REFLECTIONS ON MY INTELLECTUAL PROJECT

My intellectual project has been profoundly shaped by the ongoing transformation of the social psychology of the people of the United States and the world. My focus on the example of movements of oppressed peoples and groups has not only continued the tradition of linking the fate of African Americans to the rise of the dark world (Du Bois), but called on all people of good will to link their fates to the barefoot people of the world, the have-nots of the world-system (Dr. King).

I think that this is part of an overall intellectual and social project that is central to the construction of a new identity for the U.S. American people which will include a sense of solidarity with the people of the global south, who have sent so many people to live within our borders and who bring traditions which will enrich our lives and who travel back and forth to their home countries (taking not only goods but also ideas), ever renewing their ties to the home country but also continually enriching their new country.

My work seeks to challenge interstate and intergroup conflict in favor of building on existing feelings of international solidarity at the very core of the cultures of all the peoples within the world-system, and thus accelerating a process which will undermine the extremes of
nationalist and power group competition that is causing so much pain all around the world.

Coming to adulthood in a period when the capacity for ordinary people to fight for social justice and social change was everywhere evident, my research was infused with a spirit of optimism and possibility.

I did not and do not believe that good scholarly research in the social sciences required a separation between the true and the good. But the insurrectionary mood among the more radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s was not sustainable, not so much because of the unreasonable approach of the militants (which was sometimes the case), but because of their intellectual failure to understand the relations of force and the longer history that they were building upon.

My first book, *The New Black Vote: Politics and Power in Four American Cities* (1984), was an attempt to intervene not in the transition from protest to politics which Bayard Rustin (1965) called for, but how to reach the broad social strata within the lower and deeper working class, focusing especially on the racialized and gendered groups. When one reviewer thus likened *The New Black Vote* as having the qualities of a campaign tract, he placed it in the category of the Federalist Papers but with the express intention of fostering a truly democratic politics by exposing the pretense of popular sovereignty and democracy via forging a more inclusive politics centered on the emerging agenda of the lower social strata. While I viewed this as a class struggle from the lower depths of U.S. society, which would grow over time, I wanted to understand the emerging use of the language of class to trump the demands of racialized groups by calling for unity around class instead of falling into the trap of a divisive racial conflict which alienated the majority of population in the United States, the white working and middle classes.

As one who called for the leadership of what some called the lower and deeper working class, I thought this new claim for a declining significance of race failed to grapple with the bounds of the social arena in which political contestation occurred. I thus embarked upon an attempt to revive and reassess the analytic traditions derived within
the black freedom struggle by scholars and activists such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others who had become victims of official retribution and had been unable to complete their intellectual agendas.

In my 1999 book, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism And Class Struggle in The American Century* I sought to establish that the appropriate unit of analysis was a historical social system (a capitalist world-economy) larger than the United States, but that the increasing power of the American nation-state was key to the unique trajectory of African American social movements. I sought to explicate the evolution of the racial order after the abolition of slavery, and the manner in which it was inextricably intertwined with processes of class formation. I wished to clarify the logic of an emphasis on human rights rather than civil rights as forcefully articulated by Malcolm X, but which had historically been the position of black radicals from W. E. B. Du Bois, to Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Cyril Brigs, Paul Robeson, Miss Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hammer, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Despite the ideological divergences within the black radical tradition many seemed to hold such universalistic and transcendent strivings in common.

My 2009 book, *The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line*, sought to enhance our collective understanding of the structural, ideological, and systemic tensions between the white world and the dark world, especially as conceptualized by intellectuals of African descent in the U.S. such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ella Baker, and Angela Davis. I also sought to elevate a powerful discourse articulated by scholars working within the world-systems perspective (Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, and Andre Gunder Frank), the coloniality of power perspective (Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel), and the growing antiracist tradition in U.S. American sociology. In the book, I sought to address the nature of the integration of people of African descent into the United States as citizens in the postbellum era, and its implications for who we are as a nation. This analysis of
that process of integration focused on what Giovanni Arrighi refers to as the long twentieth century, and is situated in two larger frameworks designated by Immanuel Wallerstein as historical capitalism and the pan-European project of world domination. I argued that the efforts to integrate people of African descent into the United States is symptomatic of the troubled relationship between the pan-European world and the dark world, and as Myrdal argued in the 1940s it signifies the extent to which the historical evolution of the United States represents a quality and magnitude of social power to foster a break out of this historical conundrum.

Since the expansion of a European based world-economy relied in part on the social glue of pan-European supremacy as moral justification for and defense of Euro-North American world hegemony, the path to advancement for oppressed populations of color could only proceed by constructing alternative (or counter-hegemonic) visions and strategies. The marginal status of Blacks within U.S. society is the source of a form of counter-hegemonic “dual consciousness” regarding national identity that is important to the future of our country, as has been argued forcefully in the work of W. E. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Like other people of color, the “rise of the dark world,” has been a central theme of African American social thought, and thus provides a link between the American Dream and international social justice.

In 2013 I will publish a fourth book, co-authored with Melanie E. L. Bush, *Tensions in the American Dream: Rhetoric, Reality, or Reverie*. This book explicitly links the contradictions between the inclusionary promise of the American Dream, the history of U.S. expansion and nationalism, and the exclusionary practices of our national life (based on race, class, and gender). Additionally we seek to weave together the stories of those peoples who have been incorporated into the body politic with a sense of belonging and believing and those who have been marginalized, and who have in turn resisted. We hope that this book will therefore make a strong contribution in its historical mapping, political grounding and as a sociological study of the present juncture as well as future promise and dangers.
From the rise and fall of the New Deal to the rise and fall of multiple liberation ideologies within and outside of our borders, U.S. elites have attempted to stabilize a world full of restive social forces who cannot be stilled. Efforts at control have further undermined U.S. prestige and world leadership, and have internally lessened commitment to the principles of the American Dream. The increased power of people of color within and outside of our borders challenges a major mode of ordering power relations, and thus portends a fundamental democratization of the world-system.

I came to St. John’s University in 1998 seeking to work with a racially and ethnically diverse student body with a substantial proportion of students from working class backgrounds. Since most of my adult life had been dedicated to the quest for social justice, and had been governed by the idea that I am my brother’s (and sister’s) keeper, St. John’s was truly an ideal place for me, though I did not know this would be the case at my arrival. But it quickly became clear that the environment at St. John’s would be an ideal location for me to pursue my own mission of helping to raise the next generation of critical intellectuals, to engage them in the study of the world around them so that they would see themselves as inheritors of a world which they would seriously engage, not simply fit in and do what they are told.

My scholarship reflects both a longstanding (but evolving) intellectual agenda, and my engagement and discussions with my students as I attempt to address not only my peers and the general public, but the young socially interested and engaged intellectuals that I work with every day at St. John’s. Part of my mission is to help them see that their identity within the university is that they are young intellectuals, and that they should not only embrace that identity, but lift themselves up to the challenge that it poses to them to be intellectually serious. Intellectual seriousness would enable them to contextualize what they are doing at St. John’s. Taking students out into the world of community and social activists, and to academic conferences gives them the opportunity to meet and engage with people who are doing exciting work and see themselves as doing such exciting work up to the highest levels. In this way they can connect
theory and research to social transformation.

My scholarly work (books, articles, attendance at national and international conferences such as those in Ibadan, Paris, and Salvador) is intertwined with my personal aspirations for justice and solidarity.

EDUCATION

University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 9/67–6/71, Clinical Psychology
State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, NY, 1/88–5/92, Ph.D. in Sociology 5/92, Dissertation Title: Social Movements Among the Urban Poor: African Americans in the Twentieth Century

AWARDS AND HONORS

American Sociological Association Marxist Section Lifetime Achievement Award, 2014
Faculty Outstanding Achievement Award. St. John’s University, May 24, 2011
We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century. Awarded the Oliver Cromwell Cox Award of the American Sociological Association for the outstanding book in the antiracist tradition of Oliver Cox, 2000
We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century. Named one of the “10 Indispensable Books” by The Black World Today, 2000
Research Grant, St. John’s University Summer, 1999
President’s Award–Outstanding Professor–Service to Students, Seton Hall University, 9/97–5/98
University Research Fellow, Seton Hall University, 6/97–8/97
Excellence in Teaching, Seton Hall University, 9/95–5/96
University Research Fellow, Seton Hall University, 6/94–9/94
Ford Foundation Post–Doctoral Fellow, Seton Hall University, 9/93–8/94
University Fellow, SUNY-Binghamton, 1/88-6/88
U.S. Public Health Fellow, University of Kansas, 9/67-6/70
National Competitive Scholar, Howard University, 9/63-6/67
Ralph Bunche Scholarship, Howard University, 9/63

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, St. John’s University, Jamaica, NY, 11439, 6-2013 to 12-2013
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, St. John’s University, Jamaica, NY, 11439, 6-2003 to 6-2013
Assistant Professor, St. John’s University, Jamaica, NY, 11439, 9-98 to 6-2003
Assistant Professor, Department of African American Studies, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, 07079, 8-93 to 6-98
Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, New York, 13901, 8-92 to 6-93
Lecturer, Department of Black & Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, 695 Park Ave. to New York, NY, 10021, 8-91 to 12-91
Instructor, Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Binghamton, Binghamton, New York, 13901, 8-89 to 12-89
Lecturer, Department of History, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Kansas City, KS, 6-73 to 8-73
Lecturer, Black Studies, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 66044, 7-70 to 8-70

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant Coordinator Program Development & Research, State University of New York Educational Opportunity Center in Brooklyn, 470 Vanderbilt Street, Room 801, Brooklyn, New York, 11238, 12-86 to 8-93
Program Director Prison Education Program, New York Technical College Division of Continuing Education, 250 Jay Street, M500, Brooklyn, New York 11201, 4-86 to 12-86
Administrative Assistant, Oxfam America, 513 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110, 10-85 to 3-86
Research Associate, Institute for the Study of Labor and Economic Crisis, 2701 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, 10-79 to 9-85
Planning Analyst, City of Kansas City, Missouri Urban Affairs Department, 414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Mo. 64106, 7/73 to 9/79
Psychologist, Wyandotte Mental Health Center, 36th and Eaton, Kansas City, Kansas, 10/67 to 9/72
Psychologist, Kansas Neurological Institute, Topeka, Kansas, 6-70 to 9/70

AREAS OF TEACHING INTERESTS
(Note: see rodbush.org for sample syllabi)
African American Politics
African American Studies
Black Church
Black Family
Contemporary Sociological Theory
History of Black Nationalism
History of Civil Rights
Inequality - Race, Class, and Gender
Inequality and Oppression
International Implications of Modernization
Introduction to Sociology
Political Sociology
Poverty and Social Structure
Race and Class
Race and Ethnicity
Race Relations
Social Change
Social Change in a Global World
Social Class and Inequality
Social Movements
Social Stratification
Sociology of the Black Experience
Urban Sociology
World-Systems Studies

RESEARCH INTERESTS

The Political Economy of the Underclass
Movements and Leaders in Black Communities
Community Organizing for Social Change
Black Power and Social Change
Racism in the Longue Durée
Racism and the Conservative Backlash
Rise and Fall of the New Deal and Its Coalition
Race, Gender, Class
Capitalism, the Third World (within and without), and Globalization
Internal colonialism
The Coloniality of Power
Pan-European Racism
Black Internationalism
U.S. Nationalism
Self Organization of the Black Working Class

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS


**ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS**


RESPONSES AND REVIEWS


PRESENTATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS


2013, January 30. Presentation, the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington and I Have A Dream Speech, for the “Freedom and Equality” program for Black History Month on Wednesday, St. John’s University, New York.


2012, March 13. Introduced Academic Lecture Series, “(Re-)Discovering Malcolm X,” Zaheer Ali, project manager of the Malcolm X Project, under the leadership of the late Manning Marable of Columbia University, New York, St. John’s University, New York.


of Sociology, Social Justice and Democratization, Buenos Aires, Argentina.“


2011, April 28. Speaker, “40th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Department of African and African-American Studies, University of Kansas.”

2011, June. Participant, CIEE Faculty Development Seminar on Race and Democracy in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.


2008, August. Conference Organizer and Chair of Sessions of the Mini-Conference on Race, Labor, and Empire, Labor and Labor Movement Section of the American Sociological Association and the Association of Black Sociologists Annual Meeting.


2004, February 26. Organizer and Chair of Panel, “50 Years Since Brown v Topeka Board of Education: How Far Have We Come,” St. John’s University, Jamaica, NY.


Conference on Civil Rights in the 21st Century, St. John’s University Law School, Jamaica, NY.


2002, August 16. Presentation, “All Power to the People.” From Civil Rights to Social Revolution, the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL.


2000, February 8. Presentation on “Black Liberation From the 1960s to the Millennium” at American University, Washington, D.C.


1999, April 10. Interview on CCNY Radio.

1999, April 27. Presentation, “Continuing the Dream or Dreading the Nightmare? How the Legacies of Dr. Martin Luther Jr. and Malcolm X Speak to the Contemporary Crisis.” Wolfe Institute Humanities Colloquium, Brooklyn College.

1999, April. Critics Discuss We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century. Socialist Scholar’s Conference.


MEMBERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Member, Committee for the Award for the Popular Understanding of Sociology, the American Sociological Association, 2002-2004.

Chair, Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, American Sociological Association, 1998.
Member, American Sociological Association (Political Economy of the World-System; Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities; Marxist; and Collective Behavior and Social Movements, Race, Gender, Class sections).


SERVICE TO THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Member, Left Forum Board, 2009-13
Member, National Council of the Black Radical Congress, 1998-99
Member, National Friends of the Bus Riders Union of the Labor-Community Strategy Center, 1996-2013
Organized Speaking Tour for the National Peoples’ Democratic Uhuru Movement on Strategies of Resistance to Police Brutality, December 1996

Member, Project South, 1995-2013
Advisor, African Students Leadership Committee, Seton Hall University, 1995–98
Member, Black Veterans for Social Justice, 1992-93
Member, National Urban League, 1992-93
Member, National Rainbow Coalition, 10th Congressional District, 1987-91
Member, Samora Machel Study Series on Political Economy, Community Self-Defense Program, Fall 1986
Chairman, Black Workers Forum, San Francisco-Oakland Bay, 1983-84
Chairman, Peace and Justice Coalition, Oakland, CA, 1983-84
Chairman, District 7 (Bayview-Hunters Point) Committee, in Grass Roots Alliance, San Francisco, 1979-1981
Chairman, District 4 (Western Addition/Fillmore) Committee, in Grass Roots Alliance, San Francisco, 1979-1981
Member, Western Missouri Mental Health Center Advisory Board, Kansas City, Missouri 1976-78
Member, Concerned Citizens for Prisoners Rights, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-79.
Member, Volunteers in Education, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-79
Member, Mayor’s Advisory Council for Social and Economic Programs, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-78
Chairman, Kansas City Chapter, African Liberation Support Committee, 1974-75
Chairman, Concerned Citizens of the Northeast Community, Kansas City, Kansas, 1971-74
Advisor, Kansas City, Kansas Branch of the National Welfare Rights Organization, 1971-1974
Member, Model Cities Social Task Force, Kansas City, Kansas, 1971-73
Member, Policy Advisory Committee of the Ballard Center, Lawrence, Kansas, 1969-70
Coordinator of the Black Studies Committee, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1968-70