mainstream – on the margins – of societies where whiteness or lightness are valued and rewarded materially/economically, psychologically, and culturally. Similar to the dynamics of economic exploitation, marginalization and marginality have occurred in particular ways for Black women as they have for Black men in the diaspora.

Powerlessness involves the "lack [of] authority and status . . . and respectability" (Young, pp. 2003, 40-41). Powerlessness affects peoples of color across a spectrum of class and professional access, in noting that "[i]n daily interchange, women and men of color must prove their respectability . . . [T]hey are often not treated by strangers with respectful distance or deference" (Young, 2003, p. 41). Looking to racial realities in

Brazil provides important examples of the denial of authority, status, and respectability to Afro-Brazilians. Edward Telles (2004) discussed some of the experiences of Blacks in the workplace:

> . . . once . . . hired, nonwhite workers, especially black women, faced further difficulties. This was especially true when they occupied supervisory positions, because this reverted the logic of the Brazilian racial hierarchy. In the rare cases where negros were supervisors, white colleagues felt uncomfortable, and discrimination became more intense and visible. . . . [C]lients and subordinates were inconsiderate and did not grant them the same prestige and recognition as their white status equals. Additionally, professional colleagues of white supervisors were constantly distrustful of them" (p. 161).

The experiences of powerlessness faced in everyday racism plague Black people across the Americas, intersect with gender, and often transcend the boundaries of class.

Cultural imperialism involves ". . . the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (Young, 2000, p. 41). Cultural imperialism has been a profound experiences for various groups in the Americas and has had particular salience for Black and indigenous people, as cases in point. Black people have been one of the most visible groups " . . . defined by the dominant culture as deviant, as a stereotyped Other" (Young, 2000, p. 42). Arriving in the Americas via the transatlantic slave trade which lasted from the 15th through the late 19th centuries, African descendants experienced a profound cultural loss, being transported permanently away from their ancestral lands and legacies, while experiencing a profound projection of Otherness cast upon them by their white exploiters. Blacks in the Americas also experienced the process of syncretization and hybridization of the remnants of African cultures that they were able to retain (Heywood & Thornton, 2007; Ortiz, 1973; Thompson, 1983; Sims, 2011) while facing and adapting to the profound imposition of

Euro-derived cultures, values, ontology, and religion/philosophy – much of which was internalized by Black people themselves. Dominant groups oppress subordinate groups through cultural imperialism by judging them through the lenses of dominant norms. The privileging of whiteness/lightness and European cultural forms constitutes a type of cultural hegemony, a cultural imperialism across all of the Americas. Thus, new world Black cultures, created in the conditions of uprootedness and improvisation, became subordinated cultures in the Americas, subject to imperialist interpretations, projections, and devaluations.

> Violence, as one of the most obvious form of oppression, has a
>
> systemic character" and exists ". . . as a social practice . . . The oppression of violence consists not only in direct victimization, but in the daily knowledge shared by all members of oppressed groups that they are *liable* to violation, solely on account of their group identity (Young, 2000, p. 43).

The social practice of violence has affected all oppressed groups in various ways. The experiences of violence against Africans in the Americas have been foundational and continuous. From the day-to-day violence inherent in the slave system, to the violence of lynching, beatings, intimidation, and harassment in the Jim Crow era of the United States for instance, to the 1912 massacre of Black activists in Cuba (Booth, 1976; Fernandéz, 2002), to the violence of neglect and insult that plagues many Black communities in the Americas today, violence has been one of the more overt forms of oppression experienced.

Young concluded by offering her categorical formulations of oppression as ". . . criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed, rather than as a full theory of oppression" (2000, p. 44). As categories, these "five faces" can give

educators some conceptual frameworks, especially applicable to the dynamics and patterns of interAmerican gendered and classed racism, for how to understand the complexity and variability of oppression as historically generated and manifest everyday, structural, embedded, and pervasive realities for various groups and group members across the region.

Oppression/Discrimination: Multiple Levels

The five distinct dynamics of oppression as explained by Iris Marion Young are helpful conceptual frameworks to explain the multiple ways that oppression occurs primarily on the level of experience of oppressed individuals and communities in the Americas. Other structural and systemic approaches to understanding oppression have also been important to social justice educators. Recognizing oppression as embedded in everyday interactions and held in place by long histories, ideologies, practices and policies, some key thinkers have made the idea of oppression – as constituting a complex system operating on many levels of society— accessible to educators.

In his piece, "Discrimination Comes in Many Forms: Individual, Institutional, and Structural" (2000), Fred Pincus discussed three distinctive arenas or levels in which oppression manifests. "Individual discrimination involves the actions of an individual or small group of individuals," (p. 31) he writes, while with ". . . institutional discrimination . . . the discriminatory behavior is embedded in important social institutions" (p. 32). "Structural discrimination," he argued, "is more controversial . . . because it involves behavior that is race and gender neutral in intent" (p. 33).

A companion framework to Pincus's definitions of three different levels of discrimination/oppression is found in Warren Blumenfeld and Diane Raymond's writing

on "Prejudice and Discrimination" (2000). In their work, the authors discussed the "adverse opinion or belief" of prejudice, the "laws, customs, religion, education, and so forth" that constitute institutionalized discrimination, stereotypes, and the dynamics of segregation between dominant and oppressed group through de jure and de facto processes" (p. 22).

In working with frameworks that explain oppression, discrimination and prejudice, there are numerous examples of how Black people have been subjected to multiple levels of oppression. Ranging from individual acts of violence and stereotyping, to policies such as redlining that prevented African-U.S. Americans from equal access to housing, and other examples such as school segregation (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Herbes-Sommers, 2003). On the institutional level racist oppression has been longstanding and systemic in the Americas. An important example would be the realities of pervasive structural discrimination found in Latin American racial practices which champion "racial democracy" (Caldwell, 2007; Hanchard, 1994; Hernández, 2013; Telles, 2004). "Racial democracy" in Latin America, and racial denial in the United States, are claimed while simultaneously downplaying or ignoring the importance of the historical formation of racist exclusions of Black and indigenous peoples from public and economic life and the resulting systemic marginalization, exploitation, cultural imperialism, and powerlessness among Black individuals and communities.

Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey in "Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who Are My People?" (2004) utilized classic sociological terms to explain multiple levels of social identity formation. These definitions are also important frameworks for understanding multiple levels of oppression. They discussed four levels

206

of society: the micro or individual/ interactional level; the meso or community/ interactional level; the macro/ national-institutional level and; the global/between, across, and among nations (pp. 60-63). The meso, macro, and global levels shape discourses, beliefs, practices, and policies that influence the micro/individual level of interaction and experience.

In foregrounding the experiences of Black people in the Americas, micro level experiences shaped by racial hegemony can happen even in intimate spaces. In many Latin American countries where familial ties among individuals who have different racial-color identities. In Latin America's *mestizaje* system of race, family members in extended, and even in nuclear families across a range of skin color and other somatic features may occupy different color/racial categories and thus have different individual experiences around race. In contrast in the United States, the relatively inflexible category of whiteness and the general "one-drop" rule that defines racial Otherness often generally structures communal, shared racialized experiences among Afrodescendant family memberes where gradations of color and phenotype also exist.

Blacks, whites, Indians, and mixed-race people result in varied skin tones and racial designations and descriptors among family members, those with more visible African features can face discrimination even among loved ones. In the life of María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno "Reyita" as told by her daughter Daisy Rubiera in the book *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century* (2000), Reyita experienced color-based oppression in her family. She explained

> For my mother, it was an embarrassment, that I – of her four daughters –
> was the only black one . . . She rebuked me in hurtful ways and was
> always saying: 'that black one' . . . I always felt she rejected me . . . I was
> the victim of terrible discrimination on my mother's part (p. 21).

Along with global oppressive practices which create structures of disadvantage and

economic exploitation among regions and nations populated by darker skinned peoples,

with meso- and macro-level histories of marginalization and discrimination in law,

media, schools, politics, employment, neighborhoods and *barrios*, micro-level

interactions are also fraught with the legacies of coloniality and oppression that are

complex, omnipresent, and multilayered.

The Salience of Social Identities

Social justice educators have noted extensively that oppression has "multiple

manifestations" (Jackson, Hardiman & Griffin, 2007) and must be taught in its multiple

dimensions. Since the dynamics of oppression involve social structures and institutions,

individual, familial and group participation, social group formation along with culture-

making, teaching and learning about social identity formation and the salience of social

identities are important aspects of work in education. In their work "Conceptual

Foundations for Social Justice Education" (2007), Bailey Jackson, Rita Hardimann, and

Pat Griffin explained that

> [o]ur social identities/group membership and the relationships among
> these identities and memberships have been co-opted, exploited, and
> distorted to serve the system of social oppression and its manifestations.
> The system of social oppression uses . . . membership in various social
> groups as a vehicle for designating groups that are oppressor and those
> that are oppressed (p. 41).

Since social identities indicate ". . . how we are perceived by other people and classified

by societal institutions" (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, 2004, p. 60), introducing students to the

concepts of social categorization, social identity, and social location—particularly

engaging students in learning about social identities that are connected to the study of

colonial systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.—as

linked to broader historical and institutional processes is an important project in

educating for social justice. The new world identities that emerged in the Americas are

unique and particular, necessitating a naming of what they are, how they have happened

to people, and what advantages and disadvantages social identities have wrought in

America's structural and experiential landscapes of oppression.

In their work, "Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who Are My

People?", Gwynn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey, (2004) discussed some of the micro- or

individual-level understandings of identity and open into a fuller explanation of the *social*

in the concept of social identity. They stated

> Identity formation is the result of a complex interplay among a range of
> factors: individual decisions and choices, particular life events,
> community recognition and expectations, societal categorization,
> classification and socialization, and key national or international events (p.
> 59).

The experience and understanding of identity then is "an ongoing process" (Kirk and

Okazawa-Rey, 2004, p. 59). Yet,

> [c]lassifying and labeling human beings, often according to real or
> assumed physical, biological, or genetic differences, is a way to
> distinguish who is included and who is excluded from a group, to ascribe
> particular characteristics, to prescribe social roles, and to assign status,
> power, and privilege (p. 62).

In his discussion of how identities and difference are socially constructed, Allan Johnson

(2000) named the workings of *oppression* coupled with workings of *privilege* to explain

how social categories of group identity operate. He explained

Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do (p. 16).

And

For every social category that is privileged, one or more other categories are oppressed in relation to it . . . oppression results from the social relationship between privileged and oppressed categories (p. 20).

In her important work on questions of identity, Beverly Tatum (2000) clearly linked the processes of social categorization that inform social identities by also naming the systems of oppression and privilege that are linked to processes of identity. She wrote

. . . there are at least seven categories of "otherness" commonly experienced in U.S. society. People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability. Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism, respectively. In each case there is a group considered dominant (systematically advantaged by the society because of group membership) and a group considered subordinate or targeted (systematically disadvantaged) (p. 6).

By naming the processes of social categorization and group membership – by linking them with systems of oppression and privilege— as foundational processes in social identity formation, development, and experience, Tatum makes clear why the social elements of identities are important for students to grapple with and decipher. Our social identities inform our social location, shaping what members of social groups perceive and experience in their lives. With respect to racial identities in the Americas, the valorization of whiteness and lightness are examples of how matters of privilege have undergirded the social formation of societies within the schema of coloniality. Particularly for Latin America, to begin to name white supremacy as a foundational process of oppression,

despite the rhetoric and ideologies of *mestizaje* and 'racial innocence,' is an important Social Justice Education project.

Teaching about identity in Social Justice Education largely involves the focus on social location and the identity categories, experiences, overarching and often-occurring social patterns that are associated with how identities are connected to the workings of oppression. In many societies, the social identity categories of gender, sexuality, race, color, ethnicity and culture, class/caste are salient. Groups and individuals deemed to belong to certain groups are named and identified, and social meaning, practices, and policies are associated with those namings. Particularly in the Americas, the pattern of classifying human beings as belonging to imagined racial groups was inherited from and through the process of European colonization and the establishment of settler colonialism, and has had powerful effects on the workings of American societies. Kirk & Okazawa-Rey (2004) call our attention to the facts that "classifications and their specific features, meanings, and significance are socially constructed through history, politics, and culture" (p. 62) and that these were "often imputed to justify the conquest, colonization, domination, and exploitation of entire groups of people" (p. 62). Thus, the emphasis on *group membership* that social justice educators make when conveying the significance of social identity is a necessary project that asks our students to grapple with histories, inheritances, practices, and experiences of oppression that often transcend individualist notions of identity-making processes (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 2002). "Because our identities are embedded within the thinking, patterns, and traditions of societies, we are often unable to recognize that our identities are socially constructed within these

frameworks," (Noel, 2008, p. 1) therefore social justice educators are faced with the task of excavating identity matters in their work with students. In effect, working with the concept of social identity is a macro- and global-level conceptual project, especially when deciphering social patterns and histories in the Americas. If identities are formed beyond the individual and in many ways beyond local and even national communities, then the work of translating larger systemic and historical processes and illuminating their effects on the identities of individuals and communities is a core project in Social Justice Education.

The Social Construction of Identity

Many scholars in the social sciences and humanities agree that some of the salient features of identity are constructed in the sociohistorical, legal, practical, cultural and discursive contexts of the society in question (hence, the emphasis on *social* identity). This is a marked shift from conceptions of identity that explain human behavior, differences, experiences, or circumstances in biological, individualist or essentialist terms. What social constructionists argue is that very little about human social existence is inherent, natural, inevitable, accidental or essential. Cultures and societies are complex, they argue, and the behaviors and meanings that structure human consciousness and social organization are learned, produced and reproduced, performed and encoded in history, in time and space, in context.

The social constructionist conceptual frame allows thinkers who want to understand the workings of identity and oppression to do so from a historicist perspective. If social identities rest on social group membership, and are formed, constructed and historically specific rather than birthed or inherent, then the terrain for

understanding those identities and for changing social consciousness and structures is much more broad; the possibilities are much more open-ended. The constructionist conceptual frame has been especially helpful for people wanting to understand the impact of race and gender oppression, for example, and has allowed us to set aside ideas that "races," for instance, are biological facts, and that humans can then be ranked on a hierarchy of superior-inferior based on ideas about nature and "race." Since notions of "race" are identified as specific cultural views (Smedley & Smedley, 2012) engendered in the discursive and historic imaginaries of particular cultural spaces (e.g. the idea of white supremacy in Western settler-colonial societies), rather than a biological truth or given, we can then begin to conceptually question the category of race and if desired, to replace it with alternative conceptions.

Gender is a category of identity that appears to be universally salient – as visible differences and differences in gender roles and expectations are apparent in many parts of the world – yet it too is historically and socially constructed. While most societies have some sexual division of labor, and many appear to operate from the idea that two identifiable genders exist, and that certain characteristics, behaviors, and roles are appropriately attributed to each gender, more careful probing into history and human behavior complicates this picture. Many human societies are male dominant and/or patriarchal, so we often see various degrees of the subjugation of those humans designated as female or women. Though there are biological and physiological processes that factor into the operation of human bodies that can roughly be described as male or female, the behaviors and attitudes associated with gender roles are actually learned, social constructionists argue, not inherent (Butler, 1989; Lorber, 2007). In the social

constructionist view, those who are deemed female learn to be "women," and those deemed male learned to be "men" in the sense of what work, what social status, what behaviors, what dress, etc. are deemed culturally appropriate for particular male and female humans. To complicate this picture even further, the existence of intersex, genderqueer, and transgender people – people who are neither personally, socially and/or biologically readily identifiable as male or female –call into question the binary gender system that functions as a profound and entrenched assumption and social construct (Butler, 2004; Catalano, McCarthy & Shlasko, 2007; Feinberg, 1997). Therefore, educators holding the framework of social constructionism would not regard gender roles and attributes, nor the notion of a gender binary as inherent, inevitable or dualistic; they are structured and shaped in sociocultural contexts, influenced by history, economics, geography, religion, language, law, custom, and ideology.

Social constructionism works off of the premise that cultures and behaviors are created (consciously and unconsciously) by humans and that culture and behavior are structured by the workings of power—institutions, economies, practices, law, and ideologies— in any given society. In looking at history, patterns of change and flux, discourse, ideology, and power, social constructionism allows us to question behaviors, attitudes, or experiences that are culturally regarded as time-honored, divinely ordained, or immutable. The hope is thus, if attitudes, identities, and societies are constructed then they can perhaps be deconstructed – both conceptually and materially. Social constructionism, then, gives us an important tool with which to more fully understand the workings of culture and society, and to imagine societies differently, organized around justice and egalitarian principles. As educators, we can better explain how power and

culture work in specific societies and to imagine new possibilities rather than relying on the idea that biology and time-honored traditions primarily structure lives, knowledge, work, experiences, and relationships.

While the conceptual project of social constructionism and deconstruction may be exciting for privileged thinkers, we still have to contend with the actual experiential and material realities of people's lives, to recognize that families and other social institutions inculcate us, i.e. socialize us, with entrenched and seemingly immovable beliefs (Harro 2000), and that many of the structural and discursive realities that inform our experiences, beliefs, and identities are not under our control to construct or deconstruct *actually* as individuals (Moya, 2000). We can engage in an intellectual project of deconstruction, but we are not able to change histories and we are not be able to wish away or think ourselves out of structures, behaviors, policies, discourses, and their effects on individuals and communities. As a conceptual tool, social constructionism helps us to think more historically and socially about possible ways to structure human existence, to rethink social categories, yet it does not cancel out the very real material and psychological consequences of identities, social categories, workings of oppression, economic, physical, psychic, and ideological domination. Nor does the conceptual framework of social constructionism render research useless that continues to work with the experiences of those whose identities are shaped by historically constructed social categories. "[T]o say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed," argued Kimberle Crenshaw, "is not to say that the category has no significance in our world" (2008, p. 298).

"What makes socially constructed reality so powerful is that we rarely if ever experience it as that. We think the way our culture defines something like race or gender is simply the way things are in some objective sense" (Johnson, 2000, p. 16). In this sense, because of the embedded and everyday practices of, for instance, race and gendered/racism and sexism, it is important to work with conceptual thinkers who clarify the *realities* of systems of oppression and their impact on the experiences of individuals who are members of socially defined groups, rather than to over-theorize the notion of social construction to render the impact of social identities as somehow irrelevant, false, or transcend-able by individuals.

Post-Positivist Realism

In her important work at the turn of the 21st century, cultural studies scholar Paula M. L. Moya, "reclaimed" identity so-to-speak from what she and her colleagues identified as the postmodern/poststructuralist theoretical impulse in the 1990's to disavow the salience of social identity as an important political or educational project. Holding both the social constructionist conceptual frame and what they called a "post-positivist realist" framework for placing the workings of social identity back in the center of work for social justice, these scholars offer thorough explanations of the idea that identities need "reference to existing social and economic structures" (Moya 2000, p. 11) and that "through interpretation and theory mediation of the world, one can more or less accurately grasp the complexity of the social processes and multiple conditioning that make up the 'truth' of experience" (Haimes-García, 2000, p. 109). Confronted with the trends that entered the academy in the late 20th century vis-à-vis French poststructuralism, Moya and her colleagues embarked upon the work of developing theories of identity that

216

can enhance the work of many social justice educators. Post-positivism, for thinkers in this realm of critique of postmodern deconstructionist theoretical and political tendencies, revisits and re-asserts the salience of social identities. This realm of conceptualization acknowledges that identities are not essential, immutable, one-dimensional, nor always apparent or objective—they *are* socially constructed—yet they are *real*.

Moya (2000) writes that identity has been "a central focus of debate for psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, and cultural materialist criticism" (p. 1) and that much of what was being written about identity sought to "delegitimate, and in some cases eliminate, the concept itself by revealing its ontological, epistemological, and political limitations" (p. 2). Theoretical postmodernism (along with conservative anti-multiculturalist trends in the U.S.), she argued, "claim[s] that it is an error to grant ontological or epistemological significance to identity categories" (p. 4).

The disavowal—or better, the theoretical deconstruction and magical thinking—of the salience of social identities has had its own political effects, ranging from the postmodernist claim that to foreground the notion of identity has the effect of enacting a kind of "ideological normalization and exclusion" (p. 4), a collapsing of the heterogeneity and multiplicity of individual experience by subsuming those experiences to a group-based category, and a profound idea that difference can be subverted as a "merely discursive illusion" (p. 68). The institutionalization of postmodern/poststructuralist theorizing in this vein, Moya argues, has had effects on thinkers such as critical race theorists, women of color scholars, and others who work in areas of social justice that hold the concept of social identity as an important one. Those who "[persist] in using categories such as race or gender can be presumptively charged with essentialism, while

. . . appeals to 'experience' or 'identity' [can be] dismissed as either dangerously

reactionary or hopelessly naïve" (p. 68).

In my view, the debates about whether experiences and identities are real or

worthy of investigation are a hollow intellectual exercise. The longstanding ethos of the

coloniality of power and its construction of race, its creation of racialized-gendered forms

of domination, and its capitalist ethos which have created class systems intricately linked

to race and gender, shapes all our lives materially, socially, culturally, and

psychologically in the Americas. Afrodescendant and indigenous people have suffered

under the weight of settler-coloniality and have been profoundly oppressed within these

new world colonial contexts. The positionality of Black and indigenous women in the

interlocking constellation of colonial hierarchies is particularly salient and useful in

naming societal patterns, identity-based experiences, and the facts of oppression. The

work of trying to blur the realities of racism, sexism, and classism seems futile and

misguided. The African diaspora as a world-historic community has a need for struggle,

liberation and transformation. Since Social Justice Education deals with history and

systems, the intellectual project of attempting to ignore historical facts and the material

conditions in the lives of oppressed (and privileged) communities to make jargonistic

arguments claiming that matters of identity can somehow be un-thought through

theoretical posturing is unrealistic. Naming and excavating the workings of social

identity, naming patterns of experience of members of social identity groups is still very

much important work, especially for educators. Until oppressed peoples are liberated,

claims that identity does not matter are examples of regressive political projects.

In response to these trends that emerged in the humanities and psychoanalytic theory, Moya made important claims in her conceptual work of 'reclaiming' the idea that "social categories that make up our social locations are causally relevant for the experiences we have, as well of how these experiences inform our . . . identities" (2000, p. 75). She poses the idea of a 'realist theory of identity' "that allows for an acknowledgement of how the social categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality function in individual lives without *reducing* individuals to those social determinants" (p. 80). That experiences of oppression—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence, or cultural imperialism—will often be *causally related* (i.e. they will correlate and coincide) to the social categories that make up an individual's subordinate/non-dominant identities (Tatum, 2000) does not make identities uncomplicated or one-dimensional on the experiential level for individuals. What Moya reclaims is "structural causality" (2000, p. 82), invoking the idea that macro- and global-level systems and structures that then translate into individual or group-based experiences are profound forces that shape and construct identities. In this way, identities are not always possible to deconstruct and disavow precisely because they are linked to histories, systems, structures, and institutions with their patterns of hierarchical power—that are not as of yet deconstructed and largely beyond the control of individuals—make social identities a key factor in determining an individual's life chances and experiences.

Moya claimed that an "ability to understand fundamental aspects of our world will depend on our ability to acknowledge and understand the social, political, economic,

and epistemic consequences of our own social location" (2000, p. 85). In order to do this

adequately, she insisted that

> . . . we acknowledge and interrogate the consequences—social, political,
> economic, and epistemic—of social location. To do this, we must first
> acknowledge the reality of those social categories . . . that together make
> up an individual's social location. We do not need to see these categories
> as uncontestable or absolutely fixed to acknowledge their ontological
> status. We do, however, need to recognize that they have real material
> effects and that their effects are systemic rather than accidental. A realist
> theory of identity understands that while identities are not fixed, neither
> are they random. There is a nonarbitrary limit to the range of identities we
> can plausibly 'construct' or 'choose' for any individual in a given society
> (2000, p. 87).

Moya's and her colleagues' 'realism' then is one that takes seriously the historical

processes, institutions, policies and practices that have constructed the realities of

individuals, all of whom have decipherable experiences that shape social identities and

who inhabit social locations where there is differential and unequal access to power,

privilege, and self-actualization.

As a social justice educator, I offer these conceptualizations of the dimensions of

the coloniality of power in conjunction with gender and feminist analysis that constitute

contemporary notions of social identity in the U.S. and in Latin America as part of a

research and teaching project that allows for an expanded understanding of systems of

oppression, identity formation, and the work that is necessary to achieve social justice

amidst this knowledge of the historical and the social. Also, important to me, as a

feminist scholar of the African diaspora, an interAmericanist, and a social justice

educator, to note a shared trajectory and parallel socio-historical across different

American societies and to work with the idea of the coloniality of power as a framework

by which to understand the complex and entangled formation of society and American

social identities. In my view, the coloniality of power is *a primary source* of oppressive patterns and dynamics in the Americas. The systems of oppression that we often teach about in Social Justice Education— racism, sexism, classism, ethnoreligious oppression, heterosexism, etc.— can be charted through looking at the transnational patterns of coloniality across our region.

Conclusion

Throughout this work, I hold that the coloniality of power and present-day forms of social inequality are related and interconnected across all of the Americas. All American societies are unequal and predicated upon multiple social and economic hierarchies, and multiple systems of oppression and marginalization which were established in the processes of European conquest of indigenous land, slavery, and social, cultural, religious, and economic colonization of the Americas. These oppressive systems have changed over time, to be sure, but are continuous in their logics and origins.

Some scholars in social justice and multicultural education have challenged the idea that social justice teaching should start with a focus on oppression. Barbara Love's work at the University of Massachusetts on self-awareness and liberation are also foundational to Social Justice Education. My focus on oppression and the teaching about oppression in historically situated ways does not preclude the goal of liberation and the possibility of starting with questions of liberation as a foundational element of Social Justice Education. However, as this work holds, educators' understanding of oppression has often been unidimensional and nation-centric, and that Social Justice Education can be extended to include excavations and explanations of oppressive forces across contexts

and histories that have served to shape intersectional racialized, gendered, and classed communities and individuals.

Teaching and learning about oppression in American contexts has the potential to inspire work towards liberation in the region. I have been highly influenced by the idea of developing "critical consciousness" (a la Paulo Freire and subsequently, bell hooks) and "consciousness-raising" (a la U.S. radical feminism) through exposure to the "truth" of society. Alternatively, Kevin Kumashiro argues that the ". . . goal of consciousness-raising puts into play a modernist and rationalist approach to challenging oppression that is actually harmful to students who are traditionally marginalized in society" (2000, p. 39), a danger of which educators should be aware. This work holds, however, that education about oppression in the interest of liberation and "social change" is best undertaken in the contexts of movements and work towards decolonization of minds, bodies, spirits, and systems which include processes of reflexivity, empathic alliance, cross-national connection-making and a recognition of interlocking experiences and identities. In my view, this multidimensional and interAmerican work is crucial for expanding the conceptual and theoretical foundations of Social Justice Education and the various issues that the field of Social Justice Education can address in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSNATIONAL, RELATIONAL TEACHING AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

Introduction

Social justice educators, whether in various kinds of classrooms, workshops, or in popular, activist or community-based educational spaces, teach about histories, systems and structures that construct and inform the identities and experiences of individuals and groups, particularly those that are apparent in the hierarchical, power-laden and oppressive societies such as those found in the Americas. Since social justice educators teach about oppression and liberation—and I have been interested in this work in discussing expanded ways to teach about race, gender, and class— unpacking some of the histories and systems that have shaped oppressive dynamics and realities in America are crucial components of this work. A constellation of interdisciplinary frameworks— critical race studies, transnational perspectives, diaspora studies, interAmerican studies, world-historical analysis, along with the theory of intersectionality developed within women of color feminist praxis—inform what I hold as 21st century priorities in the continuing development and expansion of Social Justice Education.

"Education, especially social justice education, is about change" (Goodman, 2001, p. 37). Thus, the project of educating for social justice in the context of the Americas is admittedly political – meaning, enveloped in an intricate matrix engendered by the coloniality of power. Often the complex relations of power, social hierarchy, inequality and modes of privilege and advantage go too often unexamined and unspoken. To examine, speak to, and to teach about oppressive power are trangressive projects onto themselves, as

they entail naming systems and patterns of power amidst profound mechanisms of suppression and denial.

In the U.S. the mechanisms of denial about oppressive realities are maintained by overwhelming, vague, hegemonic national discourses, particularly the ideas of "freedom", "democracy" and "opportunity" that are transmitted pervasively in that part of the Americas. Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States have had histories of suppressing and repressing popular movements for social justice, ranging on a continuum of general everyday denial of inequality to outright violent and murderous attacks upon progressive and radical social movement actors (Churchill & Vander Wall, 2002; Galeano, 1973; Huggins, 1998; Simon, 1988). In addition, the U.S.'s dominating economic, political, cultural, and military influence in the Americas has impacted every Latin American and Caribbean country profoundly, and in many cases negatively. As such, the *politics* of how educators frame their concepts and teaching content – in other words, how they communicate about power and inequality and what dimensions of power they attempt to teach their students — is varied, complex and important to discern across contexts.

Whatever our constraints, political choices, and possibilities as educators we can think more globally, relationally and in social justice terms, even when we hold the distinct dynamics of oppression of a particular national space. In the United States, we can avoid holding U.S. histories, patterns, and structures of oppression and social identity formation as exceptional and to consider more cross-cultural work in our teaching and content preparation, lest we fall into the trap of replicating and privileging patterns of dominant consciousness in and beyond the United States. Patterns of

coloniality, racial, gendered, and classed formations in the U.S. are wholly comparable with those in other American countries and with patterns found in other nations. It is possible to engage in "cross-cultural and comparative history . . . to both contest persisting notions of American exceptionalism and to more fully integrate U.S. history into broader global analysis" (Adas, 2001, p. 1698).

In the discussions that follow, I uphold the possibilities that the conceptual analyses of transnationality and intersectionality offer those who teach in the vein of Social Justice Education, along with questions of pedagogy which are central to SJE. I emphasize the importance of moving beyond U.S.-centeredness and of looking to analyses of diaspora—a central transnational concept—that helps educators further examine and make-meaning of dynamics of social identity. I propose four modes of teaching and learning that I consider to be constitutive of SJE, and I review several examples of dialogic, liberatory pedagogical practices that critical educators bring to bear in learning spaces. I encourage the educational practice of "naming" systemic oppression along with the complexities, intersections, and a transnational understanding of the social identities of teachers and students.

Beyond Unicentricity and U.S. Hegemony

In the 21st century United States, we are faced with dominant contemporary nationalist discourses that assert the idea of a benevolent national identity while masking long and pervasive histories of inequality and repression (both in its own national history and in its prominence/dominance on the world stage), which makes our work to teach for justice challenging in a very particular way. In Latin America, entrenched ideologies that deny racism and justify classism and sexism, along with waves of political, murderous

225

repression in the region that have made progressive work dangerous and difficult generally, shape the politics of teaching in and about those countries. The work of educators to understand a variety of national historical and social contexts is a challenging one.

U.S.-centric understandings of systems of oppression and potential for liberation are politically and educationally limited. For those of us in the U.S. trained to be U.S.-centric, the notion of hemispheric interconnection is an emerging framework for scholars and activists that can reshape our thinking. Those of us in the United States also have to hold the reality that our nation occupies a dominating presence on the world stage and in the hemisphere. U.S.-centricity can implicate U.S.-based educators in the reproduction of a kind of national and global hegemony that has been detrimental on the planet, to be aligned with certain forces of oppression and myopia that assert the U.S. as exceptional and somehow special. Even social justice educators can be implicated when we hold U.S. patterns of oppression as exceptional and special. As discussed, most contemporary American states are settler-colonial projects. The U.S.' story as an American settler-colonial state is not unique unto itself. However, the U.S.' prominence and dominating presence on the world stage *is* a unique historical phenomenon; the U.S.' domineering ways and ideas of a national "manifest destiny" was a function of its own intrinsic settler impulses to expand and displace within and beyond its initial borders. Settler colonialism combined with the impact of an exceptionalist narrative about itself (Adas, 2001) alerted educators to the historical significance of a solipsistic U.S. self-image as it became an imperialist global power:

> . . . the nation's rise to the status of world power by the late 1800's and its
> emergence after World War II as the epicenter of the process of

globalization, meant both that Americans' self-images and the way they represented other peoples and cultures would have increasingly significant repercussions for all of humanity (p. 1696).

And

. . .[f]or those who held that key processes in U.S. history were unprecedented and unique, it followed that they were so significant that they must be studied in and of themselves . . . it was also not unreasonable to conclude that these processes could not be meaningfully compared to what more cross-culturally minded or globally oriented scholars deemed to be similar developments in other people's history (p. 1698).

Holding the U.S. as singular or exceptional can undermine the project of Social Justice Education, masking the U.S.'s historical formation in alignment with that of Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean. When we center the U.S., when in fact the U.S. provides only one regional example of how colonial forms of oppression (e.g., gendered racism) have been manifest, we lose the opportunity to teach about parallel histories, intertwined regional and transnational genealogies, the opportunities to include the experiences of some of our students who have cultural and national ties beyond the U.S., and we miss the importance of transmitting the message of conjoined, cross-national formation of patterns of racism, sexism, classism, etc. that are useful in teaching for justice to all students. In our willingness to expand our conceptualizations and practices, social justice educators have opportunities to move beyond nation-centric work, to expand our content base, and to cross national boundaries and borders in our own preparation and in our teaching.

Unicentricity-- "one-centeredness" – is a general epistemic problem (Davies, 1999). What is possible instead is for educators and activists to hold an "interactive logic of multiple, relational spheres . . ." (Davies, 1999, p. 96) through acknowledgement of regional patterns of the coloniality of power across the Americas. The habit of

unicentricity is often rooted in a national identity that is privileged, positioning the U.S. as exceptional and unique (as Adas argued in 2001). Unicentricity, especially when it centers the United States is arguably a form of oppression/suppression and marginalization in itself. There is a danger for those interested in justice and wanting to teach about social justice to unwittingly reproduce hegemony, created by the U.S.' role on the world stage – as a preeminent and domineering nation functioning as the world's police and global economic hegemon. I hold that even those of us who are justice-focused educators, when we teach about oppression – racism, classism, sexism, etc. – using nation-centric lenses, we unwittingly participate in a pattern of power that unjustly privileges United States' histories and realities. I argue that nation-focused social justice teaching is unjust; inclusion of regional patterns of power and joining our neighbors to the North and South in struggles to undo American forms of oppression is an urgent transnational (and national) project.

Social justice educators in the U.S., when teaching about race, racism, and social identity, often highlight the histories and experiences of African-U.S. Americans (along with other groups of color in the U.S. that have experienced racist oppression), which are central to the study of racial formation and systems of racism in that particular national space. Holding a trans-American/transnational understanding of "American" gives educators more histories and experiences (and perhaps a more accurate history of conjoined experiences beyond the nation) upon which to build our teaching and learning about race and social identity among Afro-descendants. Afro- and African-Americans are not only United Statesians, and U.S.-based Afrodesdendants share significant commonalities with peoples certainly across the Americas and perhaps across the world.

The longstanding historical, cultural, economic, and political experiences, and the migratory exchanges between Black communities in the Atlantic/American diaspora blur the arbitrary borders that nationalistic boundaries have drawn. Looking beyond one nation and to the geosocial space of the African diaspora, educators can better recognize and begin to teach more clearly about trans-American Afro-descendants – in Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the U.S. – who inhabit what Earl Lewis termed "overlapping diasporas" (1999). Cross-national frameworks give educators more possibilities work with the complexities of race, social identity, culture, and resistance in reflexive learning spaces.

We need relational concepts and dialogic frameworks to further our teaching/learning projects. This writing focused on the Americas and interAmericanity basically provides a conceptual example of how social justice educators can think about teaching transnationally. Relational frameworks such as transnationality, intersectionality, and diaspora showed us how the

> boundaries of national states do overlap unevenly with populations, territories, production and consumption patterns, cultural identities, collective emotional commitments, and so on . . . (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 295).

Thus, we are poised in the 21st century, given the multiplicity of local, regional, and national landscapes of identity, power, and consciousness—that of our students and beyond—to embrace global and regional realities to help us more thoroughly teach about justice. Given the ebbs and flows of globalization, movement, and migration, our sense of place or nation must necessarily expand. We and our students carry transnationalized identities and multiple histories, we interact in overlapping, intersectional systems; we are in relation, in conversation with the whole world.

Holding Diaspora in American Classrooms

While the work holds the existence of Afrodescendants in the American hemisphere as a major world-historic story of diaspora as significant—movement, migration, displacement, and new cultural forms—the category of diaspora also pertains to the existence of multiple peoples throughout the Americas and the world. The original community of people noted as diasporic were Jews, dispersed throughout the world in ancient times and creating new, multicultural formations in many nations and regions across the globe. Other communities are also the result of dispersal and relocation—South Asian diasporas, various East and Southeast Asian diasporas, Middle Eastern diasporic communities, and well as the overlapping diasporas from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States and Europe. The Irish diaspora was a significant world-historical phenomenon especially in the United States, and the diasporas of Ashkenzai and Sephardic Jews and Italians in the Americas are significant. Indeed, given that the Americas are largely settler-colonial formations, the existence of a plethora of "white," European-descendent individuals and communities also could be argued to constitute a type of settler-diaspora in itself. With the exception of indigenous peoples who are exiled and marginalized on their own ancestral lands, the Americas can be understood as diasporic spaces, generated in the historical contexts of America-making that were formed amidst the coloniality of power.

All of these new world diasporic identities-in-relation (Shohat & Stam, 1994) combined with the communal and individual realities of Native peoples are present in the classrooms and learning spaces of Social Justice Education. These social identities are macro-historical and contemporary, shaping the personal and interpersonal interactions

among peoples who inhabit the hemisphere. The stories and ways of knowing that can come from differently positioned students and teachers in varied kinds of multiracial and multi-ethnic, mixed-class and mixed-gender classrooms offer a wealth of opportunities for dialogic engagement, critical inquiry, and reflexivity in learning about the transnational complexities of history, identity, belonging and justice.

InterAmericanity, the framework of the coloniality of power and white settler-colonialism, in conjunction with feminist conceptions, address the multiplicity of phenomena that social justice educators can engage in order to hold a large picture of oppression—colonialism, the coloniality of power, global and local capitalisms, class relations, racism, sexism and gender oppression, homophobia and heterosexism, violence, exploitation. For those of us interested in "transnationalizing" teaching and learning, these frameworks can inform and expand the processes that many social justice educators are already involved in with their students.

My own social justice content work and pedagogy begins with conceptual frameworks that involve theories about the macro-historical formation of social identities, about the parallel and interlinked histories and social dynamics of American societies, and utilizes integrative frameworks which deal with the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation. It is within this conceptual space that I attempt to develop tools for students to explore their own identities and how they are formed on multiple levels, while putting themselves in relational dialogue with the simultaneity of gendered cultural identities of multiple groups in the U.S. and Latin America. When talking about Black identity and experience—as the focus of this work— it is important to show students the historical connections in Afrodescendant experience across the Americas,

231

even when foregrounding the specific experience of African-U.S. Americans and other peoples of color whose racialized identities were formed within the United States.

When we hold the epistemic insights of transnational and multicultural feminist theories and the historical and empirical research on the experiences of Afrodescendant women in various locations in the Americas multiplies, we further the tools that are available to us in inspiring transnational imaginations among students. It pushes our students cognitively and personally to be exposed to feminist narratives regarding questions of history, identity, gender, race, and intersectionality, to explore and to learn from more complicated stories. Students are exposed to historical knowledges that open up their terrain of inquiry, and learn about the social constructions of identities and standpoints through looking at the multiplicity of racialized and gendered experience through a specifically transnational and multicultural feminist lens. While these strategies may be complicated for students because they are asked to contend with the entangled nature of systemic oppression and identity formation in a frame that extends from a sense of historical understanding to an examination of present-day conditions and their causes, exposure to these knowledges creates a space for student to learn "to think nonlinearly, asymmetrically" (Brown, 1992) to decenter their own location and the location of the U.S., to grapple with the coloniality of power as a world-historical system that trickles down to their lives, their consciousness, and to their ability to know the worlds in which they live. These transnational, intersectional, and relational teaching learning processes require educators to carefully transmit and encourage historical knowledge, along with knowledge about identity construction, all framed within a holistic reflective practice

(Noel, 2008) that allows for "big-picture," cognitive, abstract, conceptual as well as interpersonal explorations in social justice learning spaces.

Approaches and Practices in Social Justice Education

As social justice educators are interested in creating learning opportunities for students to engage the complexity of injustice in order to imagine liberation, we work to construct content for our courses, and to craft processes/pedagogies to transmit knowledges that invite the engagement of differently positioned students. As Lee Anne Bell (2007) explains so clearly,

> social justice education . . . includes both an *interdisciplinary conceptual* framework for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and *a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical* principles to help learners under the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives (p. 2).

Working across a range of disciplines, Social Justice Educational practice involves what I have identified as four different modes of teaching, learning and engagement: 1) historical studies; 2) systemic analysis; 3) dialogue/reflexive processing; and 3) healing/ liberation. Below I describe some possibilities for how these first three modes of engagement can be shaped by educators who wish to use transnational frameworks and to hold multiple forms of oppression in their projects with students. In the final chapter of this work, I explore some of the healing/liberatory dimenstions of social justice thought and educational practice.

Teaching About InterAmerican Histories

History and historical studies are core to the work in Social Justice Education. Whether we are formally trained as historians or not, historical grounding in all that we teach is a first step in effective Social Justice Educational practice. In my view, a world-

historical analysis and a holding of the interAmerican nature of the coloniality of power are valuable approaches to historical study that are available to 21st century educators that help us to more fully excavate the workings of oppression in our teaching (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992; Saldivar, 2011). As the discipline of history, in the Western tradition, involves the teaching of a sequential trajectory of past events and their meaning, holding interAmericanity and the coloniality of power as conceptual tools, social justice teachers are enabled to tell an unfolding story with the wealth of historical evidence, writings and media that are available—from colonial times to the present— of oppression and its effects upon individuals and communities.

Following the vein of this work—holding the historical realities of the African diaspora across the Americas as a case study for transnational and intersectional educational practice—knowledge of the histories of Afrodescendant people in various locations can help us to expand our understanding of race and racism, along with the numerous concerns in the cultural communities of African diasporic peoples.

What does it mean to hold the historical reality of the African diaspora across the region of the Americas? For one, when we engage students in historical study, teaching an interAmerican reality would emphasize the fact of the transnational nature of the Atlantic Slave Trade by showing how Africans were brought from their continent of origin to several different parts of the Americas, not only to what would become the United States. Social Justice Educators can establish the idea of diaspora early on vis-à-vis studies of the transatlantic displacement of Africans to virtually all areas in the region, which exposes our students to the common American problems of race, racism and their continuous impacts. This plants the seed for discussions of the interAmericanity and

234

interconnectedness of Afrodescendant historical experience. Shifting the historical lens from the idea that colonial conquest and racism were/are a reality primarily of the United States to the fact that these were shared patterns in the whole of the Americas is a way to begin to establish a transnational conversation in our social justice teaching. The frame of diaspora is of increasing importance in cosmopolitan U.S. classrooms where "entangled diasporas" not only signify the world-historical processes of coloniality and the making of race, but actually correspond with the demographic realities of our white, Black and Latin@[12] students in particular, whose experiences and understanding of race and racism have already been coded for them within the parallel yet contradictory discourses of U.S., Caribbean, and Latin American race and color relations. Knowledge of the histories of gender and class and their intersections with race, the analytical frameworks of women of color feminism, and the ideas of key thinkers who use the political perspective of the coloniality of power as a world-historical dynamic that structures oppression/domination and proposes pathways for liberation, fuels our work further.

Teaching About Systems and Structures and Learning Reflexively about Social Identities

Historical study and the teaching of an unfolding story of past events informs the systemic analyses that social justice educators seek to impart to their students. In our work to help students uncover the structural-systemic workings of oppression through examinations of societal discourse, law, policy and practices, a transnational/ intersectional lens can also be used alongside a strong grounding in historical knowledge.

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[12] There are significant problems in naming "Blacks" and Latin@s" as separate social identity groups, given the powerful presence of Afrodescendant communities in Latin America and in the Latin@ diaspora currently residing in the United States. For U.S.-based educators, these distinctions are used tentatively, given the limits of language and the social construction of racial identities in the U.S. in particular.

The system of racism began with colonial projects in the new world, the coloniality of power—as a continuity—has structured ongoing and undisrupted systems of oppression engendered in the founding colonial schema of our region. Persistent social hierarchies, patterns of inequality and privilege, and institutional power that structure systems of oppression exist, flow as they do from the coloniality of power in the Americas.

Shakti Butler's groundbreaking film *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity* (2012), clearly excavates what systemic thinking is. It is to hold the complexity of the workings of power and how they manifest in big and small ways. To think systemically, Butler explains, we have to understand how inequity is embedded in history, culture, and identity. Systemic thinking involves an understanding of the external components of institutional power (government, economics, customary, statutory and case law, and policies, etc.) alongside the internal components of bias, privilege, and internalized which shape myriad human relationships; these components are simultaneously interpersonal, institutional, and structural (Adams & Zúñiga, in press; Butler, 2012). Social Justice Education is long beyond an analysis of oppression as merely interpersonal and localized in the area of belief, personal attitudes and interactions. Our field is committed to the complexity and simultaneity of systemic, structural and institutional patterns that are linked to internal and external workings of power, difference, and inequality, as well as to a historical legacy that informs the present-day.

Alongside teaching about policies, practices, law, and history, an important feature in Social Justice Education in our teaching about systems is our shaping of opportunities for students to learn about social identities and their impacts on internal and

external mechanisms in our society. Social identities are constructed in historical realities, and imparting the theory of the social construction of identities is an important vein in our work. Social identities predispose social actors to various positionalities and social locations as privileged or disadvantaged within systems of oppression (Harro, 2000). Thus, working with questions of social identity and social location are staples in the work of Social Justice Education. We teach students about race as embedded in history and lived through the experiences of humans who are racialized and subject to racial orders. We teach about class, economics and classism as a profound system of inequity which structures the landscapes of wealth, poverty, labor, power, excess, lack and treatment in society. Gender as a system of inequity flows from various expressions of patriarchy and male dominance is longstanding and even precedes the coloniality of power in the Americas. Gender's overlaps with class and race in the new world provides an important and complex understanding of the system of gender power and oppression. And finally, as suggested here, the exploration of nation/national identity as a social identity is of particular importance in transnational teaching, as students begin to grapple with the ways that national identities, immigration/citizenship status, etc. are privileged or oppressed on the world stage and how these shape our understanding of systems of oppression.

Core to the work of exploring social identities, in light of historical study and systemic analysis, what lives in Social Justice Educational spaces is the notion of *reflexivity*, a mode of conceptualization and action coined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant,1992). Connected to the work of Maurianne Adams (2007) who suggests that Social Justice Education includes

pedagogical considerations where the balance of emotions and cognition occur, and where the "affective, personal, social, and experiential dimensions" (p. 15) of the learning process are present, reflexivity is a way of being, relevant to both students and teachers. Also, reflexive thinking/feeling/learning is connected to Paulo Freire's founding work where he imagines the possibility among teachers/learners that in critical educational spaces (in which Social Justice Education rightly belongs) "[a] deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation" (1996, p. 66). Naming the phenomenon of social identity and naming one's own social identities are crucial steps in the work of raising/deepening awareness and consciousness as students and teachers together engage in uncovering the situations and structures of injustice that plague our worlds.

Reflexivity in learning/teaching about systems and social identities encourages an honest look at positionality, social location and standpoint—how the social identities of all have been constructed within larger historical and systemic patterns, implicating individuals and communities in present-day workings of power and inequity. Desmond and Emirbayer (2010) elaborate this further, highlighting these matters in the study of race, stating that reflexivity "pushes us to consider ourselves not as free-floating individuals . . . but as people shaped, privileged, and disadvantaged by a society in which racial domination is rampant" (p. 49). Reflexive thinking in Social Justice Education requires teachers and students to "acknowledge how we benefit and suffer from . . . domination, as well as the ways in which we are shaped by intersecting systems of oppression based on class, gender, sexuality, and religion" (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010, p. 49). Thus the study of social identities in social justice learning spaces does not

occur in the abstract. It involves teachers and students naming their own identities, holding those in an historical and contemporary frame, and in a process of learning and knowing the systemic nature of both oppression *and* the social construction and experiential realities of identities.

The acts of teaching about and with social identity as a core concept in Social Justice Education flows from the field of psychology, particularly cognitive development theory that shares a set of assumptions (Adams, 2007), including the assertion that "*lens, worldview, perspective* and *consciousness level*" (Adams, 2007, p. 18) are embedded in the workings of the social identities of students and teachers alike. Social identity development models recognize that "individuals of all social identity groups are affected by . . . interacting multiple oppressions . . . [and that] interpersonal interactions within groups as well as between groups are affected by developmental differences and different levels of conscious awareness" (Adams, 2007, p. 17). Hence the naming and explorations of social identities in social justice learning spaces support the balance of the intellectual/abstract/cognitive work of learning about the facts of histories and systems, combined with the pedagogical strategies that deploy reflexivity and personal engagement in learning about histories and systems as linked to individuals and their various positionalities and identities in the contexts of their very own lives.

Nation as a social identity. As social justice educators teach about the formation of social identities and the histories and patterns of oppression and privilege that characterize social group membership, the inclusion of the category *nation* in our repertoire is an important identifier that can help us in transnationalizing our work. The historical categories and social identities pertaining to *nation* and *national identity* exist

239

in interaction with the categories of identity – race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. – that U.S.-based social justice educators often utilize in our teaching. Nations and national identities are privileged/dominant or marginalized/oppressed on the world stage, along with all of the other forms of social identity and location (and the perspectives generated in privileged and dominating national spaces – such as the United States of America – can be limiting and problematic). Several scholars have worked with the idea of *the nation* and *the nation-state* as European constructs, flowing from the colonial projects of Europe and projected unto the rest of the world. Naming *nation* as a salient social identity, holding how power and marginalization are contained within national social identities, and national specificity cast in a transnational frame are important elements in teaching about social identities and oppression. Nations and nation-states, after all, are how contemporary societies tend to be structured, and national identities shape and impact a diversity of social identities contained within national boundaries, and outside of nations, in diasporic, transnational space. The phenomena of national and local social identities also inform transnational histories, dynamics and relationships.

For those of us who teach in the United States, our particular national landscape is informed by and formed in conjunction with the national and regional landscapes of the Americas, including Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. Our work to excavate the workings of race, gender, and class can do both things, highlight a national specificity and affirm a regional interconnectedness. Along with nation as an important social identity category to offer our students in our work to build their critical understanding of the dynamics of social identity and social location, the national identities of race, class, and gender in Latin America, North America and the Caribbean,

along with the politics of multiculturalism and visions for social justice have particular dynamics within any given nation. At the same time, many patterns of oppression and identity formation are common across national borders. As discussed at length, a shared colonial legacy in the Americas informs this commonality. So while we begin to work more closely with nation as a social identity to be grappled with in our social justice educational spaces, we are also not constrained by the limits of nation to introduce patterns of oppression. InterAmericanity and other transnational frameworks compel us to situate teaching in any part of the Americas within a hemispheric frame, holding the historical legacy of the coloniality of power as a foundational construct upon which a present day stream of unequitable social power flows.

It is the simultaneity of working with the specificities within nations and looking within, across, and beyond nations with which this work is concerned. Dealing with concepts of national formation and national identity are pathways, in my view, of preparing students to learn about global and transnational issues generally, specifically pertaining to justice, and to contextualize any study of oppression in a particular nation within a global/transnational frame. "We need to think ourselves beyond the nation" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 158), as what we need to know to teach adequately about justice is not always contained within national borders. For those of us teaching in U.S. classrooms, we can include comparative work with the United States and other geographies and spaces in the world. In my view, it is timely for U.S.-based educators commit to work beyond the nation. As those interested in justice, we can contribute to the work of decentering the U.S. by shifting our gaze from our center and learning more from our neighbors in the region regarding matters of race, class, gender, sexuality,

etc. By doing this work, we align our teaching for social justice in a more equitable, inclusive and contemporary global frame.

The social identity of class. In Latin America, class is talked about somewhat readily, sometimes to the elision of discussions about issues of race, while in the United States discussions about issues of class are thorny and difficult. As Betsy Leondar-Wright and Felice Yeskel (2007) described in their work on curriculum design for teaching about classism

> [t]he ability of average [U.S.]Americans to analyze and understand economic and social patterns is thwarted by prevailing myths about class and classism, compounded by lack of knowledge of global economic trends, global capitalism, and colonialism and imperialism . . .(p. 312).

However "[i]ssues of class intersect with every other form of oppression" (Leondar-Wright and Yeskel, 2007, p. 310) across the Americas. Class is foundational, as the economic system of capitalism is dependent upon social inequality, structuring labor, resources and wealth in the region, impacting the lives of everyone. Individuals have classed identities, along with communities, thus naming class in our work in Social Justice Education sets the terrain for important learning about inequality and social stratification. In working work the social identity of class, teachers and students alike can explore reflexively through examining the facts of class and economy, while naming and holding their own social identities in conversation within systems of economic inequality.

Class always intersects with race and gender in the Americas. The racialized hierarchies that formed in these societies were often class-based in their workings. The value of women's labor and class status contain raced and gendered questions. Particularly when holding the legacies of slavery and conquest, the positionalities of Black and indigenous people in capitalist societies (which also often oppressed those

242

categorized as white and mestizo in terms of class), are complexities to hold and to teach with and through. While racism lives in various expressions through discourse, images, differential treatment, somatic and aesthetic considerations, and systems of gender inequality are pervasive, they are also invariably linked with class, as the structural inequities that were/are the lived experiences of those oppressed within white settler-colonial capitalist societies rest surely upon economic inequality, exploitation and oppressive, racialized-gendered systems of labor.

The social identity of gender. Gender overwhelmingly structures personal, familial, and social life and has real consequences for inequity. The dynamics of sexism and gender conformity are inherent in the gender binary categories that are used throughout American societies—man, woman, boy, girl—and that shape the facts of male dominance and female/non-masculine subordination. Sexism is apparent on all levels of society—micro-, meso-, macro-, and global. Historian Howard Zinn, in his writings on the status of early U.S.-American women, called the subordination of women an "intimate" oppression (Zinn, 2003), a dynamic of domination/subordination that happens in the private, familial sphere and flows outward to public spheres that have historically excluded women from full participation in society. Naming gender as a salient social identity in social justice spaces is important work in teaching about historical and contemporary interpersonal, familial, and institutional sexism along with issues of gender conformity and gender expression.

As gender always interlocks with race and class, reflexive explorations of the problems of gender inequity vis-à-vis the naming of gender identities, necessarily invokes the intersectional perspective held in this work. While male dominance is a generalized

243

pattern across most societies, how it lives in settler-colonial societies is distinct. White women, for instance, while certainly victims of sexism, misogyny, and patriarchal hierarchy in relation to white men, have had certain kinds of privilege and power over men of color, namely Black and indigenous men, and higher status in relation to women of color. Work with gender encourages a multilayered approach to exploring power, particularly in the context of the Americas where a clearly marked man/woman, domination/subordination dynamic does not exist in easy terms. *All* men in the Americas do not have/have not have the same access to power over *all* women. Naming gender requires a simultaneous naming of race and class to warrant full dialogic learning among students and teachers.

The social identity of race. Explorations of race and Blackness via the conceptual lenses of the coloniality of power are the linchpin of this work, serving as a large case study for how Social Justice Education can expand its boundaries and concepts. In learning spaces in the Americas, I advocate for an expansive, interAmerican understanding of racialization and the workings of racism in the white settler-colonial spaces across the region. My focus on Afrodescendants highlights the particular salience of anti-Black racism as core to transnational, interAmerican racism overall. At the same time that anti-Black racism is powerful in the Americas, racism is not only experienced by Black people/Afrodescendants. Anti-*Indio*, Anti-Asian and general anti-"brown" racisms are pervasive across the Americas.

As social justice educators, we hold the transnational and migratory reality of the Americas, where large numbers of non-European racial/cultural groups reside. Especially, when looking at the United States, educators can hold the facts of a

profoundly multiracial country where members of immigratory diasporas from across

non-European worlds exist in social space with whites, along with originally colonized

groups—Afrodescendants who were descendants of slaves and indigenous

peoples/Native Americans. In addition, peoples of Latin American descent reside in the

United States, some with long and short histories of racialized experienced, and will soon

be the largest "minority" group. Mexican Americans/Chicanas/os were victims of

Westward Expansion and the annexation of Mexican lands in the mid 19th century. Puerto

Ricans are a colonized people whose national sovereignty was usurped by the United

States in the late 19th century. "Voluntary" immigrants from nearly every Latin American

country reside in the United States, amidst various circumstances of migration –

Mexicans (from Mexico), Cubans, Central and South Americans, Dominicans, etc. Many

Latinos/as living in the U.S. are Afrodescendant and/or indigenous, and even those that

would be seen as white or white-enough and mestizo in their countries of origin

experience racism in the context of the particular white-purity framework that structures

race in the United States. Alongside, the existence of "homegrown" African-U.S.

Americans, Native peoples, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos/as, the U.S.'s multiraciality

among people generally considered non-white, overlap with Latinas/os from all over

(including the Hispanic Caribbean), vastly diverse Asian-American and Asian immigrant

communities, Middle Eastern/West Asian/North African-descendant communities,

Pacific Islanders, more recent groups of African immigrants, European non-whites, South

and East Asian-descendants from the Caribbean, Haitian-descendant communities, and

Afrodescendant peoples from the Anglo-, Dutch-, and French-Caribbean, British Guyana,

French Guyana and Suriname on the Latin American continent. In Latin American

contexts, social movements involving indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants have created contemporary conditions where perhaps race can be readily named, taught, and learned as well, held in the landscapes of Latin America's particular histories and dynamics of race, in the lexicon of its own multiraciality and immigration histories which involve the experiences of Asian-descendants and Middle Easterners in various countries, and in its interaction with the United States and other countries in the hemisphere.

Teaching and learning about race and racism are incredibly complex in American contexts. However, in Social Justice Education, racisms can be named, put in conversation with one another (e.g., discussions of anti-Black racism and Afrodescendant experience in light of racisms against mestizo Latinas/os, or Asians, for instance) partly by naming race as a significant social identity that can be held reflexively by teachers and students in their examinations and discussions of histories, systems, and experiential dynamics. And as always, within race, are profound questions of class and gender.

Nation, class, gender, and race are salient categories of experience and domination/subordination in the world for sure. Yet, they are by no means the only priorities for Social Justice Education. Ethnoreligious oppression, homophobia/heterosexism, gender oppression/transphobia, ablelism, age-ism and youth oppression are also important systems and identity matrices that social justice educators work with in our learning spaces. Given the limits of any one piece of work, I have focused on those four dimensions in the equity and justice conversation, highlighting how these interact with interAmerican anti-black racism, as these are highly visible identities in the Americas and few have worked through these in a transnational frame through the lenses of hemispheric, interlinked phenomena. I have held some things still while

246

simultaneously arguing that they cannot be held entirely still. Oppression is dynamic and complex, continuously in motion and changing, inherently intersectional, and our work as justice-committed teachers is vast and wide. While we strive to build more, we cannot necessarily teach it all. Yet, at the same time this work suggests that we can teach a lot more, and from various new angles, given the legacies that have shaped so much of the disequilibrium and inequalities in our worlds.

How We Teach: Dialogue/Reflexivity

Social Justice Education is not only cognitive; it is experiential. It involves both the transmission of content and concepts, and the construction of learning spaces where students and teachers can be actively engaged in a learning process. As Kevin Kumashiro (2004) stresses, "challenging oppression requires more than raising awareness about more progressive perspectives on the world" (p. 27). Many educators teach about issues of power, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression. However, *the how* of transmitting and engaging content is of central importance in the field of Social Justice Education.

Below I review a collection of pedagogical innovations and frameworks that have informed my own teaching practices and that are utilized in social justice learning spaces. While the pedagogical models explored here are by no means exhaustive, I have noted their efficacy in teaching and learning, and I see a particular promise in adopting some of these as part of the liberatory work that we do with students, especially when we seek to teach about race, gender, class, etc. in a transnational frame. I acknowledge the profound influence of Paulo Freire who foregrounded practices of dialogic education initially in Brazil and Chile in the mid 20th century. Freire's educational philosophies have since

traveled and have impacted pedagogy around the world. In addition to Freire-inspired work, a number of thinkers in anti-oppression, critical, multicultural and feminist education have offered engaged pedagogical methodologies that are helpful in teaching for social justice. In working with questions of pedagogy, I affirm the needed bridges and coalitions between the choices we make regarding teaching content (what we teach) and their intersection with our teaching practice (how we teach) that Social Justice Education wholly affirms.

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's influential work in critical education and liberatory pedagogy (1996 and 2008) proposed an active, "dialogical" (i.e., a conversation, an open exchange), critical and criticism-stimulating method for learning spaces. He suggested that the "teacher-student contradiction" (1996, p. 53) needed to be reconciled first and foremost by abandoning the "banking" practices in education, where information is presumably deposited by teachers into students' minds. Freire was convinced that "[t]hose truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety" (1996, p. 60), suggested "problem-posing" in education, and held that "[t]he teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students" (1996, p. 61). Freire's recommendation for the creation of dialogic learning spaces is foundational to Social Justice Education practice.

Latin American, South African, Australian, Canadian and many other educators around the world have developed extensive educational theory and praxis in multicultural education, intercultural education, popular and community-based education, literacy education and decolonial education, all a part of what I claim as potentially transnational Social Justice Education. Building upon the work of Freire, a number of U.S.-based

educators in critical pedagogy have also added to the conversations about the ethos, environment, and practices of teaching for social justice utilizing critical pedagogical frameworks that urge: a "transformative pedagogy rooted in a project of resurgent democracy" (Giroux, 2004, pp. 36-37); "liberatory pedagogy . . . [as being] inclusive . . . of human experience" (Allsup, 1995, p. 270), particularly the experiences of the oppressed; a "retelling of history" (Ayers, Quinn and Stovall, 2008), that disrupts "partial knowledge" (Kumashiro, 2004), that asserts the importance of working with social identity (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995), and that involves an "an enactment of an emancipatory classroom culture" (Darder, 1995, p. 328). Social Justice Education is constituted by "act[s] of intervention" (Giroux, 2004, p. 38) where students and teachers are engaged as "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1985, p. 35) and where learning spaces are sites for "[p]rogressive, holistic education [and] 'engaged pedagogy'" (hooks, 1994, p. 15). AnaLouise Keating (2007) shared her educational vision of a "connectionist approach" and "transcultural dialogues" along with a perspective of critical and transformational multicultural educational praxis, and Laura Rendón (2009) explored her contemplative, integrative, and transdisciplinary perspectives in teaching and learning.

Educators who teach for justice consciously create classroom spaces that are dialogic and that engage the personal and interactional along with the historic and systemic questions of inequity. The social justice classroom strikes a balance between offering knowledge through readings/texts and lecturettes/presentations and other formal materials, and also involves teachers and students in experiential activities, question- and problem-prosing to ignite reflection, emotion, and visceral connection to, as well as thinking about and theorizing, the issues at hand. I have chosen seven pedagogical

innovations as example methodologies for enacting reflexivity and engagement in Social Justice Education spaces. I see these as "mutually informing frameworks" (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, p. 11) that have the potentail to contribute to liberatory educational practices across the Americas. These are 1) intergroup dialogue; 2) critical race/counter story-telling; 3) feminist pedagogy; 4) transcultural dialogues/*sentipensante* (Keating, 2007; Rendon, 2009); 5) the pedagogical model of Facing History and Ourselves; 6) key ideas in decolonial education; and 7) what I am generaly calling the "Freirian legacy." All or some of these can be incorporated along with other named or unnamed practices of critical pedagogy as core practices in Social Justice Education (Adams 2007). Critical pedagogies, of various kinds, are active, dialogical, reflective, critical and criticism-stimulating teaching and learning methods (Freire, 2008).

Intergroup Dialogue

A number of education projects that create opportunities for people to be engaged in conversation across difference have culminated into the specific pedagogical movement of intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogue is a particular kind of democratic exchange that involves talking and conversation with the intent to result in democratic outcomes (Schoem, Hurtado, Sevig, Chesler & Sumida, 2001). Intergroup dialogue enacts a sustained engagement that "involve[es] face-to-face, focused, facilitated and confidential discussions occurring over time between two or more groups of people defined by their different social identities" (Schoem et al, 2001, p. 6):

> Dialogue is about inquiry and understanding and the integration of content and process. The dialogue process involves challenging ideas, listening to other viewpoints, and gaining new insights. It requires intellectual, social, and personal reflection. It asks that one attempt to see issues from

another's perspective and often to develop the ability to hold multiple and sometimes competing perspectives at the same time (Schoem et al, 2001, p. 13).

The models of Intergroup Dialogue as developed at the University of Michigan and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst usually enlist participants in sustained conversation and exploration over a period of time, to be involved in a process of group formation, group conflict and cooperation, and other developments of ongoing dialogue. Some intergroup dialogues approaches intergrate a more critical approach to the examination of group differences in order to explicitly facilitate learning and "problem-posing" about racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, indeed any system of oppression and its personal-interactional-reflective dynamics among individuals in society (Zúñiga, Nagda & Sevice, 2002; Zúñiga, Lopez & Ford, 2012). In the absence of the possibility of formalized intergroup dialogue groups, the general ethos of *dialogue* as an ethic and practice in social justice learning spaces can always be included.

Four models of dialogue are presented by Ximena Zúñiga and Ratnesh Nagda (2001), all of which can support different forms dialogue across differences in the social justice classroom to foster reflective and experiential engagement among students:

1. a *collective inquiry* model that helps dialogue participants to find "shared meaning" and to develop common ground ;
2. a *critical-dialogical education* model, inspired by the ideas of Paulo Freire, that cultivates "consciousness-raising and bridge building across difference" in the interest of encouraging "individual and systemic change;"
3. *community building and social action* models that involve groups in "addressing community issues"; and
4. *conflict resolution and peace-building* models.

In the cases of learning spaces that have the intention to examine issues of oppression and liberation, these models of dialogue (the pedagogical practice) and intergroup dialogue

(the ongoing structured conversation) can help educators construct an ethos that balances different modes of learning. As, "[t]he goals of intergroup dialogue include critical co-inquiry, consciousness-raising in regard to social inequalities, conflict transformation, and civic engagement for social change" (Zúñiga, Lopez & Ford, 2012, p. 1), intergroup dialogue

> can be conceived as a critical-dialogic praxis that simultaneously supports criticality—the capacity to critically examine how unequal and oppressive relationships between groups are socially constructed and structurally reproduced by systems of advantage and disadvantage, such as racism, sexism, adultism, and heterosexism—and liberation— the capacity to name, question, listen, and free ourselves from oppressive scripts through dialogue, problem-posing, reciprocal relations, and transformative actions (Zúñiga, Lopez and Ford, 2012, p. 2).

The criticality embedded in a pedagogical framework and set of practices like dialogue, are grounded in Social Justice Education and enable myriad topics of learning around histories of race, racism, gender, sexism, class oppression, interAmericanity, and past and present social identities and their corresponding systems of oppression.

Critical Race/Counter Story-Telling

This practice emerges from the personal testimonies of U.S.-based legal scholars in the latter part of the 20th century (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006) which inspired critical race scholars to foster counter story-telling as a practice that fosters reflexivity both in terms of content and pedagogy in social justice education. "A theme of 'naming one's own reality' or 'voice' is entrenched in the work of critical race theories" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006, p. 20). In critical race theory's pedagogical contributions, the possibility of counter story-telling, foregrounding experience, and linking those experiences to larger patterns of systemic oppression are foundational. The idea of "voice," inherent in critical race theory invokes the "struggle[s] over representation and

252

retelling of history" (Ayers, Quinn & Stovall, 2008, p. 1) that are a part of re- and de-constructing realities regarding oppression. In the dialogic classroom, constructed to allow for the realities, experiences, and stories of the marginalized and oppressed to emerge in conversation with learning about larger histories, systems, and structures, critical race theory provides a kind of model that is useful for social justice learning spaces. While this school of thought emphasizes the salience of race and racism, it premise and models can provide the basis of dialogue and story-telling about a range of social identities, including race in its intersections with class and gender.

Feminist Pedagogy: The Personal is Political

The radical feminist slogan from the 1970's, "the personal is political" provides a helpful paradigm in our thinking for what we can do in social justice learning spaces. In alignment with the reflexivity required for constructing learning that deals with the multiple movements and themes in Social Justice Education, the feminist practice of "consciousness-raising," storytelling, sharing experiences, and reflecting on patriarchal power and its effects is a useful paradigm for constructing our learning spaces. Social justice educators who work in dialogic classrooms acknowledge wholly that questions of histories, systems, and structures (the political) interact wholly with experiences, identities, and communal- and interpersonal interactional dynamics (the personal), thus we build upon the work of feminist activists whose conceptual frame affirming the interaction of systems with personal lives is very relevant for the present-day.

With the advent and the growth of women's and gender studies in academic spaces, the feminist practice of equalizing power relationships in the classroom, and working with reflexivity along with content knowledge are wholly connected to critical

educational practices. Traditionally and ideally, feminist learning spaces have been relational, participatory ones, where knowledge is shared and engaged in the spirit of dialogue and transformation.

Transcultural Dialogues and *Sentipensante*

AnaLouise Keating's remarkable work in critical educational praxis is explored thoroughly in her book *Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues* (2007). In it, Keating reflected on her multidimensional work with student in college classrooms who are engaged in her gender studies classes on the intersections of gender, race, class, culture, nation, and sexuality. In her work with students, Keating affirmed a "relational, dialogic approach" (p. 49), a concept of "interconnectivity as a framework on which to develop transformative theories, pedagogies, and social action" (p. 30) and she attempted to activate these in her classroom spaces where dialogic, "relational patterns of reading can challenge students to recognize that the past is not elsewhere; it is with us today" (p. 43). She encourages her students to recognize "history's continual impact" (p. 43) and she invites students to "(re)examine their own presuppositions and worldviews" (p. 45).

Keating works intricately with issues of race in her classrooms by using the relational frames that she proposed. Her careful scaffolding of the question of white racial dominance/whiteness with students who may initially approach the subject from a place of resistance or denial is compelling and instructive for Social Justice Education. She wrote of presenting "'whiteness' in [an] open-ended, nondogmatic fashion" (p. 99) through the use of a variety of texts that coaxed her students into deeper examination, into nuanced and supportive discussions of the social construction of race, and through

assisting students in developing an "ethics of accountability, which enables them more fully to comprehend how . . . oppressive racialized systems that began in the historical past continue misshaping contemporary conditions" (p. 100). AnaLouise Keating's use of a variety of strategies, texts, and integrative dialogues provides additional roadmaps and frameworks for social justice educators seeking to bring complex, transnational material and discussions into their learning spaces.

Laura Rendón's, "integrative, consonant pedagogy," as elaborated and explored in her book *Sentipensante (sensing/thinking) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation* (2009) gives educators additional tools to think through the intellectual/cognitive/ affective/reflexive processes that are most useful in the social justice classroom. Rendón, as a university professor, sought to recover the "deeper, relationship-centered essence of education" (p. 2) and the "balance between educating for academics and educating for life" (p. 2). Her work combined a contemplative spiritual perspective of wholeness and interconnection and an advocacy for transdisciplinarity that affirm the connections between bodies of knowledge in order to shape new pedagogical possibilities that eschew separation – separation among modes of knowledge and the separation between teachers and students (i.e. the banking model of education) that Paulo Freire critiqued in his influential work. As affirmed in Social Justice Education where reflexivity in learning is an important tenet, Rendón recognized that "inner learning (i.e., working with emotion, reflective processes, subjective views, etc.) and outer learning (i.e., working with intellectual activities such as reasoning, problem solving, learning, academic concepts, etc.) should be integrated" (p. 69).

Civic Education: Facing History and Ourselves

The international, U.S.-based professional development organization, Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), holds that "[t]he educator's most important responsibility . . . is to shape a humane, well-educated citizenry that practices civility and preserves human rights" (facinghistory.org). In their seminars for educators—The Holocaust and Human Behavior, The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy, Teaching *To Kill A Mockingbird*, The Civil Rights Movement, and others— FHAO focuses on education about racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice and they utilize innovative, critical-pedagogical methodologies that involve at least three modes of integrative learning.
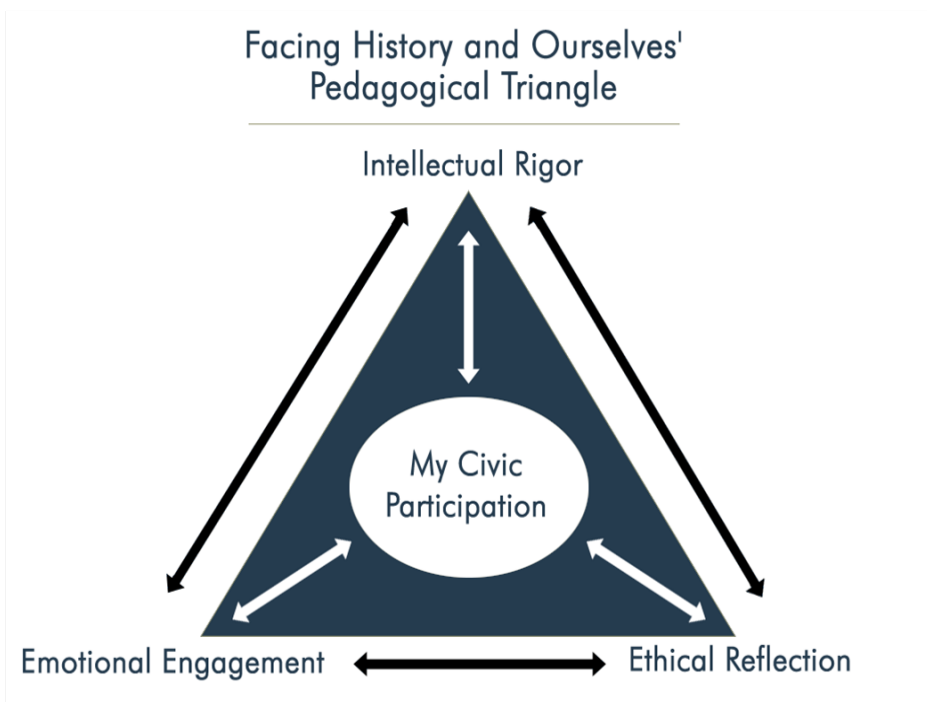

Figure 3. Facing History and Ourselves Pedagogical Triangle (Copyright Facing History and Ourselves, http://lanetwork.facinghistory.org)

The above figure gives a visual picture of FHAO's intent to engage learners in intellectually rigorous inquiry that involve reflexive practices—ethical reflection and emotional engagement—to have students "face themselves" as they delve into historical study. FHAO's use of reflexive learning demonstrates its pedagogical coalitions with various schools in critical pedagogy and Social Justice Education. FHAO encourages teachers to work with historical content to construct learning spaces that are problem-posing, that involve students in self- and societal-reflection and moral dilemmas, in effect, creating learning spaces where leaning towards social justice through multiple kinds of inquiry is the desired outcome of their work. In so doing, the study of history in the FHAO model exists alongside the study of human behavior. Facing History's constructivist approach to historical study emphasizes that humans make history and that individuals and communities are involved in a series of choices – to participate in injustice, to be bystanders or resisters to systems and acts of injustice. Thus, the study of historical occurrences involves reflexive exploration of self and society, questions of human choice and behaviors within structural and overarching historical events, leading students to examine their own participation in social injustice and in their potential to disrupt it. The figure that follows depicts the cycle of learning and inquiry that FHAO utilizes in their teaching and training models.
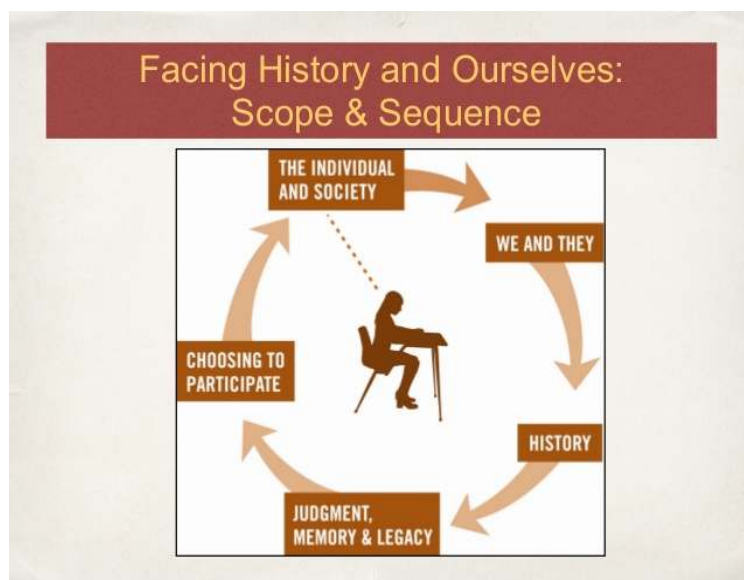
Figure 4. Facing History and Ourselves Scope and Sequence (Copyright Facing History and Ourselves, https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/our-pedagogy/scope-and-sequence)

I recently participated in an FHAO seminar for the first time to aid me in my work with K-12 teachers, and I was struck by the model's alignment with key values Social Justice Education. The integrative approach to learning, the grounding in historical study, and the transparent mission to teach about systems of oppression, namely racism and anti-Semitism, are striking and impactful.

Decolonial Education

The educational models discussed thus far have been used in the United States, though transnational realities and learning spaces in diverse geographies can certainly be engaged through all of those modes of educational praxis. Intergroup dialogue, critical race/counter story-telling, feminist pedagogy, transcultural and feeling/thinking models, along with the innovative civic education model developed by Facing History and Ourselves can be applicable in many kinds of learning spaces all over the world. They are

258

certainly inspired by the legacy of Paulo Freire, whose ideas and practices emerged from Latin American reality and were first enacted in learning spaces in Latin America. It is important for social justice educators to look to transnational educational models and frameworks, as the potential to create transnational learning that utilizes multiple modes in social justice pedagogy involves the recognition of at least two things. First, we hold the recognition that the coloniality of power has had a profound impact upon knowledge production, education and educational practice (Baker, 2012; de Oliveira and Candau, 2010; Mignolo, 2000, 2008 and 2010; Valdiviezo, 2012; Walsh 2007). And, second, a number of schools of critical education have developed in various parts of the world and involve educational projects in various regional and national realities.

Intercultural education has emerged in various parts of the Americas, in Peru, Brazil, the United States, and other nations to address questions of diversity and difference among learners. Working with multilingualism and cultural diversity, this movement has enriched the legacy of multicultural education and has engaged educators in the realities of cultural difference within and between nations. Based in Peru, Social Justice Education scholar Luís Valdiviezo held a critique of some of the trends he noted in intercultural education, particularly in its engagement with Afro-Peruvian communities and realities. Valdiviezo held that "only inside a comprehensive decolonization project, can intercultural education be understood and implemented with pluralistic and dynamic perspectives" (2012, p. 35). Hence, the applicability of the coloniality of power/world-historical analysis and its potential impact on critical educational praxis stretch the analytical and pedagogical potential in transnational Social Justice Education. A "decolonial critique of the modern world system is derived from 'Latin' American

experiences of living under the hegemony of European and North American thought and control over the past five hundred years" (Baker, p. 5) and lends itself to interAmerican and other transnational teaching and learning projects in Social Justice Education.

Walter Mignolo's idea of the "decolonial option" (2010) and its analytic possibilities are wholly relevant to the field of Social Justice Education, particularly in its content and concepts and its pedagogical, reflexive leanings. Mignolo and others in the Modernity/Coloniality working group, use of the framework of the coloniality of power to chart the workings of systemic oppression across the globe and in the Americas and pose an important analytical frame that assists with the construction of social justice learning spaces where questions of history, social identity, systems of oppression and reflexive processing of content knowledge are present. Thus, the emerging work in the field of decolonial education has bearing for social justice educators who seek to reflect upon and expand their practices, and particularly for those interested in utilizing the interAmerican, transnational and intersectional frameworks proposed throughout this work.

"Decoloniality involves the geopolitical reconceptualization of knowledge" (Baker, p. 1) away from dominant Eurocentric forms of knowledge to more integrative, historically accurate, inclusive, and systemically aware forms of knowledge such as what is found in the practices of Social Justice Education. The acknowledgement of the realities of Latin America along with its transnational, interAmerican relations it is important to note that

> the production of knowledge in Latin America has long been subject to
> colonial and imperial designs, to a geopolitics that universalizes European
> thought as scientific truths, while subalternizing and invisibilizing other
> epistemes (Walsh, p. 224).

Thus, the geopolitics of knowledge of Latin America can also be charted in an interAmerican frame, where the suppression of oppressed communities and their ways of knowing are part of a transnational socio-historical reality.

As aptly contained metaphorically in the title of Paulo Freire's influential book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, decoloniality as applied to the sphere of education enacts a pedagogy of the oppressed which acknowledges the source of oppression as flowing from the myriad hierarchies of the coloniality of power. If as educators we recognize the colonial functions of systems of oppression that shape societies, social identities, and ways of thinking and knowing, and we are committed to social justice in education, then liberatory possibilities exist when we think in an anti-colonial, i.e., decolonial manner. In effect, our work as educators can create spaces where undoing coloniality through knowledge, reflection and action can exist. In this sense, in our dialogic, reflexive educational spaces where we engage students intellectually, personally, and morally it is possible to create opportunities for knowing where students learn to deconstruct the systems and problems of the coloniality of power through historical knowing, knowledge of the systemic working of oppression, cognizance of the social construction of identities and patterns of inequity, and the ability to imagine alternative possibilities and ways of seeing/thinking/feeling that create new terrains of knowledge that can carve paths for liberation.

Decolonial education involves unthinking Eurocentrism, its ways of constructing the world generally and systems of knowing in particular (de Oliviera and Candau, 2010). As noted by education scholar Michael Baker (2012)

> [f]rom a decolonial perspective, Eurocentrism can be understood as the ways the world has been interpreted and understood (and taken for granted) through a structure of knowledge and system of power relations that emerged with the colonization of the Americas and the formation of Europe as a geocultural identity distinct from Christendom . . . The call to decolonize knowledge and education is situated in the larger framework of this critique of Eurocentrism" (p. 5).

A critique of Eurocentrism involves recognition of large systems, structures, and histories that have shaped interAmerican and transnational worlds, and it also turns the gaze unto localized educational praxis and processes. The various frameworks explored here in Social Justice Education pedagogy are themselves counter to and transformative of traditional forms of knowledge-making, teacher-student relationships, and propose that the reflexive process contained within the pedagogical fields of Social Justice Education are themselves decolonial practices that transform traditional models of learning, relationships. Dialogic, problem-prosing education, constructivist and participatory Social Justice Education constitute a decolonial praxis, "a shift from universal to pluriversal forms of knowledge and education" (Baker, p. 10).

As educators, we involve ourselves and our students in unpacking and uncovering the forces of power, systems of oppression, and the workings of social identities in order to excavate the workings of racism, sexism, heterosexism, class oppression and other forms of inequitable power. Because our work in learning spaces involves dialogue, and ideally "open and non-hierarchical dialogical relations" (Baker, p. 12) there are various starting points from whence we can craft the complex content in connection with the critically engaging pedagogies that we seek to utilize. In our integrative, interconnected work as educators, we can

> [start] from the silenced histories and experiences of the colonized, [as] decolonial thinking involves both the colonized and colonizers, and the

working out of new kinds of interrelationships that involve dialogue and the creation of symmetrical power/knowledge relations (Baker, p. 11).

In so doing, especially in interAmerican outlooks, we

recognize and take seriously the critical intellectual production of those historically denied the category of 'thinkers'—that is, of indigenous and blacks—including the knowledge produced collectively in the context and struggles of social movements (Walsh, p. 225).

When we do this in Social Justice Education, along with our multiple frameworks, strategies, and teaching praxis, in what cultural scholar Katherine Walsh noted in her work in the Andes, we involve ourselves in

the building of new places and new communities of thought, interpretation, and intervention that seek to generate and build intersections among critical forms of decolonial thought and political-epistemic projects grounded in the histories and lived experiences of coloniality (Walsh, p. 234).

The Freirian Legacy: Transnational Educational Praxis

The pedagogical possibilities of Social Justice Education are vast and evolving. There are numerous movements throughout the world and across the Americas that are useful and inspiring for the field. The growing power and visibility of Black and indigenous movements in Latin America provide blueprints for updated frameworks and possibilities in education for social justice. In their work on decolonizing educational projects in universities in a multiethnic/multiracial Nicaragua, geographer Julie Cupples and literature/media scholar Kevin Glynn asserted that

"[t]he black and indigenous project in Latin America is epistemic as well as political, given that colonialism was as much about asserting the superiority of European ways of knowing and repressing indigenous systems of knowledge not useful to colonial domination as it was about taking indigenous land and resources" (2014, p. 56)

263

One victory of the Black movement in Brazil was the institution of a 2003 law that mandated the teaching of African history and Afro-Brazilian culture in schools. In many of these projects, educators are involved in critical literacy, political-pedagogical concerns and problem-posing education to enable this new, national, transformative goal (Jorge, 2012). Míriam Jorge's work on critical literacy models of education in response to the Brazilian law, wholeheartedly claims Paulo Freire's prior work in literacy and his critical educational legacy in demonstrating how contemporary educators are charting a new course in Brazilian schools. "Reading the word is not enough," Jorge affirmed, "[a]s stated in Freire's work, reading the word and reading the world should be intrinsically related" (p. 82).

I like to work with the notion of "reading," which could be taken literally or metaphorically when considering the work we do in Social Justice Education spaces, inspired by the work of Paulo Freire and so many others since. In our work to create space for exploration, dialogic engagement, and uncovering/unpacking, we are involved in a decolonial, social justice-focused project of both challenging the terrain of knowledge and its construction while engaging our students as knowledge-builders who can critically "read" and transform their worlds. InterAmerican social movements have inspired this work, and our transdisciplinary, liberatory, multiple modes of learning/seeing/reading/sensing and remaking enacts our pedagogical praxis in Social Justice Education.

Teaching Dialogue and Reflexivity in a Transnational Frame

Clearly, Social Justice Education involves an intricate and thoughtful process of building dialogic, critical, reflexive, and participatory learning spaces as well as engaging

challenging content meant to disrupt hegemonic narratives and conceptions and to involve students in critically examining self and society. The field itself is linked to various coalitional schools of thought in education, social movements and interdisciplinary scholarship. In practical terms, the merging of justice-interested learning content and crafting a space where students and teachers are active participants in exploration and knowledge production requires insightful and creative planning on the part of teachers and facilitators. Along with some explorations of the conceptual foundations of social justice educational ethos and pedagogy, this work lays the conceptual groundwork for why and how social justice learning can be constructed using transnational frameworks, recognizing that multiplying and extending our conceptual and content bases potentially makes social justice teaching that much more challenging, transgressive and transformative. As we think of pedagogical strategies in the social justice learning space, we have to simultaneously think macro-historically about the socio-political contexts that shape our work as educators in order to expand our conceptual frameworks and teaching practices that transnationalize Social Justice Education.

The figure that follows, a funnel which holds some of the conceptual elements of Social Justice Education, including my work on world-historicism as a foundational outlook with respect to transnational social justice teaching, expresses the idea that intricate practices and content choices in Social Justice Education are ultimately held together by commitments to reflexive, critical and dialogic pedagogy in our learning spaces. Our engagement in the practice of teaching and learning, as well as the content of our courses and curricula, are pertinent to the field of Social Justice Education. As how

we teach is as important as what we teach (Adams, 2007), educators who are moved to

expand their conceptual lenses and historical knowledge to teach transnationally will also

be involved in the work of building the frameworks and processes by which teachers and

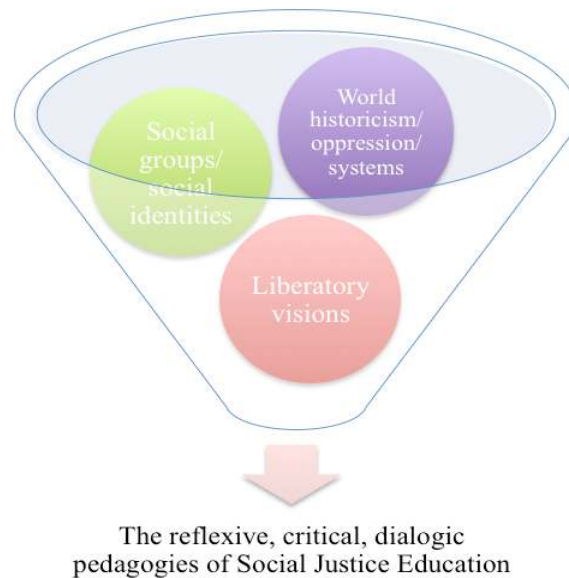students can be actively and experientially engaged in the learning process.

Figure 5. Visual representation of Social Justice Education

The Work of Naming/ Naming the Transnationality of Race

Since our work in teaching for social justice involves content knowledge along

with the enactment of liberatory pedagogy in our learning spaces, the acts of *naming* are

in and of themselves reflexive processes, particularly the naming of social identities and

their impacts upon the socialization of individuals. In teaching transnationally, naming

the fact of global processes—upon identities and corresponding systems of oppression—

is a first piece of the work. Naming interAmericanity in our work in the Americas,

especially in the context of the overwhelming unicentricity that can be the habit of many,

266

is in itself transgressive. And, the work of naming the identities of race, gender, and class in regional, hemispheric frames begins to transnationalize our teaching.

Thinking and teaching about race and racism as interAmerican phenomena entails a disruption of the conventional categories of race-ethnicity. In the United States this would involve interrogating the traditional census categories—Black, white, Latin@, Asian, etc.— that are often taken for granted. Following the tenor of this work in excavating the presence and realities of Afrodescendants across American contexts, the interrogation of the category "Black" and the category "Latin@" by foregrounding the coloniality of power, the differential construction of racial identities in the hemisphere, the differential dynamics of systems of racism and discourses about race allows for inclusive, relational, and challenging dialogues about racial identity generally, all held within world-historical frames of identity-making, shared yet simultaneously differing across nations. In Latin America, naming region-specific racisms, leads teachers and students to examine the plethora of race and color categories and their logics within the schema of coloniality, and acknowledging a different-similarity with racial formations in the United States allows for expanded justice-focused explorations of race and racism in learning spaces. Transnational thinking about race compel us to work with and through the logics of *mestizaje/*mixing, to disrupt patterns of racial denial as well as imaginaries of race "purity," and to acknowledge the complexity of racism as a particularly American phenomenon that can be named, unpacked, and reflected upon.

The acts of naming the complexity of racism and color prejudice throughout the Americas entails a hemispheric understanding of history and the coloniality of power, along with the differential dynamics of white-settler colonialism and the variation of

racial imaginaries and narratives held throughout the region. As argued, while specific narratives around color and race may vary across the Americas, the system of racism is somewhat of a constant. In that social justice educators teach about the systemic nature of injustice, it is possible to present a cross-national historicity when we excavate matters of race in our learning spaces.

The work of naming race and racism as interAmerican processes, can set the stage for reflexive processes about the complex workings of racial identities. For Black, Latin@, and Caribbean students specifically, particularly those who are learners in the United States, the communication of overlapping and differential racial schema, and differential experiences of racialization and racial subordination allows for a reflexive processing of whiteness, mestizo-ness/multiraciality, *Afrodescendencia*, and indigenous positionalities in matters of Latinidad, and issues of "purity", "mixed-ness"/mestizaje, and ethnicity generally across the Americas, including in the United States. As social justice teaching and learning involves both content knowledge and pedagogical strategies to engender critical conversations, the social identities of race can be taught in a transnational frame, that supports new and different conversations about systems of racial subordination and the interpersonal exploration of racial identities.

Naming Diaspora

The work of naming diaspora as a category of analysis as well as a transnational experience, particularly for interAmerican Afrodescendants, helps social justice educators disrupt nation-centric studies of racial and cultural identities and systems of racism that plague the entire Americas. The presence of Afrodescendants in the Americas is a diasporic reality. The experience of Afrodescendant dispersal, cultural disruption, racism,

and improvised new world Afro cultural presences are shared across the entire Americas. The African diaspora is a foundational reality dynamic of America-making. Naming diaspora is an important way to generate a transnational imaginary among students, a way to expand notions of "Black " or Afrodescendant histories and identities from nation-specific or unicentric conversations about systems of racialization and racism. The analytics of "diasporic public spheres" (Appadurai, 1996) enables dialogue about transnational processes such as migration, cultural formation, etc. in the social justice classroom.

Naming Intersectionality

As discussed at length, feminist historiographies and theories of intersectionality not only foreground the experiences and presence of women in our teaching, but provide a model or matrix for exploring the interlocking nature of oppression in the lives of all people across the Americas. Naming intersectionality, i.e. the intersections of subordinate and dominant social identities among individuals and groups, the interlocking nature of systems of oppression, as a matter of content and reflexive process in learning spaces allows for more complex stories, and it incites an exploration of the multiplicity of social identities and systems of oppression (versus the idea that any one system of oppression can be held entirely still).

Who We Are Teaching/Learning With

While my concerns in this work involve an historical and contemporary understanding of Latin American and some Caribbean realities in comparative relation with historical and systemic realities in the United States, I am currently located in the U.S. and hence this is where I teach in higher education, in a K-12 setting, and in my

work providing professional development opportunities in Social Justice Education for teachers and organizations. Hopefully, these frameworks can assist Latin American and Caribbean educators in their own contexts in some way, yet the U.S. teaching/learning context is the one that I am most familiar with. So, in forging a transnational and interAmerican conversation about oppression and the different positionalities of individuals and communities in my work, I hold the specific multicultural reality of the United States when imagining what students we are teaching and how social justice educators can foster more transnational and relational perspectives in their teaching/learning projects.

Subordinate/Oppressed Group Members

If we hold the realities of students of color, i.e. non-white students in the U.S. purity-framework, social justice educators can expect to work with students' Black, Asian, Latin@, Middle Eastern, indigenous, bi- and multiracial identities, etc. in their spaces. Because we name systems and we also ask students to name both the phenomenon of social identity and their own identities in our reflexive explorations, a number of questions posed by students can be answered with the use of transnational frameworks. In my own classes I have experienced the presence of students of African descent from a variety of places, Latin@ students with ancestries spanning the Americas, along with indigenous, Asian and Middle Eastern students. When teaching about racism, I have had students ask how they would be racially categorized. With knowledge of Latin America and the Caribbean along with a firm grounding in the histories of oppression and struggle among various non-white communities in the multicultural United States, I have been able to help students to grapple with the complexity of racial categorization by

270

being able to name different systems of racialization and how they occur transnationally and differently in various historical moments. Transnational teaching disrupts a Black-white binary that social justice educators often face in teaching/learning about race and racism in the United States. The promise in the disruption of traditional understandings of Blackness and an extenstion of the conversation about Latinidad, its multiraciality, and its reality of indigenous and Afrodescendant presence, adds new categories and possibilities to the work of Social Justice Education. An interAmerican understanding of the coloniality of power can help educators tremendously to expand and deepen dialogues about race and to create inclusive classroom spaces where myriad identities can be named, located and cast in relation within the systems of injustice that are our priority to probe in our Social Justice Education spaces. A transnational framework regarding race and racism in effect deconstructs a kind of coherency that we often hold when we primarily foreground U.S. realities, it allows social identities to be named in their multiplicity when a hemispheric/transnational consciousness is offered by social justice educators.

The racial identities of students of color also intersect with their gendered, classed, and national identities. Students of color who are female and/or transgender, poor and working class students, and students with varied national identities and immigration/citizenship status are present in social justice learning spaces, and these social identities invariably intersect with racial identities. If our historical frameworks are crafted while holding the notion of the coloniality of power, how students are situated in terms of gender, class, and nation can be framed and explained in transnational and intersectional terms. "White supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (coined in all of bell

hooks' works) is a shared reality across the Americas. Therefore framing social identities as flowing from larger systems of economics and male dominance, in large part engendered from the coloniality of power, helps students with new narratives for how to examine themselves as they learn about the systems that structures their own very social identities. In this vein, holding intersectionality along with world-historical analyses aids us in multiplying and transnationalizing learning and reflexive dialogue among and between students and teachers.

Dominant Group Members

The acts of naming and "marking" (Keating, 2007) whiteness, maleness, upper and middle class realities, as well as heterosexuality, gender conformity, etc. are important acts in social justice learning spaces. With respect to race, AnaLouise Keating (2007) discusses how "'Whiteness' has functioned . . . as a pseudo-universal category" that is often "unspoken . . . (mis)shap[ing] contemporary western cultures and mask[ing] social and economic inequalities" (p. 63). Indeed, the identities of dominant social group members often go unmasked and made invisible. Because Social Justice Education's systemic focus highlights the interplay of domination with subordination, giving students in dominant social identity groups information and opportunity to reflexively work with structural and personal privilege that are embedded in their lives is also a part of our work.

In looking hemispherically at matters of race, whiteness can often appear to be amorphous precisely because its hegemony often goes unnamed. InterAmerican studies, settler-colonial studies, and close examination of racialized discourses, practices, and imaginaries across regional contexts give social justice educators much material to

disrupt the invisibility and variability of whiteness. And, specifically when looking to Latin America, marking its particular patterns of whiteness within the hegemonic discourse of *mestizaje* is an important maneuver to expand dialogue in educational spaces. The pedagogical strategies that we use to assist students in accurate and honest explorations of their dominant social identities are numerous. This can involve teachers in modeling a reflexive stance regarding their own privileged identities and in their work to create transgressive learning spaces where challenging realizations can be had, processed, all within the relational, transnational, and critical educational frames suggested by this work. In American contexts, to grapple honestly with male, straight, Christian and upper class social identities are a possibility when conceptual maps are shared with students that explain the historical development of the region-specific dynamics of gender, race, class, etc. in new world nations.

As with subordinant identities, dominant identities are also complex, dynamic, not monolithic. The reflexive process for students who live within various constellations of dominant racial identities can also be cast within the frames of diaspora. Given the historical specificity of settler-colonialism in the Americas, whites and near whites (in their intersections) also can be named as diasporic subjects, existing on the cusp of changing definitions of whiteness across contexts, and who also inhabit intersectional identities that are formed transnationally.

How gender, class, and sexual dominance intersect with racial dominance *or* racial subordination present complex scenarios for social justice educators. The entangled configurations of social identity group membership of our students (and of ourselves as teachers) need not be daunting, as analytical clarity about overarching and interlocking

systems of domination and subordination can help us to anticipate the multiplicity we will find in our learning spaces. Our work to create critical, dialogic spaces for our students to lean into the conversations that will help them to map and examine how systems of oppression, and hence the social identities formed within the systems that we assist students to uncover and unpack, affirm the entangled and interlocking realities of our societies and our lives, and advances the work of Social Justice Education.

Conclusion

The work to address issues of inequality and to propose social justice in teaching/learning spaces and in the context of our profoundly unequal world, is a tremendous task. Teaching for social justice poses a particular set of challenges for American societies— the countries of North America, Central and South America and the Caribbean— where so much of the formation and the present-day reality of these societies involve intricate systems of oppression which marginalize and disadvantage large numbers of people, along with complex mechanisms of denial in society about the realities of oppression. Educators are charged with knowing and sharing more, with disrupting discourses of denial to allow for the telling of accurate, alternative histories and stories, and to transmit these in multifaceted ways in their teaching and learning projects. This border-crossing, bridging/coalitional, deep thinking/feeling work is challenging, hopeful, and possible for the 21st century.

CHAPTER 8

GOING FURTHER: IMPLICATIONS

This study has presented multiple conceptual frameworks for expanding the field of Social Justice Education and for putting modes of thought into conversation to elaborate the possibility for thinking transnationally and with intersectional-multicultural feminist sense in our work to construct content and concepts for teaching and learning. These frameworks can be useful in informing pedagogical approaches and curriculum in K-16 settings as well as learning experiences in educational spaces, working with some of the core practices in Social Justice Education to multiply the national contexts by which we explore questions of race, class, and gender, etc. with our students. Moving beyond the United States (and within the United States while simultaneously de-centering it) offers educators opportunities to look to other realities, countries and regions for evidence and material that excavate the similarly-different ways that social stratification and patterns of oppression have manifest, thereby involving our students in comparative learning in the reflexive and dialogic manner that we seek. These transnational frameworks can be a useful model for other comparative studies across nations, particularly in nations where European colonialism has been a salient aspect of social, economic, gendered, classed, and racial-ethnic histories. As this work contextualizes the Americas as an interconnected region, and highlights some of the dynamics involved in interAmerican Afrodiasporas, the development of "race" and whiteness, there is the potential for more work on the coloniality of power and intersectional analyses and their relevance for a number of communities across the Americas—indigenous peoples, Asian-

descendants, "white" women, "mixed-race" individuals and communities, wealthy men, working class groups and individuals, etc. Also, as these frameworks emphasize the Christian-colonial historical dynamics that fueled America-making, religious studies and studies of ethnoreligious oppression are possible with these frames. Philosopher María Lugones' work on the coloniality of power (2007) explained her "gendering" of colonial relations with a lens of a heterosexualist system that structured the intersectionality of race-ethnicity. Therefore, further studies on the entrenchment of heterosexism and gender binaries within a transnational frame are also possible using the model of these relational, intersectional conceptual lenses.

These conceptual models also can be used to structure empirical research agendas and action projects across a range of fields. Studies of student engagement and teacher preparation are possible when interAmerican and other transnational frameworks are utilized. Multiple, diasporic and transnational social identities of students and teachers were discussed in this study, and there are numerous possibilities for research regarding students' social identities and the ways that transnational frameworks regarding race, for instance, can have educational effects when comparative and cross-national studies are used. If whiteness and blackness, for example, are explored beyond the United States, what impact might this have on student learning and engagement in intergroup dialogue programs, is an example research question that may be compatible with expanded conceptual frameworks around questions of race. How students of various genders and social classes engage in social justice learning when gender and class are presented in their intersections with race, is another potential topic for empirical study using these transnational/intersectional frameworks.

Curriculum studies and development are also extended when transnational, diasporic, and feminist frames are worked with. Casting historical and social studies in a transnational frame contributes to student learning that is compatible with moves towards global education and integrated 21st century learning in schools and other learning spaces. Studies of geography and migration, gender and culture, religion and arts, along with social movements and resistance, are possibly made more rich, offer more space for comparative study, and expose students to the idea that the human social world is and has been interconnected and formed in relation. Global education that refrains from celebratory and superficial explorations of culture and instead exposes students to authentic human issues, patterns of inequality in human societies, and human needs for liberation fits squarely and wholeheartedly in the field of Social Justice Education.

I propose healing, liberation and decolonization as the fourth and final (or first) mode of education for social justice because our work in studying, exposing, and reflexively processing the facts and dynamics of inequality is fundamentally about freeing ourselves from injustice. The pedagogical innovations in Social Justice Education engage students' minds, emotions, and spirits. Ultimately, this work seeks to affirm a notion of planetary citizenship, using hemispheric belonging as a step in that process relevant to those living in the Americas. Transnational/relational/intersectional teaching and learning can affirm human interconnectedness across the boundaries established by oppressive regimes and processes. Exposing the limits of borders and nations allows for voices and presences to emerge in new ways. The educational processes of *concientization* (Freire, 1996), dialogue, critical pedagogy, reflexivity, and decolonial education are freeing processes, allowing for naming, marking, and processing what often

goes unspoken – oppression and its traumatizing effects. The more we know and can share helps students and teachers to heal. Our liberatory learning spaces offer models for how just worlds can be creative, allowing for voice, multiple identities, individual and communal explorations that touch the minds of hearts of teachers and learners. After all, the primary basis of Social Justice Education is to expand and process knowledge in order to empower individuals and communities to change our worlds. Bringing the problems of our world to light and constructing spaces for people to work through these in a critical and reflexive manner constitute a practice of freedom, something that is needed urgently in the 21st century.

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