Lisa Adams in Conversation with Anahi Guedes de Mello

Hi and good morning, good afternoon, good evening. We are here today, I'm Lisa with the CREA DSR-OI team and we're here today with Anahi Demelo, I hope I got it right that time, okay great, and we're going to be speaking with her today about her work and we are working with a Portuguese translator and we also have CART, so we'll be stopping and slowing down a little bit. So Anahi, I thought we could begin by hearing from you and learning more about you and your work in Brazil.

If you could introduce yourself, talk about who you are and the work you do as an activist an activist and an academic, working at the intersections of disability, reproductive justice, feminism and bioethics. Anahí, we are going to interview you to ask you to talk a little bit about your work in Brazil, that you introduce yourself, say who you are, and that you talk about the intersection of your work as an activist and academic about disabilities, reproductive justice, feminism and bioethics. So, I will try to speak in Portuguese.

First, I need to make it clear that before I go to the academy to participate in the feminist part of the disability body, I am an activist, I am a case of activist, I studied chemistry, I did chemistry, and at the chemistry faculty, I began to realize the need to fight for disabilities in communication. So, before we get into it, I would just like to leave it clear for everyone that I was already a militant, I was already an activist in the feminism field, but it was when I was a student, my university studies were in chemistry, and when I was a student in chemistry that I realized the need for this role within the academic world, to be a militant and to police the type of communication that is used, and I just basically want to start by saying that, that I was already a militant and a feminist, and I just increased my role once I did my graduation. So, I am situating my story to get to where I want to be with this, so I am a deaf person, I am a deaf person, but my trajectory as a deaf person was not through bilingualism, I did not participate in this process, it was an education through bilingualism, so this is how my militancy first began in the field of resistance in 1992, I was living with a local deaf community, but it was a deaf association, and they communicated through bilingualism, I was 37 years old and I was ready to learn bilingualism, but let me make it clear, my family raised me to be a deaf person, and not to be bilingual.

So, all of this is just to contextualize who I am, so I am a deaf person, and my activism in fact began as an activist for deaf people, and I was not raised with sign language, my family raised me in the oral mode, that's how I started learning, and then I was 17 years old and I came into a community that was already communicating with sign language, and I hadn't learned yet, but that's when I started learning sign language, until then I was not educated and raised that way. So, in this partnership with the local deaf community, of course, I can tell you that I could not adapt, because it is another model of deaf perception, that I could not adapt to this perception of the world, which is through sign language, but at the same time, there was a tension, like a son of a bitch, which is better, sign language or oralization. So, as I mentioned to you, once I got immersed in this deaf community, local deaf community, and became an activist for deaf people, I told you already, I had explained to you previously, that I had a hard time adapting, I was not able to adapt, I had another perception of what it was to be deaf, because I had been raised in the orality, I was always

used to that way of communicating, and there was a great debate at the time, whether it was better to be like me, or whether it was better to use the sign language, and this is in the 90s that I'm talking about, so I just wanted to contextualize how I got to come to the point where I am now.

Excuse me. I think I could say that my case is not unique, there are many deaf people who do this, it is not exclusive to Brazil, I think in many parts of the world we have this type of tension in the deaf community, some prefer to use sign language, others do not, I prefer to use sign language, I prefer to use sign language to choose, so I stayed for 6 months approaching the mass, in the local deaf community, I did not adapt, and I decided to leave, I did not want to go to the faith anymore, so I continued studying, at the time I was in the Mexican Institute, in the Mexican Institute, which today is called the Crown Institute, so I left the deaf community, and I did not want to go to the faith anymore, I just wanted to study to try to enter the university. So this reality is not unique to Brazil, it is common in many deaf communities around the world, this tension and dispute between orality and sign language, and I spent around 6 months trying to adapt myself to this new way of communicating, and after a while I just removed myself from it, I could not do it, I was in middle school, I was in high school at the time, and I just thought that I needed to continue to study and move on, and continue to find out what was the best way to communicate for me.

When I say this, I have the feeling that you have, and I want to make it clear that both ways of communication are legitimate, but what I want to say is that those who have faith in the deaf club have the right to choose the way they want to talk to the deaf, and to say that there are several ways to be deaf, it is not the only way to be deaf. Everybody can choose which way they want to communicate, and which way they find right or good for them to communicate with, and it is just a question of the person herself or himself to identify what works for them in a way of communicating, but both being oral or being sign language are valid ways of communicating within the deaf community. So, it was 1992, I registered, and in 1996 I entered the university, I entered in chemistry, and then it started, in this trajectory as a university student, I entered another stage of my life, which is the perception that I had to enable my parents to have access to knowledge, to have access to communication, because at the time in Brazil there was no sign language in Brazil, for example, there was no sign language in Brazil, so in my time as a chemistry student, there was no possibility, for example, to have sign language interpreters here in Brazil, it is a little complicated, we don't have, like me, for example, to interpret what we are doing right now, we have our communication, but we don't have sign language interpreters here in Brazil.

So, this is 1992, what I was talking about previously, and in 1996 I entered college for a chemistry major, and this is how my university trajectory began. There was another stage of my militancy, it was when I started digging deeper into the perception of the deaf community, and fighting for my right to access knowledge. In Brazil it was very different at the time, there was no law requiring sign language, for instance, and in colleges the closed captions, like we have here now, even if a person would require or request the closed captions, they weren't or they aren't available yet, so we couldn't either require at the time an interpreter of sign language.

So, those were the fights and the perceptions that I started to dig deeper into. In 1996 I studied chemistry, and in this process, as I mentioned earlier, I started my militancy for

communication skills, both in the classroom and in the classroom. I can tell you that my first contact with computers was at the University of Texas, in the second semester of 1996.

So, you can imagine how this broadened my possibilities of communication with the world, because I always had the privilege of a third-person contact, for instance, to call a taxi, to make a phone call, or to make a contact with a computer in Tenerife, and to have another friend. So, I can tell you that through this contact, the possibility of having access in Tenerife, opened the doors for me, and I got to know some people with disabilities in the network. In 1998, I met a friend of mine from Brazil, Minas Gerais, by chance, and we started a discussion group called Lista Fitão.

This Lista was the first discussion group in Brazil, only for people with disabilities. There were several people with disabilities. So, I had my first contact with the ability to have people with disabilities, but I interacted more with blind people, with people with disabilities.

So, in 1996... No, I can't go on. No, I can't go on. In 1996, while studying chemistry, and fighting for the sensitivities within communication in a classroom, and in the second semester, I had my first contact with a computer.

And as you can imagine, this was an enormous jump in my reach in communication. This completely opened doors with the world, because until this point, I would always have to communicate through a third person, whether it was to call a taxi or make a phone call. Everything was through a third person.

And here I was, finally finding ways of having a direct communication. It was definitely an open door. In addition to being able to communicate directly, I was also able to come in contact with many other people in the community, which actually increased the reach to other disabilities.

I met Olizonte, which is the capital of the state Minas Gerais, in Brazil. And he and I opened a group called Discussion Group in Brazil, where we started discussing and reaching out to people with disabilities. And through this group, I came in contact with many other disabilities.

It was not just deafness, it was blindness and others. This was a huge step forward for Brazil, which expanded my resources. What does it mean to be a person with disabilities? I managed this list for three to four years.

And I think you have to think about how this is critical, because right now we are in a pandemic of COVID and people are in quarantine. And people with disabilities are always in quarantine. So imagine that era.

And a contact with the institution. People with disabilities who left the army could speak and express themselves. People with disabilities are people who don't see the law as being scarce.

Because they are unstructured, they don't have the physical disabilities on the street, they don't have the space, they don't adapt. So in Brazil we have the city of São Paulo. It's horrible.

It's complicated to have an architectural, urban structure that is not accessible. So it was very interesting for me. This coexistence of people with disabilities through the army.

So this, as you can imagine, was really, really very important for me. It was a completely 180 change in my life. I was able to contact not just people in my community, but people in other parts of Brazil.

And finally really get to understand what it was to be a person with a disability. And this list, which the translator corrected, I said before a group of discussion, it's called actually vital list, that was founded between Anaí and a friend, was very important for many people. Because you understand, for instance, now the world is going through a pandemic.

And people have to stay home and they have to do a quarantine and be isolated. People with disabilities have been isolated forever. They've been in quarantine permanently.

And this allowed them to sort of come out of the closet, explain who they are, what they felt, what were their challenges. Because we are talking about a country without any infrastructure. People were not able at times to even get out of their houses, or be heard, or show and tell what they were feeling.

Like the city of São Paulo, huge metropolis, is not urbanly or architectonically prepared to give access to people with disabilities. So, I spent four years in this list, and it was very, very important for me. So, I did my military service in the club of disability.

I did virtual activism, artistic activism. So, I studied chemistry, I did a lot of virtual activism. I went to the streets, to march in the streets.

I started to participate, I started to go to classes. I started to go to classes, because I already wanted to know if they had made the pauses of the military disability club. There is this virtual disability club.

Here in Brazil, there is a name for it, it's called sofa activism. So, I did a lot of that. There came a point, a moment, when I started to go to classes, if the sound came out of the ground, came out a little bit of the ground, I started to go outside, to the streets, to the spaces, to the public spaces.

So, I was forced to interfere, I was forced by a law here in Brazil, which is called Terreto. Terreto, 5896, this Terreto, was the first Brazilian legislation that had the recognition, that made the recognition of these short people, who do not communicate with each other. So, I participated for the first time in the election, as I said.

So, all these militants that I was part of up until this point, was virtual, virtual activism. As I said, I was a chemistry student at the time, but I thought and felt after this contact, and this opening up into the world through the computers, I felt the need to go out to the streets, and march, and participate. This actually led me to start skipping classes, but I really was very focused on the disability agenda.

That's all I needed to know. I needed to know what it was like to be a person with disabilities in Brazil. In Brazil, we have an expression called a couch activist, and we needed action.

We needed action now. So, I started being out in the streets, and in the open political participation spaces, to try and see what could be done, to change the reality of people with disabilities in Brazil. And in Brazil, there was a decree, decree 5296, that was approved, and it was the first Brazilian law that recognized the existence of deaf people that did not communicate through sign language.

So, after that, I started to become more aware of what my participation in the disability camp should be. And at the time, I want to say that, at the time, there was a difficulty, a difficulty related to family problems. Family problems, for example, I was in the process of denouncing my father for violence against deaf people.

So, there was a difficulty, but at the same time, I was determined to denounce the issue of violence against deaf people, the violence that happened to my family, not only to me, but to my sisters as well. So, that's how I started to have this awareness, this question of violence against deaf people. So, all of this made me have much greater awareness of all the challenges faced by people and made me start participating in all activities related with people with disabilities.

But at the same time as all of this was happening, there were challenges that were related to family problems. And by that, I mean in my own family, I was about to denounce my father for sexual violence and for sexual violence not just to me, but to my sisters as well. And at this moment was when I realized and had my first experience with what it was, the concept of gender violence.

My mother and I, we had legal disputes, several lawsuits and legal disputes that were related to this narrative dispute of violence against deaf people. Whether or not this dispute happened, almost all of them, almost all three cases. And at the end of the case, for you to understand, my father passed away in 2009, but what happened next was that my sisters started to protest against me, to defend me.

Because when I heard them, I laughed at my father. He spoke against them. So my sisters started to protest, which is the narrative of the lawsuit, of the lawsuit that has the title of criminal of sexual violence, and in the field of succession, it has the title of successor.

And the dispute is about this, in the archive of sexual violence. And just last year, I won the lawsuit, after almost three lawsuits, to support this argument that there was sexual violence within the family. I won the third lawsuit, which is the Supreme Court of Justice.

Because in the first lawsuit, I lost. My sisters won the second lawsuit, I won. Then they won the third lawsuit, I lost.

So now, at this very moment, I lost. I have no other choice, my right to inherit. But I'm telling you this so you can understand a little how this had an influence in my way of interfering, of discussing the issues of gender in the feminist field.

Because my master's, my master's in anthropology was about violence against women, against women. I'm sorry, Anahí, I'm looking here and what you said was so intense that I couldn't write it. Speak in context.

I was just listening to you. No, I'll say it. In 2009, my father actually died.

And my sisters then thought that they wanted to honor my father's name and started actually reverse processes of trying to deny all of this. And this inherits me, in fact. And so it was usually my word against theirs.

And the fights went from the district court level to the second level until the Supreme Court in Brazil where I finally was able to win this lawsuit that they brought on to me. And just so you understand all the steps that I had to go through and this is actually within my own family, with my own sisters who were all at this point denying everything that I had gone through. But in the Supreme Court in Brazil, the STJ as it's called in Brazil, I was able to finally win and I am in the process of trying to get my inheritance just now.

We're talking decades. We're talking now at this point 10 years, 11 years after he died. And this actually brought me to my master degree which was in anthropology.

And my master's was violence against women with disabilities. Wow. Wow.

Thank you, Anahi, for sharing that story and for all the courage to fight through decades, through the different systems and within your family. Anahi, thank you for sharing this difficult story with us and thank you for your courage to keep this fight with your own family and share it with us. Thank you very much.

Thank you. So, I'm telling this story to make it obvious. I don't want to make any mistakes.

Of course, I can't tell all the details. So, I'm telling this story to make it obvious. So, at the time, I was almost at the end of my chemistry graduation and I wasn't happy anymore, not satisfied with the course.

And I also didn't know a field of studies about disabilities. I didn't know this field. Then, suddenly, at one point, I found out, I had contact with a text from an anthropologist as you know, Deborah Dillis.

She wrote a very interesting text about the social model of disability based on a feminist critique. I was attracted to this reading and I was in contact with this field of studies. At the time, I was almost at the end of my chemistry.

Of course, I will not go into any more details. There would be no time to be specific about all that happened. But just to say that at this point, I was almost at the end of my degree, chemistry at the time, and I wasn't happy with it.

I just wasn't satisfied with what I had studied. But I didn't quite know any field of study of people with disabilities. I didn't know really where to go.

But in the meantime, I read a study from an anthropologist called Deborah, which was studying, finally, a social model of people with disabilities. She was a feminist writer and I was really very excited and happy with what I had read. So, this is what made me veer into the new line of study.

So, what happened is, I need to say that I was an activist and an emergent in Brazil. When I left the capital city, in 2003, I joined the movement of people with disabilities in Brazil, with the intention of supporting my city, the Center for People with Disabilities in Pernambuco. I was the first president of the Center for People with Disabilities in Pernambuco for four years.

So, the Center for People with Disabilities, I think that people with disabilities in all parts of the world, need to be explained. Because the philosophy of people with disabilities began in the United States through the United States which is by Ed Roberts, by Sue, I can't pronounce her name, Sue Schirrman, who is an author I am from the United States, and I have always believed in the emergence of the movement of independence for the United States. So, I already had an idea of emerging in Brazil.

I was doing chemistry, and when I came back from Cape Verde, Bobete arrived, and I thought, I don't want to become a teacher. So, I took the first steps to become a teacher. I needed a transfer to social sciences, because I wanted to deal with the need.

So, I did my college studies, and I was an emergent Brazilian activist. As I ended my major in chemistry, and as I said, I was not happy with it, I got out of the vital list that I had founded with my friend. And in 2003, I entered a movement called the Movement of Independent Life in Brazil, with the goal of founding the Independent Life Center.

And I was a president of this group, and this group was in the town of Florianópolis in Brazil. And I was the president of this group during four years. This Center of Independent Life started in Brazil, started in the United States, with a woman whose name I don't know how to pronounce, Suzy something, who was a very important person in this world, in the United States, and in the emergence of the Movement of Independent Life in the United States.

And I was coming to the end of the degree, but I was really at this point, after reading the article, Deborah's article on the social model of disabilities, I was realizing, I don't want chemistry, this is not what I want. So I requested to be transferred to social sciences, and this is where my first steps towards the studies with people with disabilities started. Anahi, for those who are not familiar, could you briefly explain the concept of independent living? Sorry, independent living and the importance of it as a movement.

For those who don't know Anahi, could you explain the concept of independent living and the importance of this independent living movement? The concept of independent living is another issue that comes with pressure, because I don't know what the legal status is, but there is a category that a person with disabilities uses autonomy, and independent living speaks for everyone, as if it were a dialogue, but independent living for us, people with disabilities, the entire Brazilian movement is independent living. Independent living is choice. A person with disabilities has an important choice, because the death of a person with disabilities, the death of a loved one, is not only for us, but for those of us who have been part of the independent living movement.

For us, independent living is having the ability to choose, which is different from the other concepts that say that people with disabilities have the ability to do. So, we have to take into account the local context of independent living. I believe that this is what we bring to the philosophy of independent living.

I am saying this because there is a conflict between independence, autonomy, and the two fields, that is, feminism and force. Because autonomy for us is having control of the body. Independence is choice.

For feminists, autonomy is choice. So, I think it's half a salad. But I can explain this.

Independence is the person's choice. I will give an example. A person with disabilities, if she can't tie her shoe laces, because she doesn't have anthrobia in her hands, she doesn't have anthrobia, she needs help from another person to tie her shoe laces.

She doesn't have anthrobia, that is, she has no control over her body. So, it's okay if she doesn't have anthrobia, but she has independence, in the sense that she can't tie her shoe laces, but she has autonomy to choose which shoe she wants to tie, so that she can get over it. So, this concept of independent life, it is, again, a challenged concept, because there's a difference between autonomy and independence, and people sometimes use the term interchangeably, and I don't believe that it should be used interchangeably.

For us, the concept of independence, of independent living, is basically the right of a person with disability to choose. It's the power to choose. It's a philosophy of life.

There's actually a saying in Brazil that says, nothing about us, without us. And the choice is different of just simply doing something. We have to understand whether this is a local concept or not, which I don't believe it is, because I think we imported this concept from the United States, this concept of autonomy and independence.

Autonomy is what you can or cannot do with your own body. It's your limits within your physical abilities. Independence is a choice, and the example that I can give is, for instance, a person not able to tie up her shoes.

Okay, she does not have autonomy, physical autonomy, to tie up her shoes. But independence is, she has the choice of whether or not she wants the shoes tied up, or even what shoes she should wear. So it is this choice that we call independent life.

It's important because, when I decided to emigrate from here to the United States, I was like an activist in an emergency. I joined the movement for women's rights in 2003. In 2003, I was 23 years old.

And I stayed in the movement until 2016, which was exactly the year that I became a member of the state, in Brazil, which had the most democratically elected president ever. So I stayed in this movement from 2003 until 2016. So I want to say that I joined my subsistence and, during this time that I stayed in the movement, I joined two international capacitations to strengthen the advocacy group for disability.

One, in 2005, I went to Thailand, I went to Phuket, together with other disabled people from Latin America. Two disabled people from each country of Latin America. It wasn't Thailand, it was Thailand.

And then, in 2008, I went to the United States. I participated in the largest, I think you have to know it, it's a PRC course. I participated in a capacitation to participate in an edition about women with disabilities in the organization of physical disability in 2008.

And there was a moment when... because it was only for women with disabilities, there was a moment when the first issue of disability was brought up. I participated until 2016. And it was also at the same time that the Brazilian coup for the removal of the then president Dilma Rousseff happened.

And I was fighting also for this, against this coup. And all of this was happening at the same time. At that moment, I participated in two international activist trainings.

One in 2005, with other disabled youths in Bangkok, Thailand. And in 2008, I came to the United States to participate in the group, in the movement MIUSA, which is women with disabilities. And so I've been involved in all these things as a very young person.

Anahi, I know my youths so very well. I worked for them for a long time and was part of WILD also. Anahi, I know this movement MIUSA very well.

Actually, I worked for them. And I also worked for the WILD movement. W-I-L-D.

I miss this group very much. I miss Susana. I really miss these people.

Yeah, me too. Me too. Me too.

Me too. I miss my graduation. I've already done more than ten gender studies.

I've been in contact with Theory Queen, the feminist studies. And then, in this same contact with the gender studies, I started to question myself, why? But why? There's no reason. The discussion, if necessary, is at a crossroads.

The discussion, if necessary, is at a crossroads in the feminist studies in Brazil. So... I questioned myself, I started to get involved in this, I started to interfere, I started to want to fix this. So, after participating in this training in the USA, in the Mayusa movement, where I stayed for two to three weeks, I came back to Brazil and back to my studies in social sciences and I started going back to classes.

And in these classes, I started taking many of them in gender and feminism and activities, studies in gender feminism. And before I declared my doctorate degree, I had taken more than ten subject matter classes related to gender. So, it was a subject matter in which I dove very deeply.

And I started questioning, why? Why is the disability issue missing in the context of feminism in Brazil? And this did not sit right with me, and so I started trying to not just understand why, but making changes and see if I could insert this concept within the gender studies and the feminism studies, which I believed had to include disabilities. Can I just ask a brief question? I'm wondering if at this point, your classes and coursework was more accessible and if they were providing reasonable accommodation to you. Was the accessibility to the university where you were studying already providing you with the necessary structures for you to study? Yes.

I was still in the fourth year, when I started attending the third year. At the end of the fourth year, I graduated in 2009 in social sciences. I graduated in 2009 and I was preparing myself for the selection process for the master's degree.

I entered the master's degree in 2011, but I did two graduations in social sciences. One in the bachelor's degree, and the other in the master's degree at the State University of São Paulo. But at the end of my graduation, I started attending a master's degree and I had the opportunity to study feminism in Brazil, which is called, in the name of the master's degree, gender and disability.

I will translate this, but she asked if you already had... In 2009... This article was published in 2012. I submitted it in 2010, but I only know that this article had an impact in the field of feminist studies, because it is a reflection of the state of art, of international and national literature on the issue of disability. This was the first publication.

Anaí, I will translate this for her, but before that, she asked if... She asked if, during these studies, the university already had accessibility, already had spaces with access to the disabled, and already had these things, during these studies in social sciences. I think that AIDA continued with the difficulties. I think that in Brazil, we have a very structural problem, the things in the land, in the countryside, that discussion of accessibility... Sorry, there's an ambulance going by here.

I'm sorry. Okay, go ahead. That discussion of accessibility as a factor and not a right, I continued to feel the lack of accessibility because of my access, my knowledge, but anyway, I can tell you that for me it was a miracle, because for me, what people do, what people help, it's more difficult to follow the discursive discussions, the oral discursive discussions, such as those in the classroom.

But I apparently didn't have any difficulties. I apparently managed to follow everything else in the LAPEON reading. I managed to follow it.

I was mature enough to... I never had a problem with grades, I always got high grades. So, to be able to read correctly in the LAPEON reading, it's complicated. So, I continued, but I had to adapt, adapt to the classroom, but also to talk to the teachers, the teachers were afraid of me because I didn't do well in the LAPEON, so I went to the IRC.

So, back to your question, Lisa, about the accessibility while doing the social sciences and from then on, no, Brazil has very bad infrastructural problems in terms of accessibility that are yet still not resolved today. And they continued, and the closed captions continued not to exist. And I was able to stay an exemplary student with always the highest grades, but it was more an unilateral effort.

It was my effort to adapt and I always made every single effort to adapt myself to the circumstances, which I did. But that also, this always required me having a previous conversation with the teachers, for instance, requesting that they would face me and that they would let me see their lips and I was good in lip reading and so with the lip reading, I was able to always keep up with the pace of studies, but to participate in discussions and debates. It was the access, the structural access wasn't there, is not there in many cases, but

I was myself able to participate, but it was an effort that I made and not the other way around.

So, that's to your question. And back to what she was saying before, in 2009, as she's becoming more and more aware of why and asking and questioning why isn't disability also part of the debate of feminism and gender. And at the time, I was also selecting my master's degree in 2011 with gender and which I declared with the studies of feminism, gender and efficiency.

I wrote an article for a very important magazine and the article was called Gender and Disability, Intersections and Perspectives. And this article was published in a magazine in Brazil called Feminist Studies and this magazine is the most important magazine in this field in Brazil. And I was, at the time, completely immersed in all these concepts and studies.

You can't write down things on the table, or look at the table, or look at the teacher. You can't think of things at the same time. So, I started with chemistry, which is a discipline, permeated with mathematics, chemistry, mathematics, and I couldn't stop writing down because if I didn't stop writing down, I would need to accompany someone who was in the room writing down everything.

So, for you to have an idea, it was a card, it was a card for the chemistry discipline. While I was studying social sciences, I did chemistry for almost three years. It was a card for the chemistry discipline.

While I studied social sciences for three years, four years of social sciences, it was a card for my whole career. It was a card. So, I took the decision, I don't trust anyone anymore, I'm in the state, I'm in the teacher, then I take the card, I prefer to focus on it, so I don't waste time.

In chemistry, it was not possible to do this, because I was taught by the master. So, just so you understand the complexities of what I had to go through, for me, it was very challenging to have to be able to do two things at the same time. I could either look at the blackboard or take notes.

I couldn't do both, or listen to the professor, or look at the blackboard. Because I needed to look at the professor to understand what he was saying, but I would need to take notes, and so I would need to look at the blackboard. And as you know, in chemistry, there's many mathematical codes and chemical formulas, and all of this had to be written in the blackboard, and all of this needs to be memorized.

So, I remember that I spent the entire classroom writing absolutely everything down, and at the end of each class, I had filled an entire notebook of notes. And through my chemistry degree or studies, I had piles and piles of notebooks with all the notes to be able to follow the classes. But when I migrated to social sciences, I had for the entire four years of studies or three years of studies, one notebook alone.

I just put down the pencil and the pen, and I said, my focus is on what is being said. And so I looked at the professors, and I captured and focused on the message, and then I

summarized it, synthesized it, whichever way I could afterwards. And really captured a lot more information that way.

But for the entire time, I had one notebook in social sciences. Wow. So, I published that thesis, on the subject of Bishersha, and it had already been approved, when it was published, a master's degree had been approved.

So, I started my career, once again, with the literature, the feminist studies of state and Bishersha. So, I knew, for example, that the approach to abortion was very controversial, about the deficiency, but I was still working on it, because my previous job was as a feminist, when I was a feminist. I knew that there was a discussion about abortion, about the conflicts between feminists and Bishersha, about abortion.

But I waited for the right moment to end this discussion. I think I would like you to know that, right now, when I started to enter the body and soul of this space, when ANES invited me to participate with you, when you invited me to join the discussion about the principles of Nairobi, it was at this moment that I started to discuss about abortion, in this context. But ANES, in my... in my... I think it was at the time of my doctorate, when there was a coup, a circus coup in Brazil.

There was this discussion about abortion or not, about mothers' abortion or not. Then ANES got in touch with me to help me, because women... Anaí, Anaí, who contacted you? Who contacted you? They got in touch with me to... I... to manifest... They knew what my position was, to make my position official. So I manifested myself about the issue of abortion in the context of the circus.

This was at that moment, when I was pregnant. The issue of abortion. I was already in the doctorate at that moment.

But... Give me a second. Let me... So... I started reading, reading more this literature and studies about the subject matters that we are discussing. Disability in the context of feminism.

At this point, my article had already been approved. The article that I mentioned previously. Gender and disability intersections and perspectives.

And in Brazil... And I was coming or stepping towards the concept of abortion. And I knew that this was something that would need to be discussed because my master's degree was violence against women with disabilities. And abortion would inevitably be part of this discussion.

And so... I was just waiting for the right moment to start the debate and include the agenda of abortion in my debate. At this moment, I was body and soul involved in these issues. And... The discussion of... Then I started coming to know the Nairobi principles.

And... It was when the Institute of Bioethics invites me that I have an opportunity to actually make public my opinion on this. And this at the same time was when the Zika was happening in Brazil. The epidemic of Zika.

And... This was a big issue. Whether... They should or not be allowed to have an abortion when they would know that the child would have been exposed to Zika. So... The abortion was then discussed in the context of Zika.

And this was already moving towards my doctorate degree. So... We have less than 10 minutes left. So... I wanted to just ask you if you could talk a little bit about why these intersections are so important.

Disability. Gender. And also reproductive justice.

If you could just talk a little bit about why these three are so important. And why your work was focused there. These intersections are important to you.

Explain a little bit why. And... The question... Why is this? It's difficult. Because... We are still focusing on the issue of disability.

And for me... It's... It's... It's a question of respect. It's... I think it is important to discuss if abortion is something that is missing in Brazil in the movement of women with disabilities. If abortion exists, it is part of the feminist struggle for the defense of abortion, but when it comes to the issue of disability, they do not manifest themselves, they do not have the courage to manifest themselves because of the consideration that abortion, in the context of the circus, would be an illusion.

I think it is not, because one thing is the right of women, one thing is the right of women, it is not the same thing as the right of the state, how much the state obliges the woman to contribute to this, but how much the state offers to contribute, or how much a public police offers to contribute, I would choose, I don't think I can choose. For me, it is a matter of the same body, it is a feminist question, the decision is up to the woman, but we have difficulties in showing that the lack of abortion does not invalidate the struggle of people with disabilities and feminist movements. I think that feminists also have difficulties, some feminists are in doubt but it is the greatest difficulty of the feminist movement, it is necessary to discuss this intersection.

I believe that these intersections just need to be part of the debate and discussion, because even in women's lives that do have abortions, in Brazil this is still a very hard decision to make, and the access is not equal and not easy, especially when we now include in this concept of abortion disabilities, because when we talk about abortion in the concept of women with disabilities, there is always this inherent accusation of whether it is or it is not eugenics, thank you, that word was just coming in Portuguese, and whether it is or it is not, I believe that it is not, because what we are trying to discuss here is that this is a right, this is a women's right, it is her decision and not the state's decision, when the state mandates it, then it is eugenics, but when it is the women's decision, or if it is public institutions that actually give you the possibility of having an abortion, it is not eugenics, we actually say, my body, my rules, and I believe that this is just a feminist ethic, and this agenda of abortion is very challenging for all, but it is increasingly more challenging when we then add to this the intersection with gender and disability, and this does not invalidate this movement's fight for people with disability, this is all integrated and intersectable, and that is why I believe all of them need to be part of the debate. Sorry, just to clarify, when you talk about eugenics, you are talking about when a woman is deciding, or a person is deciding to have an abortion

when there is a fetal impairment? When you talk about eugenics, are you referring to when a woman decides to have an abortion because the fetus already has some deficiency? Is it already a problem? No. No, I think we have to take into account that it is only considered and understood when there is a compulsory application of the state to oblige this woman to have an abortion against the will of the fetus, whether it has a deficiency or not, but for me the question is not whether it is right or wrong, for me the fetus is not a person, so what I mean by that is that it is not possible to have an abortion there, I think there is a confusion about what eugenics means, for me this difference between eugenics, selective abortion, therapeutic abortion, I can't go into that, but what is shocking is that we need to understand that in feminist ethics, it is important to have an abortion to have an abortion on the right to a body, it is not necessarily an abortion, it is a right to a body, there is another implication, I don't believe that women, I'm asking Laysa, I don't believe that women have an abortion because it will have a deficiency, I don't believe that, I think women have an abortion much more due to material conditions, material conditions, you have to understand that the state of care is with the woman, the woman is responsible much more for the care of the fetus, when the fetus has a deficiency, the state of care is greater, because the use of time is greater, so I think that the woman, first, she asks for material conditions, because the fetus has a deficiency or not.

independently of the fetus, the concept is whether the fetus is a person or not, which for me the fetus is not yet a person, and there is a confusion here of what eugenics actually really means, and the concept of whether women choose to have an abortion because they have an impaired fetus, I don't believe this is the case, no woman decides to have an abortion because of having or not having an impaired fetus, or at least it's not the majority, I think the debate needs to be moved away from this concept and focused instead on the debate of abortion is a women's right, instead of a state mandated or not mandated right, and I believe that women do not abort because of the condition of the fetus, women are usually the main care providers of the children, and so they are the ones in whom the responsibilities fall on, whether for the survival of this being, whether they move ahead with the pregnancy or not, so the determinants I think for a woman are mostly material, whether or not they are going to have the capacity to raise or not, and this is what drives their decisions much more than what is the status of the fetus at the time of the abortion. Well, it's a huge discussion and one that we will continue through our work, so what I want to do at this point is we are running out of time, I wanted to thank you Anahi for the journey of your activism and your academic studies that you have shared with us, and this is a conversation that will be continued, but I think we have been able to see how you were mobilized through the disability movement, through being an activist politically in terms of feminism and disability, and at the same time how your academic studies were influenced by your activism and also influenced your activism, and it's really interesting to see how you have merged these different intersections in your work, and it's something that we will continue to talk with you about and to learn from you, but I want to thank you for everything that you have shared with us today. Anahi, we are running out of time, our time is up, but I would like to thank you very much for what you have shared with us today, and of course, everything you have said is very important, and these are debates that we will continue to have, we will continue to talk about all of this, we just don't have more time and space now, but this is a conversation that will certainly continue.

However, I would like to thank you very much for your activism, for your academic studies, and for how you have mobilized yourself in the context of this movement of people with disabilities, of feminist political activism, your academic studies, and all the intersections that you have focused on. What you have shared with us today was very good, and I thank you very much. To finish, I would also like to thank you for being here with us, sharing a little bit of my perspective.

I would like to tell you that I consider myself, before being a person with a disability, I consider myself a woman, and before being a person with a disability, I consider myself a woman, and for me, the position of a feminist is very important, if we think about the correctness of the materiality of being a woman. So, thank you very much for this opportunity to be here with you. I would also like to suggest to you my text, a text that I have already used and read, which I used together with Gabriela Radon, who you know.

We used the text, which sometimes amplifies a little more the debate about reproductive justice and disability justice. So, I would like to suggest this text to you, for you to know a little more about my vision, because here in the conference, I simplified a lot, I can't say everything, I have to pick up text, there are other things that were not brought up, for example, here in Brazil, we, as a movement of women with disabilities, we still need to work hard to put in place the interface of intersexuality, for example, race and disability is an interface that is very much in the trade, we need to work hard, thank you. So, thank you to you for allowing me to have a space to put out my perspective, because above all, before I am a person with disability, I am a woman, I am a woman first, and so, for me, it is very important to focus my position always in the feminist aspects of the debate, because I am a woman, and so, for this, I would also like to suggest to share a text that I published, and it is actually translated into English, that I worked in collaboration with Gabriela, whom you, I believe, know, about where you will get to understand more the concepts of reproductive justice and disability justice, and where you will get to understand better my position about abortion, because I oversimplified in this discussion, it is impossible to get into details, and I know there are many breaches and many gaps that I did not explain that actually do explain better my position, and why I believe that it needs to be included in every debate, and especially in Brazil, I believe that it is very important and relevant to keep the debate about the intersectionality of, for instance, race and disability.

This is not something that is built in the society yet, and needs to be voiced and communicated, and thank you. Thank you, Anahi. And thank you, Teresa, for translation, and to our captioner as well, thank you.

Okay. Obrigado a todos. Take care.

Tchau, Anahi. Obrigado, Teresa, pela tradução. De nada, é um prazer.

Bye. Bom dia.