

Scholarly Personal Narratives: Amalia Z. Dache

Hi, greetings everyone. I am Amalia Dache and I am an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Education in the higher education division at the University of Pennsylvania. I have been an assistant professor for the last six years and I actually started my career as a tenure track faculty member at the University of Missouri, what's sometimes called Mizzou. So, today I'm going to be talking about my background, my heritage, and the role it plays in the research that I do on racial justice activism on resistance, broadly speaking in my work, in my research, and in my teaching. So, there's a couple of different articles or manuscripts that I want to focus on while I talk about this work, that I want to draw from and I won't be reading excerpts from these pieces.



But just to give you an idea, if you want references as far as what encapsulates the work that I'm doing. So, there are two pieces. The main one, the name of it is called teaching a transnational ethic of Black Lives Matter and Afro Cubanas theory of Gaia. And that's in the International Journal of Qualitative Studies in education that was published in 2019. The other piece is an actual book that I was a lead editor on, it's called *Rise Up Activism as Education*. That was published in Michigan State University Press in 2019. So, these two pieces that just were published last year, have been really instrumental in highlighting and focusing on my own personal journey within the work that I do. Again, when the topic of the scholar narrative is racial justice work, doing work that's really anchored in challenging how marginalized communities have been oppressed and subjugated.

I tend to really focus on the work from transnational and post-colonial perspectives. And, of course, I also have a geographic perspective, if you're familiar with my work, you know that I've termed particular constructs such as post-colonial geographic epistemologies and spatial racial factors in college access, particularly in urban communities. So, what I want to do today is really, I have my notes I'll be drawing from, is I want to talk about my background and the history of Cuba, as far as racial resistance, because I think as scholars, we don't get a chance most of the time, especially in the social sciences, to really tell our own narrative, and really discuss how our narratives contribute to our research in higher education or in education broadly. For me, again, these two last manuscripts I've been publishing since 2014/2015, and most of my early research was really specific to evidence-based data, to public data to data that I collected within research studies.

Very little, had to do with my own positionality even though that was... In our dissertation when you're doing qualitative dissertations, and my dissertation was a mixed method dissertation, there is a positionality statement there that I don't know this necessarily gets given any light or given any breath in our research as we continue to build a research agenda. So today, I get to really talk about my background and focus on this history of Cuba. The history of Cuban resistance in my role and in who I am and how that contributes to the work that I've done. So, you're probably like, okay, well, I'm not familiar with work. My most recent work is specific to the purpose of the activism movement, and that happened between 2014 and 2016 in Ferguson, Missouri, in St. Louis. I did a two-year project studying activism after I was involved in some activism in Missouri, involved in some of the actions that took place after Michael Brown was killed.

So, I graduated with my PhD at University of Rochester and then I took a faculty position at the University of Missouri. And it was four weeks. I arrived to Columbia, Missouri, four weeks before Michael Brown gets shot and killed by a Ferguson Police Department officer. That really catapulted me into doing specifically activist oriented research in St. Louis. What I found in this study was that this activism was tied to, of course, racial justice, but it was also tied to issues of class inequality. In St. Louis, in Ferguson, black populations that were urbanized in St. Louis were working class. The working-class identity of Ferguson activists were very, very, very central. And if you were to look at my research studies that came out of Ferguson, you'll see that there's both a class and a race focus. Those were really strong findings and how the activist movement challenged capital accumulation in the heart of St. Louis, and how the Ferguson suburb was part of the failures of urban renewal in St. Louis, in the heels of after World War Two.

So, these histories of the failures of urban renewal, the failures of public housing, contribute to the forms of oppression that Ferguson community members, particularly black working-class people in St. Louis, were highlighting, and were challenging in reference to the killing of Michael Brown. So, all that work that was related to St. Louis and to the black working-class resistance activism in St. Louis, contributed to the role that college students played in the movement. When you look at the news media, there was assumptions that the Ferguson activist movement was just only a community movement. And, so, what I found and my collaborator found was that there were college students involved. In our study, which was a study of almost 30 activists in St. Louis probably almost ... let me be specific. In our research study, 40% of the participants were college students, and they were enrolled at the time, but they were activists or they had just got accepted into college, but they were on college campuses within St. Louis and within the state of Missouri.

And, so, what happened, they were involved in the activism on Ferguson streets and they brought this activism into the college campus. So, Ferguson radicalizes these college students to bring equity mindedness and bring challenging domination in the community setting into the college setting. So, what happens on the heels of Ferguson is what some of you may know about is the Concerned Student 1950 movement which took place in the fall 2015. So, a year after Michael Brown gets shot and killed in Ferguson, college students, and particularly black college students, who were involved in these movements and radicalized these movements spread to college campuses across the state of Missouri. In particular, the Mizzou campus. It first started in St. Louis, with the Occupy SLU movement, but it spread to ...and that was in the fall of 2014, a couple months after Michael Brown gets killed, it was Occupy SLU movement, which also started from the Ferguson activism movement. And then it extended into the Columbia campus of the University of Missouri in the fall of 2015 through the Concerned Student 1950 movement.

And if you're not familiar with the Concerned Student 1950 movement, the book that I mentioned that I was a lead editor on is Rise Up! Activism as Education. That book centers the four of the 11 students, their educational journeys and experiences with activism and it's doing kind of what I'm doing here. Giving historical context, giving social context, giving family background to their activism. And then if you're not familiar with the Concerned Student 1950 movement, Google it, you'll also find that there's a documentary called 2 Fists Up, that was directed by Spike Lee. He actually came to our campus, when he found out that these 11 students were successful in having the University system meeting their demands. And what was one of their major demands? The removal of the system president, Tim Wolfe,

and that was a historic moment for these 11 students, because institutional racism, of course, we know is present in all college campuses in the United States of America. We know that's part of our colonial history.

However, no student movement has ever been able to get rid of a college president that was biased, that was negligent in not handling student complaints, and not taking students seriously when it came to the racial injustice that they were facing on their campuses. So, a couple of events that happened in Ferguson, more specific for example, the student body president of the University of Missouri, was called the N word when he was walking down the street in Columbia. And that got a lot of attention, because obviously, this shouldn't be happening in 2015. Next, there was a swastika sign that was found in a college dorm on Mizzou's campus. And then there was other incidents that were a cause for concern for black students on campus. That was awful time to just broadly the lack of representation on campus by black faculty, by black students at the University of Missouri, and so this historical component of the University of Missouri, being in a state that was a former slave state.

We have to remember that this is where the decision for Dred Scott was decided in St. Louis, that a slave was not human, right? A slave was a slave, and so they couldn't have rights as other humans, as other white humans in the United States during that time period. So these students, Concerned Students 1950, they bring all of this history, all this context into their activism. And one student in particular starts a hunger strike, and eight of the students are black women on campus, who are doing so much, who were undergraduates. The 11 students were a combination of undergraduate students and graduate students. And again, they were predominantly women who were leading this. So, the 2 Fists Up film is something that you should definitely take a look at, as far as if you want to know about what happened in the University of Missouri, and how this movement was the catalyst for approximately seven college campus movements on racial justice in the fall of 2015 and were anchored in what happened at the University of Missouri.

So I'm right now working on a publication to talk about this component of how this expanded radical racial consciousness in the black struggle was the catalyst for the seven day movements across the country in the fall 2015. And so, again, this is giving a context to my research, and in case you're not familiar with it, and of course, I'm going to give you some resources to look up if this is really interesting to you. But, what I really want to focus the rest of this scholarly narrative on is my Cuban upbringing and its relationship to why I was so committed when I got to Missouri to do racial justice work in Ferguson. What were the strings that pulled me to be on campus because we know, here I am, I'm a junior faculty member. I just arrived to Missouri, I'm on a tenure track, and so many of you who are on the tenure track and many of you who are in the academy know that if you do activist oriented work, that's not necessarily going to get rewarded.

Most of the time, you're dissuaded into not doing that type of work, and may come against you and there may be a stigma attached to you as a scholar to do that work. So, I never thought not to do the work. That was just never a part of my rationale as to my purpose as a researcher and as a scholar. I've always been very aligned with my calling in life, which is to really do the most good for the most of us. For me right now, doing work that focuses on race, ethnicity, and class within an urban environment is really key, looking at the material conditions of people's lives, people's access to food, to shelter, to housing, and its contributions to their upward mobility in life in a democratic society. And again, looking

at communist socialist states, like Cuba, is also a part of my future work and what I'm working on now. But that all comes from roots, how am I rooted? Why was I so consistent and so steadfast in doing the Ferguson work, being so early and junior in my career?

Why wasn't I shook? Why wasn't I afraid? Being unafraid comes from my background, comes from my family background, comes from the history of my native country, right? So, I'm going to give you some of that in the remaining of this wonderful personal narrative I get to share with you today. Here we go. I was born in Cuba in the late 1970s. Cuba, if you're not familiar with the Cuban context, Cuba has this strong, strong, strong history of resistance, very strong history of resistance. And it starts with looking at their colonial period. Again, because my work is post-colonial, looking at Cuba's colonial period, and looking at their independence from Spain in 1901 saved my family and my own thinking about how I resisted, how my ancestors have resisted. So, when you think about Spanish independence, and Cuban independence in 1901, that was a part of a movement, quote unquote, of Afro Cubans.

Afro Cuban slaves and white Cubans, which were the sons of the Spaniards that lived and were born in Cuba, the colony of Cuba, when these two groups came together to free themselves from the motherland, from Spain to become their own country, to become their own Republic. So, it started with this combination of bringing these two groups together. Latin American history and Caribbean history, in particular, the Hispanic from Caribbean, you have these ideas called racial democracy, which in Latin America in the Caribbean, really is this idea of egalitarianism and equality across racial lines. One of the salient reasons that you have these myths of racial democracy much more present in Latin America and in the Caribbean, these ideas that racism was eradicated, or there was less racism in Latin America, in the Caribbean because of the racial mixing, right?

So, when you think of Latin America, and you think of the Caribbean, especially the Spanish born Caribbean, you always get this idea of mixing. And if you look at just Latino Studies, and Latin American Studies scholarship, you'll see that racial mixing was something that was a policy concern. White national governments that were in power wanted to... They wanted to swallow indigenous people and swallow African people and combine them into their white nation and basically whiten them. Because we had, in Cuba and in Brazil we had largest populations of Africans, and because in other parts of Latin America, the African presence wasn't as salient as it was in Cuba and Brazil, for example, and it was more indigenous. These white colonial governments wanted to make it less black and brown.

So through racial mixing, through policies of miscegenation to ideas of mixing and cultural mixing, of course, it wasn't equal, of course, blackness was still dehumanized. There was still a component that was salient, which was we're a mixed society. Whereas, in comparison to the U.S., where you had the one-drop rule, and there were anti miscegenation laws, and where it was illegal for you to actually mix, even though it happened, and most of it was under rape and dress in Cuba, although rape and dress were present, it wasn't state sanctioned, it wasn't a state policy to not mix. So, after all that you have the Cuban Revolution... you have the Cuban independence, not revolution. That's later, that's 1959. So you have Cuban independence that comes on the heels of this thinking of mixing. You have key players in the Cuban independence movement and what frees Cuba from Spain is these ideas of Afro Cubans being a part of the nation, you have these ideas of Afro Cubans and mulatto Cubans, which are mixed Cubans.

And again, in Cuba, because there's no one-drop rule, we have a lot of different variations of blackness. You have white on top blancos and you have Negros at the bottom. In the middle, you have mulattos, you have various shades of mulattos, you have various shades of mulattos, triguenos to full white. And then on the other end, you have Moro, which are darker skinned. So, it looks very much like Brazil. Brazil and Cuba have since had the same racial hierarchy as far as white and black. But you have in between an internal hierarchy, like a microcosm of the broader hierarchy, that also plays a role in why mulatto Cubans get to advance more than Negros in Cuba, because they get to whiten. So, mulattos get to whiten if you have particular class dynamics and class factors and class attributes. I don't know if you heard of this even like in the British colonized Caribbean, if you have a class background that's high it whitened you. So that's the case in Cuba, not only through skin type and phenotype, but also it's through class and through money.

Where in the U.S., it doesn't matter in the time period of even the post antebellum period. Money doesn't whiten, nothing gets to whiten a black family. People could argue now that may be a little bit more of the case. Sometimes they use cases like OJ Simpson and Barack Obama, who, because of their class dynamic, got to be whitened. There are debates about that, but ultimately, in Cuba, you could. So, what I want to focus on is this idea of racial democracy, the idea that the Cuban independence movement was led by two mulattos and a white Cuban, Jose Marti, Maximo Gomez, who was a mulatto Dominican, and you had Antonio Maceo, who was a mulatto Cuban. You had basically two Afro Latins, one Afro Cuban, one Afro Dominican and a white Cuban being the face of independence. So in the U.S., we can't really fathom that. Imagine having the American Revolution being led by two former slaves and a white American, that would change the history of this country, just the representation on itself.

So we have that kind of multicultural leadership in the consciousness of Cubans both black and white and mulatto and mixed Cubans that the Cuban nation was born out of this racial mixing of leadership in battle. Although Antonio Maceo and Maximo Gomez were on the black side, they were seen as the brawn, as the actual physical health in battle to beat the Spanish. Jose Marti was seen as the academic, the brains. So, it still follows this idea of the colonial binary and it still falls into this racial hierarchy. Yet, during that time period, it's unheard of in a society that was colonial to have independence come through this multicultural form of leadership. Knowing that Afro Cuban presence in the leadership of Cuban independence, contributes to the way Cubans think during the Republic. So during the Republic is time period from between 1901 in 1959, before the revolution. During that period, you have basically like the Harlem Renaissance of Cuba, some people call it just Guyanese more, which means, you have the African presence being highlighted in Cuba.

And that came off the heels of a lot of activism, a lot of Afro Cuban activism. Once Cuba becomes a free state, a free society, independent society, the U.S. comes in and attempts to put in place Jim Crow type policies and laws into the Cuban consciousness of its white Cuban leaders. But, you also have a very strong black movement happening in 1912 called El Partido Independiente de Color, the of color party. It was one of the first kind of black political parties in the Caribbean and all Latin America in 1912. Well, between 1908 and 1912. In 1912, there was a massacre, a white supremacist massacre, that some of the literature says the U.S. had a lot to do with this massacre that happened in Cuba, and killed about 5,000 Afro Cubans who were fighting for continual racial justice to happen in Cuba, even though again, all of these ideas of racial democracy were shaping the nation in between 1901 and 1912, you still have basically, this white supremacy massacre that's happening in 1912.

To give context, in 1912, Cuba doesn't have Jim Crow like the U.S. So Cuba doesn't have institutionalized legal policies of segregation. What it does have is U.S. influences of white supremacy battling these ideas of racial democracy coming from Afro Cubans, and mulatto Cubans and Cubans of color, who led the nation into the independence and freeing of Spain. All right, 1912 happens. There's a huge movement between 1920 and 1940 called Guyanese more, meaning that the nation and its white elite starts addressing it because it's being pushed by black Cubans that black Cubans are critical to the nation. So music, entertainment, African cultural values, because African religions, Afro Cuban religions, and the syncretism of Catholicism and religion and Yoruba religions, is central to Cuban identity. So, this Afro mixing within the Cuban nation, across racial lines, you have Cubans practicing the syncretism of Catholicism, Yoruba and bound to traditions. This has been a part of the nation for 20 years.

Then you have political movements that are trying to create affirmative action in the Cuban state. Fast forward to 1959. I'm skipping a lot because I don't have a lot of time and I want to also talk about my own upbringing. I'm giving you a whole history of the Cuban Revolution and the Cuban independence movement. But as I talk about Ferguson and St. Louis, I didn't get a chance to talk about Rochester, but I'll do that in a minute. I guess, we'll reorganize this as far as it gets edited, and it gets put in a nice little package. So I say this to say that in 1959, when Fidel Castro comes into power, there's this conception in the West and this conception of the revolution. That was called the Cuban Revolution that before the revolution, everything was bad, that Afro Cubans were being racially discriminated institutionally, which was the case to a certain extent, and that imperialism and the U.S. played a huge role in the oppression of Cuba, which again, not discrediting that that wasn't the case, to a certain extent.

But there are a lot of debates, especially now with the literature on race and racial resistance in Cuba and its history and how it's been erased post 1959 in order to prop up Fidel Castro's government and the revolution, right. So a lot of my experience came from the fact that I was a refugee from the Cuban Revolution. My father was a political prisoner in Fidel Castro's dictatorship and totalitarian government and in 1980, the Mario Exodus, which was the exodus of 125,000 Cubans who fled Cuba to come to the U.S. And my father in Cuba, prior to 1980, was in prison for over five years, on and off, because he did not believe in the Cuban Revolution, which to him and to many Cubans, 125,000 to be specific, in 1980 didn't believe in what Fidel Castro was doing for 20 years. So from 1959 to 1980, Fidel Castro takes the country and continues to put forward policies like literacy, puts forward policies like free health care, and also puts forward policies of indoctrination, also puts forward policies of anti-religion.

So, if you were religious in Cuba before 1980, well actually before 1990, you were seen as an enemy of the state. My mother would go to Catholic Church in the 1960s and 70s and military guards would throw rocks at my mother because she was going to church because in the common Marxist resume that they were trying to enforce, using the Russian model, religion is the opiate of the masses. But for Cubans, religion was also a show of ethnic and racial solidarity. Again, because there was this very strong Afro Cuban component, it was a part of Cuban identity. Can you imagine, for generations, Cubans have this Afro Cuban identity is tied to their religion and spirituality, and then in 1959, because the government says you can't practice your religion anymore and you can be arrested and you can be harmed and violently attacked for practicing your religion, how that would shake the core of so many people and why it pushed so many people to leave, it wasn't just religion, but religion was a part of it.

And for my family, my mom was Santeria. What does that mean? They were priests of the religion Ifa Orisha, which is tied to Yoruban cultural traditions. Of course, my brothers and I were all initiated in this religion in the early 1990s. And the Mariel boatlift, the fact that we were refugees, the fact that 60,000 Cubans from 1959 to the present, there was a statistic that says about 60,000 Cubans have died between Cuba and Miami, in the ocean because of their fleeing from the island and their facing of oppression. So, a lot of the research that's come out now, in particular, there's a text called called The Power of Race in Cuba, Racial Ideology and Black Consciousness During the Revolution by Danielle Pilar Cleland, which is really central in a lot of the work that I'm doing now in Cuba, talking about how racial ideology in the Cuban Revolution, how white supremacy in the Cuban Revolution, from 1959 to present, is contributing to the oppression of black Cubans, and is limiting their access.

So this is always been up against this idea that Cuba passed free education, Cuba has free this, free that. But when you actually go and talk to people, a country that's predominantly of African descent, they're mostly in poverty. It's almost like when I was interviewing Cubans, because I've done a Cuban study, Cubans will say to me, well, what's the sense of having free education if you don't have food? And some people will say, well, it's because of the embargo. It's not just the embargo. Fidel Castro and his government have made very, very bad calls on domestic policy. Domestic economic policy and domestic policy across the board. The fact that they chose to have a non-democratic society that does not have elections, the fact that they have a totalitarian dictatorship for the last 60 years, has zero to do with the embargo of the United States, right? There's a part of it that has to do with the embargo. But at the same time, you have countries like Spain that have had businesses in Cuba for a long period of time.

That helped Cuba in their economy. The hotels in Cuba and tourism, 51% belongs to the state and the 49% can be owned by another private company, like companies that are controlled by the Spanish. So you still have businesses in Cuba, the state controls all businesses by 51%. But that 49% comes from other outside investments. So, we can't always say that it's the embargo. It's not the embargo only, the embargo has a particular role in it. But, before 1959, there's also numbers that say that the U.S. controlled all businesses in Cuba, not the case. Some of the statistics I've heard is, 70% of Cuban economy was controlled by the Cubans. So 30% was owned by maybe Americans and Europe, but 70% was Cubans. What people forget, is that a component that Cuba has also played a role in building the nation and black Cuba has played a role in building a nation and blackness and race is something that it's not even allowed to be a part of their identity anymore, because it all falls under being a revolutionary, being revolutionary is not racist.

Before 59, Fidel says we don't need racial policies because we have class policies. And if we address class policies, and if we apply Marxism, we do not have to address racial issues. So, he got rid of all types of organizations similar to like the NAACP in Cuba, all kinds of organizations that were created by black Cubans along racial lines were banned. No political parties, nor organizations could organize with a racial lens. Supposedly the Cuban Revolution eradicated racism, that's not the case.

Okay, next is how this contributes to my work in Rochester. So, I came here as a three-year-old refugee with my family. We came to Miami, we lived in refugee camps. Because my parents, we were Afro Cubans in the Mariel boatlift that had high concentrations of Cubans of color, we get to Miami, a very white Cuban space and we don't have family. Although some Miami Cubans did offer us their homes, we didn't have job connections, we didn't have a social network.

So white Cubans in Miami in the 1980s, already had generations of Cubans that were white Cubans that had left Cuba in 1960s and 70s, that were already in Miami, building capital, building the economy, that were reaching out to them. But because of racism in Cuba, because racism in Cuba did exist before 59, and particularly after the wealthy classes in Cuba, which is predominantly white, not all white, but predominantly white, because there was a black upper class and there was a black middle class during the Republic, which was before the revolution, there were black businesses, there were black homeownership, it wasn't at high percentages, but some would argue it was higher percentages per capita than other Latin American countries. So actually Cuba before 59, and so the scholarship that I read did a lot for racial equality, but it was erased during the 60 years of the revolution during Castro's reckoning. So all this to say it shaped my experiences and my research, and how my father was completely anti revolution and our home, what we discussed was democracy and equality. And my father really believed in the U.S. democratic system

He believed that in the U.S. you had freedoms that didn't exist in Cuba, which was true as far as having legal rights. In Cuba, people don't have legal rights, you don't have due process, you don't have a right to congregate, you don't have a right to free expression or protest. If you protest you go to jail and because they don't have due process you can go to jail for 20 years. So I have family members, and I have cousins, who before the American dollar was legal in Cuba in the late 1990s and early 2000s were arrested just for having American dollars and were in prison for years, just because they carried American dollars. And these are black Cubans, right? My family is of African descent. The Cuban prisons have highest concentrations of Afro Cubans and black Cubans in the prison systems and you don't see them represented in the universities. That's what I'm learning from my research studies that black Cubans and Afro Cubans and mulatto Cubans aren't represented highly.

You may see a sprinkle of them just like you do in capitalism, but you don't see them in high positions of power. And you don't see them in the high economic brackets. Most of the private so-called private businesses in Cuba are owned by white Cubans, right. So if racism was eradicated for the last 60 years in the revolution, you wouldn't see that racial hierarchy as well, you wouldn't see it and you do, and it's present. All right, so how does this contribute to my work in Rochester and St. Louis and now Philadelphia? So now I'm at the University of Pennsylvania and I've been really concentrating on work having to do with public housing. I submitted grants to do work on public housing and issues of access. Philadelphia has a 25% poverty rate, so one in four people in Philadelphia is living in poverty. And as far as children in Philadelphia, 45% of children in Philadelphia are living in poverty. So, Philadelphia is considered out of all the big cities in the United States as the poorest city in the country.

Philadelphia is also seen as a black City. Philadelphia has a strong history of resistance, when you think about the MOVE bombing that happened in the 1980s. Look, I've taken my core students, I'm now teaching a class in urban geography in University of Pennsylvania and we went to the MOVE bombing site. And we realized, I was shocked to learn that this happened in 1980s, a black community in Philadelphia, in West Philadelphia was bombed in the 1980s by the state. 61 people died in the 1980s. So, we are exploring that in my research. I've also looked at the Latinx community in North Philly, and the history of the Latinx community. And what I learned is that that community, also urban renewal and planning, contributed to having toxic waste transportation and transport I think it was called Conrail was a part of this industry in the north. And that the Conrail system was where you had a lot of drug activity. So, you have toxic waste areas in high Latinx community areas that contribute to higher crime, and they

contribute to educational resources being depleted from those communities and employment being depleted in those communities.

So there are organizations and community centers that are fighting back against that and trying to build housing and trying to stop gentrification from happening for the Latinx community in North Philly. And that community is called El Centro de Oro, so those are areas that I'm exploring now in Philadelphia, through my courses. So, for example, I teach a course on urban geography in critical higher education, looking at issues of access for local communities of color in urban areas. I don't always have to do work on urban areas, my work has always been specific to urban areas, because the urbanization of the United States has really been a result of racial segregation. So, those urban renewal and urban policies have been results and have been mechanisms and tools of segregation post Jim Crow. Because of that, I feel as if those areas are in high need of education inquiry in issues of access, because it's tied to segregation. But it's also mechanized differently now that it's not de jure segregation. Even though some would argue that, like Rothstein in the color of law would argue that we still are in de jure segregation mode.

But some would argue that we're in de facto segregation, and so how these kind of invisible ways of segregating societies are built into urban areas, but rural communities face similar forms of oppression, especially when you think about access. That they don't have transportation like urban communities do, that they have less capital. So, looking at how wealth inequality has affected communities that are working class across racial lines is a really, really specific spatial factor that I'm interested in probably looking at in the future. But for now, as you've learned my past, my heritage as a Cuban and particularly as an Afro Cuban has contributed to the work that I do and have done, to my work in Ferguson, to the Latinx work I did with Latinx students in the city of Rochester with my former adviser, Judy Marquez Kiyama, and to the work I'm doing now in Cuba. So, my work moving forward is really looking at Afro Latin American political thought and its contribution to racial ideologies and challenging racial ideologies within the U.S., looking at a capitalist system.

Then also looking at how these racial ideologies and political ideologies have worked together to build the nation in Cuba. So, those are my areas of research and I know that this is going to have a huge contribution in higher education and ethnic studies work and broadly in looking at political economy, works in political economy and geography. So although racial justice activism isn't necessarily something that's looked at, as far as just protest, like my work in Ferguson, activism and resistance, in particular, is tied to post-colonial studies, looking at the subaltern and it's tied to how political economies function. How there are moral economies of justice and moral economies of injustice, which I learned about those theories and terms in looking at Cuban resistance, and how they tried to equalize racial problems in Cuba through policy, and typically through economic policy during the republic periods.

I hope that you enjoyed learning about the intersection of transnationalism post-colonial studies and access in my own background, and in the work that I do, and I look forward to having you look more into the research and into the studies that I've mentioned here today.