

almost entirely focused on male perspectives, male experiences, and it was almost as if there were no Black women in society and Black women were not especially impacted by policing and criminalization. I decided that was an area I want to focus on, and I did that research both in the United States and I have done it in South Africa, and my book really focuses on what has been happening in South Africa.

What I focused on was on the policing of sex work, in particular, because I think sex work is interesting in terms of reflecting the different sexual hierarchies, both gender hierarchies as well as racial hierarchies, and what I found is depending on where you fit on a hierarchy impacts the type of policing you receive. For those individuals who were whiter, who were lighter skinned, they were entitled to more protection from the police. Police saw them as benevolent, beneficiaries of their protection. Whereas, the darker-skinned people, the Blacker-skinned people, which has this particular meaning in South Africa where there is a lot of xenophobia or there has been this history of xenophobia, a history of colorism, history of racism, Blacker people were entitled to less protection, were often left for neglect and just seen as not worthy of police protection. I think that provides interesting insights in terms of who do we deem as being valuable, who is worthy of police protection, where you look at the same thing in the United States where whiter women might be entitled to greater protection or seen as being more vulnerable, whereas, Blacker women might be left for neglect.

MICHELE BRATCHER GOODWIN

We have seen those patterns worldwide, right? As you talk about colorism and how this pans out in terms of complexion and the kind of alarmism related to complexion, sadly that has been part of a diaspora story. Aissatou, I want to turn to you because this connection that India weaves for us in terms of sex work, we know one of the ways in which Black women have been policed as with regard to their sexuality, and that traditionally it has been that police target individuals based on their clothing. I am wondering, as a designer coming into the space, what is your thought process there? I recall the defense strategies of the 1980s. Regarding gang rape, “Well, she was wearing red.” It is unfathomable to think that people would actually put a defense like, “Well, of course, what else were we supposed to do? She was wearing red after all.” Or, “Her skirt was above her knee. What else could be expected but that men would lose their mind?” What do you bring to this when you are thinking about it through the lens as a designer and clothing people? How do these issues relate for you?

REMARKS BY AISSATOU SENE

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I can feel what India was saying. I have a personal experience of it. I was in Sédhiou in 2016. I was with a group of friends, and we were at the festival. the festival was really white-centric, even though we were in Senegal. It was three in the morning. I was walking. I was in a short skirt. I was the only dark Black woman. I was picked up by the police, and when I answered to the police officer in Wolof, he told me the only reason I could be hanging there with white people is because I am a prostitute, and for that, I was taken into custody. When I was sharing that story with a lot of Black women and mostly with a lot of dark-skinned women in Senegal, it was not unique. Most of us were just target on the street because the police officer felt that we must be a prostitute, dressing a certain way.

Liberating people through fashion is something that I did not even understand I was doing because it was like we are wearing African print. We are wearing a short dress. We are changing

things that are traditional. We are embracing our body. We are working on doing things and being free. When you realize that this is actually going to war against the patriarchy, this is actually going to war against men—and the conversation is always around, “Oh, what was she wearing?” What a woman is wearing, where she is, what she is eating, or where she was has nothing to do with the fact that she was assaulted. The only person responsible is the man, and I think in our society, we have made sure that we always find a way out for men.

When we go out and start to speak about those things, the outrage is always for men. It is always very hard to talk about being a Black woman, being a feminist, and talking about my relationship with the police, because on a personal level, I have a very hard situation with them. On a professional level, I can go and use them to work on some issue, and I think we will talk about that a little bit more later.

MICHELE BRATCHER GOODWIN

What you bring to mind is the question, as a survey, how many of you have had a police encounter? I know I have. One hundred percent of us on this panel have had an experience. Aissatou, when you were mentioning being arrested, it reminded me of friends from Europe visiting me from Italy. We were driving between states, and we had entered the state of Indiana. I was taking them to the airport in Chicago. We were pulled over by an officer, and the officer tapped on the window with this flashlight, looked in, and it was broad daylight. The officer said, “What is the situation here?” because my friends were white Italians. Clearly, there was some suspicion. I said, “We are friends,” and then the officer went around to the other side of the car to one of my friends to just confirm that we were friends. But these kinds of issues that you experienced or that I have experienced—and that is a mild experience compared to what you experienced or what else I have experienced—are not the kinds of things that others have to go through.

Ana, I want to turn to you as we continue to circle the globe of our African diaspora. So often people may think about the questions that relate to race and policing and criminalization as being something that is either American-centered, people think about the Caribbean, or they may think about the continent, but they miss all of Central and South America. I want to know what has that been like for you, filling in the blanks and being a real warrior and voice for lifting up and recognizing the African diaspora through your work in Brazil and elsewhere.

REMARKS BY ANA PAULA BARRETO

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Thank you so much. Thank you for the invitation. This is a very difficult topic for me. I want to say that Brazil has the most violent police in the world, killing around 6,000 people every year. A lot of them are children.

I also want to say that I am part of one of those communities. They are highly criminalized, and they are harassed and abused by police every day. When I think about police and police brutality, and when I think about dignity, and, as Karen mentioned, who is being seen as a victim or who has the right to even question something or who has the right to even tell their own stories, sometimes that is a questioning to a lot of our brothers and sisters in the diaspora, including the favelas of Brazil, for example.

I want to share a very short story that really drove me to the work of policing and thinking about policing and gender. In 2013, a 40-year-old woman named Claudio Ferreira de Silva was dragged by a police car for several minutes. There is a video of it, and the morning in my office, I watched it. We can see the other cars telling the police to stop, “You are dragging her. You are dragging her,”