

Book Review:

Lima Holanda, Valesca. Book Review: Keisha-Khan Y. Perry, *Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil*. *Political Studies Review*, May 2016, 14: 305.
doi:10.1177/1478929916630922f

Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil by Keisha-Khan Y. Perry. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 213pp., £18.50 (p/b), ISBN 9780816683246

This book is an ethnographic work conducted at Gamboa de Baixo neighbourhood in the Northeast of Brazil, a poor black century-old fishing community. Keisha-Khan Perry's study is centred on the daily struggles of the women in the leadership of this community, exploring the central role of community-based black politics, specifically black women fighting to avoid eviction from their land and for social rights such as water and dignified housing.

The author's main argument is focused on the historically veiled racism present in Brazilian political and social life. Narrating first-person cases of open black racism— including an episode involving herself - the author paints a picture of Brazilian false racial democracy. The actions of land grabbing promoted by the white society from Bahia are explained in detail, together with the black women's strategy to keep their land rights in the context of racism, poverty and violence. The author's approach is to examine black women's disengagement with politics, revealing racist practices of urban renewal and the historical oppression on the poor - especially black people - and their strategies to resist these injustices.

This work's fundamental topics are gender and black politics, specifically gendered racism. By studying a very specific set of political actors – women, black, poor – the reader is invited to undertake a revision of academic work on black culture and black identity. Perry criticises the current literature, where authors often look at issues of identity and cultural movements but not black political movements, where work such as hers is long overdue. The author succeeds in her goal of analysing community-based black politics because of her engagement with her subjects. By living with them and participating in their daily struggles for land and social rights, the researcher was able to understand the meaning of being black in Gamboa de Baixo.

It is also important to highlight this book's contribution to the debate in the public policy area. The non-inclusion of regular citizens – not only black people – in planning policy has negative consequences for poor people in general, not only those in the North of Brazil, within the national context of authoritarian politics which excludes the poor from the spheres of decision-making and power.

Current researchers and academics will appreciate this work as an example of an empirical investigation conducted by a committed activist, a feature that provides the book with intensity and engagement from the author.

VALESCA LIMA HOLANDA
University College Dublin