Anxious Whiteness, Anti-Racism on Hold: Exploring the Contemporary Disputes About Political Anti-Racism and Decolonization in European Contexts

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Introduction: Towards a Cartography of Whiteness

This chapter engages with political processes, polemics, and disputes in European contexts that illustrate what the Roma writer and activist Helios Garcés has described as the different reactions of "the European neurosis facing the emergence of political anti-racism"[1] (Garcés 2017c). I propose an exploratory cartography of this European neurosis with a specific focus on its contours in the left and radical left of the political spectrum. This will be interpreted through the lens of racial fear—*White fear*—and one of its usual manifestations: "an anxious whiteness" (Ahmed 2004). I argue that this approach can bring about critical analytics of contemporary (anti-)racism in self-proclaimed non-racist democratic regimes in Europe that acknowledge the existence of racial discrimination and have implemented legal measures to combat it (see Maeso 2018). The analysis engages with three interrelated conceptual and

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[1] I consider *political anti-racism* as a political articulation committed to both, the struggle against the institutionalized racism/violence inflicted by the normal functioning of the State and the (inter)national geopolitical order, and the autonomous collective organization of racialised peoples from the standpoint of their specific histories and lived experiences of oppression and liberation (see, for example, Khiari and Bouteldja 2010; Garcés 2016).

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political debates. First, the reactions to compelling critiques of dominant White-led anti-racist policies and discourses, established since the 1940s, that centred on anti-racialism, anti-discrimination, and the promotion of "mutual understanding" and diversity (see Lentin 2004). Second, the critical purchase of using notions that were born in the anti-racist struggle or have long circulated in diverse academic, intellectual, and activist spheres, but have always been contested, controversial, or ill-defined, such as racialization, intersectionality or White privilege. Third, the development of a sociology of anti-racism (Ibid.) within counter-hegemonic, radical left politics that enables analytics of *white supremacy* understood as "the context within which whiteness can remain a neutralised and privileged racial positioning" (Johnson 2018: 18).

I will briefly present a series of recent polemics in the French and Spanish contexts that allow me to illustrate those three issues and introduce the chapter's outline. In November 2017, the French Minister of Education, Jean Michel Blanquer, was one of the most prominent voices to critique a trade union's initiative to organize decolonial workshops for racialized people in French universities. Via his Twitter account, Minister Blanquer qualified this initiative as "unconstitutional", and the next day he addressed the French Parliament as follows:

> [These workshops] refer to *no racial-mixing* [*non-mixité*], they refer to *whiteness*, they refer to *racialized*, that is, the most horrendous words of the political vocabulary are used in the name, supposedly, of anti-racism, whereas they obviously convey racism. As this union decided to speak also about *state racism*, I have decided to file a complaint for defamation against *Sud Education 93* under article 29 of the law July 29, 1980 (In Ranc 2017).[2]

In March 2018, Mame Mbaye, 35, a Senegalese citizen that was living in Spain for more than a decade, died of a heart attack after police persecution in Lavapiés—a central neighbourhood in Madrid where many racialized immigrants live and work. Mbaye was a street vendor (known as *manteros*), a common means to earn a living for many Black Africans that, even after many years in the country, do not have a work/residence permit. Hours after Mbaye's death, street protests and rebellion took place in Lavapiés, resulting in six people being arrested by the police. The day after, in the morning, there was a concentration, mostly of Senegalese citizens, next to the street where Mbaye died. Protestors confronted the police, but two of the tensest moments that morning were fuelled by the presence of the president and several members of a White-led Human Rights NGO, *Movement against Intolerance*, and the Ambassador of Senegal. When Esteban Ibarra, the president of this NGO, was speaking to the press, protesters shouted at him that he was being opportunistic; the Ambassador left quickly, escorted by the police, while protesters shouted: "He does not defend us, he is guilty", "We do not

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

want politicians here" (see La Sexta 2018; Sekor 2018). The union of street vendors—*Sindicato de Manteros*—organized a demonstration that same day in the afternoon with the political slogan "Against Murderous Institutional Racism" that denounced the continuous police harassment and the effects of immigration laws on illegalized street vendors, with the complicity of the city council. In the words of Malick Gueye, president of the union: "The death of Mbaye is not an isolated incident. We have been denouncing the police aggressions, harassment and persecutions for three years and the city council hasn't done anything. […] We have filed a complaint against those aggressions to the Ombudsman, and nothing has been done" (La Sexta 2018). During the course of these events, two police unions filed a complaint against several individuals, Gueye and Rommy Arce[3] among them, for incitement to hatred, insults, and defamation. Arce's tweets and Gueye's declarations to a newspaper had denounced institutional racism in Spain's migration laws, the criminalization of racialized poor immigrants, and police brutality and harassment (Barroso 2018). In February 2019, the judge ratified the criminal proceedings for insult and prejudice to the police's honour[4]; she argued that the defendants implied that the police were responsible for Mbaye's death even though they knew he died from natural causes[5] (Barroso 2019; Azcárate 2019).

These polemics and legal actions involve a set of multilayered elements: the influence of political imaginaries of *racelessness* in Europe, the criminalization of the use of specific political vocabularies, and the politics of application of the right to freedom of speech and organization. I contend that a crucial issue is White fear, understood here as the backlash to both the crisis of White-led anti-discrimination discourses, practices and organizations, and the increasing power of racialized organizations and activists that do not merely respond to racism, but do it under their own terms. *Talking back*, as bell hooks (1989: 6) stated from the experience of Black American women, was not so much "to emerge from silence into speech but to change the nature and direction of our speech, to make a speech that compels listeners, one that is heard".

In the context of this backlash to anti-racist *talking back* in European contexts, this chapter offers an exploratory cartography of White fear and anxiety expressed through "declarations of whiteness" (Ahmed 2004).

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[3] The first elected councillor of immigrant origin in Madrid city council, and a militant of the Anticapitalist movement.

[4] This is not an isolated case. In February 2018, the Senegalese Immigrants Association of Aragon (AISA)—a region in the North-east of Spain—sent a document to the councillor responsible for local police services in the city of Zaragoza, that compiled a series of denunciations and testimonies of police harassment, misconduct and racial profiling practice against Black street vendors of immigrant origin. In August, the Union of workers of the city council filed a complaint against the Senegalese association for defamation and incitement to hatred against the police forces. In March 2019, the judge proceeded to order an oral trial against the former president of the Senegalese association, Idrissa Gueye.

[5] This was ratified by the Supreme Court of Justice of Madrid in April 2019.

My foci are not declarations made by representatives of hegemonic, well-institutionalized political spheres, but by intellectuals and activists in the radical left and subaltern politics in the Spanish context. My aim, as a White academic doing research on anti-racism in a self-defined progressive academic milieu in Portugal, is not to make whiteness visible, but rather to analyse "how whiteness gets reproduced through being declared" (Ibid., para 11) in academic and activist texts. I consider how the inclusion of anti-racism in radical left politics and critical academic initiatives is shaping radical and progressive politics, its analysis and political proposals, and the extent to which its acknowledgement of White privilege fails to decentre and challenge White interests and experiences of oppression. I will focus on two different, albeit interrelated, instances of declaration: on the one hand, when we ask: "what can we, White people, do", "what is our place in the anti-racist struggle"?; on the other, when we self-define ourselves as white *other*, or "different within [Europe]" (Boatcă 2013; see also Santos 2019), or—when we take over Frantz Fanon's analysis of a colonized humanity—as those [whites] in the zone of being-*almost*-non-being.[6] The second section of this chapter will dissect the key conceptual and political understandings of race and racialization that foster those declarations in the debate about "Racism and the Left" (2017) between Roma activist Helios Garcés, and Spanish philosopher Santiago Alba Rico.

The Spanish context is an interesting case to analyse declarations of whiteness in the progressive and radical left. Racism has been generally silenced and unacknowledged as a key system of oppression for understanding the formation of the Spanish State, or it has been restricted to the presence of far-right and *skinhead* groups. There has been little public discussion about Spanish colonial-imperial history—and the participation and complicity of nations and peoples ruled by the Spanish State/Kingdom—for understanding contemporary racism as if the construction of the Spanish nation-State were a marginal process in the formation of modernity. In the third section, I map declarations of whiteness that situate peripheral and subaltern working classes/cultures/peoples in the formation of the Spanish nation-state alongside Black, Roma, and Muslim experiences and histories. I explore how this amalgamation evacuates race from the formation of political ontologies and ends up *re-centring White agency* (see Ahmed 2004, para 56). Finally, I conclude with a proposal for a relational analytics of anti-racism.

Europe's Psychoanalytic Couch: The Debate Between Helios Fernández Garcés and Santiago Alba Rico

Helios Fernández Garcés is a Roma poet, anti-racist writer, and activist that has contributed regularly to several newspapers and published on anti-Roma racism and decolonial theory. He is a member of the Roma decolonial and

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[6] I owe this formulation to my endless dialogues with Cayetano Fernández on these issues.

anti-racist organization *Kale Amenge*. Santiago Alba Rico is a philosopher and essayist that has written extensively on Marxism, capitalist culture, democracy, left politics, feminism, and Islamism. In 2015, he ran for the Senate chamber with far-left party *Podemos*. After both met in Barcelona some years ago, Alba Rico came up with the idea of a debate on racism and the left, and Garcés presented it to the independent news website *El Salto Diario*.[7] To my knowledge, "Racism and the left" is one of a kind because there is rarely a direct, precise discussion and analysis of (anti-)racism between racialized and White people.[8] This does not mean, of course, that issues such as the relationship between race and class, Marxism and race, or the alliances between anti-racist movements and left politics have not been widely approached in academic literature and political commentary. The debate between Garcés and Alba Rico is conceptually rich, and it helps to dissect divergent understandings of specific notions and histories, and their impact on political agendas. Finally, beyond the specific personal and political trajectories of both writers, the debate sheds some light on the climate of discussion about anti-racism that gained significant momentum in the wake of anti-austerity politics in Europe since 2010, and the promise of a "new left politics" in contexts such as Spain. I have considered three issues around which the main arguments and divergences in the debate unfold, starting from the conceptualization of racism and its relation to left politics. These issues revolve around a key question: how are the project of modernity and European civilization conceptualized and experienced? Divergent responses foreground a confrontation about the political configuration of whiteness and its complicity with racism.

What Are Race and Racism?

Garcés (2017a) admits a political mistake that many racialized individuals have made when they have been militants in the radical left: they have denounced its blindness to racism and demanded that the left speak about racism. Garcés explains that this demand was based on a wrong diagnosis: the question was not about an innocent lack of attention, but rather about *political interest*. This could change when White people start to suffer the consequences of the logics of racism. However, Garcés argues, the Spanish left has generally *reacted* to the debate about racism—and the contemporary reproduction of the Spanish State's colonial history and culture—, *in denial*. Despite the inclusion of (anti-)racism as a political issue and goal, and the work of Black, Roma, and Muslim militants inside their organizations and parties, the left in Spain continues to misread its position in the racial hierarchies—its identity and political projects are White—and deny the reality of race and racism

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[7] Personal communication.

[8] I engage with a Fanonian understanding of racialization as a process of dehumanisation inflicted by the white man/woman who overrepresent the universal, supracultural being of being Human itself (see Fanon 2007: 101; Wynter 2003: 310).

through claims of anti-essentialism and anti-identitarianism —"races do not exist", "national or foreign, it's the same working class". In this context, Garcés defines race as "a social category not a biological reality that structures power relations in the modern world". Accordingly, anti-racism needs to be a political endeavour focused on the decolonization of Western civilization.

Alba Rico's response establishes his approach to race, whiteness, and anti-racism. I contend that his arguments reveal the Eurocentric approach to racism that underlies racialist thinking and trans-historic embodied experiences of inequality. He favours a generic reading of race that he defines as "the symbolic matrix of unequal power relations because, no matter which one you refer to, all dominant power locks the dominated in their own bodies". Accordingly, race would be present in any relation of oppression (i.e. patriarchy, classism, homophobia, slavery)—that is, "'a 'natural' racialisation of the oppressed, the subaltern" (Alba 2017a). He builds upon Balibar's analysis of the emergence of a "neo-racism"—"racism without race"—and describes the current situation as "a world 'without racist thinking' that is, in reality, a fully racist world" and an anti-racist position would require that we talk about race, we name it. He illustrates this point with sentences that would imitate the "we" of the racialized talking back to White people: "let's call them 'whites' with the same contempt that their silence shows when they do not call us 'blacks'". However, Alba Rico considers that decolonial and (certain) anti-racist thinking have become what they critique: a binary and reductive thinking. The opposition between White and non-white, Alba Rico argues, "locks all whites in an 'epistemological cage'" that does not allow them to see the differences between White men such as, for instance, Bartolomé de las Casas and Ginés de Sepúlveda. In sum, the rescuing of the concept of race has *ontologized* the struggle and the possibilities of political emancipation: White people and civilizational achievements are discarded, whereas "non-White people" would be, by definition, in possession of reason. In opposition to this binarism, he proposes a "'judicious' anti-racism'" that does not discard everything and is able to see in European colonialism not Western reason, but *unreasoning*.

What Has Western Modernity Got to Do with Racism?

Alana Lentin (2015: 1403) has rightly pointed out that "race (…) persists precisely because so much has been invested in dismissing it as unreasonable" and, following Jared Sexton, she underlines how racism is largely reproduced "in the workings of the supposedly 'anti-racist racist states' that [we] inhabit". I pick up on this argument to expose the unfolding of the debate between Garcés (2017b, 2017c) and Alba Rico (2017b, 2017c) that makes more explicit the central divergence in the understanding of race and racism. Garcés locates its historical contextualization in the process of constructing *Europe/the West* as a geopolitical and cultural entity—*the producer* of history, subjectivity, and morality—while Alba Rico considers racism as a mechanism present in *all* unequal *embodied* power relations that impose hierarchies legitimized by

corporeal differences. Alba Rico (2017b) contends that "racism is not ontologically European, but a 'human' mechanism of corporealisation of the material unequal power relations". Racialization is, therefore, conceived as the oppression of *bodies*: a Black body, a female body, or a homosexual body. Alba Rico insists on the unreasonableness of racism and racialization within the Western Enlightenment's promises of self-determination and freedom: "the European nightmare has to do with the dissonance between the values it proclaims out loud and the crimes it commits. Europe is also a nightmare for the Europeans (…)" (Alba 2017c).

Garcés (2017c) rejects a transhistorical and abstract reading of racialization: "racialisation is not an abstract process, although it contains a symbolic aspect. On the contrary, we refer to a technology of genocide, epistemicide and destruction". This definition means that the so-called European Enlightenment was not in contradiction with the State crimes committed under the umbrella of modernization projects and biopolitical administration. Europe has not betrayed its values but has been consistent with them. Garcés illustrates this with the case of the Marquis of Ensenada, a key figure in the modernization of State administration and the Spanish Enlightenment—promoter of the institutionalization of the sciences in the eighteen century (see Pimentel and Astigarraga 2015)—who planned, the extermination of the Romani population jointly with other members of the administration, the Church and the Military. The decree was signed by the King to be executed in 1749; the main project's aim failed, but this was just a crude example in a panoply of anti-Roma laws since the end of the fifteenth century (see: Gómez 1993; Martínez Dhier 2007: 322–341).

Garcés (2017c) confronts the routine accusations of identitarian essentialism held against political anti-racism and exposes the pitfalls of "extrapolating the term 'racialisation' (…) to try to explain the genealogy of other processes of oppression". He contends that this approach does not elucidate the relations of domination pertaining to racism and its meaning ends up confined to two frameworks: (i) the more liberal understanding of different oppressions that would be individually lived within a presumed equal geopolitical regime; (ii) the Socialist version that privileges class as the *structural* master oppression and considers race and gender-sex as categories derivative of material power relations. Garcés claims that he "is not interested in describing ontological or natural realities, but rather in unravelling political identities and analyzing power relations" set in a specific geopolitical context—i.e. the modern nation-state and coloniality (see Quijano 2000; Lugones 2008). I agree with Garcés that a historically contextualized analysis of racism needs to fully understand how race became an organizing principle of power relations that made specific realities exist as recognizable entities interlocked with others. More specifically, since the end of the fifteenth century race as a category and racism as a regime of power are historically meaningful in the formation of a specific colonial relation between "Europe" and "non-Europe" (Quijano 2000; Hesse 2007). In this context, I follow Barnor Hesse

(2007) in his recuperation of "ontology" understood as a "historical ontology" and, in particular, what he calls the "onto-colonial": "the modernity of social realities historically brought into *racialized being* by *colonial regimes* of demarcations, designations and deployments, that is to say as the effects of *onto-colonial taxonomies*" (Hesse 2007: 659, my emphasis). This raises key questions about the understanding of the concept of racialization in the contemporary context of an anxious whiteness about political anti-racism and its own *perceived* racialization. I engage with some of them in the remainder of this section.

What About Whiteness? Key Theoretical Questions About Racialization and Anti-Racism

Alba Rico's contributions to the debate exposed a dialectical logic in dominant understandings of racialization and its consequences for the political meanings of anti-racism. The meaning of racialization is narrowed down to corporeal difference and widened to a transhistorical human experience/relation. This dialectic depoliticizes anti-racism and evades confronting whiteness as the effect of a political relation and regime, racism. However, this is expressed through anxious "declarations of whiteness": "I am a man, I am White, I am bourgeois. What do I do with this? (…) Can I be something else than a 'good' White man?" (Alba 2017a). In her paper on modes of declaration of whiteness, Sara Ahmed (2004, para 56) commented that a White response to the text "asked the question, 'but what are white people to do'?". Ahmed rightly points out that this kind of questioning "does re-center on white agency, as a hope premised on lack rather than presence. It is a question asked persistently in response to hearing about racism and colonialism". White urgency to do something about racism, Ahmed argues, exposes a drive to *moving on* from *hearing* about the racist present: "The desire to act in a non-racist or anti-racist way when one hears about racism, in my view, can function as a defense against hearing how that racism implicates which subjects, in the sense that it shapes the spaces inhabited by white subjects in the unfinished present" (Ibid., para 57).

The *premise of absence* and the *drive to move on* are, in fact, crucial to understand declarations of whiteness and the dispute over the understanding of racialization. I am unconvinced that racialization is about making whiteness visible, because "whiteness is only invisible to those who inhabit it. To those who don't, the power of whiteness is maintained by being seen" (Ahmed 2004, para 14). The urge to be anti-racist or non-racist, to do something about racism, is not about making White dominance intelligible but about the refusal to abdicate being at the centre of the conversation (Garcés 2017d)— yes, sometimes we just have to *listen*. In this sense, if the notion of racialization stands "somewhere between race and racism" (Rattansi 2005: 271), then, it is a helpful concept in order to describe, dissect, and interpret how racism,

as a specific regime of oppression, effects the regulation between European-ness and non-Europeanness: "its sustained configuration in discrete markings of various assemblages of social entities (e.g. polities, corporealities, histories, knowledges, communities)" (Hesse 2007: 661). What about whiteness here?

I propose a reading of the relation between whiteness, racialization and anti-racism that instead of asking about the possibilities of engagement in action, insists on foregrounding the specific political relation that sustains White power. This means that the call for decolonization inside White spaces and, in particular, the radical left, is not about claiming how whites *are also* racialized but about unravelling our complicity with State politics, even if we oppose them or are in overt conflict with the State. If this is not the case, we are draining anti-racism of its possibility for actual political transformation and obfuscating the debate: racism is about peoples whose humanity has been denied and questioned by the White woman/man; peoples governed under the rule of a permanent possibility or realization of extermination; peoples that exist despite the modern State. It is about anti-Blackness, anti-gypsyism, Islam-ophobia, anti-Indigeneity. The conceptualization of racism cannot collapse into all experiences of being the periphery of Europe, a poor White woman or an oppressed nation without a State. However, this does not mean that the boundaries of racism, its logics, and power arrangements are sealed, and do not shape the formation and expression of political conflicts led by White people. The challenge is to find adequate analytics for understanding whiteness as a political and social relation that is, whiteness as the omitted or largely *unquestioned* onto-colonial being that sustains modern State sovereignty through the governance of non-Europeanness. In the next section I will focus on the politics of (un)questioning whiteness in debates raised within counter-hegemonic left spaces that have engaged in the critique of the Spanish State's coloniality, and in the response to knowledge produced from political anti-racism.

Draining Anti-Racism in (Post)austerity Times: Counter-Hegemonic Left Politics of Decolonization, Solidarity, and Emancipation

The 2008 global financial crisis exposed the devastating consequences of the contemporary "manner through which populations are organised in the service of capital. Once in service, accumulation occurs in much the same way regardless of the source of value. The question is whether and how differentiated populations fall into such service" (Bhattacharyya 2018: 23–24). I agree with Bhattacharyya's (Ibid.: 28) contention that this differentiation is better described as *racial* and engage with her investment "in describing and understanding the significance of dividing working-class populations for capitalism to 'work'". The financial crisis also made more explicit and intelligible the unequal geopolitical power relations through which capital profit operates, accelerating calls for recovering lost or oppressed sovereignty and national

self-determination in different contexts and, in particular, in Europe. This call has shaped political projects and claims in the left–right political spectrum; some projects are grounded in and update historically rooted White supremacy, while others incorporate anti-racism and solidarity with racialized peoples as part of their demands for self-determination. I am interested in the latter and what they leave unquestioned regarding racism, sovereignty, and finance capitalism.

In this section, I examine two interrelated instances of radical left politics in the Spanish context that propose counter-hegemonic, anti-capitalist, feminist, and anti-fascist political projects in response to the imposition of global/EU austerity policies and Spanish nationalism. I have selected written and oral contributions, some of them published in the media, that develop two interrelated political debates in the radical left: projects of national sovereignty and ethnic identity that oppose Spanish nationalism and denounce its historically rooted ethnic oppression, colonialism and classism, and proposals of political articulation between racialized and White subaltern classes as new spaces of solidarity.

The analysis of specific political parties, grassroots movements, or organizations falls beyond the scope of this chapter. I focus on unravelling declarations of whiteness that collapse the understanding of racism into radical left politics of decolonization, emancipation and solidarity. I argue that these declarations are ambivalent between a self-conscious, critical whiteness that is compelled to intervene, claim solidarity and intersectionality, and a subaltern whiteness that situates itself alongside Black, Roma, and Muslim experiences and histories. The most immediate consequence is the draining of political anti-racism, its *neutralization*. This is not tied to questioning the legitimacy of specific political projects and demands, or the good intentions of solidarity efforts, it rather questions the material conditions—economic and cultural—of a sound and consequential debate on racism and anti-racism (Garcés 2017d).

Ethno-National Identities and State Projects in Conflict: Whose Coloniality/Whiteness?

The political strength of the Catalonian movement and demand for national self-determination—exemplified in the political crisis created during and after the repression of the independence referendum of October 1st 2017—exposed the historically contested nature of Spanish nationalism and its contemporary *post fascist* formation that resulted from the "constitutional settlement of 1978" and the unchallenged legacies of the Francoist dictatorship (Bernat and Whyte 2019: 26–27). Bernat and Whyte contextualize this political crisis within the Spanish government's strategy in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis and the European bank bailout; they argue that the State's alignment to save the financial elites prioritized "the repayment of the public debt above any social spending" (Ibid.: 40). This policy burdened the peripheries and regions, favoured the Madrid-based financial class, and this resulted in the break in the

allegiance of the Catalan bourgeoisie to the Spanish State and the consequent strengthening of the Catalan demands

> This is why the independence movement is now based upon a complex inter-class alliance. We have seen a close collaboration between two strands of the movement which has connected sections of the Catalan population represented by radical and socialist groups and even conservative groups. The centre-right parties representing the Catalonian property-owning class appear to be changing character in ways that suggest their commitment to independence will be a lasting one. (Ibid: 42)

It is against this backdrop of inter-class alliance that a subaltern anti-capitalist and feminist Catalan project of self-determination is developed. The assumption is that "challenging the *form* of the nation-state in Spain means challenging the basis on which social relations are organised: challenging social relations of citizenship, class, gender, race and property" (Ibid.: 60, italics in the original). The case for the possibilities of anti-racism is illustrated with the emergence of "movements of migrant people, and groups expressing solidarity with migrant people (…) within the independence movement" and they ask if a future 'anti-racist' republic should make reparations to redress the Catalan historical responsibility for its participation in colonialism and if this should require open borders. My answer is *yes*, but the analysis needs to go beyond a declaration of anti-racism in order to *question* the actual political conditions where these declarations are made (see Ahmed 2004, para 50). I advance two interrelated questions and the analytical riddles they pose. One, how has the formation of Catalan identity been shaped and informed by White privileged racial positioning? Two, what is the role of the inter-class alliance for national self-determination in a radical project of deracialization of class relations within exacerbated racial capitalism and the consequent "differential privileges to workers and almost workers and non-workers" (Bhattacharyya 2018: x)?

These questions require an analysis that does not confine coloniality to certain Western(ized) national identities and State governmentalities, in this case, Spanish nationalism. The complicity, benefit, and interest of Catalan politics and peoples cannot be reduced to the role of Catalan corporations. If "the privileges of whiteness are always located at the centre of capitalism" (Sánchez Dipp and El Atiki 2019: 257) and a "truly anti-racist sovereignty" needs to be committed to securing "the same social and political rights" for everybody (Ibid.: 258), there is a demand for a historical analysis of the meaning of whiteness in Catalan and Spanish working classes, and its contemporary contours. I argue that to avoid or gloss over these questions, recentres whiteness as the privileged locus of political subjectivity that declares solidarity and urges us to do something about it. The radical left milieus have been and are White-led spaces that—despite the increasing political presence of racialized militants and their counter-narratives and lived experiences—ground their political struggles

on specific historical memories and experiences of anti-fascism[9] and anti-capitalism that tend to marginalize the analysis of institutionalized racism. In the Catalan context, the radical left has centred its struggles on the fight against the Spanish right and far-right, and the complicity of the Spanish left in oppressing national self-determination.

These analytical and political riddles are also present in other subaltern projects of national self-determination that do not have so much political purchase, but pose crucial questions for an analysis of racialization, whiteness, and left politics. Critical academics and radical left militant organizations are proposing a project for "Decolonizing Andalusia" conceived as a twofold process: to break the grip of Eurocentric colonial oppressions to which Andalusia, as a peripheral region in the Spanish State, is subjected, and to break the grip of its privileges as territories that belong to White/colonial Europe (García 2018). I argue that their understanding of this condition leads to subsuming the second reality under the first and, consequently, the reality of racism is neutralized and collapses into the denunciation of exploitation, Andalusophobia, and the proposal for Andalusian feminism (Gallego 2016; Filigrana 2018). I will unpack this analytics through an examination of specific interventions in two academic and political debates organized at the University of Granada in 2016 and 2017.

The workshop "Horizons of Decolonization" (2017)[10] hosted a debate on the topic "Thinking decoloniality from Andalusia" with the participation of young scholars and activists. Javier García, a trained historian, explained in his opening remarks that the challenge is towards an analysis of Andalusia that goes beyond the colonial legacy of Spanish institutions and nationalism "that has necessarily involved domination of 'the Other', that 'Other' of Al-Andalus, but also the Roma, the Jew […], women, the immigrant" (García 2017). The challenge would entail another understanding of the history of Andalusia that does not start in 1492 and goes beyond the memory of Al-Andalus: "Andalusia's history spans over 2000 years (…), [it results from] contact with Phoenicians, Visigoths, Muslims, Christians, the contact with Jews, Africa, with Asia through the Mediterranean" (ibid.). I argue that the challenge to a Eurocentric history that is built upon Islamophobic narratives of Christian liberation and the "discovery" of the so-called "New World" is inadequately addressed as the recovery of a historical trajectory prior to modernity. Andalusia is retrospectively projected as a sort of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural utopia that has connected peoples and geo-political regions.

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[9] For an interesting analysis of the interconnections of anti-racism and anti-fascism in social movements and organization in different European context in the late 1990s, their failure in addressing contemporary experiences of institutionalised racism, and the politics of representation in white spaces, see Lentin (2004: 218–225; 237–273).

[10] The programme is available at: https://standugr.com/2017/04/24/horizontes-des colonizadores-hacia-un-dialogo-emancipatorio-andaluz-18-05-17/, accessed 2 September 2019.

My contention is that this approach leaves coloniality unquestioned beyond the effect of Spanish nationalism and the "fact" that Andalusian territories belong to Europe. Racism becomes an exteriority to the formation of Andalusia and its contemporary realities. The institutionalization of racism remains unexplained and subsumed under a general "Andalusophobia" that produces the inferiorization of Andalusianness: "Andalusophobia is an example of how the myth of modernity works. Andalusia has been internally and externally conceived as a periphery, despite being geographically located in Europe. A non-European culture, non-developed, non-modern" (Filigrana 2018). In this piece, Roma lawyer and feminist activist Pastora Filigrana lumps together the oppression and degradation of cultures within the tradition–modernity divide, and modernity as a racialized discourse and its governmental reason. Accordingly, the representation of both Muslim women and rural simpleton women [cateta] as the opposite to modernity would be examples of Andalusophobia that functions as a catchall notion: cultural inferiorization, economic exploitation, and racialization become conflated. This can be seen in the analysis of the economic situation of women in Andalusia in comparison to women in other regions of the Spanish State, the impact of austerity, and the future of an Andalusian, decolonial feminism.

For instance, in her intervention in the workshop "Horizons of Decolonization", Filigrana made reference to a report that analysed the impact of the "austericide period" on women and gender equality in Andalusia (see Gálvez and Rodríguez 2016).

> [In the report] they are aware that we cannot speak of 'women in Andalusia' as a unitary category but in relation to these transversal axis of territory, gender, or cultural identity. It is not the same a woman in the rural area in Andalusia than a woman that lives in Seville, Málaga or the touristic coast *[Costa del Sol]*. It is not the same a Roma woman or a White [*paya*] woman. (Filigrana 2017)

However, the report does not analyse the impact of *austericide* on racialized women; it does not examine racism and racial discrimination, neither does it question the absence of public data on ethno-racial inequalities in Spain. It merely acknowledges that studies of austerity "have often neglected other key dimensions that structure inequality and intersect with income rates such as gender and ethnicity" (Gálvez and Rodríguez 2016: 1). In this context, Filigrana´s acknowledgement of the "feminization of poverty" as a severe reality in Andalusia[11] is read from the perspective of "cultural subalternity", that is, Andalusophobia, which would encompass "triple exploitation" (poor, Andalusian, woman) (Filigrana 2017). This approach

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[11] According to official data, the unemployment rate in Spain, in 2018, was 14,45%; in Andalusia, 21,3%; 17,9% for men and 25,4% for women. The unemployment rate for young men between 20 and 24 years-old was 43,2% and 42,0% for women. Data available at: https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paro-epa/espana-comunidades-autonomas, accessed 6 September 2019.

equates Andalusophobia with racism and the notions of "triple exploitation" or intersectionality—developed by and from the experience of Black American women—become malleable and easily adapted to describe conditions of oppression and exploitation, but devoid of a sound analysis of racism.

This problematic approach is also present in initiatives for a counter-hegemonic feminism inside and outside academia. In this context, White-led feminist initiatives have shared spaces of debate with decolonial approaches led by racialized women. For instance, the event "Diverse reflections on development: Gender, communication and decoloniality", organized at the University of Granada in 2016,[12] hosted the presentations of Ochy Curiel, a well-known Afro-Dominican decolonial feminist, and Mar Gallego, a White Andalusian journalist and feminist. Gallego has developed a project for producing and disseminating knowledge about Andalusian subaltern women that would enable counter-hegemonic Andalusian feminism. The initiative's manifesto states that they aim to recover an "intersectional approach" that can, "embolden our origins and our culture. The Andalusian culture: the south that has done the cleaning for the north and survives coping with historical discrimination in silence".[13] Gallego explained, in 2016, that the conflict with other feminist women made her realize that there were some questions to be posed: "are North–South dynamics at work in the Spanish State? Is feminism making them evident? Is feminism putting intersectionality into practice in more familiar places as it demands in other geographies?" (Gallego 2016). However, an explicit engagement with racism is absent, and she only gives a hint about how this reality would be part of her understanding of intersectionality when she mentions "diversity": "I speak about Andalusia as a diverse territory. I know there are identities in Andalusia that are more f**** than ours, but my aim is to recover this and name what is happening in the South from a feminist perspective" (Ibid.). More specifically, she refers to "Afro-Andalusian culture" or to "the existing sorority among women that come from the legacy of Al-Andalus" (Ibid.).

The acknowledgement of "diversity" does not engage with a specific analysis of the historically rooted and institutionalized order of Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, and antigypsyism. The focus on Andalusianness dilutes their explanatory power for understanding racial capitalism,[14] the structural position of women and the historical, lived experiences of racialized women collapse into the centrality of an Andalusian identity and heritage. Intersectionality is dispossessed of the specific histories of anti-Blackness and becomes a vehicle for the reification of diversity through its declaration. In the next section, I

[12] Helios Garcés also participated in this event. The programme is available at: http://asad.es/tag/decolonialidad, accessed 6 September 2019.

[13] http://www.feminismoandaluz.com/manifiesto/, accessed 6 September 2019.

[14] See (Robinson 2000: 9–28; Bhattacharyya 2018: 1–38; Bennet 2018: 11–12).

unpack how the emergence of counter-narratives brought by racialized militant voices in political anti-racism have unsettled the debate on the working class, whiteness and racism.

THE POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY WITHIN RACIAL CAPITALISM OR THE UNWANTED REVELATIONS OF RACIALIZED DIFFERENTIATION

Cayetano Fernández, Roma militant and academic researcher, pointed out in the debate "Horizons of Decolonisation" that we need to challenge White epistemologies and their specific formulation in regions like Andalusia. He claimed that a decolonial project "needs to get rid of culturalist discourses that conceal a system of ethnic domination that depoliticises the [positionality of] Roma and racialised peoples in Andalusia" (Fernández 2017). He insisted on the need to reflect on how racism is reproduced in grassroots movements, in the left, that is, racism cannot be merely framed in terms of the ideologies and institutional arrangements of aristocratic, wealthy classes or the hegemonic political parties—such as the Socialist Party that has governed in the region for decades. Fernández argued that any project of decolonizing Andalusia has to analyse how racism and anti-gypsyism are also part of the working classes and how they relate to the institutions that sustain racist structures. He illustrates this point with a call for reflecting on the history of racist violence and pogroms against Roma families in racialized ghettos in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.[15]

Racist violence and ghettoization have structured the systems of intensive agriculture and greenhouses built upon seasonal, temporary, and circular migration that have been "successfully" implemented in many European Southern regions, such as Andalusia. The racist and Islamophobic pogrom in El Ejido (Almeria) in 2000 brought this reality into the spotlight (see Caro 2002). More recently, the media has paid attention to the conditions of exploitation, displacement, and sexual violence suffered by migrant women employed in the seasonal strawberry harvest in the province of Huelva—mostly Muslim Moroccan and Romanian women (La Sexta 2019).[16] In urban areas, the everyday police harassment and brutality against Black African street vendors and, all over the state, the high incarceration rates of racialized foreign citizens, the criminalization of illegalized migrants, and the creation of the Centres for the Internment of Foreigners (CIEs) in 1985 under the

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[15] The cases of Loja (Granada); Torredonjimeno, Martos and Mancha Real (Jaén); El Saucejo (Sevilla). For an analysis of some of these events, see Río (2003).

[16] Fruit and vegetable industries that recruit so-called migrant "intensive-labour" function in many regions in the Spanish state such as the Catalan provinces of Barcelona, Tarragona, and Girona; in the Eastern coast province of Alicante; in Southern provinces such as Murcia, Huelva, Almeria and in the central plateau of Albacete. According to official data, in 2015, 1,096,498 contracts for foreign nationals in agriculture were registered in these regions (Palumbo and Sciurba 2018: 26).

First Immigration Law,[17] made evident the structures and functioning of institutional racism and racial capitalism.

Against this backdrop of violence and exploitation, racialized militants in political anti-racist organizations have unsettled the premise of working-class unity and alliance with the political slogan: "Native or Foreigner, it is *not* the same working class". This was heard in the second national anti-racist demonstration organized in November 2018 (see El Salto 2018; Jesús 2018). Decolonial researchers and anti-racist militants such as Natalí Jesús, Salma Amzian, and Fatiha El Mouali have written insightful pieces that foreground the silences and denials within White working-class struggles, White feminism, and White-led NGOs and organizations (Jesús and Amzian 2018; Amzian and Fatiha 2018; Jesús 2018). I highlight two key issues raised in their analysis:

I. The slogan "Native and foreigner, *not* the same working class" was unwelcomed both in the Spanish left that has been historically blind to racism, and in the more radical sectors that have been more sensitive to this question:

> They [the radical left] have pointed out that this slogan is counterproductive (…). We have noticed their political dishonesty. We would have preferred that they show more dignity accepting that they are not really concerned with political antiracism, instead of reducing it to an attitude that has to be overcome in order to unite all working class subjects, or to confine it to its use as a weapon against the rise of European neo-fascism (…) (Jesús 2018)

Jesús argued that the historical relation between whiteness and European *native* working classes, and how the state protects their privileges giving them access to benefits, continue to be denied and seen as a conspiracy of the far-right.

II. The media coverage and denunciations of the conditions of the Moroccan workers in Huelva were made after years of silence and neglect, and the narrative is generally blind to the key question: who are these women? Amzian and El Mouali contend that in order to adequately answer this question, we need to address Spanish colonial history, its legacies, and the impact of austerity plans already implemented in African countries such as Morocco in the 1980s. In this context, "racism, sexism, the practice of racial capitalism and the Imperial State are interlocking hierarchies". However, most feminist narratives and strategies are not able to understand their own whiteness and to overcome their limits concerning their well-intentioned denunciations

[17] In 2018, foreign citizens represented 28,5% of prison population in the Spanish State, Moroccan citizens represented 5,2% (Prison Insider 2019). Also in 2018, 7,855 illegalized immigrants were detained in the CIEs, Moroccan citizens represented the 36% of the detainees (Jesuit Service for Migrants 2018).

and analyses" (Amzian and Fatiha 2018). White feminisms and their call for "diversity" continue to speak for racialized and migrant women. In this context, Jesús and Amzian (2018) contended that the participation of racialized women in protests such as the feminist strike on International Women's Day, continue to "universalize white feminist strategies reinvented and re-legitimised in our bodies and practices, this time with our approval".

The denial of racialized differentiation and privileges among the working classes and the constant recentring of whiteness in left politics and feminism are paradigmatic examples of the draining of anti-racism in the left. This situation calls for a sound analysis of racial capitalism in the so-called Global North. Bhattacharyya builds upon Kalyan Sanyal's *Rethinking Capitalist Development* to expose how the proletarianization of the "third-world" produces an "outside": there are exploited peoples that remain outside the "workforce", and exposed to expropriation and expulsion. They become capitalism's wasteland, subjected to necropolitics. That is, they are expendable populations, *left to die* (2018: 14–19). The production of wastelands has its traces in the metropolis, which allows few inhabitants of the necropolis to work in the biopolis:

> The unfortunate machinery of border control may serve to create a pool of precarious workers who occupy a particular role in the semi-formal and informal economies but it also confirms the exclusion of the greater mass of the world's poor. (…)
>
> We know that racisms of the metropolis also lead to arbitrarily premature deaths, sometimes as an outcome of state violence, and the systematic exclusions, disadvantages and humiliations of everyday and official racisms erode well-being and limit lives. (Ibid.: 20)

I agree with Bhattacharyya that we cannot equate the systematic exclusions in the metropolis with a complete relegation to death. However, I do not consider it fruitful to read racism in the metropolis as "an expression of defensive anxiety" in the face of precarization and loss of racialized privileges (Ibid.). White anxiety is a symptom of institutionalized racism and the historical investment of the European working classes in whiteness: becoming sovereign subjects that vote and can negotiate and come into conflict with the state and the political establishment. White working classes are political subjects that are seen as part of the workforce but not available for low-paid, racialized jobs, so the unions and other political organizations struggle for demands such as land distribution, welfare benefits, and higher salaries. These political strategies are not available for poor racialized people: Roma people have never been considered as part of the workforce and the political community; Black African and Arab men are cheap labour subjected to extreme State violence and incarceration; Muslim women are seen as submissive and easily exploitable subjects, outside the political history of subaltern women.

Conclusion: Towards a Relational Analytics of Anti-Racism, and a Call for Containment and Decentring

You can't help it, if you're an American, you're a racist. (…) I'm a racist. I know I'm a racist. You know how I know? 'Cuz the other day I caught myself being racist against myself. There's so much shit going on. I got mixed up. Forgot whose team I was on. (Dave Chappelle 1998: 24'35''–24'57'')

An effective antiracist discourse has to interpellate and trouble white people. (Desiré Bela-Lobedde 2019)

Alana Lentin's sociology of anti-racism in Europe (with fieldwork in France, Italy, Ireland, and the UK) proposed an analysis of anti-racist organizations and discourses that focused, on the one hand, on their engagement with "the ambivalence of western Europe's historical position as the locus of colonial power and the universal measure of 'progress'" (Lentin 2004: 13) and, on the other, their *proximity-to-distance* to "the public political culture of the nation-state" that has represented "Europe and the West as the general birthplace of the so-called 'rights of man'" (Ibid.: 14). In this chapter, my focus was not on anti-racist organizations but, rather, on academic and political discourses and projects from the White-led radical left in the context of the Spanish State and their *incorporation of anti-racism*. These political analyses and proposals usually declare their *distance* from the public political culture of the nation-state; they also declare their privileges, and they distance their struggle from the logics of colonial politics and capitalism.

Alliance and solidarity between White and racialized people and organizations, decolonization, whiteness, anti-capitalism, intersectionality, and feminisms are key themes and concepts mobilized and discussed in this process of incorporation. My point of departure was the acknowledgment of apolitical anxiety, what Sarah Ahmed has named as "anxious whiteness". The analysis of the specific debate on *racism and the left* between Helios Garcés and Santiago Alba Rico, the post-austerity politics of ethno-national projects of self-emancipation and decolonization in Catalonia and Andalusia, and the conditions of exploitation within racial capitalism, has made explicit three main modes of expression of anxious whiteness that continue to recentre White narratives and historical experiences:

I. a self-conscious whiteness that "sees" itself and is ready to do something about it (Ahmed 2004: para 49–50; 56), while saving Western modernity and its promises of emancipation. It is usually expressed in questions such as "I'm White, what do I do with this?" or "Is it possible to be antiracist and white?"

II. an omitted whiteness that confronts the nation-state and its Imperial, colonial and capitalist logics. Subaltern projects of national self-emancipation that distance themselves from replicating models of modern sovereignty and capital exploitation but read racism as an *exteriority* to their own political aspirations. An omitted whiteness leaves key issues about whiteness and racism unquestioned beyond the focus on the far right and fascist national ideologies, hegemonic political parties, or capitalist corporations.

III. a whiteness in denial that also confronts the nation-state, and distances itself from the myth of Western modernity and its projects of emancipation but *collapses* racism into experiences/histories of oppression and exploitation that situates subaltern/contested whiteness alongside the situation of Black, Roma, and Muslim people.

These expressions of anxious whiteness reflect historically rooted debates and silences in the left regarding race, nation, class, and representation, but they are specifically shaped by the political and socio-economic context of post-austerity policies in Europe. In particular, they reflect the crisis of State sovereignty, welfare policy arrangements, and their expression in the Spanish State. Nevertheless, they provide interesting insights to think about our analytical approaches to the current configurations of anti-racism. In this sense, I follow Sarah Ahmed's (2004) and Lauren Jackson's (2019) cautionary remarks on the limits of critical whiteness studies and their tendency towards narcissistic confession. Instead of investing in whiteness studies, I consider a relational analytics of anti-racism that enables the unpacking of White supremacy but, as Ahmed proposed, "turning away" from White experiences. This is a call for *decentring* in order to make racism intelligible from the different historical experiences of racialized people. This is not only a question of "recovering voices" or "checking my privilege" stories—rhetorical moves that have led more to appropriation and predatory use of concepts than to a meaningful political transformation—but of adequately addressing the heterogeneous functioning of racism and racial hierarchization. This is a call for *containment* that displaces White narratives and avoids the usual tropes of inclusion, diversity, difference, complexity, multiplicity, and so on. Racism is not an add-on to the multiple oppressions list, neither is anti-racism an add-on struggle.

This demands an engagement with Fanon's (1988 [1956]: 36) famous statement: "Racism is never a super-added element discovered by chance in the course of the investigation of the cultural data of a group. The social constellation, the cultural whole, are deeply modified by the existence of racism". How is the existence of Black, Muslim, and Roma people being modified by the contemporary logics of racism in European contexts? How is White supremacy being reproduced and what are the political relations of an impoverished White middle class and poor subaltern classes, with White power? And of racialized people? How is anti-racism circulating in the left–right political spectrum? Adequate answers presuppose that we refrain from claiming *innocence*

(see Bouteldja 2019) and acknowledge that racism is not the patrimony of the right, neither is anti-racism the patrimony of the left. Many racialized individuals or organizations do not invest in anti-racist struggles, but rather in their *integration*, and are complicit with the reproduction of whiteness. Racial hierarchization works against the political autonomy and agenda of Black, Roma, and Muslim organizations, and the material conditions for a political anti-racism collapse into the interests of white-led counter-hegemonic projects. A relational analytics is grounded on these material conditions, and aims to avoid certain misreadings and obfuscations such as (i) the flattening of processes of capitalist exploitation and political subjugation that favours *gestures to include* "other" oppressed peoples and collective identities but disavows the historical and structural specificity of racism; (ii) the denial of whiteness as a racial positioning and a power structure that reinvigorates its supremacy as the privileged experience of struggle and emancipation; and (iii) the unquestioning of a "natural" alliance between left politics and political anti-racism that animates imaginaries of a "multiracial front" informed by a disinvestment in the sound acknowledgement of structural anti-Blackness and antigypsyism.

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