



social sciences

Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe

Edited by

Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Printed Edition of the Special Issue Published in *Social Sciences*

Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe

Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe

Editors

Zenia Hellgren

Bálint Ábel Bereményi

MDPI • Basel • Beijing • Wuhan • Barcelona • Belgrade • Manchester • Tokyo • Cluj • Tianjin



Editors

Zenia Hellgren
Interdisciplinary Research
Group on Immigration
(GRITIM-UPF),
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Spain

Bálint Ábel Bereményi
Center for Policy Studies,
Central European University
Hungary

Editorial Office

MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

This is a reprint of articles from the Special Issue published online in the open access journal *Social Sciences* (ISSN 2076-0760) (available at: https://www.mdpi.com/journal/socsci/special_issues/racialized_citizenship).

For citation purposes, cite each article independently as indicated on the article page online and as indicated below:

LastName, A.A.; LastName, B.B.; LastName, C.C. Article Title. <i>Journal Name</i> Year , <i>Volume Number</i> , Page Range.
--

ISBN 978-3-0365-3148-9 (Hbk)

ISBN 978-3-0365-3149-6 (PDF)

Cover image courtesy of Zenia Hellgren.

© 2022 by the authors. Articles in this book are Open Access and distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license, which allows users to download, copy and build upon published articles, as long as the author and publisher are properly credited, which ensures maximum dissemination and a wider impact of our publications.

The book as a whole is distributed by MDPI under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND.

Contents

About the Editors	vii
Preface to “Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe”	ix
Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi Introduction to the Special Issue: Far from Colorblind. Reflections on Racialization in Contemporary Europe Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2022 , <i>11</i> , 21, doi:10.3390/socsci11010021	1
Sebastian Carlotti Behind the Curtain of the Border Spectacle: Introducing ‘Illegal’ Movement and Racialized Profiling in the West African Region Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 139, doi:10.3390/socsci10040139	13
Tina Magazzini Antidiscrimination Meets Integration Policies: Exploring New Diversity-Related Challenges in Europe Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 221, doi:10.3390/socsci10060221	33
Carolin Müller Anti-Racism in Europe: An Intersectional Approach to the Discourse on Empowerment through the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025 Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 137, doi:10.3390/socsci10040137	49
Dan Rodríguez-García The Persistence of Racial Constructs in Spain: Bringing Race and Colorblindness into the Debate on Interculturalism Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2022 , <i>11</i> , 13, doi:10.3390/socsci11010013	67
Colleen Boland European Muslim Youth and Gender (in)Equality Discourse: Towards a More Critical Academic Inquiry Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 133, doi:10.3390/socsci10040133	93
Zenia Hellgren and Lorenzo Gabrielli Racialization and Aporophobia: Intersecting Discriminations in the Experiences of Non-Western Migrants and Spanish Roma Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 163, doi:10.3390/socsci10050163	109
Laia Narciso “Race”, Belonging and Emancipation: Trajectories and Views of the Daughters of Western Africa in Spain Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 143, doi:10.3390/socsci10040143	127
Saiba Bayo The Charnegroes: Black Africans and the Ontological Conflict in Catalonia Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 257, doi:10.3390/socsci10070257	143
Olga Magano and Maria Manuela Mendes Structural Racism and Racialization of Roma/Ciganos in Portugal: The Case of Secondary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic Reprinted from: <i>Soc. Sci.</i> 2021 , <i>10</i> , 203, doi:10.3390/socsci10060203	161

Ismael Cortés

Hate Speech, Symbolic Violence, and Racial Discrimination. Antigypsyism: What Responses for the Next Decade?

Reprinted from: *Soc. Sci.* **2021**, *10*, 360, doi:10.3390/socsci10100360 **175**

About the Editors

Zenia Hellgren is a political sociologist and senior migration/diversity scholar at GRITIM-UPF (The Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration), and a lecturer in political and social theory at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. Her research focuses on different dimensions of inclusion/exclusion, participation, and discrimination of migrants and racialized groups, generally from an intersectional perspective. She has been the leader of several international research projects; most recently, the EU-funded AGREP (Action program from effective reporting of antigypsyism and discrimination). She has published extensively in her field of research; for instance, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *International Migration Review* and *Social Politics*. She is guest editor of a Special Issue on Discrimination and Interculturalism for *International Migration* (together with Ricard Zapata-Barrero). For more information about her research and publications, please visit her personal website: <https://www.upf.edu/web/zenia-hellgren>.

Bálint Ábel Bereményi, who has a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology, is currently a Marie S. Curie Research Fellow (MSCA-IF) at Central European University's Democracy Institute (CEU/DI). His main research interests focus on ethnic minorities (Roma/Gypsy), children/youth, and social inequalities, mostly in the domains of education and the labour market. He teaches anthropology in BA and MA programs, supervises Master's theses and doctoral dissertations, and has been a visiting lecturer at several European universities. His articles have been published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *the British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, and *Intercultural Education*, among others. He serves as an editor of the Podcast series "Retazos Antropológicos" of *Anuario de Antropología Iberoamericana (ARIES)*. For more information, please visit the following website: <https://people.ceu.edu/abel.beremenyi>.

Preface to "Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe"

Today, European societies are often described as superdiverse, in order to define the ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism that results from decades of immigration. Simultaneously, Europe appears to be evermore polarized in its approach to migration and diversity. Xenophobic currents in political and public debates gain presence across the continent, while anti-racist actors and critical scholars increasingly focus on racialization as the producer of inequalities and injustice.

The awareness that experiences of racism and discrimination seriously harm the sense of belonging of those affected by it, and also reduce the opportunities to enjoy social mobility and quality of life for many immigrants and minoritized people, is increasing in both academia and the civil society. However, there is also a persistent unwillingness to talk about the racial dimensions of the disadvantage and social exclusion that disproportionately affect immigrants, their descendants and other racialized groups. Race as a concept has been viable in Anglo-Saxon scholarship for a long time, but much less so in the European context, where it was largely replaced by the broader and less specific term "ethnicity" in the aftermath of the Second World War and the painful unravelling of what barbarism Nazi racialization led to. However, as Alana Lentin has argued, the *European silence about race* has allowed European states to declare themselves officially non-racist, while, at the same time, continuing to imply an inherent European superiority in which Europeanness presupposes whiteness.

This volume enquires about how racialization shapes European societies and the lives of people affected by it in myriad ways. It provides a powerful collection of new publications by scholars who, through their empirical research, contribute to placing race and racialization studies at the forefront of European academia.

Zenia Hellgren, Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Editors



Editorial

Introduction to the Special Issue: Far from Colorblind. Reflections on Racialization in Contemporary Europe

Zenia Hellgren ^{1,*} and Bálint Ábel Bereményi ^{2,*}

¹ Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration (GRITIM-UPF), Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 08002 Barcelona, Spain

² Center for Policy Studies, Central European University, Nador u. 9, 1051 Budapest, Hungary

* Correspondence: zenia.hellgren@upf.edu (Z.H.); beremenyia@ceu.edu (B.Á.B.)

Abstract: European history is to a significant extent also a history about racialization and racism. Since the colonizers of past centuries defined boundaries between “civilized” and “savages” by applying value standards in which the notions of race, ethnicity, culture, and religion were interwoven and imposed on human beings perceived as fundamentally different from themselves, racialization became deeply inherent in how (white) Europeans viewed the world, themselves, and others. In this Special Issue, we assume that colonialist racialization constitutes the base of a persistent and often unreflective and indirect racism. Implicit value systems according to which white people are automatically considered as more competent, more desirable, preferable in general terms, and more “European” translate into patterns of everyday racism affecting the self-image and life chances of white and non-white Europeans. In this introductory article, which defines the conceptual framework for the special issue, we contest the idea of a “post-racial” condition and discuss the consequences of ethno-racial differentiation and stigmatization for racialized groups such as Black Europeans, European Roma, and non-white migrants in general. Finally, we argue for the need to further problematize and critically examine whiteness.

Keywords: race; racialization; post-racial; whiteness; colorblind; European colonialism

Citation: Hellgren, Zenia, and Bálint Ábel Bereményi. 2022. Introduction to the Special Issue: Far from Colorblind. Reflections on Racialization in Contemporary Europe. *Social Sciences* 11: 21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11010021>

Received: 27 December 2021

Accepted: 28 December 2021

Published: 12 January 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. A European Dilemma

To understand our present, we need to know, and be openminded enough to critically examine, our past. European history is to a great extent also a history about race, racialization, and racism. Since the colonizers of past centuries defined the boundaries between “civilized” and “savages” by applying value standards in which notions of race, ethnicity, culture, and religion were interwoven, racialization became deeply inherent in how (white) Europeans viewed the world, themselves, and others (Maneri 2020; Lentin 2008, 2020; Silverstein 2005). While in the US, a denial of race as a social fact is virtually unimaginable given the country’s overtly racist history, from ethnic cleansing and slavery to racial segregation and police violence, in Europe, an illusion of colorblindness has thrived for a long time (Lentin 2008, 2011; Törngren et al. 2019). Race as concept has therefore been viable in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, but much less so in the European context, where it was largely replaced by the broader and less specific term “ethnicity”. It has been argued that the painful and shameful legacy of the Nazi genocide of Jews, Roma, and other groups considered as inferior led to a persistent non-recognition of race as category in Europe, out of fear for any forms of racial registration that could potentially be used for the persecution of minorities (Lentin 2008). Today, however, this lack of recognition of the race category hampers a general recognition and examination of racial hierarchies in Europe. As Lentin (2008) has argued, the European silence about race has allowed European states to declare themselves officially non-racist, while at the same time continuing to imply an inherent European superiority in which Europeaness presupposes whiteness. Several

anti-racist activist groups even advocate for ethnic/racial registration, in order to facilitate the detection and reporting of discrimination (Hellgren 2021).

Now, it appears that the global Black Lives Matter movement has contributed to contest the European negligence of race as a central producer of injustice and inequalities. Numerous Europe-based activists and politicians have made statements in the past year, using catchwords such as “BLM in Europe too” in order to draw parallels between the racism against black people in the US and similar, though less publicly acknowledged, situations across European societies¹. In addition, a growing body of research engages with race and racialization in European societies, not seldom in comparison with the US, which traditionally has often been perceived as a fundamentally different context (Lentin 2011; O’Hanlon 2016; Törngren et al. 2019). In this context, parallels have been drawn between the treatment of black people in the US and the Roma population in Europe (Miskovic 2009), and the specific forms of racism affecting Roma people, officially defined as anti-gypsyism. Kóczé (2020) provides a definition of the racialization of Roma people that appears applicable to other groups as well: “Racialization and racial oppression of Roma are discursive and structural mechanisms that place them in an imaginary hierarchical classificatory system based on phenotypical, cultural, and social markers and render them as “other”/sub-human. These oppressive discourses became articulated and solidified in concrete social practices, mechanisms, policies, and structures in Roma people’s everyday lives”.

Barwick and Beaman’s (2019) empirical examples from France furthermore reflect the practical relevance that the notion of “race” has for people affected by it, beyond academic debates or political declarations. In France, despite not officially recognizing race as a category and generally ignoring it, racialized people in stigmatized suburbs, *banlieues*, outside Paris repeatedly defined themselves as non-white, and those perceived as “French” were described as white. For them, skin color was the most relevant marker of social difference and disadvantage, often accompanied by being the resident of a marginalized housing area (ibid). Similarly, in Eastern Europe, the exonym “the white” for non-Roma is a common term used by both Roma and non-Roma people in local contexts (Kuchta 2005).

It is in this framework that we situate our Special Issue, which enquires into how racialization shapes the lives of people affected by it in myriad ways. It provides multiple and multilevel perspectives on different forms of exclusion of immigrants and Roma people in European societies, both in spheres such as policy making and governance and in everyday practices. We assume that colonialist racialization constitutes the historical base of a persistent and often unreflective and passive racism, which translates into automatically considering “white” people as more competent, more desirable, preferable in general, and more “European” and which influences the life conditions of white and non-white Europeans. Our contribution to contemporary European research on race, racialization, and discrimination consists of a collection of recent empirical studies, which bring the racial dimension to the forefront in approaching the exclusion that affects many non-white migrants and ethnic minorities, most noticeably the Roma population that is numerous in several European countries.

In this introductory article, we will first define the key concepts of race, racialization, racism, and discrimination. We then use contemporary scholarship on race and racialization in order to dismantle the widespread idea that race is no longer a relevant category in the context of the European societies’ increasing super-diversity (Vertovec 2007; Crul 2016) and ethnic hybridization (Rodríguez-García et al. 2019). We argue that this is indeed a *segmented super-diversity*, in which ethno-racial features continue to define differences in opportunities depending on factors such as the tone of the skin or hair.

2. Race, Racialization, Racism, and Discrimination—Some Conceptual Clarifications

In the debates over whether or not to use the concept of “race” in European research, which we shall return to below, a powerful argument against its usage is the dangerous ways in which a scientifically sustained notion of different human races may be misused

(see, for instance, the [Jena Declaration 2019](#)). This line of argumentation appears highly meaningful in scientific domains such as biogenetics and medicine, but, we claim, less so in the social sciences. We coincide with [Törnngren et al. \(2019\)](#) and Rodríguez-García in this volume, who sustain that though race is a social construct, it is also a social fact with real effects on people's everyday lives. In this context, we also consider that it may in general be more constructive for the analytical purposes of social scientists to apply the term racialization, rather than race. Racialization as concept does not coerce its user to engage with the question of whether race to some degree should exist as a biological fact or not; it focuses merely on the social construction of difference, or otherization, based on ethno-racial features.

In this Special Issue, we define racialization as an overt or subtle form of differential treatment based on ethno-racial differentiation. We apply a broad definition; like [Silverstein \(2005\)](#), we understand that racialization, more than being merely related to skin color or phenotype, may also encompass a rather vague sense of (devalued) "ethnicity", "culture", or religion, and in practice, it often intersects with categories such as class, and/or gender in the negative stereotyping of people with certain characteristics. When racialization is expressed as ascribing certain characteristics to groups of people based on such categorization ([Gans 2017](#), p. 342) or, in general, when people are differentiated based on their deviance from the established norm of whiteness in accordance with the *pigmentocracy* ([Telles 2014](#)) of a specific society—indeed, where the subtle line is drawn between who is considered "white" or not varies across the Western world ([Törnngren et al. 2019](#)): a Moroccan, for instance, may pass for "white" in Spain, but hardly in Sweden ([Hellgren 2019](#))—the effects are often strongly negative for the racialized individuals. Racialized classifications of (people defined as) Muslims as "potential terrorists" and Black Africans or indigenous Latin Americans as "poor, exploitable workers" (see, e.g., [Silverstein 2005](#)) entail tangible consequences for the individuals' self-image, social status, and real opportunities in society (see [Hellgren and Gabrielli 2021b](#) in this volume for a more detailed discussion of such intersections between race and class). Yet, applying a critical whiteness approach, racialization may also be beneficial for the individual whose racial profile is positively valued. This is clear in the narratives of white Canadian and Norwegian immigrants in Spain, who share the experience of being cast as "reliable" and "respectful", even more so than natives, based on their physical appearance and origin ([Hellgren 2019](#)).

Ethnic discrimination, in turn, is here primarily considered as a consequence of racialization. Discrimination and racism are often used as practically synonymous and interchangeable concepts (e.g., [Lentin 2011](#)). In this Special Issue, ethnic discrimination is instead considered as fundamentally different from racism in one central regard: While racism refers to a doctrine or a set of *ideas* or *beliefs* according to which people are classified as superior or inferior depending on traits defined as "racial", most typically skin color, discrimination is understood as a *behaviour* by which the person who discriminates, consciously or unconsciously, differentiates between different categories of people. Applying this definition allows us to understand how, for instance, a person who does not share racist ideas may in practice discriminate, often without even noticing this, in a wide range of situations, for instance based on deeply rooted preferences for white people of certain nationalities ([Pager and Shepherd 2008](#); [Safi 2010](#)). While overt forms of racism such as hate speech or racist violence draw immediate attention and call for intervention, subtler forms of discrimination such as simply not choosing people of certain origins for employment or rental contracts is far more difficult to detect, or prove, but nonetheless have serious consequences in terms of hampered opportunities and perpetuated inequalities between natives and racialized others (e.g., [Crul et al. 2012](#); [Barnes 2011](#); [Burgett and Hendler 2014](#); [Silverstein 2005](#)).

There are multiple categories of people who risk being discriminated against, as established by the European Union's directives declaring that discrimination on the grounds of "sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or

sexual orientation shall be prohibited” ([European Commission’s Website 2021](#)). In practice, virtually anyone risks being discriminated against at some time in life based on one or several of these categories. Moreover, two or more different grounds for discrimination often intersect, and it may indeed be difficult for, for instance, a female migrant domestic worker from the Dominican Republic to determine whether she is being discriminated against for being poor, for being a woman, or for being racialized. In addition, we argue that there is a class-related dimension of racialization that cannot be left out of any serious discussion on discrimination ([Hellgren 2019](#)). For stigmatized groups such as the Roma and immigrants of different origins, the perceived discrimination and disadvantage that the respondents express, being (or being expected to be) poor, “underclass”, is closely intertwined with their ethno-racial features (see [Hellgren and Gabrielli 2021a, 2021b](#)). People of Sub-Saharan African and Latin American origin for instance report being denied entrance into expensive stores or stopped if they drive a certain type of car, as they are expected to be unable to afford this, based on generalized prejudices about the “precarious migrant” or the “gangster” (*ibid.*). This is one of the reasons why an intersectional perspective appears fundamental in discrimination research (e.g., [Seng 2012](#); [Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2012](#); [Young 2009](#)).

For the analytical purposes of this Special Issue, however, we shall largely limit our approach on discrimination to the ethnic, or racial, dimension. In line with [Silverstein’s \(2005\)](#) argumentation that the different forms of labelling affecting immigrants in European societies constitute different expressions of racialization, we define ethnic discrimination as an overt or subtle negative form of differential treatment based on ethno-racial categorization, including skin color or other physical traits that mark a visible difference from the white, Western, native norm (such as “ethnic” clothing); having a foreign-sounding name or speaking the majority language(s) with an accent; or, in general, being categorized based on a “different” ethnicity, culture, religion or belief, or national origin.

3. The Myth of the Post-Racial Society and the Complexities of Whiteness

There is broad awareness that experiences of racism and discrimination seriously harm the sense of belonging, as well as the opportunities to enjoy social mobility and quality of life for many immigrants and ethnic minority peoples in European societies (e.g., [González-Sobrino and Goss 2018](#); [Crul et al. 2012](#); [Pager and Shepherd 2008](#); [Safi 2010](#); [Vincze 2014](#)). Yet, there is simultaneously a persistent unwillingness among broad layers of European scholars to talk about the racial dimension of the kinds of disadvantage and social exclusion that affect immigrants, their descendants, and other racialized groups disproportionately. Some even claim that we live in a “post-racial” society ([Sayyid 2017](#)). This reluctance towards the race concept springs from liberal-conservative thinkers but also from a class-centred approach, in which race is viewed as subordinate to or less relevant than the class category in conceptualizing inequalities in contemporary Western societies. The tension between race vs. class-centred research is strongly felt in the polemics between scholars defending Critical Race Theory (CRT) on the one hand, and both liberal-egalitarian and Marxist scholars opposing their analysis on the other hand ([Warmington 2020](#); [Leonardo 2009](#)).

The “post-racial society” argument turned up as early as in the 1970s in the US press, celebrating the improvement of race relations. It then became generalized with the appearance of high-ranked politicians of Afro-American background in both Republican and Democratic administrations, culminating in Barack Obama’s election as president ([Hollinger 2008](#)). Some scholars argued that this made it easier to contemplate a future “in which the ethno-racial categories central to identity politics would be more matters of choice than ascription [. . .] and in which economic inequalities would be confronted head-on, instead of through the medium of ethno-race” ([Hollinger 2008](#), p. 174). [Sayyid \(2017\)](#) claims that the post-racial discourse has been a neoconservative argument, which suggests that belonging to a racial group ceased to be determinant in explaining socioeconomic inequalities. On a more theoretical level, other post-racial epistemologies draw on the concept of hybridity, in relation with Stuart [Hall’s \(1992\)](#) proposal of the emergence

of “new ethnicities” and the capacity to challenge essentialist political identities and social positions based exclusively on racial experiences.

From a critical perspective, [Sayyid \(2017\)](#) highlights the underlying “post-racial paradox” present in the tension between a generalized disapproval of racism on the one hand, and its continued perpetuation and practice in people’s everyday lives ([Essed 1991](#)) and the functioning of institutions on the other hand. According to this author, current debates suggest that advances of the post-racial condition, that is, the questioning and deconstructing of white privilege, has been far more limited in the EU than in the US due to a less emphasized influence of the Civil Rights Movement in anti-racism ([Sayyid 2017](#)).

[Lentin \(2015\)](#) argues that post-racial discourse in Europe is closely related to the liberal views that the individual freedom ensured by the European democracies will automatically push racism to the margins. In addition, she suggests, present racial plurality, taken as a sign of modernity, does not invite for a deep revision of racism as a fundamental element in the formation of Europe. It may thereby be used discursively in ways that impede coming to terms with the current forms of racist practices. Due to the denial of race as “unreasonable”, it paradoxically persists as a structuring logic. A general recognition of how the colonialist legacy shapes racial hierarchies in contemporary Europe would be a basic condition for the hypothetical construction of a post-racial Europe, inasmuch as European racism is rooted in centuries of colonization ([Lentin 2015](#)). As Da Costa puts it: “belonging and inclusion become fraught as the avoidance of racial difference in discourse or policy sustains rather than eradicates coloniality” ([Da Costa 2016](#), p. 477). As a result of this contradiction, race apparently disappears “without the disappearance of its histories, meanings, and cumulative effects” (2016, p. 477). In this sense, Da Costa claims, post-racial discourse strategically depoliticizes race, racism, and difference, and thereby demobilizes anti-racist politics, cultural recognition, and material redistribution.

From an intersectional perspective, [Bhopal \(2018\)](#) suggests that whiteness still operates as a form of privilege, in subtle, nuanced ways. Rather than an explicit white supremacy, it is a particular kind of whiteness that is privileged and protected ([Bhopal 2018](#)). The *non-acceptable forms of whiteness* are not associated with the privileges that whiteness generally entails. For Bhopal, Roma people represent par excellence this undesirable category of non-privileged whiteness. Using a different analytical typology, we may even, as [Silverstein \(2005\)](#), conceive of such “non-acceptable” physically white people as being *racialized* in ways similar to non-whites, based on their migrant status and (devalued) country of origin. This would, other than the Roma, be the case for, for instance, many poor Eastern European immigrants in Western Europe. Such accounts on whiteness, implying that “not all whites are equally white”, indeed adds nuances and complexity to the often taken-for-granted notion that whiteness is equal to privilege in Western societies ([Lundström 2014](#)). Within the emerging field of critical whiteness studies ([Applebaum 2016](#)), there appears to be a need to further problematize whiteness ([Nayak 2007](#)), not only in opposition to the implications of being categorized as non-white but also in terms of different forms of whiteness and their intersections with class.

A complementary approach to the study of race and racism is through the lens of international anti-racism struggles that [Bhattacharyya et al. \(2019\)](#) suggest. The authors make the contentious statement that “far from entering the post-racial era, we are living through times when all manner of disputes and divisions can become racialized” ([Bhattacharyya et al. 2019](#), p. 2) and provide a historical overview of anti-racist movements. This form of political mobilisation, which initially emerged in the 18th century as uprisings against slavery, inspired by Enlightenment thought and the French Revolution, were neglected by or subordinated to the (white) workers’ rights struggles in the 19th and 20th centuries (ibid). Their analysis puts the finger on how much it matters *who tell the stories*. It also makes clear that an “either or” view on the class–race binary is counterproductive, both at the analytical level and in the transformation from social analysis to social movements. In this scenario, intersectionality appears as a necessary “third way”: Rather than arguing about whether race supersedes class as producer of inequality, or vice versa ([Cortina Orts](#)

2017), it enhances how race and class (and gender) are intimately interwoven and often inseparable in assessing the specific kinds of disadvantage that affect, for instance, racialized immigrants in European societies (Hellgren 2019; Crenshaw 1991). This approach to the study of racialization in Europe also highlights the importance of context: Though there are important similarities between the types of racism and discrimination affecting Black people in the US, from where CRT originated (Warmington 2020), and the experiences of immigrants in European countries, there are also differences that may be significant for our understanding of the relationship between race and class. It is our ambition that the empirical studies on racialization that are compiled in this volume will contribute to such an enhanced understanding.

4. The Contributions of the Special Issue

The articles included in this volume represent complementary perspectives that serve to deepen our understanding of how racialization reproduces otherization and hampers the social cohesion of multiethnic societies in myriad ways. All contributions provide empirically grounded accounts on how ethno-racial differentiation operates in different contexts. Covering both the macro and micro levels, they span from racialization in policy making, governance, and integration processes to self-perceived discrimination and identity construction among racialized migrants and Roma people in different European societies. Micro-level data appear particularly important in order to assess what racialization is in terms of how it is perceived by, and what it does to, the people who suffer from Appendix A.

In the following part of this introduction, we will present the contributions to our Special Issue, starting with Sebastian Carlotti. In his article “Behind the Curtain of the Border Spectacle: Introducing “Illegal” Movement through Racialized Profiling in the West African Area”, he approaches the “border spectacle” that is played out at the frontiers between Europe and Africa and justified in public and political discourses by the production and reproduction of racialized and criminalized portraits of migrants.

Focus is then shifted towards the (multi-level) governance of diversity in Europe at a general level, through the lens of racialization. Tina Magazzini explores how Critical Race Studies and a structural intersectionality perspective can contribute to the field of integration studies in a European context in her article “Antidiscrimination Meets Integration Policies: Exploring New Diversity-related Challenges in Europe”. She raises the question of whether the US has employed these perspectives to a great extent while Europe has not because the contexts are in fact fundamentally different, and she argues for the need to bring race into the European context from an integration-focused perspective.

Carolin Müller draws on Kimberly Crenshaw’s classical writings on intersectionality in order to examine the EU action plan against racism from a critical perspective, including, for instance, to what extent it addresses the historical baggage of European imperialism. Her article “Anti-Racism in Europe: An Intersectional Approach to the Discourse on Empowerment through the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025” also encompasses the role of transnational anti-racism organizations such as ENAR in advocating for such discursive forms of anti-racism.

The intersectional perspective is represented also by Colleen Boland’s article, which also approaches the issue of islamophobia: “European Muslim youth and gender (in)equality discourse: Towards a more critical academic inquiry”. This author applies a complex lens that incorporates the intersections between gender, class, and race in her analysis of how Muslim youth are affected by European discourses that pose contradictions between Muslim identity and gender equality, being deeply interwoven in the construction of Muslims as racialized “others”.

Dan Rodríguez-García instead focuses on the case of Spain, claiming that this country represents an “exceptional laboratory for studying ethnic and race relations” given its colonial past, its rapid increase in international immigration in recent years, and the remaining marginalization of the national Roma population and other racialized groups such as black African-origin immigrants. The growing interest in Spain as context for

contemporary studies on racialization processes is also reflected by this Special Issue: No less than six of our articles approach ethnic/racial issues in Spain from different perspectives and with different empirical examples. Rodríguez-García's article "The Persistence of Racial Constructs in Spain: Bringing Race and Colorblindness into the Intercultural Debate" covers macro-level discourses on race and racialization in the country and refers to several recent studies in order to scrutinize racism in contemporary Spain. The result is a critique of the interculturalist public policies' colorblind approach, based on the argument that race-neutral (or "post-racial") approaches fail to address a structural racism with roots in colonialism that there indeed is reluctance to recognize at a general level.

In the rest of the articles, micro-level data from recent case studies among Roma and African migrants in southern Europe are used to provide empirical accounts on the perceptions and implications of racialization. In their article, "Racialization or 'Aporophobia'? Intersecting Discriminations in the Experiences of Non-Western Migrants and Spanish Roma", Zenia Hellgren and Lorenzo Gabrielli add the concept of "aporophobia" to the race/class debate by comparing the stigmatization based on racialization and class-related prejudices, respectively, in the otherization of Roma and non-white migrants in Spain.

Bringing back the gender perspective to the analysis, Laia Narciso then offers an intersectional analysis of the racialized experiences of the daughters of West African immigrants: the process of belonging of young women grown up in Spain, strongly conditioned by gender and class position. The author highlights that contrary to the popular beliefs, it is in key spaces of social inclusion—school and work—in which young West African women's aspirations for an independent adult life become frustrated, rather than by the control of their ethnic communities. Narciso applies the conceptual tool of "translocational positionality" (Anthias 2002) to grasp the complexity of the positionality of subjects "in the interaction of locations and dislocations of gender, ethnicity, nationality, belonging, class and racialization".

Saiba Bayo in turn plays with the Spanish/Catalan term "charnego", used as derogatory description of working-class migrants from Southern Spain to Catalonia, and applies it to African migrants as "charnegros". In "The Charnegros: Black Africans and the Ontological Conflict in Catalonia", he uses his ethnographic work among African-origin migrant communities in Catalonia in order to theorize on the commonalities and particularities of "Black identity".

Then, the pressing issue of how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the most vulnerable groups in societies is taken on by Olga Magano and Maria Manuela Mendes. In "Perceptions and Experiences of Racism and Discrimination in Portugal: a Case Study among Roma Secondary School Students", they suggest to broaden the notion of racism and discrimination against Roma people in order to encompass also the authorities' neglect, or "look the other way-approach", in relation to extreme poverty and vulnerability among Roma children and youth. Discrimination, thus, is expressed also in indirect forms as through society's acceptance of highly precarious living conditions among the Roma, which would be considered unacceptable for members of the ethnic majority population.

Finally, Ismael Cortés concludes the Special Issue through his timely analysis of antigypsyist hate speech in the wake of the pandemic. He argues for the need to keep the historical construction of antigypsyism present and shows how antigypsyist discourse is also used, reproduced, and normalized by established actors such as politicians and the media, indicating that it is probably the most generally "tolerated" form of racism.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; methodology, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; software, not applicable, validation, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; formal analysis Z.H. and B.Á.B.; investigation, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; resources, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; data curation, not applicable.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; writing—review and editing, Z.H., visualization, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; supervision, Z.H. and B.Á.B.; project administration, not applicable.; funding acquisition, not applicable. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Presenting the Authors

Saiba Bayo is a PhD candidate in political philosophy and philosophy of film at the Pompeu Fabra University. He holds a BA in Political Science and Public Management from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a Master's degree in Political Philosophy at Pompeu Fabra University. His research is focused on gender and emancipation within the oeuvre of the Senegalese novelist and filmmaker Ousmane Sembène's work. He coordinates and teaches the postgraduate course "Introduction to postcolonial theories and black African Cultural Studies" at the Pompeu Fabra University.

Bálint Ábel Bereményi, PhD in Social Anthropology, is currently a Marie S. Curie Research Fellow (MSCA-IF) at Central European University's Democracy Institute (CEU/DI). His main research interests focus on ethnic minorities (Roma/Gypsy), children/youth, and social inequalities mostly in the domains of education and the labour market. He teaches Anthropology in BA and MA programs, supervises Master's theses and doctoral dissertations, and has been a visiting teacher in several European universities. His articles have been published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, and *Intercultural Education*, among others.

Colleen Boland holds an MA in Near and Middle Eastern Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and a PhD in Sociology and Anthropology from the Complutense University of Madrid, specializing in migration studies. She has served as Managing Editor of the international quarterly *International Journal of Health Services* and as Research Manager at the Common Action Forum. Currently, she is a postdoctoral researcher at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, working on the European Commission Horizon 2020 ITFLOWS (IT Tools and Methods for Managing Migration Flows) project, where one of her roles includes co-leading the Gender Committee. Her research interests include diversity management, hybrid identity, and migrant agency, with specific reference to populations residing in Europe.

Sebastian Carlotti is a PhD Student at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Pisa and at the AISSR of the University of Amsterdam. In 2017, Sebastian graduated at SOAS, University of London, with a Master of Science degree in Migration, Mobility and Development by writing his dissertation on the consequences of European border externalization policies on sub-Saharan migrants in West Africa. Previously, he obtained his bachelor's degree in International Relations and Political Science at the University of Pisa with a thesis on the development of policies to contrast gender-based violence in refugee camps. Among his research interests is the study of the selective and differentiating characteristics of migration policies. In particular, his focus lies on the evolution of restrictive visa policies and their securitized impact on migration patterns and habits. Currently, Sebastian is a member of the UBIQUAL research centre of the University of Pisa.

Ismael Cortés is currently a member of the Spanish parliament. He has been a lecturer at the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, Jaume I University (Spain), where he gained his PhD on international conflicts and social development studies with an international award. In 2018, he was a postdoctoral fellow of the Romani Studies Program at the Central European University. Together with Markus End, he edited the book *Dimensions of Antigypsyism in Europe* (ENAR and Central Council of German Sinti and Roma 2019).

Lorenzo Gabrielli is Senior Researcher at GRITIM (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration) at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona (Spain). Actually, he participates in the AGREP project on Antigypsyism and Discrimination. His research covers migration

dynamics and policies in the Euro-African space, borders and bordering processes both at the internal and international levels, as well as othering and racialization processes, among other topics. He has participated in several international research projects (Vakeripen, Disaporalink, Medimurs, Interact, Mipmue, Garnet). He has also been a visiting researcher at the IEMed (European Institute of the Mediterranean) and the United Nations University—Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility, and he has collaborated with the ITC-ILO, CIDOB, MPC-EUI, Oxfam-Intermón, CCAR-CEAR, Jaume Bofill Foundation, EUNOMAD network, and MhiC, among others. He regularly collaborates with Irenia-Jocs de Pau developing and conducting workshops on identities in schools.

Zenia Hellgren is a political sociologist and senior migration/diversity scholar at GRITIM-UPF (The Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration), Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), Barcelona (Spain), where she also teaches political and social theory at the Master and undergraduate levels, for instance, the course “Diversity, Discrimination and Citizenship”. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator of the EU-funded research-action project AGREP (Action program for effective reporting of anti-gypsyism and discrimination). Her main research areas involve inclusion/exclusion, intersectionality, and agency of immigrants and racialized groups in European societies, with a particular focus on discrimination. Her recently concluded research project REPCAT, funded by a Marie S. Curie individual fellowship, examined diversity management in Catalan public institutions, suggesting that the representation of ethnic diversity is necessary for democratic legitimacy. She has published her research in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *International Migration Review*, the *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *Social Politics*, and the *Journal of European Social Policy*, among others.

Olga Magano is a sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Open University, Department of Social Sciences and Management, Lisbon. She holds a PhD in Sociology and a Master in Intercultural Relations from Open University and graduated in Sociology from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto. She is currently also a researcher at the ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon, Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES-IUL). Since the late 1990s, she has been involved in research on the integration and exclusion of Roma/Ciganos in Portugal and has participated in several research projects and publications alone or with others authors, such as: “Tracing normal lives: between stigma and the will to be Cigano in Social Identities”, Olga Magano (2016); “National Study of Roma/ Ciganos communities (2014)”, with Maria Manuela Mendes and Pedro Candeias; “School pathways and economic practices of Portuguese Ciganos: some continuities and changes” in *Social Identities* (2016), with Maria Manuela Mendes, among several other texts published in Portuguese and English. She is also a full member of the Romani Studies network, a Member of the Portuguese Association of Sociology, and a Member of the Gypsy Lore Society.

Tina Magazzini is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (Florence, Italy). Her research interests involve the tension between redistribution, recognition, and representation; identity politics; intersectionality; Critical Race Theory; comparative analysis; visual narratives and methodologies; and the relationship between majorities, minorities, and states. She holds a PhD in Human Rights (University of Deusto, Marie Curie fellowship), an MA in International Relations (CCNY), and a BA in Political Science and International Studies (University of Florence). Her work was awarded the Weston Scholarship for Public Service by the City College of New York (2011), the Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship by the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research (2016), the Social Impact Award by the Marie Curie Alumni Association, and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Seal of Excellence (2018). Outside academia, over the past years she has worked with a number of research institutes, NGOs, UN agencies, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe in the United States, Guatemala, Belgium, Hungary, the Basque Country, and Zimbabwe.

Maria Manuela Mendes is a sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon (FAUL). She completed her PhD in Social Sciences at the

Institute of Social Sciences University of Lisbon in 2007 and is currently a fellow researcher at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology Institute University of Lisbon (CIES-IUL). She is also a member at the Centre for Research Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (CIAUD, FAUL) and at the Institute of Sociology Faculty of Arts of Porto (ISFLUP). Her main lines of research focus on issues related to ethnicity, immigration, Roma/Ciganos, city and diversity, racism, social and spatial exclusion, and relocation and disqualified territories.

Carolin Müller is a faculty member at the Media Center at the Technical University Dresden, coordinating the international PhD program “Education & Technology”. She was selected as a fellow to the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in 2021. She holds a PhD and an M.A. in German Studies from The Ohio State University and an M.Ed. in English and Art Studies from the Technical University Dresden. Her research is informed by critical theory in citizenship and migration studies, critical race theory, and performance studies. She looks at creative acts of citizenship through music, film, and the arts. She also works on recent activist movements, the politics of migrancy, as well as representations of oppression and flight in Germany. Her work has been published by *on_culture*, *textpraxis*, *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, *Activist History Review*, and *Border Criminologies*.

Dan Rodríguez-García is Serra Hünter Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology and Director of the Research Group on Immigration, Mixedness, and Social Cohesion (INMIX) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. His areas of research are international migration, ethnoracial relations, and the social integration processes of immigrants, minorities, and their descendants, with a particular focus on mixedness (couples, families, and individuals across national, ethnocultural, racial, religious, or class boundaries), a phenomenon that exposes social boundaries and that is key to the study of social categories, identity processes, discrimination, and social transformation. His most recent work has appeared in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (also acting as Guest Editor), the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (also acting as Guest Editor), *Ethnicities*, the *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, and the *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. He is currently the PI of the funded R&D project “Social Relations and Identity Processes of Children of Mixed Unions: Mixedness, Between Inclusion and Social Constraints (MIXED_YOUTH)”. Dan is a regular participant in training and knowledge transfer activities regarding immigration and diversity issues for different government institutions, associations, and the media.

Notes

- ¹ See, for instance, <https://www.socialeurope.eu/black-lives-matter-in-europe-too>; <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/politics-for-change-black-lives-matter-in-europe/> (accessed on 25 October 2021).

References

- Anthias, Floya. 2002. Where do I belong?: Narrating collective identity and translocational positionality. *Ethnicities* 4: 491–514. [CrossRef]
- Applebaum, Barbara. 2016. *Critical Whiteness Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [CrossRef]
- Barnes, Peter W. 2011. Perceived Racist Discrimination, Coping, Stress, and Life Satisfaction. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 33: 48–61. [CrossRef]
- Barwick, Christine, and Jean Beaman. 2019. Living for the neighbourhood: Marginalization and belonging for the second-generation in Berlin and Paris. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7: 1. [CrossRef]
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi, Satnam Virdee, and Aaron Winter. 2019. Revisiting histories of anti-racist thought and activism. *Identities* 27: 1–19. [CrossRef]
- Bhopal, Kalwant. 2018. White privilege. In *The Myth of a Post-Racial Society*. Bristol: Policy Press. [CrossRef]
- Burgett, Bruce, and Glenn Hendler. 2014. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. New York: New York University Press.
- Cortina Orts, Adela. 2017. Aporofobia, el rechazo al pobre. In *Un Desafío para la Sociedad Democrática*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–99.
- Crul, Maurice. 2016. Super-diversity vs. assimilation: How complex diversity in majority–minority cities challenges the assumptions of assimilation. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42: 54–68.

- Crul, Maurice, Jens Schneider, and Frans Lelie. 2012. *The European Second Generation Compared. Does the Integration Context Matter?* TIES Project Report, IMISCOE. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, Available online: <https://www.imiscoe.org/publications/library/2-imiscoe-research-series/11-the-european-second-generation-compared> (accessed on 25 October 2021).
- Da Costa, Alexandre Emboaba. 2016. Thinking 'Post-Racial' Ideology Transnationally: The Contemporary Politics of Race and Indigeneity in the Americas. *Critical Sociology* 42: 475–90. [CrossRef]
- Essed, Philomena. 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism, an Interdisciplinary Theory*. London: Sage.
- European Commission's Website. 2021. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/know-your-rights/equality/non-discrimination_en (accessed on 25 October 2021).
- Gans, Herbert J. 2017. Racialization and Racialization Research. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 341–52.
- González-Sobrinó, Bianca, and Devon R. Goss. 2018. Exploring the mechanisms of racialization beyond the black–white binary. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 505–10.
- Hall, Stuart. 1992. New Ethnicities. In *'Race', Culture and Difference*. Edited by J. Donald and A. Rattansi. London: Sage, pp. 252–59.
- Hellgren, Zenia. 2019. Class, race-and place: Immigrants' self-perceptions on inclusion, belonging and opportunities in Stockholm and Barcelona. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 2084–102.
- Hellgren, Zenia. 2021. Representations of Ethnic Diversity: The Role of Public Institutions for Inclusionary Citizenship Practices. GRITIM-UPF Working Paper Series No. 47 Spring 2021. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354718485_GRITIM-UPF_Working_Paper_Series_No_47_Spring_2021_Representations_of_Ethnic_Diversity_The_Role_of_Public_Institutions_for_Inclusionary_Citizenship_Practices (accessed on 25 October 2021).
- Hellgren, Zenia, and Lorenzo Gabrielli. 2021a. The Dual Expectations Gap. Divergent Perspectives on the Educational Aspirations of Spanish Roma Families. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 42: 217–234.
- Hellgren, Zenia, and Lorenzo Gabrielli. 2021b. Racialization or "Aporophobia"? Intersecting Discriminations in the Experiences of Non-Western Migrants and Spanish Roma. *Social Sciences* 10: 163.
- Hollinger, David A. 2008. Obama, the Instability of Color Lines, and the Promise of a Post ethnic Future. *Callaloo* 31: 1033–37.
- Jena Declaration. 2019. Official statement by the researchers Martin S. Fischer, Uwe Hossfeld and Johannes Krause of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, and Stefan Richter from the University of Rostock. Available online: https://www.uni-jena.de/unijenamedia/universit%C3%A4t/abteilung+hochschulkommunikation/presse/jenaer+erkl%C3%A4rung/jenaer_erklaerung_en.pdf (accessed on 1 July 2021).
- Kóczé, A. 2020. Racialization, Racial Oppression of Roma. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*. Edited by I. Ness and Z. Cope. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kuchta, Karin. 2005. A dernői cigányság [The Roma from Dernő]. In *Lokális cigány közösségek Gömörben. Identitásváltozatok marginalitásban. [Local Roma Communities in Gemer. Identity Variants in Marginality]*. Edited by Cs Prónai. Budapest: MTA Etnikai-nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet, pp. 71–83.
- Lentin, Alana. 2008. Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory* 11: 487–503.
- Lentin, Alana. 2011. *Racism and Ethnic Discrimination*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group.
- Lentin, Alana. 2015. What does race do? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38: 1401–6. [CrossRef]
- Lentin, Alana. 2020. *Why Race Still Matters*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Leonardo, Zeus. 2009. *Race, Whiteness and Education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Lundström, Catrin. 2014. *White Migrations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maneri, Marcello. 2020. Breaking the race taboo in a besieged Europe: How photographs of the "refugee crisis" reproduce racialized hierarchy. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44: 4–20.
- Miskovic, Maja. 2009. Roma education in Europe: In support of the discourse of race. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 17: 201–20.
- Nayak, Anoop. 2007. Critical whiteness studies. *Sociology Compass* 1: 737–55. [CrossRef]
- O'Hanlon, Christine. 2016. The European Struggle to Educate and Include Roma People: A Critique of Differences in Policy and Practice in Western and Eastern EU Countries. *Social Inclusion* 4: 1–10.
- Pager, Devah, and Hana Shepherd. 2008. The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit and Consumer markets. *Annual Review of Sociology* 1: 181–209.
- Rodríguez-García, Dan, Miguel Solana, Ana Ortiz, and Beatriz Ballestín. 2019. Blurring of color lines? Ethn racially mixed youth in Spain navigating identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 838–60.
- Safi, Mirna. 2010. Immigrants' Life Satisfaction in Europe: Between Assimilation and Discrimination. *European Sociological Review* 26: 159–76.
- Sayyid, Salman. 2017. Post-racial paradoxes: Rethinking European racism and anti-racism. *Patterns of Prejudice* 51: 9–25. [CrossRef]
- Seng, Julia S. 2012. Marginalized identities, discrimination burden, and mental health: Empirical exploration of an interpersonal-level approach to modeling intersectionality. *Social Science & Medicine* 75: 2437–45.
- Silverstein, Paul A. 2005. Immigrant Racialization and the New Savage Slot: Race, Migration, and Immigration in the New Europe. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 363–84.
- Telles, Edward. 2014. *Pigmentocracies. Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Törngren, Sayaka Osanami, Nahikari Irastorza, and Dan Rodríguez-García. 2019. Understanding multiethnic and multiracial experiences globally: Towards a conceptual framework of mixedness. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 763–81.
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 1024–54.

- Vincze, Enikő. 2014. The racialization of Roma in the 'new' Europe and the political potential of Romani women. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21: 443–49.
- Viruell-Fuentes, Edna, Patricia Y. Miranda, and Sawsan Abdulrahim. 2012. More than culture: Structural racism, intersectionality theory, and immigrant health. *Social Science & Medicine* 75: 2099–106.
- Warmington, Paul. 2020. Critical race theory in England: Impact and opposition. *Identities* 27: 20–37.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2009. Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference. In *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*. Edited by T. Christiano and J. Christman. West Sussex: Blackwell.



Article

Behind the Curtain of the Border Spectacle: Introducing 'Illegal' Movement and Racialized Profiling in the West African Region

Sebastian Carlotti

Department of Political Sciences, University of Pisa, 56126 Pisa, Italy; sebastian.carlotti@phd.unipi.it

Abstract: The introduction of 'illegal' migration in West African countries represented a major conceptual policy shift for societies that were historically characterized by intra-regional free movement. However, this transformation went along with severe allegations of racialized profiling of undocumented migrants in many West African societies. De Genova's concept of the 'border spectacle' describes how the presumed 'illegality' of migrants is made spectacularly visible in Europe, thus producing a criminalized and racialized portrayal of migrants. Nonetheless, this work argues that today's illegalization through a racialized representation of migrants has been extended beyond Europe's boundaries and behind the spectacle's curtain towards countries of migration origin. Drawing on the cases of Mauritania and Mali, this paper considers their fundamentally opposite reaction to the introduction of 'irregular' movement and illustrates the inherent problematics of transferring the figure of a racialized migrant into the West African region. Particularly successful in countries with a history of ethnic conflicts, this process essentially externalized European border practices of racialized profiling. On the contrary, this analysis concludes that the presence of established patterns of regional movement and cross-border habits made it undesirable to either introduce the policy concept of 'illegal' migration or to adopt its potentially racialized portrayal.

Citation: Carlotti, Sebastian. 2021. Behind the Curtain of the Border Spectacle: Introducing 'Illegal' Movement and Racialized Profiling in the West African Region. *Social Sciences* 10: 139. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10040139>

Academic Editor: Zenia Hellgren

Received: 8 March 2021

Accepted: 13 April 2021

Published: 15 April 2021

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: border externalization; West Africa; migration; illegalization

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the illegalization of migrants in their countries of origin became a new and powerful tool of Europe's border externalization policies. One of the main approaches used by European authorities comprised an unconsidered introduction of the concept of 'illegal' migration in West Africa, a region traditionally linked to the free movement of its inhabitants, which went along with severe allegations of creating a racialized profile of the newly criminalized migrants. Depending on the countries' history of ethnic conflicts and the overall relevance of migration in society, the illegalization of migrants may risk becoming a dangerous instrument in the hands of local elites against ethnic minorities. This raises the important question of how the cooperation on migration, between European and West African countries, aimed to introduce the idea of border controls and to illegalize migrants in a cultural context where these elements were historically absent. The processes that governed these policy goals, however, did not produce the same results in all countries and were subject to contrasting outcomes. The two neighboring West African countries of Mali and Mauritania have been selected to highlight the fundamental differences in how local authorities and societies acted in response to the possibility of cooperating with European states. The marked divergence between the reactions of these two countries provides, moreover, interesting insights into the role played by local civil societies, diasporas, and ethnic relationships in the context of West Africa and its migration-related customs.

During the 1990s, the European Union pursued a strategy of strengthening its external borders and increasing surveillance mechanisms with the aim of reducing arrivals of African migrants on its territory. Despite these efforts, while borders were progressively closed and the paths for legal entry restricted, European governments were soon forced

to recognize the failure of traditional migration control policies as migrants continued to subvert these limitations by shifting their itineraries (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). Thus, European policymakers identified the need for a new and broader approach to overcome the sole fortification of its external boundaries. Authorities progressively manifested their interest in the itineraries used by migrants to design the appropriate actions to intervene on their journeys before these could reach Europe's external borders. As a result, European Member States quickly began to involve third countries in this new migration control strategy. Ultimately, this project, made of deterrence and containment, aimed to reduce the numbers of migrants arriving in Europe and asking for asylum (Ruhmann and FitzGerald 2016).

The overarching narrative behind migrant's journeys, as told by media and politicians, is commonly one of small, overloaded boats with 'desperate' migrants. The European public has been fueled with a restrictive and securitized view on migration and asylum. This narration describes migrants as illegal border trespassers, invaders, and criminals who are only in search of their personal economic gain. Furthermore, this image of the 'illegalized' migrant is reinforced through the so-called 'border spectacle', where their presumed 'illegality' is made spectacularly visible by producing a criminalized and racialized portrayal of the sub-Saharan migrant (De Genova 2002). Migration itself has come to be viewed as a threat, urging the deployment of a growing number of measures to hinder people from arriving on European territory. Hence, an increasing combination of police and military means went along with a new strategy of international cooperation to externalize border control functions and establish a powerful 'global' migration regime.

In the first decade of the 2000s, the European migration strategy focused on the externalization of borders and outsourced its border patrol activities to third countries such as Mauritania, Mali, and many other West African states. These countries began to cooperate with the new European migration regime by accepting varying degrees of different measures such as readmission agreements, joint patrol activities, and the introduction of regulations aimed to control and restrict cross-border movements. The outcome of these instruments caused some countries to implement a dangerously racialized illegalization process far away from the European 'border spectacle'. In fact, seen from a Eurocentric point of view, processes of illegalization now are produced, but not enacted, behind the border spectacle's curtain in countries of migration origin and of transit.

The article will begin with a description of how processes of illegalization and securitization had a significant socio-political influence on European societies and policymakers. In this sense, the first section will be dedicated to the representation of migrants as a criminalized threat represented through a racialized portrayal of the sub-Saharan migrant. Successively, to provide the necessary background of the processes behind the European border externalization, the first part will focus on the origin and the main passages which led the European border control cooperation with third countries. Nonetheless, while it is not the scope of this study to retrace the complete evolution of the European policy framework, attention will be given to the aspects which are helpful in highlighting the history and the instruments which paved the way for the European border externalization in the West African region.

Finally, the second part of this article offers a more detailed focus on the impact of the European border externalization on West African countries and migrant's itineraries. This will be achieved by examining the very different response of the states of Mauritania and Mali to the cooperation on migration control with the EU and its Member States. The contrasting reaction of these states to the introduction of the concept of 'illegal' movement draws the attention to the importance of several factors which are at play in third countries. In particular, the presence of a considerable diaspora, the relevance of migration in the local culture, and the previous history of ethnic conflicts may represent decisive factors in the decision-making of third countries. In conclusion, this investigation suggests that the European efforts to outsource border controls—through the introduction of policies

contrasting ‘illegal’ movement—were especially successful in those countries where the ‘illegalization’ of migration was domestically paired with a racialized portrayal of migrants.

2. European Borders between Securitization and Illegalization

The development of border externalization and of ‘remote-control’ policies has been examined from many analytical perspectives which looked at the relationship between the EU’s external dimension and the cooperation with third countries (Schöfberger 2019; Gabrielli 2016; Adepoju et al. 2009; Boswell 2003), on state and non-state actors involved (Ostrand and Statham 2020; Andersson 2014), the impact of border externalization instruments on the integration process of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Idrissa 2019; Uzelac 2019; Robin 2009), or the complicated negotiation of Mobility Partnerships (Reslow 2012). As scholars pointed out, the issues associated with border externalization practices and with how we frame their impact have predominantly been approached from a Eurocentric gaze, which produced a prejudice when investigating these complex structures (Cuttitta 2020; Adam et al. 2020; Natter 2018). Undoubtedly, while it is necessary to analyze the developments that occurred on the side of the externalizing states, without the response and decisions of the ‘receiving’ side, any research in this field would be affected by a strong bias in its premises. Indeed, as will be discussed in the last section, the agency and the interests of West African countries played an active role in determining the outcome and the shape of border externalization policies. States might very well refuse to agree to most of Europe’s conditions or, instead, accept them willingly in order to foster their own domestic and international position, as occurred in the case of Mauritania. West African countries, in fact, negotiate EU migration policies while aiming to obtain an advantage from the circumstances that this cooperation may generate (Adam et al. 2019). Certainly, this does not mean to ignore the unbalanced power relations that resulted from the end of the Cold War order, which transformed the nature of political negotiations between Europe and Africa into what Bauman (2002, p. 89) described as a constant “bargain-by-force”.

Today, nevertheless, it is generally accepted that West African countries are not simply passive recipients of the decisions adopted by European governments. Rather, these states pursue their own agenda and have the power to negotiate with Europe on specific terms that they agree upon. It is necessary, from this point of view, to keep in mind that the interest of West African countries in EU migration policies can have conflicting and dangerous outcomes. As will be discussed in more detail in the final section, the EU—while being concerned only of its security-oriented agenda—maintained a neutral position in relation to the potential misuse of their policies in third countries. In particular, it will be argued that European states have been responsible for not considering the role of fragile and unbalanced domestic power relations in third countries, such as a previous history of ethnic tensions and conflicts. As a consequence of this dangerous behavior, European migration policies and their resources have been reported to cause, in certain countries, an increase in intra-African *refoulement* practices and deportations, as well as locally instigating racialized human rights abuses against foreigners and local minorities (Andersson 2014; Trauner and Deimel 2013). In certain circumstances, such as in the case of Mauritania, cooperation with European countries resulted in what has been termed the ‘numbers game’, which aimed to demonstrate the efficiency of migration control activities against alleged migrants in countries of origin or transit. As discussed in the section dedicated to Mauritania, the search for ‘illegal’ migrants built upon previous racialized tensions and led to arbitrary deportations of local citizens of the Haratine ethnic group (Andersson 2014). On a regional scale, the increase in deportations which followed cooperation with European Member States is threatening the construction of an ECOWAS area for free movement (Uzelac 2019).

The assessment of the potential impact of EU migration policies, however, depends on a country-by-country examination. The following analysis discusses two divergent responses to Europe’s goal of introducing the concept of ‘illegal’ migration into the West

African region. Before continuing in this direction, it is important to provide the context behind the development of European policies and of the increasing role of border externalization policies in the cooperation with third countries.

The concept of border externalization encompasses a broad spectrum of activities and policy instruments which, in general terms, can be framed as a process where a state's migration policy is expanded to actively involve a third country's engagement. Hence, this article adopts the definition, which describes border externalization as "based on the direct involvement of the externalizing state's border authorities in other countries' sovereign territories, and the outsourcing of border control responsibilities to another country's national surveillance forces" (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, p. 73). In this sense, externalization has the purpose to 'stretch the border' through the multiplication of institutions and actors responsible for stopping and controlling movements in countries of migration origin and of transit. Restrictive visa policies, joint border patrols, police cooperation agreements, economic and material support of border capacity building efforts, and the introduction of the concept of 'illegal' entry and presence constitute only a representative sample of the growing number of instruments adopted to enforce border externalization and the outsourcing of border control activities. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine these externalized European borders as devices aimed only at reinforcing exclusion—or as impassable walls. The EU is not sealing itself off. Rather, it created a differentiated access system to supply the needs of the European labor market, which restricts certain movements while easing others (Bojadžijev and Karakayali 2010). The procedure of differentiating movements refers to the function of borders as 'filters' (Bauböck 2017) characterized by a steady increase in their "selective permeability" (Walther and Retaillé 2015, p. 192). Instead of losing importance, Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) notably argued that we are assisting in the multiplication of borders and in their capacity to select between desired and undesired movements.

From this perspective, the concept of 'liminal porocratic institutions' fits very well with the current development of European borders and its definition provides a particular analytical value to the extension of regimes of control to cooperating third countries (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). The 'liminality' of these institutions expresses their capacity of being flexible and, when required, to continuously adapt its border configuration. Whereas 'porocratic' indicates their primary function as regulatory means of borders' porosity and to operate the crucial distinction between desirable and undesirable movements. In the context of externalizing border functions, these institutions are adaptive and fluid systems of control which aim to follow and govern the mobility patterns of migrants.

Framed as a security issue, over the last few years, migration has been portrayed as a threat to the integrity of European communities. Migrants arriving via boats and *pateras* from the southern shore of the Mediterranean became the dangerous actors of an alleged 'invasion of aliens' in Europe. This negative view of migration was fueled through an extensive use of the so-called securitization rhetoric: a discursive strategy used by media and politicians to create the general perception of a threat coming from outside—while lacking the evidence to support such claims—which, in turn, produced an emotive response demanding an increase in 'security' (Buzan et al. 1998). Thus, if we look at the development of new means to control migration, the process of securitizing migration shifted the domestic perception of risk from the national to a transnational scale and transformed the state's security objectives from the local to the external level (Popescu 2015).

The portrayal of immigrants as a danger originating from outside the European community is reinforced by their description as subjects whose presence is automatically assumed as illegal. Media representation constructed a narrative around what the anthropologist Nicholas De Genova (2002, 2013) called the 'border spectacle', a concept which describes how the 'illegality' of migrants became an immediate label for most immigrants—especially in the case of sub-Saharan migrants in Europe. De Genova (2002, 2013) highlighted how the enactment of a racialized migrant, whose 'illegality' is made visible and perceived as a 'natural' representation, is produced through a 'spectacle of

enforcement' at the border. Therefore, the spectacle of border infringements has created a mediatic performance to induce the public opinion to feel a need for protection and security against the arrival of migrants (De Genova 2013).

The criminalized representation of people as *de facto* illegal for their physical presence plays an important role in defining the social and political response of the public opinion and policymakers. Scholars like Harald Bauder (2014) highlighted the need to focus on the language and suggested that we use the term 'illegalized' in relation to the institutional mechanisms which made the sole presence of migrants 'illegal' while obscuring the variety of their conditions and personal histories. Indeed, the success of labels like 'illegal' and 'irregular' has raised significant linguistic concerns, as they imply a pejorative and stigmatizing trait on those who enter a country without legal permission (Cernadas 2016). Moreover, these terms suggest the feeling of crime and of being wronged, causing powerful repercussions on the perception of the public opinion. The constant use of 'negative' migration-related terminology, as made by media and politicians, fueled the description and narratives in relation to migrants' crossings of the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Among the consequences of this kind of rhetoric, the resulting border spectacle occurring at Europe's frontier produced a specific form of 'illegalization', which led to a racialized portrayal and criminalization of sub-Saharan migrants (Gazzotti 2021; De Genova 2018).

In the process of externalizing border control functions to third countries, the introduction of the concept of 'illegal' movement—and, in parallel, of promoting a new process of 'illegalization'—caused a significant problem which entailed several risks in those countries who were culturally used to free movement. As Ruben Andersson (2014) described in his work, *Illegality Inc.*, what he calls the 'illegality industry', border externalization, and the 'illegalization' of migrants constitute a 'value chain', where migrant illegality is not only produced but also made lucrative. Besides the direct interests of states, economic benefits from this cooperation go to a number of actors like police forces, institutional authorities, and political elites, which all contend this increasing flow of money coming from the EU and its Member States.

The representation of the border spectacle between African and European shores is only the most visible and outstanding part of the illegalization process, which, in the meantime, expanded far beyond the external borders of Europe (Bialasiewicz 2012). As Ruben Andersson (2014, p. 6) notably recognized, today, the border spectacles' "vigilantes are but a sideshow: instead powerful border regimes seek to keep the undesirables out". While the 'spectacle' is still ongoing, especially on the Mediterranean Sea, and perpetuating the image of a racialized illegal sub-Saharan migrant, it is behind the curtain of the European border spectacle that new processes of illegalization are unfolding. Indeed, the metaphor of the curtain provides a useful perspective as it helps us to shift the focus to what is hidden from the spectacle's spotlight, namely what happens to migrants during their journeys and experiences before reaching the Mediterranean shores. From a European perspective, the curtain conceals the new spaces and forms in which the process of 'illegalization' is being enforced—but not enacted—through the externalization and outsourcing of the European border regime in most North and West African countries. Besides the expansion of the condition of 'illegality', migrants in West Africa also face a status of permanent deportability, a concept originally developed by De Genova (2002), with the risk of being arrested and deported at any time and in any place during their journeys.

The European narrative behind these voyages produced a general perception of migrants moving along direct routes from their point of origin till they are able to reach their country of destination. However, as Crawley et al. (2016, p. 5) pointed out, framing these itineraries "as linear, singular uninterrupted journeys or flows of people heading toward Europe is grossly misleading". In contrast with the common idea of the African continent of being on the move, actual migration from sub-Saharan countries towards Europe is minimal and proportionally negligible (de Haas 2008; Andersson 2014). Those politicians and media who argue that African and sub-Saharan migration is fundamentally directed towards Europe fail to recognize the pre-eminence of intra-regional mobility

between West African countries. In fact, West African cross-country migration significantly surpasses the movements to Europe, and, moreover, West and North African countries are themselves important destination countries (Andersson 2014). These movements mainly take the form of seasonal migrations—for example, of itinerant merchants and workers in the agricultural sector—and thus provide an important contribution to family livelihoods in the region. Moreover, with the emergence of specific manufacture productions, such as the fishing industry in Mauritania, these movements also provide the necessary supply of skilled workforce for many countries (Dünnwald 2015). Many of this work-related seasonal movement originated under French colonial authority and remained part of the local custom also after the independence of West African countries. Border crossings were not regulated and informal migration was never perceived as ‘illegal’, neither by the population in the region nor by the states themselves (Bensaâd 2008). It is worth noting that a state like Mali, with a population of 12 million people, has an estimated number of 4 million citizens living outside its territory. However, of this apparently large amount—from a Eurocentric point of view—more than 3.5 million emigrate for seasonal work to other West African countries and only a small amount of around 200.000 Malians live in Europe (Trauner and Deimel 2013). Indeed, it is essential to acknowledge that migratory movements in the West African area have their destination in the region itself. Afterwards, unemployment or dangerous circumstances may constitute some of the many reasons which can lead individuals to induce a successive mobility towards neighboring countries. Authors such as Hannah Cross (2013, p. 8) called this phenomenon a ‘stepwise’ migration, which is often produced by a “contradictory mixture of coercion, compulsion and repression combined with choice, opportunity and mobility”.

The complexity of intra-regional mobility, as we will see in the following sections, highlights the severe misunderstanding of how European authorities perceive movements in West Africa. Eventually, the mistaken belief of migrants being primarily on the road to Europe led to the controversial policy response which adopted the so-called ‘migration routes’ approach (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010). Recognizing this inherently problematic issue, the distinction offered by Casas-Cortes et al. (2015) between ‘routes’ and ‘itineraries’ will be used in the next pages to provide for conceptual clarity. The former, as used by the European Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), pertains to the control strategies implemented by the European migration regime to capture and organize movements into linear and definite routes. Instead, itineraries represent the non-linear movements and the agency of migrants that constantly obliges European border authorities to be flexible and recalibrate their spatial frameworks. Thus, ‘routes’ is used to express the perspective and the actions of the European migration control regime, whereas ‘itinerary’ and ‘movements’ relate directly to the migrants’ practices.

European Border Control Externalization in Third Countries

Before moving to the cases of Mali and Mauritania, in this section, the border externalization will be analyzed from the point of view of the externalizing agents, the European Union, and, more importantly, of its Member States. This will provide the required preliminary background to the different stages of the frequently incoherent relationship between European and West African countries in the field of migration control cooperation.

In 1997, the European Treaty of Amsterdam established for the first time a supra-national competency over migration and asylum policies. Prior to this major event in European history, migration was a sovereign domain of Member States and the main instrument available for cooperation with third countries to control international migration was to negotiate bilateral agreements (Bialasiewicz 2012). In 1999, the European Council of Tampere was tasked to define the content and the approach to be implemented by the EU for its new competencies. The Council of Tampere, therefore, highlighted the necessity of a ‘global vision’ aimed at actively including cooperation with third countries to manage migration at all levels. Moreover, the global vision also recommended to reduce the reasons to move by focusing on what European authorities called the ‘root causes’ of migration—such

as poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment—in countries of origin. Underlying this process, the EU embraced the ‘migration and development nexus’ as its key conceptual framework for its future European migration policy strategies. Based on ‘push-pull’ neoclassical theory, this approach identifies international migration as an outcome of wage and development imbalances between countries (Papademetriou and Martin 1991). From the problematic ‘push-pull’ point of view, the ‘root causes’ of migration may ‘push’ people to migrate and search for employment in another country. To address the conditions in third countries of migration origin, since the Council of Tampere, cooperation in migration control became officially a central part of the EU’s strategy (Harding 2012).

After the Council of Tampere, the EU began to structure its approach and envisage the future of its strategy. In 2002, the informal meeting of the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs held in Santiago de Compostela promoted the development of a ‘global plan to combat illegal immigration’ which considered the inclusion of countries of origin and transit as a fundamental objective (Araujo 2011; Papadopoulos et al. 2008). First actions consisted in the deployment of Immigration Liaison Officers (ILOs) tasked with the collection of information on migration itineraries in North and West African countries, as well as providing technical and economic support to fight human trafficking in these states. During these years, however, the main debates in Europe concerned the relationship between the requests made to third countries to be more active in controlling their emigration movements and the provision of development aid—a tool which has been increasingly misused as a bargain to force negotiation with third countries. This debate peaked at the Council of Seville in 2002, where authorities from Spain and the United Kingdom proposed the reduction of development aid to those countries who were deemed not conforming with borders control duties as laid out in bilateral agreements (Araujo 2011). While this proposal was rejected, the Council agreed to regularly assess compliance with these agreements and to consider sanctions which, nonetheless, were not to be targeted at development aid.

During the following years, migration from third countries lost its prominent position in the domestic agenda of most European countries, leading to a significant delay in the development of a common approach to migration. In 2005, this situation was due to change when the so-called *Asalto Masivo* marked a crucial turning point in the future of European migration management. Fourteen migrants were shot dead by police forces as thousands of migrants tried to jump the border fences of the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Andersson 2014). After this episode, Morocco raided the migrant camps near Ceuta and Melilla and brutally expelled their inhabitants to the desert or to their countries of origin. The *Asalto Masivo* and the inhuman repression of Moroccan authorities caused a general outcry in the European public opinion. Regardless, in the meantime, Morocco displaced thousands of migrants southward along the Atlantic coast and caused a major shift in the itineraries taken by people who tried to reach the Canary Islands (Casas-Cortes et al. 2016). From that moment, most migrants chose to embark further south on fragile *Cayucos* and *Pirogues* from Mauritania, as alternatives to the Western Sahara coast, a much longer and life-threatening journey.

During the same year, the events of Ceuta and Melilla convinced the European Council to hold an informal reunion at Hampton Court (European Council 2005). This meeting, in light of the emotional response to the *Asalto Masivo*, led to the development of the first guidelines of a new migration policy, which resulted in a formal draft of the European Commission for the next European summit (European Commission 2005). At that point, authorities in the EU were mostly convinced of the importance to develop a border policy capable of tracing migrants’ itineraries and translating them into manageable routes (Casas-Cortes et al. 2016). Eventually, the proposal was approved in 2005 and became the comprehensive and holistic migration policy framework known as the ‘Global Approach to Migration’, later renamed as the current ‘Global Approach to Migration and Mobility’ (European Commission 2011; European Council 2005).

For the first time, the Global Approach to Migration introduced a common policy framework that aimed to replace the previous bilateral agreements with a new form of

multilateral cooperation with third countries of migration origin and transit in order to efficiently transfer the responsibility of border control activities away from Europe's external boundaries (Casas-Cortes et al. 2016). The vision behind this approach was to implement a flexible and rapidly adaptive system to control migration flows according to the shifts in migrants' itineraries. To achieve this objective, migrants' itineraries were extensively mapped and turned into governable routes, where their mobility patterns became divided into categories of countries of transit, origin, and of arrival (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010). The overarching framework of the European Union can be synthesized in two main pillars (Boswell 2003). On one side, it envisaged a security-oriented approach whose main goal is the overall reduction of—undocumented—migrant arrivals on its territory. On the other side, it was also designed to promote a preventive approach through economic development in countries of origin as, by doing so, Europe sought to tackle the root causes behind migration.

To implement the new strategy involving third countries, the EU started to negotiate 'mobility partnerships' (MPs), a new form of multilateral agreement in the field of migration control. These partnerships entailed the European security agenda, requiring cooperating countries to sign readmission agreements, strengthen their border control capacities, and to increase their effort against undocumented migration. Besides providing the necessary training, resources, and equipment to implement this strategy, the EU on its part offered third country citizens new legal migration channels for work and study purposes in Europe (Reslow 2012).

Spain became an early precursor and the leading country in the development of agreements for the externalization of borders and the outsourcing of border controls. Till the 1990s, the Spanish border regime with Morocco resembled very much those with its European neighbors. However, the Schengen agreement, which established a zone of free movement between European states, required the harmonization of the Member States' immigration policies towards third countries (Nessel 2009; Gabrielli 2011). The EU was aware "that Ceuta and Melilla are vulnerable flanks of Fortress Europe" and Spain begun with building fences along a two-fold barrier around its exclaves on the African continent (Harding 2012, p. 148). In the early years of implementation of the Schengen area, academics such as James Hathaway (1993) warned that the harmonization of migration policies and the increased difficulty to cross borders would make it challenging for refugees to receive international protection on European territory. However, the EU continued to strengthen its external borders and, in 2005, created the European Agency for the Integrated Border Management (Frontex).

After implementing controls at the Spanish–Moroccan border, itineraries across the Strait of Gibraltar became increasingly difficult and eventually led migrants to choose longer and more dangerous journeys. Soon, migrants moved south, embarking on small *Cayucos* and *Pirogues* from the Mauritanian shores to the Spanish Canary Islands (Nessel 2009; Cross 2013). Consequently, following the arrival of the first *Cayucos* on the Canary Islands, Spanish authorities negotiated bilateral cooperation with Mauritania to establish joint patrols with Frontex in the Atlantic. From that moment, Spain begun to largely involve third countries in the West African region in its migration strategy. In 2005, Spanish authorities officially adopted the so-called 'Plan Africa', an approach aimed at setting up cooperation agreements in the area of migration policy with North and West African countries who in turn benefited from increased funds for development aid and of quotas for temporary or circular migration schemes (Dünwald 2015).

Over time, the EU adopted various policies and soft tools to enhance its capacity to manage migration movements before these were able to arrive at its external borders. Framed under the concept of border externalization and the outsourcing of border controls to third countries, it is useful to highlight the most significant instruments used by Europe in the process of transferring control functions to West Africa and, more importantly, shifting the focus away from the European borders.

First, it is important to remember how the adoption of visa requirements is perhaps the main and most powerful tool available to a country for implementing immigration control (Cuttitta 2015). The establishment of a rigid visa system is consistent with the border reworking process and is directly aimed at constructing a selective and differentiating access to the EU by allowing entry only to 'desirable' individuals. Thus, the EU drew Schengen lists of third countries to define whose citizens require or do not require a visa permit to enter Europe. In this way, while a potential migrant is still in their country of origin, the Member State's consular offices become responsible for examining each application and to decide whether to grant or deny the possibility of accessing Europe.

The negotiation of readmission agreements has progressively gained a fundamental role in European migration policies as it is a mandatory requirement for Member States to deport undocumented migrants. While readmission agreements are commonly bilateral contracts, the EU's effort to create a multilateral approach aimed at implementing readmission into its new Mobility Partnerships. In general, readmission agreements have evolved over the years and, today, depending on the type of obligation, they are commonly divided into two categories. In the first typology, the signing country is committed to accepting only the return of its own citizens. The second typology, instead, the so-called 'second generation' agreements, are negotiated between the EU and countries of migration transit. These new agreements introduced the specific obligation to readmit also individuals who hold a different citizenship of the signing state, as long as it can be proven that the migrant has passed through its territory. The first readmission agreements were signed between Morocco and Spain in the early 1990s, whereas from the early 2000s, these arrangements have been extended to other sub-Saharan and African countries (Nessel 2009).

Alongside these soft tools, the EU promoted border police cooperation with third countries to support patrolling activities of migration routes, to control travel documents, and to train local border forces (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). Until the early 2000s, migrants' most common itinerary from sub-Saharan countries targeted Morocco. This changed soon after, when Spanish authorities decided to sign an early bilateral agreement on police cooperation with Morocco (Gabielli 2011). Since 2004, Spanish and Moroccan police also began to conduct regular joint patrols and coordinated their efforts to contrast undocumented border crossings. After migrants' itineraries shifted southward, Spanish and Mauritanian authorities signed an agreement to deter undocumented migration and enhance migration controls (Andersson 2014). In a short time, airplanes and radar technology were supplied by the Spanish Government to the Mauritanian police in order to monitor international waters between Mauritania and the Canary Islands (Nessel 2009).

Hence, a new defensive and lethal border control system was established with the deployment of Frontex joint operations to prevent vessels from reaching European territorial waters near the Canary Islands. These joint operations are characterized by the leading position of one European Member State, with Frontex serving as the coordinating agency, and employ a wide array of technological instruments, including satellite and drone surveillance, to control and stop migrants (Dünnwald 2011). Soon, many joint operations were deployed in the area between the Canary Islands and the African shores, in the Strait of Gibraltar, and several others in the Mediterranean Sea. In particular, as highlighted in the next section, from 2006, the operation HERA strengthened surveillance over the Atlantic Sea between the Canary Islands and the Mauritanian–Senegalese coast (Cross 2013). During these activities in international waters, international sea law obliges vessels to rescue migrants who are in distress and conduct them to the nearest safe harbor. When people are rescued in the European territorial waters, or if they disembark on European territory, migrants can claim for asylum while being protected by the *non-refoulement* principle. To avoid this outcome, Frontex operations were mainly deployed in Senegalese–Mauritanian sovereign waters as then migrants could be directly handed over to African countries' responsibility. Notably, the case of the 'Marine One' boat, which was refouled to Mauritania, represents a significant example of the Spanish motives behind these operations. The Marine One was rescued in Spanish territorial waters while carrying

around 400 migrants; the boat did not transit Mauritanian sovereign waters but, regardless, these migrants disembarked and were detained in Mauritania for several months (Bensaâd 2008). The European narrative, however, continued to justify these operations as being concerned with saving human lives. In this sense, Europe sees itself as a humanitarian actor and defends the necessity of aerial and maritime patrolling of the Senegalese and Mauritanian shores (Harding 2012). Nonetheless, it is arguable whether forcing migrants to abandon sea journeys for the more dangerous itineraries through the desert could be justified as a humanitarian act.

3. Shifting Itineraries and Border Externalization in North and West Africa

The impact of the fence jumps of 2005 at Ceuta and Melilla also had significant repercussions on the migrant itineraries and migration policies of the entire North and West African region. In the aftermath of the *Asalto Masivo*, the Moroccan police reacted by proceeding with violent roundups of sub-Saharan migrants and deported them to the village of Oujda at the border with Algeria (Andersson 2014; Dünwald 2011). These deportations to the desert, which continued for several years, were strongly criticized and considered as “forced returns that take place outside any legal framework” (Lambert and Clochard 2015, p. 122). Furthermore, Moroccan forces have been alleged to rob, beat, and rape migrants before abandoning them in the desert of Oujda (Harding 2012). Sandra Gil Araujo (2011) gave a wider account of how deportations have been carried out by the Moroccan authorities. Police forces regularly executed raids in the Medinas, especially of Tangier, targeting the quarters where sub-Saharan migrants settled. Afterwards, migrants were treated with brutal force and were denied food and water before being loaded onto the trucks and sent to the closed border with Algeria. In other cases, people were sent south in the desert and left without supplies (Andersson 2014). The repeated appeals made by humanitarian organizations, who denounced these serious racialized violations of human rights suffered by sub-Saharan migrants, have fallen on deaf ears.

As a consequence, migrants soon considered this path as increasingly hazardous to choose and moved their itineraries further south, away from the Strait of Gibraltar and Ceuta and Melilla. Hence, Mauritania rapidly entered the spotlight of European migration management (Gabrielli 2016; Harding 2012). Migrants attempted to reach by boat the Spanish Canary Islands as these were located in the Atlantic Sea and 100–400 km away from the African coasts (Dünwald 2015). First, migrants departed from the Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara coast, but the surveillance of the coastline against migrants was soon extended also to this area (Cross 2013). Therefore, between 2005 and 2007, migrants moved the starting point of their journeys to the Canary Islands farther south near the cities of Nouadhibou and Nouakchott in Mauritania (Nessel 2009). *Pirogues* and *Cayucos* were again the little boats used by thousands of migrants for their long and hazardous sea-crossings.

In the meanwhile, as the EU failed in its attempts to negotiate the first Mobility Partnerships with third countries, the European Commission and Member States began their efforts to introduce the concept of ‘illegal’ movement in West African countries. Historically, the West African region has been characterized by its habitual cross-border movements, which still represent an important voice in the economy and the culture of the area. The introduction of a concept like ‘illegal’ border crossings, thus, did not exclusively regard the policy-level of adopting new regulations. The specific context of West African countries meant that implementing new border control systems and actively regulating movements encountered significantly varying degrees of interest. From this point of view, West African countries were able to exercise their agency and approached European pressures by evaluating the potential benefits or problems associated with their demands. However, as highlighted by the contrasting cases of Mauritania and Mali, the response could be subject to substantial differences and misuse. While the EU did not take into account the local background and, in particular, the potential impact of its policies on West African societies, the ‘illegalization’ of migrants risked exacerbating previous

ethnic tensions in the region. In fact, as will be discussed in the case of Mauritania, the illegalization of migrants was achieved by implementing a racialized profile which targeted the Haratine minority. Nevertheless, ethnic tensions may not automatically lead to such outcomes. In the case of Mali, in the years preceding the civil war, while it was suffering severe ethnic hostilities, the country's specific relationship with migration and its active civil society represented some of the reasons for which the concept of 'illegal' movement was not regarded as desirable.

3.1. Mauritania

Mauritania was one of the very first countries in West Africa to become a policy laboratory for the introduction of the European border externalization. The change in migration itineraries and the country's specific position as an obligatory passage from West Africa to the Maghreb region and its relative proximity to the Canary Islands made Mauritania a strategic partner for Europe. Before this major transformation, however, migration in Mauritania has always been linked to traditional customs as, until the 1970s, the country was characterized to a large extent by nomadism (Dünnwald 2014; Bensaâd 2008). This aspect of the Mauritanian culture remained, during more recent times, as the state neither formally controlled migration nor considered undocumented border-crossing as something 'illegal'. When the itineraries of migrants moved south and the boats began to depart from the ports of Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, Europe rapidly shifted its security-oriented attention to Mauritania's porous borders and the freedom of movement that it granted to foreigners (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010). The EU and the Spanish government recognized, therefore, the importance of promoting an artificial illegalization of the informal migration existing in Mauritania (Bensaâd 2008). In contrast to other neighboring countries—in particular, to Mali—the lack of a diaspora abroad influenced the behavior of Mauritania's governments, its population, and civil society organizations, who did not perceive migration as a relevant issue.

Mauritania was a member of ECOWAS, which created an economic space of free movement for goods, services, and to be progressively extended to people. However, Mauritania left ECOWAS in 1999, but maintained free movement agreements with Senegal and Mali. This choice had its well-founded reasons as informal and seasonal movements were fundamental in the lives of West African populations and the borders inherited by the former colonial powers arbitrarily divided pre-existing societies (Andersson 2014; Tamburini and Vernassa 2010). Thus, border crossings in this region were not perceived as illegal by the local populations, as they were part of normal life for many West African countries (Dünnwald 2015).

Mauritania is commonly categorized as a rentier state because the country's economy mostly relies on the rents deriving from its natural resources and its strategic contact position between North and West Africa (Cross 2013; Tamburini and Vernassa 2010). Furthermore, Mauritania's society is historically characterized by strong ethnic segmentation due to its history of widespread slavery, which still affects the current socio-political relationships (Dünnwald 2014; Bensaâd 2008). The country's population is divided between the black Haratine minority, who live mostly in the south of the country along the Senegal river, and the majoritarian Beidanes of Arab ethnicity, who live in the cities and the north (Andersson 2014). The Beidanes-Moors represented the political elite of the country and forcefully imposed their dominance of the poor population of the Haratine minority, which was increasingly pushed southward along the Senegal river. More recently, a conflict between Senegal and Mauritania in the 1990s became an opportunity for the racialized displacement of tens of thousands of Mauritanian Haratines to Senegal and Mali. While the conflict soon calmed down, the introduction of a figure of an 'irregular' migrant, which immediately became identified with people of black ethnicity, was considered to be an extremely high risk of inflaming once more ethnic tensions (Bensaâd 2008).

In the framework of the 'Plan Africa' and the wider European GAMM, the Spanish authorities coordinated their efforts to stop the journeys to the Canary Islands by offering

development aid and equipment to Mauritania in exchange for their cooperation. In 2005, the Spanish Government increased the number of sea patrols around the Canary Islands, which, in 2006, became the cornerstone of the new HERA I operation coordinated by Frontex. Soon after, the operations HERA II and III followed and Mauritania was supplied with technological equipment to enhance its border surveillance and interception capacities (Cross 2013). Nonetheless, initially these measures failed to obtain their goal as arrivals increased to their maximum height of 30,000 people in 2006 (Dünnwald 2014; Harding 2012). Therefore, Spain quickly decided to extend its control activities to the Mauritanian territory and found there a conveniently favorable political context. During these years, authorities in Mauritania were particularly open to cooperation as the country was eager to regain international recognition after the two coups d'état of 2005 and 2008 (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010). In 2006, Spain and Mauritania negotiated two agreements which, moreover, also entailed the deployment of 250 Guardia Civil police forces in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou (Dünnwald 2015). Additionally, Spain supported the Mauritanian Gendarmerie by sending surveillance equipment, such as helicopters and night vision goggles (Andersson 2014; Cross 2013). In particular, a detention center was established by Spain in the dismissed school compound no. 6 in Nouadhibou and was called *Centro de Estancia Temporal de los Inmigrantes*. Rather, this center was largely known and referred to as 'Guantanamo' by Mauritanian citizens and migrants themselves (Andersson 2014; Dünnwald 2015; Harding 2012). In fact, Mauritania at that time had no laws against illegal migration until 2010, thence, unfortunately making the name 'Guantanamo' fitting for this out of law condition. The former Malian minister for Culture and Tourism, Aminata Traoré (2007), argued that Africa was in the process of becoming a prison due to these detention centers built or financed by Europe on the continent. Furthermore, the Mauritanian shores were controlled by joint patrols between the Mauritanian Gendarmerie and Spanish forces. In particular, the EU enhanced Mauritania's border surveillance and migration control activities with EUR 8 million through the European Development Fund and the more security-oriented Instrument for Stability between 2008 and 2013 (Frowd 2014).

In 2009, the number of arrivals to the Canary Islands reduced substantially as the HERA operation was said to be responsible for halting almost entirely these journeys (Dünnwald 2011). HERA was praised for its ability to patrol and intercept migrant vessels and has been described by Frontex as its most successful joint operation to date (Frontex 2009). However, the self-proclaimed 'success' of the operation did not interrupt movements to Europe and did not save the lives of migrants. Instead, the only result achieved by Frontex's intervention seems to have made, overall, itineraries more perilous (Van Houtum 2010). Furthermore, the HERA operations and the bilateral agreements signed successively with Senegal continued to broaden the scope of surveillance and interception activities. Consequently, this made also the Senegalese coast troublesome to embark for the Canary Islands, and migrants partly moved further south on even more dangerous and longer itineraries from Gambia and Guinea to reach these Islands.

The European Union managed to successfully incorporate Mauritania into its migration regime for its strategic position as the country became the desired "buffer zone between Africa and Europe" (Cross 2013, p. 90). The expansion of migration control over the Mauritanian territory also entailed routine raids in Nouadhibou's migrant quarters. These roundups filled 'Guantanamo' with those presumed to be migrants intending to move towards Europe. Successively, these—alleged—migrants were deported to the Senegalese and Malian border, respectively, in Rosso and Nioro (Andersson 2014; Cross 2013). The latent racism between Haratines and Beidanes, as described before, was fueled by the introduction of a criminalized 'illegal' migrant (Dünnwald 2014, 2015). This situation, caused by the Spanish and European intervention, led to a racialized surveillance regime which arbitrarily criminalized black Haratines as potential illegal migrants. In fact, the normal presence of informal migration from neighboring countries in Mauritania made it impossible and unreasonable to determine who, eventually, was planning to migrate towards Europe. Therefore, this migration regime was set to target all those who might

look like a 'black' sub-Saharan migrant, as in the case of the Mauritanian Haratines. This was a consequence of creating also in Mauritania an image of the illegal migrant as a black individual from sub-Saharan Africa, worsening even more the already racialized relationships in the Mauritanian society (Cross 2013).

Stephan Dünwald (2015) conducted in 2012 fieldwork in Mauritania, which acknowledged the increased violence and harassment against foreign citizens, even if they were legally residing in the country. An atmosphere of fear reigned among 'legal' migrants of black ethnicity as arbitrary arrests were rolled out on a regular basis. These people, who possessed the required legal documents, suffered temporary detentions in overcrowded prison facilities which even lacked food and water. Indeed, this procedure was defined by Andersson (2014, p. 114) as the "numbers game": when 'real', irregular migrants were too scarce, numbers were inflated through arbitrary arrests of legal migrants in order to show European donors the utility of their activities (see also Harding 2012). However, if the police deemed an individual as being illegally in Mauritania, she or he was, in most cases, deported to Rosso, a Senegalese border town. From there, migrants usually just re-entered Mauritania but were deprived of all their possessions by the Mauritanian police.

Further, through this approach, Mauritanian forces arrested migrants originating from Mali and Senegal. Hence, the country broke the bilateral contracts on free movement previously signed with its neighbors, by detaining their citizens in 'Guantanamo' and finally deporting them to the respective borders (APDHA/AME 2009; Cross 2013). Some NGOs denounced the participation of European actors in these violent abuses of human rights perpetrated against migrants, but allegations were rejected by Spanish authorities and attributed to Mauritanian authorities (APDHA/AME 2009). Meanwhile, the EU continued to finance this migration regime even after 2009, to expand the control of migration flows in Mauritania. In particular, in 2010, approximately 45 new border posts were built along the borders with Senegal and Mali, thus becoming the only legal entry points to the country (Frowd 2014). Eventually, whereas 'Guantanamo' was praised by the Spanish authorities, by 2010, the Mauritanian Gendarmerie dismantled all furniture and equipment for their own use, leaving it ruined and abandoned (Andersson 2014).

3.2. Mali

With the expansion of the border externalization and the outsourcing of border patrol to countries along the West African coast, migratory itineraries shifted to another sea, the internal sea of Africa: the Sahara (Andersson 2014; Gatti 2007). Following the movements taken by migrants, European efforts begun to focus on Mali with the aim of integrating the country into its externalized border regime. The nature and the outcome of this process, however, is of particular interest if it is compared with the racialized migration regime put in place in the neighboring Mauritania. For a long time, the democracy in Mali has been considered erroneously as an outstanding case of institutional best-practice in West Africa and the outbreak of the civil war in 2012 was often viewed as an unforeseen event (Sangaré and McSparren 2018). However, the rapid political disintegration caused by the war was the outcome of a protracted condition of insecurity and tensions rising in the country.

Ethnically divided among their historical roles as pastoralists and cultivators, droughts and the effects of climate change worsened resource-based conflicts by reducing available fertile lands (Pelckmans 2015). Often inexistent at the local level, the authority of the state served to increase the feeling of insecurity and the emergence of militias with the aim of defending their scarce livelihoods. Moreover, desertification made access to water for agriculture and livestock a pressing issue, forcing pastoralists to abandon their nomadic customs and settle down permanently where they found a suitable place with water sources. The population in Mali is segmented between the Mande ethnicity, which represents the majority of the country, with over 50%; the Peuhl or Fulbe, Voltaic, Tuareg, and the Soninké, who together constitute the complex ethnic mosaic in Mali (Sangaré and McSparren 2018). Traditionally separated along the distinction between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers, ethnic-based conflicts have repeatedly occurred in Mali's history. However, ethnic

tensions had no impact on the country's relationship with migration and a process of racialized illegalization, in contrast to Mauritania, did not occur. Following the path of Europe's border externalization efforts in Mali, it is remarkable to note the role played by its diaspora and their remittances, by the very active civil society organizations, as well as by its strong need for regional integration. All these elements combined made migration a sensible topic and the introduction of policies aimed at restricting movement neither desirable nor useful from the Malian point of view.

Mali represents a peculiar example for its socio-political reaction towards the European border externalization: less compliant, yet open to negotiate if their demands were met. The country occupies a strategic position as it is both a significant point of origin and of transit for people coming from Congo, Cameroon, and other African states. However, movements from—and passing through—Mali towards Europe, and particularly to France, started comparatively late in the mid-nineties and only witnessed an increase between 2002 and 2006 (Dünnwald 2011). Nevertheless, an early attempt to introduce in Mali, and other West African countries, the concept of 'illegal' migration was conducted by an Italian NGO called CISP (International Committee for the Development of Peoples). The CISP, financed by the European Commission, has cooperated with six West African countries and the IOM since 2004 by organizing awareness campaigns to warn over the risks of undocumented migration towards Europe. Till the events of Ceuta and Melilla in 2005, these campaigns had a rather small audience. In particular, Mali is a straightforward case of the inherent difficulties of introducing the notion of 'illegal' movements, as its society is historically bound to migration in the West African region (Idrissa 2019). It is estimated, in fact, that a third of the country's population habitually works and resides on a seasonal basis in the neighboring states such as in the case of the Ivory Coast.

Nonetheless, the events of Ceuta and Melilla in 2005 had meaningful consequences also in Mali. First, Morocco deported and returned 400 Malian citizens as an immediate reaction against sub-Saharan migrants. In the following months, Mauritania also started to return migrants to the Senegalese and Malian border. However, while Senegal quickly refused to accept these indiscriminate deportations, Mali continued to tolerate this practice and became critically labelled for this reason as the 'African dustbin' (Vincent 2010). Successively, in 2006, the EU and other international agencies, such as the UNHCR and IOM, begun to influence the Malian government by attempting to create awareness of the risks of undocumented migration (Dünnwald 2015). This task, however, needed to face the fact that Malian society is characterized by its considerable diaspora, with more than a third of its population residing in other West African countries (Idrissa 2019). Because of the prominent role of its diaspora, Mali has been one of the most convinced supporters of the ECOWAS community. While its diaspora mostly depends on seasonal work in the West African region, Mali also requires the qualified immigrants who habitually arrive from the neighboring Senegal and the Ivory Coast. Consequently, in order to realize the GAMM guidelines, the EU needed to deploy a significant effort to convince the Malian government of the usefulness of its border policies. Considerable persuasion work was needed to demonstrate the existence of benefits to negotiate agreements entailing surveillance, readmission clauses, and border controls. In fact, the large diaspora and the strong economic dependence on maintaining free movement with its neighbors represented a considerable disincentive for Mali to introduce restrictive migration policies (Trauner and Deimel 2013).

Till the 1970s, the former colonial power of France granted the right of free movement to Malian citizens. From that moment, however, France adopted progressively constrained immigration policies and introduced specific visa requirements. After the 2005 events of Ceuta and Melilla—and the following European pressure on countries of origin and of transit—France attempted to negotiate a bilateral readmission agreement with Mali. The French Government linked the agreement to the extension of development aid projects, whereas Mali, due to the value attributed to its diaspora, demanded an annual regularization program for 1500 Malian *sans papiers* living in France (Trauner and Deimel 2013).

The negotiation quickly became a major topic in the public debate, with many civil society organizations campaigning against the approval of the readmission agreement. When the agreement was finally due to be approved, the increasing popular criticism led the Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré to refuse to sign the agreement (Gatti 2007). As a retaliation, France interrupted the *Co-développement* projects and reduced development aid to Mali (Dünwald 2011).

In the meantime, the Spanish authorities sought to create new ties with Mali and likewise try to establish a bilateral readmission agreement. Spain's history of diplomatic relations with Mali commenced only in 2006, when, in conformity with its 'Plan Africa', it opened an embassy in Bamako (Andersson 2014). In this case, the two countries managed straightaway to sign the readmission agreement, which included a quota of 800 Malian temporary migrants per year allowed to work in Spain (Trauner and Deimel 2013). In contrast to France, Spain profited from the fact that its image was not that of the former colonial power in the Malian public opinion. Furthermore, no significant Malian diaspora lived in Spain. Nonetheless, the Spanish Government soon interrupted the program for temporary workers after accepting only 26 Malian citizens, but insisted on continuing repatriations in the first years after the agreement (Dünwald 2015).

The EU was a rather irrelevant actor in Mali's migration policy until 2008. Nevertheless, with the Rabat summit of 2006 the European Commission, delegates from Mali, Spain, and France, together with ECOWAS representatives, agreed to open the *Centre d'Information et de la Gestion des Migrations* (CIGEM) bureau in Bamako (Commission 2008). Dünwald (2011, 2015) illustrated the curious history of this center, which opened in 2008 and was financed by the European Commission with EUR 10 million from the fund for development aid (Commission 2008). Its main duty was to pave the way for a new migration policy and to organize guestworker programs towards Europe—a task which, however, was quickly rejected by European states (Idrissa 2019). Afterwards, the center was limited to elaborate awareness campaigns over the risks of illegal migration and offered counselling to returnees (Trauner and Deimel 2013). However, none of these programs achieved particular success. The CIGEM was closed without notice in 2014, and its website removed was from the internet. The EU also funded a project to establish 17 new border zones along the Malian boundaries, partly co-financed with Spain. However, as Dünwald (2015) reports from his fieldwork in Mali, rumors argued that most of the donated materials for this project, such as 4 × 4 vehicles and computers, never reached their destination and, eventually, that previous border crossing habits never changed.

The comparison between Mali and Mauritania highlights the significant differences in the European engagement with third countries in its efforts that aimed to implement border externalization measures. First, the EU itself lacked a real intention to push for a strong cooperation with Mali, as the case with the CIGEM demonstrated, and potential agreements were mainly negotiated by individual Member States. A plausible explanation is that concurrent circumstances occurring on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Sea were more pressing and shifted the political priorities of European institutions (Cross 2013). Moreover, Mali's geographic position played a crucial role as the country is particularly integrated with its neighbors. Migration, thus, represents an essential issue because of the presence of a significant diaspora and the importance of seasonal migration for the countries' economy—characteristics which were absent in the case of Mauritania. While negotiating migration cooperation agreements, Malian authorities needed to carefully consider the consequent social and economic costs of, for example, accepting readmission obligations for its diaspora. The impact of these policies on the transnational ties of its community abroad is also reflected, as we have seen, by the very active Malian civil society and its protest against previous negotiations with France. On the other hand, countries like Mauritania, who lack the existence of a consistent diaspora, seem to have not experienced the same concerns regarding the negative consequences of readmission agreements. In this sense, Mauritania was able to favor other aspects which were deemed to be more beneficial by cooperating on migration control, such as improving its international image

after the coups d'état of 2005 and 2008. The presence of Arab ethnic majorities holding the political power has reportedly caused the common use of racial profiling during migration control activities which targeted and criminalized black sub-Saharan migrants. Historically, the Beidan political elite in Mauritania fostered its dominant position while the Haratine community and other ethnic minorities faced severe discrimination and recurrent displacements. In an effort to demonstrate the efficiency of Mauritania's commitment to its European partners as a West African 'gatekeeper', migrants and local communities were increasingly subjected to arbitrary arrests and deportations only because of the color of their skin. Instead, in a non-Arab country such as Mali, this was obviously neither possible nor desired. While ethnic hierarchies and tensions affect Malian society as well, the strong link with regional movements and its diaspora seem to have excluded migration from the ongoing confrontation. Eventually, the negligent process behind the European border externalization did not take into consideration the very different country-based contexts in West Africa, exposing, unfortunately, local societies to dangerous consequences, as revealed by the racialized illegalization that occurred in Mauritania. West African countries, nonetheless, are not just passive actors and do retain their own agency in this field. Despite the repressive reaction of France, which suspended *Co-développement* projects after the Malian refusal to sign a bilateral cooperation agreement, it is difficult to determine a clear response of European actors in case of rejection. A wider analysis, which includes more countries in the area, could investigate the indirect consequences of cooperation on migration control and provide some interesting insight into the policy implications both for migrants and local societies.

4. Conclusions

In the late 1990s, European countries recognized the inherent limits of a migration strategy based only on strengthening Europe's external borders. During the following years, the European Union developed a far more articulated approach and began to actively engage third countries in a broad process that aimed to externalize Europe's borders and outsource its border patrol functions. Generally viewed as a migrant-sending region, West Africa soon became a key partner in the new European project to intervene on migrant itineraries before these were able to reach Europe. Among the many instruments deployed by the EU in its cooperation with third countries, this article examined the major role played by policies which implemented efficient border controls in countries of migration transit and of origin. In particular, what emerged from the analysis of the cases of Mauritania and Mali is that the 'success'—from a European perspective—of introducing the concept of 'illegal' movements depended on the social and ethnic background of each country. Moreover, in a geographical area which is historically characterized by free cross-border movements, such as West Africa, the illegalization of migration is exposed to the risk of harming ethnic minorities through a racialized portrayal of sub-Saharan migrants.

The European Union, with Spain as its forerunner, established a growing number of policies and agreements to stop migrants before these could leave or pass through the West African region. The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility gradually designed a set of multilateral mechanisms which offered the required flexibility to constantly adapt to the shifting itineraries of migrants. Thus, the pathways taken by migrants were divided into manageable and governable routes through the categorization of countries in places of 'transit', 'origin', and 'destination'. New agreements, called Mobility Partnerships, were proposed to third countries and entailed a dual approach backing the main objective of externalizing migration control. On one side, the EU required third countries to accept a series of security-oriented measures, such as readmission agreements, the deployment of joint patrols, and to increase border control capacities. On the other side, the use of development aid and the creation of new opportunities for legal—but temporary—migration was considered to tackle what Europe judged to be the root causes of migration, notably poverty and unemployment, and to bargain the favor of third countries' authorities.

In Europe, the processes of illegalization were commonly connected to the extensive use of rhetorical strategies employed by media and politicians to depict and identify migrants as an external threat. Over the years, the enforcement of Europe's external borders in the Mediterranean and the Balkans performed the function of producing the so-called 'border spectacle', which made the confrontation between undocumented migrants and the border police a powerful representation of migrant's 'illegal' act of trespassing borders. The media visibility of such a narrative served as a crucial step in the construction of a racialized image of the 'illegal' sub-Saharan migrant. Nonetheless, the progressive implementation of border externalization agreements in West Africa went along with a new and less spectacularized illegalization of migration. Seen from the perspective of the European public, the illegalization and the mechanisms to combat undocumented migration have become increasingly hidden behind what this article called the border spectacle's curtain. Away from the spotlight, the curtain conceals the dangerous impact of new approaches to stop migration from West African countries arriving at Europe's borders.

Mauritania and Mali have been selected as case studies to highlight the consequences of the intricate implementation of European migration control strategies in West Africa. The analysis of the specific context of only two countries represents a limit of this research in regard to the wider implications for the entire West African area and the cooperation in the field of border control policies. Moreover, the focus and the reflection offered by this contribution has been circumscribed to aspects which pertain directly to the introduction or refusal of border control activities in a region where these were not present before. These experiences might not apply to other countries in the area, nor do they aim to cover the more complex nature of cooperation agreements and the role played by development funds in the field of border security and migration control.

The main insight resulting from this investigation suggests the impossibility and the dangers of applying a one-size-fits-all policy approach to the countries in the West African region. The complexity behind the dynamics of new border control policies cannot point to a uniform assessment of the potential consequences as each country requires a specific analysis. This issue should specifically inform researchers who investigate the impact of the European border externalization in West Africa or in other areas of the African continent. More importantly, policymakers should be aware of the socio-political contexts which are the object of their policies as several factors influence the outcome of introducing the concept of 'illegal' movement. As acknowledged in this study, a major role was played in this regard by different elements, such as the presence of a strong diaspora, a previous history of ethnic conflicts, and of how migration is perceived in the public opinion, by civil society organizations, or by political elites. Whereas in Mauritania, the illegalization of migration has been implemented upon pre-existent ethnic tensions in its society, the Malian context was less inclined to accept new limitations to international movement due to the peculiar characteristics of Malian society, which is strongly defined by its diaspora. Eventually, the externalized and outsourced European border strategy in the West African area only achieved cooperation with those countries who saw a political and economic benefit from the introduction of illegalization policies. A question which remains open concerns the broader implications for the social behavior and work patterns as a result of introducing restrictive border controls and limiting allowed movements. It is unclear to what extent this will change the landscape of regional West African trajectories and if it will affect the ECOWAS area of free movement. In the meantime, as border capacity building projects continue to be implemented, an interesting area of research regards the analysis of the consequent transformation of local livelihoods which are affected by these developments. While it is difficult to assess whether European governments succeeded in achieving a reduction in arrivals on their territories, this strategy has certainly served to further conceal the increasingly deadlier and hazardous journeys of migrants.

Funding: The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Adam, Ilke, Florian Trauner, Leonie Jegen, and Christof Roos. 2019. West African interests in (EU) migration policy. *UNU-CRIS Policy Brief* 4: 1–11.
- Adam, Ilke, Florian Trauner, Leonie Jegen, and Christof Roos. 2020. West African interests in (EU) migration policy. Balancing domestic priorities with external incentives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46: 3101–18. [CrossRef]
- Adepoju, Aderanti, Femke Van Noorloos, and Annelies Zoomers. 2009. Europe's Migration Agreements with Migrant-Sending Countries in the Global South: A Critical Review. *International Migration* 48: 42–75. [CrossRef]
- Andersson, Ruben. 2014. *Illegality Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- APDHA/AME. 2009. Otra Frontera Sin Derechos: Mali—Mauritania. Available online: http://www.apdha.org/media/Informe_Nioro200509.pdf (accessed on 14 February 2021).
- Araujo, Sandra G. 2011. Reinventing Europe's Borders: Delocalization and Externalization of EU Migration Control through the involvement of Third Countries. In *Crossing and Controlling Borders. Immigration Policies and Their Impact on Migrants' Journeys*. Edited by Mechthild Baumann, Astrid Lorenz and Kerstin Rosenow. Opladen and Farmington Hills, MI: Budrich UniPress, pp. 21–44.
- Bauböck, Rainer. 2017. Political Membership and Democratic Boundaries. In *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*. Edited by Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bauder, Harald. 2014. Why We Should Use the Term 'Illegalized' Refugee or Immigrant. A Commentary. *International Journal of Refugee Law* 26: 327–32. [CrossRef]
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2002. Reconnaissance Wars of the Planetary Frontierland. *Theory, Culture & Society* 19: 81–90.
- Bensaâd, Ali. 2008. L'«irrégularité» de l'immigration en Mauritanie: Une appréhension nouvelle, conséquence d'enjeux migratoires externs. *CARIM notes d'analyse et de synthèse* 2008/76. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI, Florence. Available online: <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/10509> (accessed on 14 February 2021).
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza. 2012. Off-shoring and Out-sourcing the Borders of Europe: Libya and EU Border Work in the Mediterranean. *Geopolitics* 17: 843–66. [CrossRef]
- Bojadžijev, Manuela, and Serhat Karakayali. 2010. Recuperating the Sideshows of Capitalism: The Autonomy of Migration Today. *E-Flux Journal*. 17. Available online: www.e-flux.com/journal/17/67379/recuperating-the-sideshows-of-capitalism-the-autonomy-of-migration-today (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Boswell, Christina. 2003. The 'External Dimension' of EU Immigration and Asylum Policy. *International Affairs* 79: 619–38. [CrossRef]
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. 1998. *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Casas-Cortes, Maribel, Sebastian Cobarrubias, and John Pickles. 2015. Riding Routes and Itinerant Borders: Autonomy of Migration and Border Externalization. *Antipode* 47: 894–914. [CrossRef]
- Casas-Cortes, Maribel, Sebastian Cobarrubias, and John Pickles. 2016. 'Good Neighbours make Good Fences': Seahorse operations, border externalization and extra-territoriality. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23: 231–51. [CrossRef]
- Cernadas, Pablo C. 2016. Language as Migration Policy Tool. *SUR-International Journal on Human Rights* 13: 97–111. [CrossRef]
- Crawley, Heaven, Franck Düvell, Katharina Jones, Simon McMahon, and Nando Sigona. 2016. Destination Europe? Understanding the Dynamics and Drivers of Mediterranean Migration in 2015. *MEDMIG Final Report*. Available online: <http://www.medmig.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/research-brief-destination-europe.pdf> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Cross, Hannah. 2013. *Migrants, Borders and Global Capitalism. West African Labour Mobility and EU Borders*. New York: Routledge.
- Cuttitta, Paolo. 2015. Territorial and Non-territorial: The Mobile Borders of Migration Controls. In *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Edited by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 241–55.
- Cuttitta, Paolo. 2020. Ripensare l'esternalizzazione. Per una critica dell'euro-centrismo e dello stato-centrismo negli studi su migrazioni e confini—Rethinking externalization. For a critique of Euro-centrism and state-centrism in migration and border studies. *Rivista Geografica Italiana* CXXVII: 55–73. [CrossRef]
- De Genova, Nicholas. 2002. Migrant "Illegality" and Deportability in Everyday Life. *Anthropology* 31: 419–47. [CrossRef]
- De Genova, Nicholas. 2013. Spectacles of migrant 'illegality': The scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36: 1180–98. [CrossRef]

- De Genova, Nicholas. 2018. The “migrant crisis” as racial crisis: Do Black Lives Matter in Europe? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41: 1765–82. [CrossRef]
- de Haas, Hein. 2008. The Myth of Invasion, the inconvenient realities of Africa migration to Europe. *Third World Quarterly* 29: 1305–22. [CrossRef]
- Dünnwald, Stephan. 2011. On Migration and Security: Europe managing Migration from sub-Saharan Africa. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 22: 103–28. [CrossRef]
- Dünnwald, Stephan. 2014. Mauritania: Europe’s First External Border. In *The Shadow of the Citadel. The Impact of the European Migration Regime on “Third Countries”*. Edited by Stephan Dünnwald, Martin Glasenapp, Judith Kopp, Karl Kopp, Francisco Mari and Sophia Wirsching. Frankfurt am Main-Berlin: Bread for the World-Medico International-PRO ASYL, pp. 30–35.
- Dünnwald, Stephan. 2015. Remote Control? Europäisches Migrationsmanagement in Mauretanien und Mali. *Movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 1: 1–32.
- European Commission. 2005. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Priority Actions for Responding to the Challenges of Migration: First Follow-Up to Hampton Court. COM (2005) 621. European Commission. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52005DC0621> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- European Commission. 2008. The European Commission and Mali Join Forces to Improve the Management of Migration. Press Release. European Commission. Available online: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-1463_en.htm?locale=en (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- European Commission. 2011. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. COM (2011) 743 Final. European Commission. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=celex%3A52011DC0743> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- European Council. 2005. Global Approach to Migration: Priority Actions Focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean. 15744/05. European Council. Available online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15744-2005-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Frontex. 2009. Annual Report 2009. Frontex. Available online: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201008/20100805ATT79751/20100805ATT79751EN.pdf> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Frowd, Philippe M. 2014. The field of border control in Mauritania. *Security Dialogue* 45: 226–41. [CrossRef]
- Gabrielli, Lorenzo. 2011. La construction de la politique d’immigration espagnole: Ambigüités et ambivalences à travers le cas des migrations ouest-africaines. Ph.D. dissertation, Bordeaux 4, école Doctorale de Science Politique, Sciences Po Bordeaux, Université de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France.
- Gabrielli, Lorenzo. 2016. Multilevel inter-regional governance of mobility between Africa and Europe. Towards a deeper and broader externalisation. *GRITIM-UPF Working Paper Series* 30: 1–41.
- Gatti, Fabrizio. 2007. *Bilal, il mio Viaggio da Infiltrato nel Mercato dei Nuovi schiavi*. Milan: Rizzoli.
- Gazzotti, Lorena. 2021. (Un)making illegality: Border control, racialized bodies and differential regimes of illegality in Morocco. *The Sociological Review* 69: 277–95. [CrossRef]
- Harding, Jeremy. 2012. *Border Vigils. Keeping Migrants Out of the Rich World*. London: Verso.
- Hathaway, James. 1993. Harmonizing for Whom: The Devaluation of Refugee Protection in the Era of European Economic Integration. *Cornell International Law Journal* 26: 719–35.
- Idrissa, Rahmane. 2019. *Dialogue in Divergence. The Impact of EU Migration Policy on West African Integration: The Cases of Nigeria, Mali, and Niger*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Lambert, Nicolas, and Olivier Clochard. 2015. Mobile and Fatal: The EU Borders. In *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Edited by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 119–37.
- Mezzadra, Sandro, and Brett Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labour*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Natter, Katharina. 2018. Rethinking immigration policy theory beyond ‘Western liberal democracies’. *Comparative Migration Studies* 6: 1–21. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Nessel, Lori A. 2009. Externalized Borders and the Invisible Refugee. *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 40: 625–99.
- Ostrand, Nicole, and Paul Statham. 2020. ‘Street-level’ agents operating beyond ‘remote control’: How overseas liaison officers and foreign state officials shape UK extraterritorial migration management. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 25–45. [CrossRef]
- Papademetriou, Demetrios G., and Philip L. Martin. 1991. *The Unsettled Relationship: Labor Migration and Economic Development*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Papadopoulos, Dimitris, Niamh Stephenson, and Vassilis Tsianos. 2008. *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Pluto Press.
- Pelckmans, Lotte. 2015. Mali: Intra-ethnic fragmentation and the emergence of new (in-)security actors. In *Insights from Eastern Africa and Sahel. Protection and (In)Security Beyond the State*. Edited by Kasper Hoffmann and Louise W. Moe. Copenhagen: DIIS, pp. 43–50.
- Popescu, Gabriel. 2015. Controlling Mobility: Embodying Borders. In *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Edited by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 100–15.

- Poutignat, Philippe, and Jocelyne Streiff-Fénart. 2010. Migration Policy Development in Mauritania: Process, Issues, and Actors. In *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Edited by Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 202–19.
- Reslow, Natasja. 2012. The Role of Third Countries in EU Migration Policy: The Mobility Partnerships. *European Journal of Migration and Law* 14: 393–415. [CrossRef]
- Robin, Nelly. 2009. ECOWAS, an Area of Free Movement and First Border Post for the Schengen Area. In *Regional Challenges of West African Migration. African and European Perspectives*. Edited by Marie Trémolières. Paris: OECD/SWAC, pp. 143–58.
- Ruhrmann, Henriette, and David FitzGerald. 2016. The Externalization of Europe's Border in the Refugee Crisis, 2015–2016. Working Paper 194, CCIS Center for Comparative Immigration Studies. Available online: https://ccis.ucsd.edu/_files/wp194.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Sangaré, Yalla, and Jason McSparren. 2018. Acknowledging Conflict across Mali's Centre: Drivers and History. *AfSol Journal* 2: 14–38.
- Schöfberger, Irene. 2019. The EU's Negotiation of Narratives and Policies on African Migration 1999–2019. *European Foreign Affairs Review* 24: 513–32.
- Tamburini, Francesco, and Maurizio Vernassa. 2010. *I Paesi del Grande Maghreb: Storia, Istituzioni e Geo-Politica di una Identità Regionale*. Pisa: Plus.
- Traoré, Aminata. 2007. L'Afrique Devient une Prison. *L'Humanité*. Available online: <http://www.humanite.fr/node/376856?amp> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Trauner, Florian, and Stephanie Deimel. 2013. The Impact of EU Migration Policies on African Countries: The Case of Mali. *International Migration* 51: 20–32. [CrossRef]
- Uzelac, Ana. 2019. Incoherent Agendas. Do European Union migration Policies Threaten Regional Integration in West Africa? *Clingendael Policy Brief* 1–9. Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21329> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Van Houtum, Henk. 2010. Human Blacklisting: The Global Apartheid of the EU's External Border Regime. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28: 957–76. [CrossRef]
- Vincent, Elise. 2010. Refoulés à Bamako. *Le Monde*. Available online: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2010/11/17/refoules-a-bamako_1441305_3212.html (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Walther, Olivier J., and Denis Retaillé. 2015. Rethinking borders in a Mobile World: An Alternative Model. In *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Edited by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 191–203.



Article

Antidiscrimination Meets Integration Policies: Exploring New Diversity-Related Challenges in Europe

Tina Magazzini

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 50133 Florence, Italy; tina.magazzini@eui.eu

Abstract: Contemporary European societies are increasingly diverse. Migration both within and to Europe has contributed over the past decades to the rise of new religious, racial, ethnic, social, cultural and economic inequality. Such transformations have raised questions about the (multi-level) governance of diversity in Europe, thus determining new challenges for both scholars and policy-makers. Whilst the debate around diversity stemming from migration has become a major topic in urban studies, political science and sociology in Europe, Critical Race Studies and Intersectionality have become central in US approaches to understanding inequality and social injustice. Among the fields where ‘managing diversity’ has become particularly pressing, methodological issues on how to best approach minorities that suffer from multiple discrimination represent some of the hottest subjects of concern. Stemming from the interest in putting into dialogue the existing American scholarship on CRT and anti-discrimination with the European focus on migrant integration, this paper explores the issue of integration in relation to intersectionality by merging the two frames. In doing so, it provides some observations about the complementarity of a racial justice approach for facing the new diversity-related challenges in European polity. In particular, it illustrates how Critical Race Studies can contribute to the analysis of inequality in Europe while drawing on the integration literature.

Keywords: integration; race; migration; Europe; United States

Citation: Magazzini, Tina. 2021. Antidiscrimination Meets Integration Policies: Exploring New Diversity-Related Challenges in Europe. *Social Sciences* 10: 221. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060221>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 8 March 2021
Accepted: 2 June 2021
Published: 10 June 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

In a globalized yet very unequal world, issues of diversity management linked to the processes that either promote or halt social justice represent an ever more urgent matter. In recent years increasing attention—both scholarly and from a policy perspective—has been paid to ethnic, religious and racialized minorities, and to the need for diversity management stemming from migration flows in particular. One pressing concern for contemporary democracies is how to cope with changes in the composition of their population and how to manage inter-group relations, at a time in which Western countries are also confronted with population aging and with increasing levels of inequality across group lines. Within this field, European and North American research on migration, multiculturalism, diversity and integration share questions and ambitions: how to frame and understand persistent inequalities, immigration and integration patterns through analytical contributions and evidence-based data. Yet, they remain largely disconnected in their methodologies, debates and approaches to these issues.

Whilst Europe has seen the concept of super-diversity (Vertovec 2007; Phillimore et al. 2020), a ‘diversification of diversity’ and migrant integration become major topics in urban studies, political science and sociology; Critical Race Studies and Intersectionality have become central in US approaches to understanding inequality, racial and social injustice (Crenshaw et al. 1995, 2019).

What this article proposes to do is to look at the terms and the concepts employed to deal with diversity, difference and injustice in the two contexts, to try to understand

whether they are in practice similar, interchangeable, complementary or at odds with each other or even incompatible. Are we using different terminologies to speak about similar issues? Or are we employing different analytical tools because the matters studied are fundamentally different? Can we compare the policies, claims-making and social movements that rally around the concepts of exclusion and inclusion, race and ethnicity, integration and immigration, (super)diversity and antidiscrimination in Europe and the United States?

The following sections provide an overview of how the main concern for these topics has evolved in recent years in the United States and in Europe, focusing on the development, understanding and use of the concept of ‘integration’ and what is seen as its opposite. In terms of methodology, this paper draws mainly on secondary data, tracing and contrasting the usage of ‘integration’ in different political and scholarly contexts. It, however, also includes some excerpts from interviews carried out between February and August 2020 to policy-makers, integration experts and media representatives, which were part of the fieldwork conducted for a broader research project on radicalization, secularism and the governance of religious diversity.¹ What emerges from comparing the main frameworks employed in continental Europe and the United States are the very different assumptions that lay at the core of ideas of antidiscrimination, race, ethnicity and, ultimately, who constitutes the body politics.

2. Locating the Issue

Over the past decades, at a superficial glance at least, it seems that many of the issues confronted by Europe and the United States in terms of increasing diversity are fundamentally of the same nature. As two of the strongest global economies and liberal democratic societies which promote themselves as havens of human rights and the rule of law (regardless of the actual fulfillment of those self-narratives), it is no surprise that both continue to be net-immigration countries, attracting immigrants from different world regions. While the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily slowed such trend, it is reasonable to expect the percentage of foreign-born population (currently accounting for approximately 7.7% of residents in the EU, and for 14.5% in the US) to continue to grow, as well as that of children born in the EU or the US whose parents are immigrants.

Considering the rising share and number of older people in both places, economists broadly agree that receiving countries benefit economically and demographically from the inflow of migrants (Portes 2019), yet immigration is also met with ambivalence, anxiety and hostility by sectors of majority societies that are concerned with what such developments mean in terms of broader changes (Hadj Abdou 2020; Triandafyllidou 2020). These fears and hostility have been mobilized and amplified by political parties and movements that, while putting forward and anti-immigration propaganda, heavily resort to racially coded dog-whistle politics and Islamophobic discourses (Haney López 2014, 2016). Former President Trump’s inflammatory claim that the United States should reject immigrants from African and Muslim-majority countries, while attracting more people “from countries like Norway” (BBC 2018) shocked but hardly surprised: the appeal of the alt-right—an appeal which is widespread way beyond MAGA, Fidezs, the Northern League, the Alternative for Germany, or the Law and Justice voters—is clearly not a blanket hostility toward foreigners in general, but rather toward specific ‘othered’ racialized migrants.

In the United States, the Census Bureau projections showing that African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and other racialized minorities will collectively make up a majority of the population by 2050, have generated mixed responses, with more Americans saying that a majority nonwhite population will have a negative impact on conflicts compared to those who say it will have a positive effect (Parker et al. 2019). The polarization in response to immigration and racial justice protests such as the 2006 immigrant protests and the Black Lives Matter movement are certainly not new, but divides have become even more visible since the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020.

Criticism to what is often, pejoratively, labelled as ‘identity politics’ relies on the idea that a focus on racial, sexual, ethnic or intersectional identity threatens to entrench society into subnational groupings where minority members receive ‘preferential treatment’, which in turn polarize and divide (Fukuyama 2018). However, this is invariably grounded on the assumption that past politics (one dominated exclusively by white men) was not rooted in identity—that ‘identity’ is an attribute that does not apply to whites. From the perspective of the still dominant framework that sees the ‘Default Man’ (western, middle-class, white heterosexual male) as the benchmark of what it means to be ‘integrated’ or to belong to the ‘mainstream’ (Magazzini 2017; Perry 2014), this starting point is hardly surprising. This approach has been the framework employed in social sciences, the media and politics for so long that it is ingrained in a myriad of everyday banal conventions, including the ways in which we discuss such issues: “The term white is almost always lowercase, while other ethnic and racial groups are capitalized: Blacks, Latinos, Hispanics, Jews. [. . .] the unequal stylistic treatment of the words is part and parcel of the cultural and political terrain in which the lowercase indicates the taken-for-grantedness that comes with whiteness” (Hattam 2007, p. xii). The Critical Racial Studies and Intersectional approaches that have emerged in the United States over the past decades question such premise, observing that “The marginalized did not create identity politics: their identities have been forced upon them by dominant groups” (Abrahams 2019).

Meanwhile, in Europe, even as many pro-Europeans gather around the narrative of a European project that is opposed to the right-wing populism and nationalism that has been rising over the past decade, some aspects of racial dog whistling have been incorporated into Europeanism itself (De Genova 2017; Heller et al. 2018). The racial undertones present in discourses around ‘European identity’ are all the more difficult to address, given that race remains by and large a taboo in continental Europe, relegated to the history of Nazism, Fascism and the Second World War.

It is worth noting that European institutions themselves have no competency over how individual countries define ethnic, racial or national minorities within their territory, and each country retains the sole capacity to carry out census data collection according to their own categories (which are in turn shaped by specific historical legacies, which differ for each country). Speaking about the US and Europe in such broad strokes might therefore run the risk of flattening both realities—which are rich in complexity, nuances and contradictions—into generalizations. That being said, one fundamental difference that can be appreciated between the two contexts is the fact that ‘race/ethnicity’ as a census category provides, in the United States, a critical tool to assess racial disparities and make policy decisions, while in Europe it only exists in the UK, with most countries ignoring the concept altogether and some—such as France—explicitly forbidding any collection or usage of data referencing race (data protection law 1978, amended in 2004. See Simon 2015).

While in recent years a network of German scholars and activists has written about and challenged Germany’s attempts to erase the term ‘race’ from the German constitution (Barskanmaz and Samour 2020; Roig 2021), the uneasiness in using racial categories in EU countries extends further than the issue of whether census on data collection is allowed or not. Frédérique Vidal, France’s Minister of Higher Education, has repeatedly dismissed any call to research racial inequalities and address structural discrimination in higher education with claims such as “In biology, it has been known for a long time that there is only one human species and that there are no races” (Vidal 2021). That there is just one human race is of course indisputable, but such statements (which are widespread in politics at both the national and EU levels) intentionally misunderstand the claims for racial justice by ignoring that race, while not a fact of nature, continues to play a fundamental role as a sociopolitical fact of domination:

Indeed, race is the naturalized effect of a regime of domination orchestrated according to racialized distinctions and categories, which are themselves sociopolitical contrivances. Thus, race is not a fact of nature so much as a fact of

racism, a fact of racialized domination, configured historically and continuously reproduced on a global scale—particularly the historically specific hierarchies of social power, wealth, and prestige enforced through violent and oppressive regimes of (European/colonial) white supremacy. (De Genova 2017, p. 6)

The erasure of the term ‘race’ in Europe following the Second World War has not erased racism, but it has caused it to be largely replaced with the term ‘ethnicity’, which in turn has been increasingly used interchangeably with the concept of cultural identity (especially religious identity, i.e., with ‘Arabs’ and ‘Muslims’ being perceived as synonyms). Therefore, while many continue to experience racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia, the inability of speaking about race has turned into an inability to speak about racism in Europe, and to seriously consider affirmative actions as a tool to redress injustices, particularly related to colonialism (El-Tayeb 2008; Lentin 2008).

Against this background, the perception that an unspecified but implicitly white and Christian ‘European identity’ is under threat—a claim articulated in terms of culture and values but rooted in colonialist legacies and race cleavages—has become more prominent in European right-wing parties. On the other hand, those that present themselves as opposing such narratives, have so far not seriously engaged with the concept of diversity in any other terms than gender diversity, as can be seen in the 2019 claim by EU’s Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen that the newly inaugurated, 27-strong team of all-white commissioners was “as diverse as Europe is” (Montalto Monella 2019). Indeed, the European Commission’s political leadership has never come as close to gender parity as its current composition, yet it has so far not seriously engaged with issues of representativeness of racialized minorities, that continue to be identified as ‘migrants’, regardless of whether they were born in Europe.

Kundnani, a non-white British writer, has pointed to the fact that the EU’s migration policy, by focusing on ‘protecting’ a narrowly defined Europe, ends up naturalizing the idea that whiteness constitutes a fundamental characteristic of ‘Europeanness’ and in doing so it projects different levels of worth onto different categories of migrants, with those who are non-white labeled as a threat:

[. . .] The most striking expression of this pro-European civilisationalism is that, as part of Von der Leyen’s ‘geopolitical Commission’, the EU now has a Commissioner for Promoting our European Way of Life (it was originally ‘for Protecting our European Way of Life’), Margaritis Schinas. His main responsibility is to coordinate the Commission’s approach to asylum and migration, which is largely about keeping migrants out, often using brutal methods that violate human rights. This makes the EU’s civilisational turn explicit: migration is now seen not just as a difficult issue to be managed but as a threat to the ‘European Way of Life’. (Kundnani 2021)

What makes (again, a certain kind of) immigration—in Europe as in the United States—be perceived as such a threat, if economically there are more advantages than disadvantages at stake for the receiving societies? Some authors have argued that, with the framing of migration being generally presented as something that is connected to misery and tragedy and/or as a phenomenon that should be prevented, “migration is linked to threat, and immigrants’ experiences are constructed as radically different to those of the rest of society, which makes it difficult to identify with migrants as equals” (Hadj Abdou 2020, p. 656). It has also been argued that the rising economic inequality in most Western countries has “pushed the issue of “social integration” or “social cohesion” up the political agenda; but so has the general economic and cultural globalization, the flow of migrants across nation borders and the security concerns after 9/11” (Larsen 2014).

The political playbook of linking migrants to marginality, otherness and insecurity has been harnessed successfully by parties in Europe as in the United States. It should not, however, be assumed that these dynamics play out in the same way, nor that the methodologies and frames employed to pursue ‘social integration’ are the same.

As ‘unity’ and ‘integration’ have been mobilized in both settings as a remedy to the increasing (real and/or perceived) polarization and threats of violent radicalization, it is worth looking into how ‘integration’ is declined differently in the two contexts, and in which ways and to what extent it relates to issues of immigration, racism and racialization.

3. ‘Integration’ Caught between Race, Ethnicity, Class and Their Intersections

The concept of ‘integration’ has informed much of the political and social science research on both immigrant settlement and on the struggle for equality of national and/or racialized minorities in Western countries. Heated debates have spurred over whether cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities are ‘integrating enough’, over how integration varies across immigrant/national minority groups, and on whether the concept of ‘integration’ is too state-centered or biased to be of much use (Schinkel 2018), or whether it has simply failed, leading to ‘integration exhaustion’ and ‘race fatigue’ (Cashin 2004; Hartman and Squires 2009).

In Europe, what has been branded as a ‘two-way integration’ (involving the engagement of the host society as well as of immigrants to foster migrant integration) or a ‘three-way integration’ (in which the country of origin also plays a role, see Garcés-Masareñas and Penninx 2016), has become the standard bearer of the EU’s (as well as of individual EU countries’) approach to integration. As laid out in the EU’s 2004 Basic Common Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy “Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States” (Council of the European Union 2004, p. 17).

Similarly, the introduction to the European Commission’s latest Action plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021–2027) reads, “The integration process involves the host society, which should create the opportunities for the immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural, and political participation. It also involves adaptation by migrants who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence” (European Commission 2020, p. 1).

The opportunities to be created by such an integration process are identified in the pillars of housing, education, employment, health and civic participation (or ‘active citizenship’) which remain the same priorities of previous Action Plans and Strategies: the same ‘markers and means’ identified in reference to the integration of refugees by Ager and Strang (2008); the same priorities known as the ‘Zaragoza indicators’, introduced at a 2010 ministerial conference under the Spanish presidency of the EU and then adopted in the 2011 European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals; the same indicators that represented the cornerstone of the European Commission 2016 Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals, as well as of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 (adopted by the European Commission in 2011).

Among the criticisms brought to this understanding of integration, one issue that emerges repeatedly is that while individual policy-makers and NGOs working to foster integration at the local level might be competent, dedicated and well intentioned in providing migrants, refugees or Roma with equal access to services, in its current form, integration remains a ‘soft policy’ approach which simply cannot undo nor subvert structural factors such as institutional discrimination and racial and class inequality (Hellgren 2016; Magazzini 2020). This means that if the concept of ‘integration’ in the European context is to be usefully employed as a governance technique, its model needs to be rethought to address multiple issues: normativity, the negative objectification of migrants as ‘other’, an outdated imaginary of society, methodological nationalism, and a narrow focus on migrants in the factors shaping integration processes (Spencer and Charsley 2021). In order to do this, categories such as race and class must be included into the integration framework (Hadj Abdou 2019).

How to do so, however, remains unclear. The goals of the integration process themselves (migrants’ active participation and equal access to services) rest on the assumption of a well-functioning, fairly equal society in which the standard, imaginary national citizen

is him or herself ‘integrated’ (Figure 1). An advisory report for the European Commission’s Home Affairs claims: “Naturalisation is both a final step in a process and a tool to further improve integration in several areas of life. Citizenship is a societal outcome indicator, a policy indicator and a measure of openness of receiving societies, all at the same time” (Huddleston et al. 2013). But what if being an EU citizen is not automatically a synonym of being integrated in the first place?

Are, for instance, people in prisons (a growing demographic in most EU countries since the 1980s) or homeless individuals integrated, regardless of their citizenship? Given the importance given to civic participation in the abovementioned reports and plans, can an EU national who has never voted in his or her country be considered integrated? Are billionaires, or even millionaires, the vast majority of whom do not interact with the states’ public health and education services, integrated? Can citizens who are living below the poverty line be said to be integrated?

As an example, according to official figures in Italy in 2018 over 23% of youth (18–29 years old) belong to the NEET category (neither in education, employment nor in training), while the overall female employment rate in the country has never reached 50% and is below 34% for women under 35 (Rosina 2020; ISTAT 2021). In the same period, the overall employment of non-EU migrants in Italy was of 59% according to governmental statistics (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Poliche Sociali 2018). If one of the main concerns of integration policies is that of fostering access to employment for those sectors of the population who rank poorly in their participation in the economy, it seems that young Italian women residing in their own country of origin might offer a qualified target.

The point of these objections is to raise the broader question: can we speak about ‘integrated societies’ and of ‘migrant integration’ into these societies, if most democratic European countries display, to a non-negligible degree, some of the features mentioned above—homelessness, unemployment, high incarceration rates, rising inequality, or significant groups of the population disengaged from the democratic process and institutional representation?

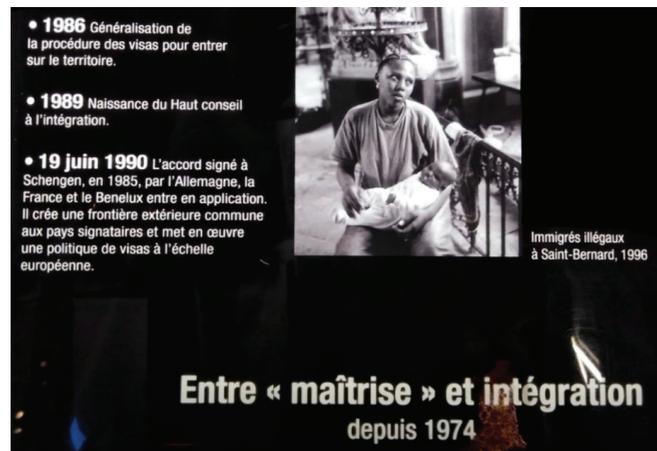


Figure 1. Since the 1980s, the policy of European countries towards migration has focused on two main objectives: to ‘manage’ and reduce the flow of immigrants through border controls, and to ‘integrate’ the migrants already present on the territory by increasing their ‘skills’ (picture taken at the Immigration Museum, Paris, 2020).

The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 recently put out by the European Commission prides itself with, as of this year, supporting not only non-EU migrants, but also “EU citizens of migrant background”—arguably the only significant difference in approach compared to previous frameworks, which only saw third country

nationals as targets or beneficiaries of integration measures. This, however, still begs the questions of whether the disparities in ‘integration’ between EU citizens of migrant background and EU citizens who are not of migrant background have to do with the formers’ parents’ histories and ‘imported culture’, or whether they have to do with the latter’s racism.

In other words, if the need for integration—intended as policies promoting participation and equal access to services—can no longer be ascribed (solely) to differences stemming from different citizenship status or to language skills, the extension of such measures to EU nationals ‘of migrant background’ (i.e., non-white, as those with white American or Australian parents are unlikely to be the target of integration) is an acknowledgement, albeit implicit, of the discrimination suffered by racialized minorities based on the colour of their skin or on the religion they practice.

In the United States, the integration debate has a very different history and terms of reference, one that starts from such an acknowledgement—that because society is profoundly (racially) segregated, specific affirmative actions need to be taken in order to create integration. This means designing policies in ways to include disadvantaged groups, but the ways in which the target group(s) have traditionally been defined differs radically from Europe’s focus on migrants.

In the aftermath of the civil war, the main tool to resist and impair the attempt to create a society of racial equality were the Jim Crow laws, enforcing systematic segregation in the South. With whites self-segregating and monopolizing all the opportunities for themselves, from property acquisition to quality education to business ownership, the term integration became mainly associated with the struggle for desegregation, school integration and with *Brown v. Board*, the sentence with which, on 17 May 1954, the United States Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional (Figure 2). Of course, despite progress, segregation was not wished away with *Brown v. Board*, nor with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or the Fair Housing Act of 1968, as blacks in the United States continue to disproportionately attend lower quality schooling, live in poorer neighbourhoods and face constrained access to basic civil rights as voting (Chetty et al. 2018). Many argue that this is because legal segregation was but a manifestation of the problem, the problem remaining that white America has not been willing to give up its socio-economic privilege and continues to fight integration (Hartman and Squires 2009; Ivery and Bassett 2015). In practical terms, this means not only that past structural discrimination continues to affect current inequalities, but also that because of the persistence of ‘whiteness as property’ (Harris 1993) in the form of federal housing policies, even as legal segregation was overturned, current racial segregation in most major US metropolitan areas is worse today than it was 150 years ago during Reconstruction (Finn 2018).

Integration measures are therefore fragile and depend upon white buy-in, and in the instances in which there has been successful integration, racial minorities have ended up being hostages of the whims and preferences of whites (Gross 2020).



Figure 2. In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruled segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, acknowledging that racially separate schools were inherently unequal. Despite the sentence, the huge backlash against integration by some whites in the south led President Eisenhower in 1957 to dispatch federal troops to protect 9 Black students attending the recently desegregated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. While the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s achieved significant gains in integration, there has been backsliding since in both education and housing segregation (picture from 1957, Little Rock, Arkansas).

What does this concept of integration—one built as a reaction and alternative to racial segregation—mean for migrant minorities in the United States? Immigrants are central to the US identity and history, and yet they are not incorporated into the same integration policies nor efforts aimed at racialized minorities (unless they are Black immigrants, see [Hamilton 2018](#)). When American scholars resort to the vocabulary of integration they qualify it as mainly concerned with matters of race, residential segregation and school segregation, rather than with cultural integration or religious diversity, which tend to be the main concern in Western Europe ([Alba and Foner 2015](#)). The extensive literature on immigrants in the United States employs instead the concept of assimilation ([Zhou 1997](#); [Alba and Nee 2014](#)).

Despite its limitations in scope—since in its focus on racial desegregation it risks neglecting important aspects tied to cultural recognition, and does not provide a strong framework to discuss the role of immigrant groups in society—one fundamental difference that arguably makes the American approach to ‘integration’ more useful than the European one for the purposes of advancing social justice has to do with the fact that integration is not seen as something that affects exclusively, or mostly, the ‘beneficiaries’ that are to enter into a society that is seen as already ‘whole’, but rather as a mechanism by which equality can be achieved.

Elisabeth Anderson, in her *The Imperative of Integration*, defined integration as the full participation by people from all social sectors and walks of life, on terms of equality,

in all the institutions of civil society (Anderson 2010). In this context, US scholars of integration are careful to distinguish integration from assimilation, and to specify that integration has to do with creating settings in which people interact as equals, not where one group gets to dictate to another group how to behave.

In terms of who the targets or beneficiaries of integration are, even though it has been argued that letting go of the idea of ‘race’ in favour of the concept of ‘visible continental ancestry’ would be helpful to free colour consciousness from assumptions about racial nature (McPherson 2015), the terminology of race is widely employed, and is clearly distinguished from that of ethnicity: “Issues of power and inequality are more readily expressed in a descent-based language of race [heredity, body/blood, hierarchy]; issues of plurality and inclusion are terrain of ethnicity [culture, language/religion, plurality]” (Hattam 2007).

Because it is possible to distinguish between the social construct of ‘racial identity’ and its linkages to power and inequality, and that of ‘ethnic identity’, which is used primarily in reference to migrants’ country of origin, it is possible to study different mechanisms of the American stratification system, rather than using ethnicity as an imperfect proxy for racialized minorities. This has made comparisons across racial and migrant status possible, such as Tod Hamilton’s study, which convincingly shows how the relative success of black immigrants in the US, compared to black natives, can be explained not by culture, but by migrant selectivity (Hamilton 2018).

Ultimately, it seems that how the idea of ‘integration’ is operationalized, and whether it can help advance equality, depends on how the debate is shaped by who is setting the agenda in each context.

The American debate has traditionally used ‘integration’ as a reaction to and a remedy to racial segregation, while the European debate tends to employ ‘integration’ to speak about the process of migrant integration into Europe, creating normative categories of ‘successful’ versus ‘failed’ integration. Therefore, the US integration is clearly situated in a racial debate, which has to do with society as a whole, while the EU integration discussion still revolves mainly around individual skills, indicators performance and how to improve them. This creates different kinds of blind spots in the two contexts: in the US, integration is a poor tool for capturing the process of economic mobility and social inclusion of immigrants and their children. In Europe, integration is an inadequate concept to address structural inequalities, since it remains completely detached from non-discrimination law and intersectionality (which exist in their own right in EU legal scholarship, but lack a policy forum comparable to that of ‘integration’; see Lawson and Schiek 2011).

In the American context, integration is therefore mainly useful to debate structural and institutional inequalities across racial lines, rather than to understand migrants’ positioning in the US: but while ‘Europe’s integration’ claims to be a tool to address both realities, ‘American integration’ does not.

The ways in which the two approaches translate into more concrete terms can be seen, perhaps, by identifying the opposite of integration. If integration implies achieving social cohesion and a certain level of equality, what does it mean to sit at the opposite end of that spectrum? Does the opposite of integration mean institutional segregation, exclusion, the perpetuation of racial injustice, polarization, marginality, radicalization, failed integration?

What the next section does is look into what these antonyms mean, and do, for the integration and antidiscrimination ideals.

4. The Opposite of Integration? Anti-Muslim Racism and ‘Color-Blindness’ in Europe

In November 2020, on the fifth anniversary of the Paris Bataclan attacks, the EU home affairs ministers released a joint statement condemning terrorism with a text that, despite the numerous revisions which removed the explicit references to Islam and the requests for migrants to “earn a living for oneself”, makes a direct link between the concepts of ‘failed integration’ and radicalization (Boffey 2020). A core passage of the statement reads: “The sense of belonging and equality is of central importance for the social cohesion of our

modern, pluralist and open societies. Successful integration is of key importance in this regard. Integration is a two-way street. This means that migrants are expected to make an active effort to become integrated" (European Council 2020).

Such declaration on behalf of the EU institution that defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union confirms the expectation that it is migrants who need to become 'integrated', and not institutions, neighborhoods, schools or parliaments. This expectation, in turn, is directly linked with the difficulty to research race and racism in Europe, and of ethnicity often being used as a proxy for racial categories—with its obvious pitfalls and inconsistencies. In other words, this is what happens when 'race' is replaced by 'ethnicity', 'ethnicity' is replaced by 'culture', and 'culture' is replaced by 'religion', which in turn is presented not as a collective belonging but rather as an individual feature, unrelated to and disconnected from the pervasive and subtle hierarchy of racialized categories.

Such issues become particularly visible when conducting research that is officially unrelated to race, such as religious diversity, but that ends up being entangled into racial narratives (however implicit they might be). While carrying out research about religious governance in France for a European funded project, considerations on discrimination related to Muslims (who constitute France's largest religious minority) invariably spilled into racial and ethnic discourses. An EU migrant who has lived in both the UK and France and was interviewed in Paris in 2020 within the framework of a project on religious diversity governance and radicalization,² summarized her perception of the difference between the UK and France in the following way: "There is a very strong social status hierarchy here in France, and race is a huge part of it. It's not that in the UK there is no racism, of course, but classism is stronger there: so yes, BAME people are over-represented in low paying jobs, but you also see white working poor people—they exist. In Paris, you don't see "white trash"—and I challenge you to find me a bathroom cleaner who's white. So, about the hierarchy: on top of the food chain, there's the 'Parisian' of course. On the bottom, it's either the blacks or the Arabs: depending on how fresh the memory of the latest terrorist attack is" (interview, February 2020).

With recent controversies around what is framed as an 'Islamic separatism' threat, France represents the most visible and extreme case of pushback against Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, even though narratives about immigrants' 'duty' to achieve a kind of 'cultural integration' is widespread across Europe. For a long time, integration has been seen in EU white papers mainly as a function of migrants' employment status (i.e., the 'high skilled' versus 'low skilled' migrants debate, see Boucher 2016; Fernández-Reino et al. 2020) and legal status (see Hinger and Schweitzer 2020); however, the 'responsibility to integrate' has in recent years increasingly been "displaced to the cultural realm: 'fitting migrants' are not only [no longer] those economically useful to our markets; they must show that they are capable of integrating culturally in our societies as well" (Morondo Taramundi 2016, p. 2).

A journalist from a mainstream French outlet explained her understanding of integration in terms of 'becoming French': "When the 'Muslim veil' ban passed in 2011, it was really well received by the population. French people support it. [...] We require a certain assimilation from people who don't look French to us, or who don't embody what we view as French. It's very difficult for French people to change the image of what a French person looks like—I feel, for example, even though this is shifting and evolving a little bit, that a French person is still a white person" (interview, August 2020).

If the process of integration is seen as becoming a national of one's country of residence by 'shedding' any characteristic that may be viewed as un-national, and if such characteristic of 'Frenchness', 'Italianness', 'Germanness', etc. involve an implicit racial and religious bias, it is easy to see how such a process can end up short-circuiting.

In a speech given by French President Emmanuel Macron in October 2020, "Certain social science theories entirely imported from the United States" were explicitly identified as a danger to "breaking the republic in two" (Onishi 2021). By blaming universities for encouraging the "ethnization of the social question", the French President inadvertently

pointed the finger to the fact that recent efforts do decolonize the curriculum in some departments, can hardly do so in practice without addressing the racialization of inequalities. In the same speech, Macron stated that “The Republic is both a system and a promise. And so, what we must do very strongly is go further along that path.”

Indeed, it seems that the French state promises more to its citizens than the United States does, in terms of welfare and opportunity. Yet, whether such promises are kept, and to whom, is less clear. One interviewee claimed, in reference to France’s republican ideals³:

France promises more, but it does not deliver more. And the gap between promise and delivery creates specific forms of resentment. And strikingly, every time this happens the response of the French state is to promise even more: including the promise that France is inherently a non-racist country, because of the principle of republican equality, which is a promise that is largely meaningless, since it completely misunderstands the nature and concerns being expressed. (interview, February 2020)

The narrative of non-racism and non-discrimination as the natural consequence of color-blindness is by no means exclusive to France, however.

In September 2019, one week ahead of the OSCE’s annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, which included the European Union’s first ever Anti-Racism and Diversity Week held in the European Parliament, the US Helsinki Commission convened in Washington, D.C., the hearing *The State of Diversity and Inclusion in Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics*. The hearing and the questions asked by the US Commission to the EU minority representatives bringing their testimony highlighted some of the differences in approaches in ways that are plain yet striking. The issue of what kind of data collection is acceptable in the census, for instance, is one on which Europe and the US still clearly sit at opposite poles of the spectrum. The exchange during the OSCE hearing between US Congresswoman and Helsinki Commissioner Representative Gwen Moore, and French MP Danièle Obono, sums it up quite clearly:

MOORE: it is very akin to the notion that you want to protect the European way of life to talk about *égalité*, *fraternité* in France where no one can wear the hijab, where they don’t get data and statistics on race [. . .] So is there no chance that you could legislatively get the government to officially collect data? You’ve got a census coming up, right, where you count the people. Do you count people every 10 years like we do?

OBONO: There’s a census, but it’s not based on the same kind of statistic. We don’t have race statistics.⁴

In a way, the US census offers a specular picture to that of most European countries: while the Census Bureau has been collecting racial data based on self-identification for decades without this causing major controversies,⁵ the 2018 attempt by the Trump administration to re-introduce a question in the census regarding citizenship status for the 2020 census was seen as extremely contentious and was eventually dropped. This was because it was seen as a tool to disenfranchise many residents who might have chosen not to fill in the census for fear of repercussions based on their migration status, with consequences in redrawing electoral district boundaries (which are based on census data).

As there are understandable reasons for migrants in the US to be wary about a census that includes questions about citizenship, there are, of course, historical reasons and legitimate concerns regarding data collection on racial identity in Europe. Yet, data in most EU countries is collected on other dimensions (gender, migrant status, citizenship, wealth, employment, family composition) that can also be considered sensitive, of that are grounds for discrimination. So, if race is not a fact of nature so much as a fact of racism and of racialized domination, tackling discrimination inevitably requires some assessment of the situation.

The risk, otherwise, is that the 2000 European race directive (Directive 2000/43/EC) remains an empty declaration of intentions: if the dominant narrative is one of a non-racist

EU, there is hardly a need for anti-racism. And without reliable data on differential access to services and to positions of power, any case of discrimination remains within the realm of the individual and the anecdotal.

If, however, patterns of segregation and disempowerment, rather than individual acts of discrimination, are the fundamental cause of inequality to be addressed—meaning that we do not segregate because people are similar; rather, we think people are similar because they are segregated—then bringing Critical Race Theory into European debates on integration could help us both disentangle some of the intersectional discrimination faced by those who belong, for instance, to both ethnic and racial minorities, as well as dealing with cases such as the Romani minorities in Europe that have long been treated as exceptional and unique (Kóczé 2021). Some efforts in this direction are being made, as can be seen by the creation of the Center for Intersectional Justice, a non-profit organization founded in 2017 and based in Berlin, but such efforts are for the time being carried out by civil society rather than by government institutions (Center for Intersectional Justice 2020).

5. Bringing Race into European Integration: Non-Discrimination as a Method?

In Western countries, which claim to have democratic pluralism as their foundation, the issue of how to foster social cohesion while avoiding a backlash on the rights of migrants and racialized minorities is particularly salient.

With the surge of an extraordinary populist conjuncture in the past few years, migrant and minorities integration and diversity management feature more prominently than ever in national and European research and policy agendas (Brubacker 2017). But what does an integrated society actually look like?

This article sketched out in broad strokes some of the differences in how the ideal of integration and antidiscrimination is narrated—and pursued—in Europe and the United States. Overall, the greatest divergence seems to rest on whether ‘integration’ is used in reference to a social whole (that individuals ‘integrate into’), or whether it is a tool to achieve greater equality (in the form of an integrated society).

The question raised by the existing different approaches then is, can we speak about integration without speaking about its ‘targets’ or ‘beneficiaries’, be they immigrants, citizens of migrant origin, Roma or black citizens? I believe we can (and should), but what needs then to be fleshed out is that it is impossible, instead, to research integration without looking not only at inequality and social justice, but at where the structures of those inequalities emerged from.

As James Baldwin eloquently put it over half a century ago: “We talk about integration in America as though it were some great, new conundrum. The problem in America is that we’ve been integrated for a very long time. Put me next to any African, and you will see what I mean. [. . .] What we are not facing are the results of what we’ve done. What one begs the American people to do, for all our sakes, is simply to accept our history” (Baldwin 1965).

If the United States, over the past years, has started to reflect upon its history (if not quite to accept it), Europe’s conundrum lays precisely in the fact that its incapacity or unwillingness to do so hampers, and will continue to hamper, its efforts towards building an integrated society.

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Zenia Hellner and Ábel Bereményi for coordinating the special issue “Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe”, to Martino Serapioni and Licia Cianetti for starting the conversation that led to this article, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

Funding: This research has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 770640.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee of the European University Institute (GREASE project, grant number 770640, ethical approval issued on 23 May 2019).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ The interviews were carried out in Paris and online to French practitioners and policy-makers, as well as to officers of international organizations working on diversity and anti-discrimination. For more information on the project, see grease.eui.eu. The GREASE project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 770640.
- ² Nine semi-structured interviews were carried out between February and August 2020 on the governance of religious diversity and of violent radicalization in France, as part of the research conducted for the report "Radicalisation and Resilience Case Study: France". Details on the methodology as well as the full report are available at <http://grease.eui.eu/publications/radicalisation-and-resilience-case-studies/>, accessed on 9 June 2021.
- ³ For an in depth discussion on the concept of French republicanism, see (Roy 2005; Sealy and Modood 2021).
- ⁴ The full transcript of the 2019 hearing is available at <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/state-diversity-and-inclusion-europe>, accessed on 28 May 2021.
- ⁵ The current five minimum categories employed by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The reason stated for data collection is that such data is employed in policy decisions, to promote equal employment opportunities and to assess racial disparities in health and environmental risks. See <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>, accessed on 27 May 2021.

References

- Abrahams, Stacey Y. 2019. Identity Politics Strengthens Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. Available online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-02-01/stacey-abrams-response-to-francis-fukuyama-identity-politics-article> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Ager, Alastair, and Alison Strang. 2008. Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21: 166–91. [CrossRef]
- Alba, Richard, and Nancy Foner. 2015. *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2014. Assimilation Theory for an Era of Unprecedented Diversity. In *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 4th ed. Edited by David B. Grusky. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 721–28.
- Anderson, Elizabeth. 2010. *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baldwin, James. 1965. Debate with William F. Buckley at Cambridge University's Union Hall. Available online: <https://www.folger.edu/sites/default/files/NJADO-Baldwin.pdf> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Barskanmaz, Cengiz, and Nahed Samour. 2020. The Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Race. *Verfassungsblog*. Available online: <https://verfassungsblog.de/das-diskriminierungsverbot-aufgrund-der-rasse/> (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- BBC. 2018. Donald Trump: Shock over US President's Migrants Remarks. *BBC News*. January 12. Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42661435> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- Boffey, Daniel. 2020. Violent Extremism Linked to Failure of Migrants to Integrate, EU Says. *The Guardian*. November 13. Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/13/violent-extremism-migrants-failure-to-integrate-eu> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Boucher, Anna. 2016. *Gender, Migration and the Global Race for Talent*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2017. Between nationalism and civilizationism: The European populist moment in comparative perspective. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 1191–226. [CrossRef]
- Cashin, Sheryll. 2004. *The Failures of Integration: How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Center for Intersectional Justice. 2020. Intersectional Discrimination in Europe: Relevance, Challenges and Ways Forward. A Report Commissioned by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR). Available online: https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/img/intersectionality-report-FINAL_yizq4j.pdf (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter. 2018. *Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective*. Working Paper 24441. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, Available online: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w24441> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Council of the European Union. 2004. Press Release 14615/04 (Presse 321), 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs. Brussels. November 19. Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/common-basic-principles-for-immigrant-integration-policy-in-the-eu> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz. 2019. *Seeing Race again. Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas. 1995. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. New York: New Press.

- De Genova, Nicholas. 2017. The “migrant crisis” as racial crisis: Do Black Lives Matter in Europe? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41: 1765–82. [CrossRef]
- El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2008. The Birth of a European Public: Migration, Postnationality and Race in the Uniting of Europe. *American Quarterly* 60: 649–70. [CrossRef]
- European Commission. 2020. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027. (COM 758 Final). Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/the-ec-presents-its-eu-action-plan-on-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- European Council. 2020. Joint Statement by the EU Home Affairs Ministers on the Recent Terrorist Attacks in Europe. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/13/joint-statement-by-the-eu-home-affairs-ministers-on-the-recent-terrorist-attacks-in-europe/> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Fernández-Reino, Mariña, Madeleine Sumption, and Carlos Vargas-Silva. 2020. From Low-Skilled to Key Workers: The Implications of Emergencies for Immigration Policy. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 36: S382–S396. [CrossRef]
- Finn, Johnny. 2018. Living Together/Living Apart. Geography of Segregation in the 21st Century: Mapping Segregation. Available online: <https://www.livingtogetherlivingapart.com/mapping-segregation> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2018. Against Identity Politics. The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. Available online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2018-08-14/against-identity-politics-tribalism-francis-fukuyama> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Garcés-Mascareñas, Blanca, and Rinus Penninx. 2016. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Contexts, Levels and Actors*. Cham: Springer.
- Gross, Terry. 2020. Podcast Examines How ‘Nice White Parents’ Become Obstacles In Integrated Schools. *NPR Education*. October 20. Available online: <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/12/922092481/podcast-examines-how-nice-white-parents-become-obstacles-in-integrated-schools> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Hadj Abdou, Leila. 2019. Immigrant integration: The governance of ethno-cultural differences. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7: 15. [CrossRef]
- Hadj Abdou, Leila. 2020. Push or Pull? Framing immigration in times of crisis in the European Union and the United States. *Journal of European Integration* 42: 643–58. [CrossRef]
- Hamilton, Tod G. 2018. *Immigration and the Remaking of Black America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Haney López, I. 2014. *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haney López, Ian. 2016. This Is How Trump Convinces His Supporters They’re Not Racist. *The Nation*. August 2. Available online: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/this-is-how-trump-supporters-convince-themselves-theyre-not-racist/> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Harris, Cheryl. 1993. Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review* 106: 1707–91. [CrossRef]
- Hartman, Chester, and Gregory Squires. 2009. *The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities*. London: Routledge.
- Hattam, Victoria. 2007. *In the Shadow of Race. Jews, Latinos, and Immigrants Politics in the United States*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Heller, Charles, Lorenzo Pezzani, Itamar Mann, Violeta Moreno-Lax, and Eyal Weizman. 2018. It’s an Act of Murder: How Europe Outsources Suffering as Migrants Drown. *New York Times*. December 26. Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/26/opinion/europe-migrant-crisis-mediterranean-libya.html> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Hellgren, Zenia. 2016. Immigrant Integration as a Two-Way Process: Stakeholder discourses and practices in Stockholm and Barcelona. *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management* 4: 143–67.
- Hinger, Sophie, and Reinhard Schweitzer. 2020. *Politics of (Dis) Integration*. Cham: Springer.
- Huddleston, Thomas, Jan Niessen, and Jasper Dag Tjaden. 2013. Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration. Final Report for Directorate-General for Home Affairs. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/legal-migration/general/docs/final_report_on_using_eu_indicators_of_immigrant_integration_june_2013_en.pdf (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- ISTAT. 2021. Tasso di occupazione disaggregato per sesso ed età. Available online: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_TAXOCCU1 (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Ivery, Curtis, and Joshua Bassett. 2015. *Reclaiming Integration and the Language of Race in the “Post-Racial” Era*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Kóczé, Angéla. 2021. Racialization, Racial Oppression of Roma. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kundnani, Hans. 2021. What does it mean to be “pro-European” today? *New Statesman*. Available online: <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2021/02/what-does-it-mean-be-pro-european-today> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Larsen, Christian Albrekt. 2014. *Social Cohesion: Definition, Measurement and Developments*. Aalborg Øst: Institut for Statskundskab, Aalborg Universitet.
- Lawson, Anna, and Dagmar Schiek. 2011. *European Union Non-Discrimination Law and Intersectionality: Investigating the Triangle of Racial, Gender and Disability Discrimination*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Lentin, Alana. 2008. Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory* 11: 487–503. [CrossRef]
- Magazzini, Tina. 2017. Making the most of super-diversity: Notes on the potential of a new approach. *Policy & Politics* 45: 527–45.
- Magazzini, Tina. 2020. Integration as an Essentially Contested Concept: Questioning the Assumptions behind the National Roma Integration Strategies of Italy and Spain. In *Politics of (Dis)Integration*. Edited by Sophie Hinger and Reinhard Schweitzer. Cham: Springer, pp. 41–59.
- McPherson, Lionel. 2015. Deflating 'Race'. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1: 674–93. [CrossRef]
- Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali. 2018. Eight Annual Report. For-igners in the Italian Labour Market. Directorate General of Immigration and Integration Policies. Available online: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/studi-e-statistiche> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Montalto Monella, Lillo. 2019. Is Von der Leyen's New Commission Team Really 'as Diverse as Europe'? *Euronews*. September 15. Available online: <https://www.euronews.com/2019/09/15/is-von-der-leyen-s-new-commission-team-really-as-diverse-as-europe> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Morondo Taramundi, Dolores. 2016. Identity, Belonging and Human Rights: Cultural cues in integration processes. An introduction. *The Age of Human Rights Journal* 7: 1–5. [CrossRef]
- Onishi, Norimitsu. 2021. Will American Ideas Tear France Apart? Some of Its Leaders Think So. *The New York Times*. February 9. Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/09/world/europe/france-threat-american-universities.html> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Parker, Kim, Rich Morin, and Juliana Menasche Horowitz. 2019. Pew Social Trends. Available online: <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/03/21/views-of-demographic-changes-in-america/> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Perry, Grayson. 2014. The Rise and Fall of Default Man. How Did the Straight, White, Middle-Class Default Man Take Control of Our Society—And How Can He Be Dethroned? *New Statesmen*. Available online: <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2014/10/grayson-perry-rise-and-fall-default-man> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Phillimore, Jenny, Nando Sigona, and Katherine Tonkiss. 2020. *Superdiversity, Policy and Governance in Europe. Multi-Scalar Perspectives*. Bristol: Policy Press, New Perspectives in Policy and Politics.
- Portes, Jonathan. 2019. The Economics of Migration. *Contexts* 18: 12–17. [CrossRef]
- Roig, Emilia. 2021. *Why We Matter: Das Ende der Unterdrückung*. Berlin: Aufbau Verlag.
- Rosina, Alessandro. 2020. I NEET in Italia. Dati, esperienze, indicazioni per efficaci politiche di attivazione. StartNet—Network transizione scuola-lavoro. Available online: <https://www.start-net.org/sites/start-net.org/files/attachments/366/ineetitaliawebdef.pdf> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Roy, Olivier. 2005. *La laïcité face à l'Islam*. Paris: Éditions Stock Les Essais.
- Schinkel, Willem. 2018. Against 'immigrant integration': For an end to neocolonial knowledge production. *Comparative Migration Studies* 6: 1–17. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Sealy, Thomas, and Tariq Modood. 2021. France: From Laïcité to Laicism? In *Routledge Handbook on the Governance of Religious Diversity*. Edited by Anna Triandafyllidou and Tina Magazzini. London: Routledge.
- Simon, Patrick. 2015. The Choice of Ignorance: The Debate on Ethnic and Racial Statistics in France. In *Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity*. IMISCOE Research Series; Edited by Patrick Simon, Victor Piché and Amélie A. Gagnon. Cham: Springer, pp. 65–87.
- Spencer, Sarah, and Khatarine Charsley. 2021. Reframing 'Integration': Acknowledging and addressing five core critiques. *Comparative Migration Studies* 9: 1–22. [CrossRef]
- Triandafyllidou, Anna. 2020. Nationalism in the 21st century: Neo-tribal or plural? *Nations and Nationalism* 26: 792–806. [CrossRef]
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 1024–54. [CrossRef]
- Vidal, Frédérique. 2021. Interview de Mme Frédérique Vidal, ministre de l'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et de l'innovation à France Culture le 4 mars 2021, sur la polémique déclenchée par le mot "islamo-gauchisme", la liberté académique et la détresse des étudiant face à la crise sanitaire. *Vie Publique*. Available online: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/279113-frederique-vidal-04032021-polemique-islamo-gauchisme> (accessed on 9 June 2021).
- Zhou, Min. 1997. Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation. *International Migration Review* 31: 975–1008. [CrossRef]



Article

Anti-Racism in Europe: An Intersectional Approach to the Discourse on Empowerment through the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025

Carolin Müller

Media Center, Technische Universität Dresden, 01069 Dresden, Germany; carolin.mueller2@tu-dresden.de

Abstract: Anti-racism in Europe operates in political, policy, and civic spaces, in which organizations try to counter racial discrimination and violence. This paper applies a textual analysis to the European discourse of the transnationally connected anti-racism movement that shaped the European Union (henceforth EU) anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. The plan seeks to address structural racism in the EU through an intersectional lens. Alana Lentin, however, cautions that the structuring principles of anti-racism approaches can obscure “irrefutable reciprocity between racism and the modern nation-state”. Against the backdrop of a critique intersectionality mainstreaming in global anti-racist movements, this paper draws on Kimberly Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality to critically examine the practices outlined in the EU anti-racism action plan to understand (1) the extent to which the EU anti-racism action addresses the historical baggage of European imperialism, (2) the influence of transnational anti-racism organizations such as the European Network Against Racism (henceforth ENAR) in reinforcing universalisms about notions of humanity in anti-racism activism through language and (3) the limitations that the EU anti-racism action plan poses for the empowerment of racially marginalized groups of people.

Citation: Müller, Carolin. 2021. Anti-Racism in Europe: An Intersectional Approach to the Discourse on Empowerment through the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025. *Social Sciences* 10: 137. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10040137>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 8 March 2021

Accepted: 8 April 2021

Published: 14 April 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: anti-racism; intersectionality; EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025; activism

1. Introduction

The publication of the European Union (henceforth EU) anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 that the European Commission (henceforth the Commission) launched on 18 September 2020 signaled that anti-racism has become “a social priority for the EU” (Pascoët 2020). Prominent anti-racism initiatives, such as the European Network Against Racism (henceforth ENAR) and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (henceforth ILGA), note that the new action plan is a significant change from earlier attempts to combat discrimination, specifically concerning anti-racism, in Europe. ENAR activist Julie Pascoët, for example, writes that “this plan . . . represents the highest level of institutional recognition of structural racism and its impact on all racialized groups at EU level” (Pascoët 2020). In contrast to earlier steps taken by the EU to address anti-racism, the current plan claims to recognize the structural dimension of racism. The plan proposes an intersectional approach to addressing the specific needs of different groups that experience racism.

According to Anna Carastathis, “intersectionality is a critique of hegemonic politics of representation and how these are reproduced in contestatory discourses such as antiracism and feminism” (Carastathis 2016, p. 163).

The question with which this article is concerned is the extent to which the Commission is able to set political priorities in the fight against structural oppression in a differentiated way, that elevates the experiences of oppression of specific groups of people within minority communities. Does the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 suggest measures that are able to capture the many bases of oppression in the different EU Member states (henceforth EU MSs), or does the EU’s approach engender strategies that avert the importance of

recognizing that there are different kinds of oppression that members of different minority communities experience?

It is important to note that the most well-known author of intersectionality theory, Kimberlé Crenshaw, argues from the perspective of Black feminist theory. Crenshaw centers that anti-racist agendas have historically neglected the specific contexts in which social problems occur. Using the example of how black women are treated in U.S. court cases on, for example, domestic violence, she demonstrates that if the experiences of oppression that are the basis for anti-racist interventions follow the concept of “racism as experienced by people of color who are of a particular gender—male—” (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1252), anti-racist agendas can erase the experiences of women of color in particular. She explains that if anti-racist efforts articulate racism only along very specific lines, anti-racist efforts employ what Crenshaw terms “strategic silence” (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1253). “Strategic silence” is the suppression of specific information about intersectional subordination within minority groups, for example, when women of color fall victim to domestic abuse. Crenshaw notes that in such cases “[t]he experience of violence by minority women is ignored, except to the extent it gains white support for domestic violence programs in the white community” (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1260). Crenshaw warns that anti-racist interventions often reproduce strategic silences. The question that remains in the context of the new action plan against racism in the EU, therefore, is the extent to which the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 falls into the pitfalls of anti-racist legacies.

The Commission interestingly seeks to do two things at once with the new action plan. On the one hand, the Commission seeks to expand on previous equality legislation. On the other hand, however, it seeks to disrupt imperialist practices as it takes suggestions from civil society organizations on anti-racist approaches and wants to act intersectional. In practice, that means instating a large number of measures that seek to shape the legal protection of people who experience racism in all areas of life. This includes, for example, incorporating existing equality bodies and implementing a report on the Racial Equality Directive in 2021 with possible legislation suggestions for EU MSs by 2022. Furthermore, the Commission will enforce the framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia, including infringement procedures. The Commission will also publish an Artificial Intelligence (henceforth AI) proposal to address the risk of bias and discrimination of AI systems. Concerning the economy, employment, housing, and healthcare, EU funding will be allocated to these areas to promote diversity and inclusion. The new action plan approaches the area of education by stating that the Commission plans awareness raising seminars on racial and ethnic stereotypes for journalists and civil society. The Commission also wants to introduce mainstreaming inclusion and awareness in education policies as well as mark key commemorative days linked to racism.

Other areas of enforcement include extremism and hate speech, where the Commission wants to identify gaps in tackling violent extremism by 2021, and, in order to do so, work together with IT companies, also with regard to countering hate speech and the promotion of acceptance of diversity online. A key strategy for all of these measures is better data collection for more and better data disaggregated by racial or ethnic origin. Within its own institutions, the Commission will pursue a diversity approach through which the composition of the Commission staff will be critically evaluated, a Diversity and Inclusion Office will be created within the Commission, diversity of Commission staff will be increased to improve representativeness, and a strategy for the Commission’s traineeship programs will be developed, alongside the institution of an anti-racism coordinator (European Commission 2020b). Through the combination of multiple equality agendas, the new action plan wants to expand our understanding of what is possible on the EU’s equality agenda to imagine a brighter future for all.

Even though, the list of measures appears comprehensive, the new action plan is not free from the legacies of anti-racism mainstreaming. First and foremost, the new action plan does not make explicit how the Commission grounds its understanding of the concept of intersectionality. Carastathis argues that the “deracination of intersectionality from its

origins in Black feminist thought" (Carastathis 2016, p. 32) is symptomatic of the way in which anti-racist mainstreaming asks intersectionality to "do conceptual work that seems to invert the very aims of the theorists who inaugurated the concept and of the intellectual and political movements in which it germinated" (Carastathis 2016, p. 86). The negative consequence of anti-racism mainstreaming is that it decontextualizes policy "actions [from] the lived experience of the racialized and promot[es] a universalized vision of equality, and thus the humanity, of non-white, non-Europeans" (Lentin 2004, p. 439). In the pitfalls of anti-racism mainstreaming, how then can the Commission realize its overarching goal of exposing and addressing structural racism in the EU if it does not define what it means by using intersectionality as the chosen revolutionary paradigm?

The Commission pledges to use the tools of the EU to "build a life free from racism and discrimination for all" (European Commission 2020a, p. 3). Making the argument for anti-racist intervention in this manner suggests that the Commission's plan proposes strategies reminiscent of a practice that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick termed "reparative reading" (Sedgwick 1997).

Reparative reading seeks to identify spaces of empowerment and innovation, healing and change (Röder 2014). Sedgwick conceptualizes reparative reading as an approach that exposes structures of oppression and looks for pathways for "reparation and indeed hope" (Rao 2020, p. 20). The reparative impulse can be addictive, and burden pathways for reparation, if the exposure of the structures of oppression is the only goal—a practice to which she refers as "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Sedgwick 1997, pp. 4–6). However, Sedgwick also sees a potential for renewal. Katrin Röder convincingly explains that "the act of reparative reading creates novel and subversive nexuses of meaning through connections of formerly separate semantic units as well as novel, provisional, deviant, subversive and alternative self-images" (Röder 2014, p. 61).

If the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025, as I argue, pursues a design approach that practices a reparative reframing of anti-racist approaches through what it calls an intersectional lens, we need to understand where it succeeds and where it fails. In the following I analyze (1) the conceptual baggage of anti-racism mainstreaming that informs the extent to which the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 is able to address bases of oppression, (2) the influence of transnational anti-racism organizations such as ENAR in reinforcing universalisms about notions of humanity in anti-racism activism through language, and (3) the limitations that the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 poses for the empowerment of racially marginalized groups of people. Following a brief review of the legacies of anti-racism approaches in the EU that originated from article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community (EC Treaty), I examine the conceptual and practical realms that the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 seeks to employ and provide a critical reading of the axes of power along which they are thought.

2. The Legacies of Anti-Racism Approaches in the EU

Previously, the EU "characterized [anti-racism] by a long history of declarations of principle in which its character as a transnational norm and definition as a human right" was central (Ruzza 2013, p. 32). However, the new action plan follows a series of policy initiatives that the EU developed to combat discrimination. For example, Articles 2 and 10 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), articles 19 and 67(3) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and articles 20 and 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights provide the EU legal framework for implementing comprehensive policies on equality and non-discrimination. Most recent examples include the Communication A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, (COM (2020)152 final), and other targeted approaches to Roma and LGBTQ concerns and disability rights.

The new initiatives build on the EU's foundational declaration against discrimination stated in article 13 in the EC Treaty in 1997. Article 13 explains:

Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on

a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The impetus of article 13 was to promote measures that aid the full integration of people who were previously discriminated against. Instruments developed to combat discrimination at Community level, as Marie Loutridou and Mark Eric Butt importantly explain, can entail binding legal acts in accordance with Article 249 of the EC Treaty (directives, regulations, and decisions), non-binding legal acts (recommendations, opinions, and resolutions), action programs and grants, and mainstreaming approaches (Loutridou and Butt 1999). Article 13 further authorized the Council to take joint action within the limits of the Community, encouraging advocacy coalitions between institutional and non-governmental actors.

Thus, the parameters laid out in article 13 laid the foundation for civil society organizations, such as activist organizations, to become involved with EU institutions. Carlo Ruzza's analysis of civil society's organizations that are involved with EU institutions reveals that in order to take up consultancy in EU institutions, civil society organizations undergo institutionalized accreditation processes and face "the high cost of negotiating an effective presence in Brussels" (Ruzza 2013, pp. 42–43). In 2011, the EU established the "Transparency Register" in which organizations "commit to a Common Code of Conduct and reveal information about their interests, size, goals and finances" to potential collaborators (Ruzza 2013, p. 42). However, only groups who have access to the administrative skills and resources needed to do so can gain access to the European Parliament and decision-making processes. Smaller social movements and community organizations, therefore, often do not benefit from this system.

Furthermore, Mark Bell cautions about the autonomy that civil organizations have when they operate in tandem with the EU. Bell proposes that the authorization of civil society organizations by the EU "does not suggest that this is intended to be a specific and autonomous policy competence of the Community[,]" which could be read as an independent source for anti-discrimination law (Bell 1999, p. 10). Besides involving civil society organizations in efforts to stop discrimination, the EU instituted a list of directives about discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity (Article 2 of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000), and on the grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion (Council Directive 2000/78/EC), which the EU passed in 2000 to extend the previous "gender-only equality policy regime" (Krizsan et al. 2012, p. 2). However, EU directives were not evenly adopted by the EU MSs. Krizsan et al. point out that "[d]iverse legal frameworks, political and discursive structures, and citizenship practices in place [as well as issues of multi-level governance, with many equality institutions operating at regional level] throughout Europe" (Krizsan et al. 2012, p. 5) made a systematic implementation of the EU directives challenging. Another issue with this, as Alana Lentini rightfully notes, was that previous approaches to racism in the EU conceptualized racism in terms of individual and institutional injustices (Lentini 2004).

Putting forth the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025, thus, falls in line with a long-standing effort to develop measures that can help facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups. The goal of the new action plan is, therefore, to use the existing legal instruments and comprehensive EU policy to reinforce specific areas of equality (European Commission 2020a, p. 3) so that the shortcomings of the past can be addressed. The proposed measures stated in the previous section of this manuscript, however, display little critical engagement with structural oppression in the different institutions and processes of the EU. Instead, the Commission seems to insinuate that the central introspective critique has already taken place by stating that at the center of the new action plan is an intersectional approach. Nonetheless, the Commission does not provide a distinct definition of the term "intersectional", which makes it difficult to assess whether the suggested approach can actually help the EU come to terms with the shortcomings of past anti-racism interventions and the EU's historical responsibilities.

2.1. The Crux of Language

Given the lack of a clear definition, it is only possible to gauge the Commission's understanding of the term intersectionality from the language it uses to describe how the EU seeks to prevent racism. Using the findings of the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017) (henceforth FRA), the new action plan has "identified the areas of life where racial discrimination is felt most strongly": work, housing, education, and access to goods and services (European Commission 2020a, p. 4). The four sections of the plan address the conceptual and practical reconsiderations that the Commission is taking to combat these structural dimensions of racism in these areas.

Taking the information of the FRA survey as the basis for designing intervention strategies suggests it is important to be critical of the Commission's claim that it centers the experiences of people who are subject to multiple systems of domination. The Commission's approach to tackling racism lies in that it has still not fully come to terms that its own understanding of how racism is produced by the societies of the EU MSs is incomprehensive and needs radical reevaluation.

The issue of an incomprehensive understanding of racism is visible in the new action plan when the Commission states what kinds of racism the new action plan should tackle—in other words, what the Commission identifies as the root of the problem:

There are different forms of racism, for example anti-black racism, antigypsyism, antisemitism and anti-Asian racism, that link to religion or belief in cases such [as] anti-Muslim hatred. All share the reality that the value of a person is undermined by stereotypes based on prejudice. In addition to religion or belief, racism can also be combined with discrimination and hatred on other grounds, including gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability or against migrants. (European Commission 2020a, p. 3)

This statement reveals that the Commission plans to target the issue of racism in EU societies via addressing "stereotypes based on prejudice" as the primary object of political action. In his analysis of contemporary racism, Étienne Balibar, however, rightfully takes issue with centering "prejudice" in debates about racism. Balibar argues that "prejudice" obscures the structural causes that have shaped "the system of hierarchies and exclusions which, above all, takes the form of racism and sexism" (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, p. 9). Structural racism means combined modes of oppression that stretch into every aspect of social life in the nation state, for example financial wealth, land rights, health, and education. Racism is, therefore, not a spontaneous phenomenon or merely rooted in attitudes or ignorances. The very issue that racism is rarely "considered to be embedded in the very structures of the nation state" (Lentin 2004, p. 428) has been an ongoing critique of anti-racist approaches.

From the outset of the new action plan, the Commission reproduces the narrative that racism can be discussed outside the bounds of the "historical and contemporary actions of European states themselves" (ibid.). Therefore, the new action plan builds a complex package of measures through which it seeks to tackle individual and structural racism without acknowledging the effects that past and contemporary migration regimes (Lazaridis 2015; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018), racial profiling (Goldberg 2002; Law 2014), and complex border strategies (Agier 2011; Yuval-Davis et al. 2019) have had on different minority communities throughout the EU MSs. The Commission is an important actor for anti-racist concerns as it has the highest policy-shaping influence. Therefore, it should be more accurate in the language that it uses to want to bring about change.

Even though the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 states that it recognizes both individual and structural racism, the question remains whether the new action plan's approach can truly be called intersectional. It appears as if the new action plan approaches anti-racism from a point of view that renders the issue of racism marginal, and anti-racism an object of disciplinary intervention. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the EU can achieve

the task it set for itself given that anti-discrimination measures have been in place since the 2000 equality directives and yet EU MSs have taken very different approaches to realizing the equality directives.

The EU is limited in the extent of EU interventions in national and regional contexts in the respective EU MSs. However, the Commission's approach to favor strategic litigation as a key national strategy in legislation to bring awareness to infringements on human rights has demonstrated again and again the apolitical nature of EU anti-racist interventions, as [Lentin \(2004\)](#) argues. Anti-racist agendas are often at odds with EU migration policies and approaches to counterterrorism. I follow Lentin in saying that the Commission's apolitical approach, although openly promising to counter both individual and structural racism, is the basis for why racism is able "to persist at the level of the state by releasing it from its historical responsibility" ([Lentin 2004](#), p. 436). This approach allows EU MSs to limit the extent to which the equality directives are recognized, for example through nationalist state and exclusionary migration policies, in order to make sure that the nation state secures its dominant position in the racialized hierarchy that marks the structures of society. Making the case for anti-racist intervention through the Commission is, therefore, at odds with assuring nation states their sovereignty as members of the EU.

2.2. Fallacies of Social Inclusion in Anti-Racist Interventions

Furthermore, the language of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 constructs a narrative that centers the EU's mission for unity as opposed to alleviation of oppression for marginalized people. The notion that social inclusion is a primary concern of the EU is set atop the new action plan via a statement by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen from her speech to the European Parliament on 17 June 2020, which states:

We need to talk about racism. And we need to act. It is always possible to change direction if there is a will to do so. I am glad to live in a society that condemns racism. But we should not stop there. The motto of our European Union is: 'United in diversity'. Our task is to live up to these words, and to fulfil their meaning.

Here, von der Leyen enlists all EU institutions, the citizens of the EU in all its Member States, as well as other partners affiliated with the EU through economic, social, and political relations in the mission to realize social inclusion for all.

Von der Leyen's message constructs a reparative narrative that suggests that the Commission's new approach to racism is able to come to terms with previous shortcomings and construct the solidarity needed to heal from the atrocities that racism has brought to all of Europe. Anna Carastathis, however, importantly explains that this is a false universalism that does not get at the core of the issues. She notes that "by reducing intersectionality to an inclusionary politics of diversity rather than to a coalitional politics of antisubordination", an intersectional approach is no more than the mainstreaming of "colorblind" tendencies ([Carastathis 2016](#), p. 112). To understand what Carastathis means by this, we must consider the initial object of critique in Crenshaw's intersectionality theory.

Crenshaw criticizes that anti-racist interventions tend to think "about discrimination which structures politics so that struggles are categorized as singular issues [thus, importing] a descriptive and normative view of society that reinforces the status quo" ([Crenshaw 1989](#), p. 167). The goal of the intersectional approach, then, is to interrogate "the particular values attached to [the social categories that exist in our world] and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies" ([Crenshaw 1991](#), p. 1297) in order "to look beneath the prevailing conceptions of discrimination and to challenge the complacency that accompanies belief in the effectiveness of this framework" ([Crenshaw 1989](#), p. 167).

Therefore, it is not enough to embed anti-racist measures in the frameworks of social inclusion. Carlo Ruzza's analysis of the equality directives, for example, already drew attention to the issue when he demonstrated that the legitimacy assigned to new anti-racist measures is established only when anti-racism interventions are "connected to the legitimacy of policy focused on social inclusion and anti-discrimination in the public

opinion of Member States” (Ruza 2013, pp. 46–47). If the new action plan is meant to be a reparative tool through which empowerment and healing is possible, the language of the plan must not depoliticize the aim of intersectional approaches. It must challenge the foundational frameworks that (re)create systems of oppression, otherwise, racism is rendered marginal again.

The new action plan’s tendencies of leaving old ills uncured is evident in von der Leyen’s address. She clearly establishes a connection between the task of combating racism in the EU and the Commission’s task of signaling and ensuring the unity of the EU. The all-encompassing statement includes advocacy liaisons that are connected to the EU. As a result of civil society organizations, like ENAR’s, close ties to the Commission by way of receiving generous funds for advocacy action and research, civil society organizations are inseparable from the political framework and grammar that the Commission uses to address systemic inequality. This approach situates the project of anti-racism that is laid out in the new action plan within the language of the overall EU integration project.

2.3. EU Integration and Anti-Racism Mainstreaming

In order for the EU to be successful as a project, successful anti-racism approaches are necessary. The new action plan states that success of such projects could be measured in lower numbers of reported experiences of discrimination, on the one hand, and higher numbers in diversity within the structures of all EU institutions in all EU Member States, on the other hand. Therefore, an anti-racism approach as laid out in von der Leyen’s speech conceptualizes EU integration as an overarching project that is grounded in anti-racism as a fundamental practice. Incorporating concrete measures for anti-racism into the structural apparatuses and action bodies is envisioned to eventually reconfigure the EU in a way that recognizes the needs of the project of the EU as a “union in diversity”. The prerequisite for this end would be that all forms of oppression can be eliminated.

Furthermore, there is another dimension to the refiguration process that is embedded in von der Leyen’s statement. Articulating the urgency of the needed change from the perspective of a collective “we”, von der Leyen implies that if the problem of racism is not solved, the impacts will be felt by all. Section one of the new action plan further elaborates this notion, stating that the Commission aims to “build a life free from racism and discrimination for all” (European Commission 2020a, p. 3). In response to this statement, it may be fair to say that racism affects all areas of economic, social, political, and personal life. However, racism is first and foremost experienced by people who live in a structure within which modes of operation are modes of oppression.

In her analysis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) anti-racism mainstreaming, Alana Lentin convincingly argues that it is problematic when anti-racism action “promotes a universalized vision of equality that individualizes humanity without seeing how racism refuses the individuality, and thus the humanity, of non-White, non-Europeans” (Lentin 2004, p. 439). While the new action plan’s intersectional approach seeks to ground its actions in the lived experiences of the people who are racialized by way of employing diversity measures and data collection, the new action plan fails to provide a vision toward equality that incorporates reparative steps of reconciliation and reparation that would completely reorganize the policy apparatus to make it possible to think about the prospect of alternative futures, which for Crenshaw is only made possible by involving Black Studies (Crenshaw et al. 2019, p. 48). She argues:

If any real efforts are to be made to free Black people of the constraints and conditions that characterize racial subordination, then theories and strategies purporting to reflect the Black community’s needs must include an analysis of sexism and patriarchy. Similarly, feminism must include an analysis of race if it hopes to express the aspirations of non-white women. Neither Black liberationist politics nor feminist theory can ignore the intersectional experiences of those whom the movements claim as their respective constituents. In order to include Black women, both movements must distance themselves from earlier approaches

in which experiences are relevant only when they are related to certain clearly identifiable causes (for example, the oppression of Blacks is significant when based on race, of women when based on gender). The praxis of both should be centered on the life chances and life situations of people who should be cared about without regard to the source of their difficulties.

From an approach that centers the experiences of racialized people, it can become possible to move beyond making the subjects that policies seek to protect the problem.

Consequently, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 semantically sets itself up for falling short in providing meaningful supportive state action against racism. The areas of gravest concern in this regard are the Commission's approaches to police violence and diversity measures, which I will address in more detail in the next sections. Much needed reparative practice with regard to the acknowledgement of the violence that European imperialism has caused would need to be reflected in the language chosen to articulate the political framework of the new action plan. Hence, the Commission should seriously reconsider for itself what it means to place the minority communities at the center of its approach. Signpost-acts such as the establishment of a coordinator for anti-racism, which the new action plan proposes in section four, are only short-term solutions. Unless these acts are closely linked with other EU policies, there is no structural change in sight.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that there are limits to what the legal frameworks can help achieve. Feminist scholar Wendy Brown cautions that gaining rights alone does not make the system of subordination disappear. Rights only soften the blow. In addition to this, Brown warns that holding on to rights themselves for liberation can increase the likelihood that specified rights can encode further definitions of already oppressed people (Brown 2002, p. 422). In the case of anti-racism interventions, Brown can be read to help understand that the more rights anti-racism seeks to broaden, the more White European society and the EU institutions gain power over the groups that their systems subordinate. The EU anti-racism plan 2020–2025 builds a specific profile of anti-racist work that reproduces specific definitions of the category of race. Unless there is a more careful approach to identifying the specific experiences of oppression that people who live in a context that is governed by multiple different kinds of power, the needs of people will not be at the center.

2.4. Legacies of Colorblindness and Chances for Reparative Work

If anti-racist tactics become a matter of justifying race as a determiner of human difference and differences in humanity, anti-racism interventions run the risk of reproducing the colorblind framework that, for example, Alana Lentin convincingly criticizes. With regard to the UNESCO's tradition of treating racism as an individualized problem, she argues that the colorblind approach "circumvent[s] the problem of racism by denying the role played by the state in its origins and perpetuation" (Lentin 2004, p. 439). David Theo Goldberg's comprehensive analysis of racial historicism further illuminates the project of colorblindness

as a racial presumption, ... [that] continues to conjure people of color as a problem in virtue of their being of color, in so far as they are not white. As whiteness studies has so readily and rightly trumpeted as one of its central insights, whiteness remains unquestioned as the arbiter of value, the norm of acceptability, quality, and standard of merit. Color is considered a bruise, a blot on social purity, an unfortunate fact of life to be ignored, seen past yet still seen even if in blurred outline ... Racially understood, colourblindness is committed to seeing and not seeing all as white, though not all as ever quite, while claiming to see those traditionally conceived as 'of colour' and yet colourless. (Goldberg 2002, p. 223)

The logic of colorblindness, as Goldberg argues, is a continuation of the intimate relationship between the history of the modern nation state and its racial definition. He explains that "race is integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually,

philosophically, materially) of the modern nation state" (Goldberg 2002, p. 4). The fallacy of the colorblind framework is that it promises healing at the cost of "making possible the denial of racism as a real experience ensuring the *de facto* persistence of discrimination against those who in fact cannot be whitened" (Lentin 2004, p. 438, italics in original).

The EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 does encourage some reparative practices through which the experiences of racially oppressed people seek to be addressed. Section three of the new action plan presents the Commission's "permanent framework for exchange". Although proposed in an apolitical manner, the establishment of opportunities for regular consultation and dialogue with EU MSs, academia, and civil society via the coordinator for anti-racism can be viewed as an attempt at reparative practice. The Commission seeks "to strengthen policy responses in the field of anti-racism" (European Commission 2020a, p. 24) and, simultaneously, signal that the legislative framework offers space for hope. At the same time, to avert the continuation of racial historicism, such measures of exchange must involve the multiple frameworks of oppression that the EU engages in controlling migration, border policing, and racial profiling.

The current agenda for evaluating racial profiling in EU MSs does not consider practices that happen on the borders between nation states within and on the boundaries of the EU, in externalized refugee camps, or in marginalized migrant communities in EU MSs. If the EU anti-racism plan 2020–2025 does not lead to practices that "historicize the relationship between [states'] evolution into nations, with increasingly imperialist ideals and needs for bio-political power, and the political idea of 'race'" (Lentin 2004, p. 438), promising models for remedial measures will remain mere platitudes.

3. Civil Society Organizations' Ambiguous Roles

Anti-racist advocacy groups that operate internationally play an important role in the process of making the current anti-racism action plan in the EU. The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values program and Horizon Europe provide continued funding resources and ENAR is reassured of its position as an important contributor to the implementation of proposed measures. Due to their close engagement with the EU apparatuses, it is necessary to reflect on how groups like ENAR promote meaningful change but can also fall into the trap of using the universalizing promises for achieving social inclusion via an intersectional approach to anti-racist policy opportunistically.

In response to the publication of the EU anti-racism action plan, ENAR and 45 other civil society organizations signed an open letter to the Commission President von der Leyen in which they state that in order to combat structural racism, "[t]here should be a strong focus on ensuring that racialized groups with key expertise from civil society organizations are consulted and engaged in a meaningful and timely manner on the implementation of the plan" (ENAR 2020). ENAR demands that the European Commission applies strong processes that ensure that the new action plan is realized, that targets are clear and measurable, and that progress is monitored. ENAR welcomes that the Commission recognizes the contributions by civil society organizations.

At the same time, ENAR reiterates that the Commission lacks a specific plan that tackles the absence of diversity in the institutions that uphold civil society in Europe. ENAR suggests that the Committee set up "a permanent European Commission advisory committee on anti-racism involving NGOs, Member States and social partners to support the implementation of policies, in particular the framework of National Action Plans against Racism" (ibid.). Furthermore, ENAR underscores the importance that the EU anti-racism coordinator, who the new action plan suggests to instate, "should be appointed based on relevant skills and competences, have strong expertise on anti-racism issues and intersectionality, and be from a racialized group" (ibid.).

The demands that ENAR articulates identify clear weaknesses of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. It is clear that there will be no sustainable anti-racism legislation from the Commission if the composition of the institutional bodies in Europe does not have representation of marginalized voices as ENAR suggests. At the same time, it is

important to remain cautiously optimistic whether ENAR is the entity that can bring about such structural change. Already on 12 June 2020, ENAR, together with ILGA and 150 other civil society actors, published an open letter to the Commission president von der Leyen in which the coalition of civil society organizations demanded that the Commission take immediate steps to address racism. Karen Taylor, chair of ENAR, writes representatively for the coalition that:

[f]or decades, ENAR and anti-racist organizations on the ground have been reporting (<https://www.enar-eu.org/Shadow-Reports-on-racism-in-Europe-2020>, accessed on: 11 April 2021) what racialized communities experience at the hands of the police across the European Union: discriminatory stop and search, abuse, violence and even death. So far, however, there has been little visibility and no public response . . . The bare minimum that EU leaders should do is acknowledge the existence of and publicly condemn discriminatory and violent police practices, in particular when it results in death. But most European political leaders were not even able to do that. (ILGA and ENAR 2020)

Taylor's words resonate with what Carlo Ruzza describes as the limited role that civil society organizations such as ENAR have in the EU (Ruzza 2013). Although, the EU encourages collaboration, being enlisted as a trusted actor by the EU for the purpose of policy dissemination to the public does not mean that civil society organizations are involved in a reciprocal relationship with the EU. While ENAR provides foundational research that the EU can use to conceptually orient its approaches to anti-racism, the EU has in the past not taken full advantage of that work.

3.1. *The Problems with Superficial Deployment of Intersectional Approaches*

Notwithstanding, ENAR itself needs to remain critical of its own language with regard to the suggestions that the organization gives to the EU about the implementation and monitoring of anti-racism policies and other measures. Sirma Bilge uses the term "ornamental intersectionality" to describe the meetings of "neoliberal corporate diversity culture and identity politics" (Bilge 2013, p. 408). Bilge cautions that a "superficial deployment of intersectionality undermines intersectionality's credibility and potentials for addressing interlocking power structures and developing an ethics of non-oppressive coalition-building and claims-making" (ibid.).

At the same time, institutional anti-racist efforts, especially when they receive support from civil society organizations, draw on branding themselves as committed to equality, equity, and diversity. Anti-racism advocacy groups who brand themselves as agents of reparative action construct a marketable expertise in diversity management for themselves. Possessing the image of being able to identify and contribute to the management of diversity can help anti-racism advocacy groups to gain recognition by and access to institutions that possess different kinds of social resources and power. Anti-racist advocacy groups, then, become part of the overall management apparatus for diversity in society, thus, limiting their own abilities to address structural oppression independently.

This critique of advocacy group opportunism is not to say that civil society organizations should not market their expertise to deciding bodies to gain more access to closed off spaces of power. Neither do I seek to downplay the contributions that civil society organizations have made over the years in terms of anti-discrimination legislation using this strategy. However, it is important to note that forming such relationships by way of leveraging action against oppression can be problematic and needs to be addressed. As it was core to the construction of intersectionality theories in discourses by Black feminist scholars to "confron[t] racism within feminism" (Bilge 2013, p. 420), it is important to confront the attempts of cultivating Whiteness—as a reaction to "the perceived threats of growing heterogeneity" (Goldberg 2002, p. 188)—within anti-racist discourse today.

With regard to international queer liberation movements, Rahul Rao notes that liberation movements for marginalized communities are often "haunted by . . . the spectre of abjection" (Rao 2020, p. 25). Drawing on the example of the international queer liberation

movement, Rao explains that liberation movements often refigure the marginalized person “as model capitalist subject whose inclusion promises a future of growth and economic dynamism” (ibid.). In the case of anti-racism activism, such pitfalls can be identified when the case for inclusion in society is not made in the language of human rights but as a persuasive move to change the register of inclusion. Rao correctly argues that, in such situations, “the language of the market is deployed to repress an unresolved moral argument about the acceptability or desirability of [the marginalized group] in the nation” (ibid.). The materialist strategy that Rao identifies in regard to global queer liberation movements and their relation to state and market actors is apparent also in anti-racism campaigns.

3.2. Limitations of Civil Society Organizations

The close relation between the EU, the economic and political union between nation states, and ENAR, an internationally organized anti-racist advocacy coalition between local and regional actors and organizations across the European nations, speaks to the intricate relationship that evolves when intersectionality is used for gaining power and social resources. Organizations like ENAR, on the one hand, act as activist networks that assist the EU with the dissemination and promotion of anti-racist and other anti-discriminatory policies. ENAR groups also lend their perspective on inclusion of ethnic minorities. In addition to this, ENAR groups publish scientific analysis of social issues related to racism that inform new policies and make links between migration and anti-discrimination known. On the other hand, ENAR financially benefits from its enlistment in EU initiatives as it receives around 90 percent through EU contributions (Ruzza 2013, p. 44). While the EU heavily relies on input by civil society organizations such as ENAR, the financial dependency that is created between the two begs the question whether civil society organizations can maintain their independence from EU agendas to provide reflection and point out voids.

Carlo Ruzza (2013) convincingly notes that the implementation of anti-discrimination policies, in particular with regard to anti-racism, serves the Commission as a tool to disseminate a particular narrative about the EU. The aim is to portray the identity of the union as one that is united in diversity. In order to realize this goal, the Commission enlists the assistance of anti-racism organizations “as a channel to reach local communities through a top-down process and use these contacts to disseminate EU policies which have lifestyle implications, such as the promotion of anti-discriminatory behaviour” (Ruzza 2013, p. 42, ctd. in Ruzza 2006).

The Commission uses its liaisons with civil society associations like ENAR to legitimize “EU anti-racist efforts . . . [and] the policy focused on social inclusion and anti-discrimination in the public opinion of Member States” (Ruzza 2013, p. 47). Due to the fact that EU-level organizations such as ENAR take an important mediating position between different interest groups, the paradigmatic use of intersectionality as a tool for establishing and maintaining the relationship between ENAR and the EU comes at a cost to the communities that anti-racism seeks to serve.

For example, ENAR’s report on intersectionality problematizes the mainstream understanding of individual racism “as an intentional act perpetrated by one prejudiced individual against another person or group of people based on race, skin colour, gender or any other axis of discrimination” (European Network against Racism and Center for Intersectional Justice 2019, p. 14). ENAR’s report was published ahead of the composition and publication of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. Regardless, the Commission did not take full advantage of ENAR’s findings. Instead, as previous examples have outlined, the new action plan falls short to acknowledge the relationship between universalism and racism inherent in the Commission’s understanding of racism in the EU.

4. Universalisms and Racism

Étienne Balibar's examination of the structural causes of racism is helpful to understand the relationship between racism and nation states and the practices of universalism in policy. He explains that contemporary forms of racism affect all aspects of life, including the social, economic, and political engagements of people, and the historical imaginaries they form therein. Therefore, it does not suffice to understand racism as a singular development that "revitalizes typologies and reworks accumulated experiences" to reveal to the world that the way in which we believe humanity came into being is not correct (Balibar 1991, p. 44). He goes on to explain further that traces of certain forms of racism function as screens for others, while simultaneously representing the "unsaid" of those other traces. Showcasing that different forms of racism can be a register for many more forms of oppression, Balibar explains that compounding multiple expressions of oppression work toward denying a specific group the right to freedom and humanity (Balibar 1991, p. 45). He gives the example of xenophobia to demonstrate that the way in which classifying criteria by which the humanity of a person is assessed presupposes a hierarchical form of ranking. Even when other signifiers such as "culture" are substituted for that of race, markers such as "heritage" and "ancestry" are attached to elaborate the relation of a person with their origin (Balibar 1991, p. 57). Doing so creates idealized descriptions of the human ideal, and with that, idealizations of "the perfect type of humanity" (Balibar 1991, p. 58) and, simultaneously, insinuates its opposite.

4.1. *United in Diversity*

In relation to Balibar's critical reflection on universalism and racism, there is something to be said about how the construction of modes of racial oppression is imbued in the idealized projection of EU identity as "unity in diversity". Multiple actors, including international anti-racism advocacy groups, EU institutions, EU MSs, and (White) EU citizens contribute to the production of anti-racist practices as an approach that offers (White) EU citizens the possibility of freeing themselves from the accusation of racism. The promotion of anti-racism through a series of actions that change the supra-nationalist structures of the EU, therefore, can also serve the construction of an idealized pathway through which the EU, as a holder of power, hopes to free itself from racism. Although this approach may not be the intent of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025, the new action plan's mission cannot be viewed independent from the underlying project of European imperialism because the Commission is embedded in, and operates from, the structures that uphold the principles and goals of nations (Lentin 2004, p. 430).

The issue is that institutions that anti-racist interventions seek to target tend to deracinate themselves to occlude their complicity. Therefore, in order to be effective, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 needs to be more critical of previous legislation and its application of intersectionality as a conceptual framework. The Commission should interrogate the ways in which the universalism that the new action plan propagates are constructed without referencing how the historical practice of racism was institutionalized. I follow Lentin in stating that a failure to recognize the historical contingencies that assert dominance will result in future policies that will only participate "in compounding the logic of racial historicism" (Lentin 2004, p. 440).

Alana Lentin draws on Balibar to note that contemporary forms of racism "cannot be fully understood without a concomitant engagement with the history of the development of the notion of universalism and the project of conceiving a general 'idea of man'" (Lentin 2004, p. 429). Thus, racism is not a matter of individual prejudice, as noted in the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. Instead, "race" is a political idea, Lentin writes, that relies on the ideological and methodological framework that the Enlightenment created to uphold the principles and goals of the nation (Lentin 2004, p. 430).

The conceptual framework of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 should, therefore, reflect mainstream strands of anti-racist understanding, as Lentin calls it. By that, she means the common, but often false understanding of racism that was largely promoted

by institutions such as UNESCO. Drawing on Lentin, I argue that the new action plan needs to seriously acknowledge this gap and revert from the individualization of racism as a problem of pseudo-science. Furthermore, the new action plan should regress from proposing alternative definitions of difference such as culture and ethnicity (Lentin 2004, p. 439). As long as the Commission does not acknowledge that there will remain, as Lentin describes:

the *impossibility* of equality as premised on the assumption that each and every individual has the opportunity to attain the humanity encapsulated by the universalist vision . . . if the universalistic ideal of humanity is founded upon the European, white model, it will simply not be possible for the Others that human rights seek to protect to gain entrance to that community of individuals. (Lentin 2004, p. 440)

contemporary anti-racism initiatives will continue to jump into the “specter of abjection” (Rao 2020) and not be able to achieve the necessary reparative work that it needs to come to terms with the ways in which contemporary problems are entangled with the racial and colonial histories of the European nations.

4.2. Risks and Chances of Intersectionality in Policy

Even though the reparative approach to racism that the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 suggests considers structural locations and power differentials, the paradigmatic use of intersectionality that the new action plan presents may risk intersectionality becoming “a universal device to be applied as an invariant rule” (Bilge 2013, p. 420). Bilge notes that intersectionality is no objective analytical tool, thus, it does not suffice to acknowledge that there are different experiences of racism without acknowledging that there are different bases of oppression that cannot be added up like a “shopping list” (Bilge 2013, p. 420) to make arguments for liberation. Instead, it is just as necessary to recognize the different conditions that have created the bases for structural oppression, as it is important to recognize the different kinds of knowledges and resistance that have developed as a result (Bilge 2013, p. 419).

Therefore, the Commission tries to avoid thinking of different categories of discrimination as separate from each other. In order to provide a reparative practice, the action plan provides opportunities to acknowledge the different ways in which experiences of oppression may be marked. For example, the Commission identified that the specific function of hatred is to sustain the subordination of historically subordinated peoples (Brown 2002, p. 424). The new action plan, thus, places great care on identifying different spaces in which hate is expressed, especially online. In Section 2.1, the plan states that the Commission is expanding “effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties throughout the EU” that the framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law (2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008) laid out via “a full and correct transposition and implementation” of the Victims’ Rights Directive (2012/29/EU), which “requires Member States to ensure a fair and non-discriminatory treatment of victims of crime, with particular attention to victims of crime committed with a bias or discriminatory motive” (European Commission 2020a, p. 6). Specifically, the new action plan details a planned digital services act that among other concerns of cyber security will include a reporting system for experiences of hate speech. The new action plan hopes to contribute to the safeguarding of freedom of expression online but also be a basis that can “[help] civil society and policymakers . . . formulate policies that effectively target racism” (European Commission 2020a, p. 7).

To understand the opportunities and limitations of the new action plan’s approach to the issue of hatred, it is useful to return to Crenshaw’s concept. Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the notion of intersectionality in her 1989 article in which she analyzed the manner in which the needs of Black women were insufficiently addressed through the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination doctrine in the United States (Crenshaw 1989). Crenshaw surveyed a series of court cases in which courts were not willing to allow the claims by Black women

plaintiffs. Rulings on sex discrimination cases were articulated with regard to race- and class-privileged White women and rulings on race discrimination were considered from the experiences of sex- and class-privileged Black men. There was a lack of clarity that people may experience discrimination by way of multiple categories of discrimination. Furthermore, the categories of discrimination that were identified were defined through the experiences of middle-class White women and Black men. Thus, Black women could not be represented by some combination of any of these categories as these categories do not speak to the experiences of Black women. Crenshaw importantly pointed out that in the place of (impossible) intersection, to borrow Rahul Rao's phrasing (Rao 2020, p. 14), the experience of Black women is erased.

While multiple forms of discrimination may intersect, they are not separate layers or separate axes at a crossroads. Contrary to critiques of intersectionality through the "infinite regress objection", which "assumes the stability and explanatory power of monistic categories even as it explores their permutations and combinations" (Carastathis 2016, pp. 148–49), Carastathis argues, intersectionality is aware of the thorny issue that depending on the social context, social experiences of multiple oppression may be flattened or fragmented. By that, Carastathis means that intersectionality leaves the option to opt for single-issue approaches if the issue at hand had to be prioritized. However, Sirma Bilge importantly notes that such prioritization was always temporary and strategically done (Bilge 2013, p. 419).

What does the conceptual work mean for the implementation of measures against hatred in the EU? The new action plan's approach to stopping online hatred as an anti-racist strategy reveals that countering racism as a form of hatred can be useful to approach as a single issue. The space of the internet is so vast that national and supranational entities like the EU and its MSs have limited resources to identify social experiences of racism online. Furthermore, the internet is a relatively new space of governance in which nation states and supra-national entities such as the EU have only governed for about twenty years. The 2014 Communication, for example, called for "establishing a coherent set of global Internet governance principles that are consistent with fundamental rights and democratic values, with all stakeholders" through cooperative governance frameworks with shared rights and responsibilities among the EU MSs (European Commission 2014, p. 4). Already, the 2014 Communication opted for a multistakeholder approach to internet governance because of issues of unequal access to resources for certain EU MSs, a lack of trust in the structures of the internet, and a lack of resources to address the multiple concerns that have arisen over the past twenty years, with the expansion of broadband connection and technology developments.

Considering the multilevel obstacles with which the EU is faced in governing online spaces, pursuing a single-issue approach when addressing hatred online is understandable. While a more nuanced approach to illegal practices of racial discrimination online would be welcomed, the Commission has found an interesting approach that allows for placing the issue of hatred online into the focus of internet governance to argue for protection of the social experiences of racism that people make online.

However, there is also criticism about the EU's attempt to interfere in the policing of hate speech online. Maryant Fernandez Perez from EDRI, for example, argues:

The illegality of the content is assessed in relation to companies' Terms of Service and 'where necessary' vis-à-vis national laws. In practice, this means that content will always be deleted on the basis of Terms of Service, so there's never a need to check the content against national laws on hate speech. (Dachwitz 2016)

Regardless, the integration of racism as an issue in online hate speech through single-issue political movements such as the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025, using the words of Carastathis, can be viewed as a "strateg[y] of survival for those who are regarded by their "natural" communities as outsiders, traitors, and fakers" (Carastathis 2016, p. 196). Such microscale versions of political coalition to which Carastathis refers emerge out of necessity for coalition. In this regard, the new action plan offers hope, but hope only if long-term

strategies will be developed that prevent the policing of hate speech online becoming part of the cultivation of Whiteness in language online.

5. Reparative Action and Empowerment—A Possibility?

The failure to address the historical contingency of racism in the EU's language to anti-racism approaches is problematic. The question, thus, remains, under what conditions can empowerment be possible? This paradox is particularly visible in the new action plan's approach to countering discrimination by law enforcement authorities. In order to prevent the continuation of different forms of racial discrimination, the Commission suggests to address the issues of discriminatory attitudes within law enforcement, specifically profiling. The new action plan acknowledges that there is a need for structural changes to tackle the lack of "trust in authorities" because many crimes and resistance to public authority are underreported (European Commission 2020a, p. 7). The Commission proposes a multi-level approach that involves "mapping the gaps and needs in EU Member States, and training action to detect and prosecute hate crime" as well as building training manuals and training packages to "sharpen awareness of fair and inclusive policing" (ibid.). The Commission hopes that implementing these measures will help develop key guiding principles to increase the currently low reporting of hate crimes.

Even though the Commission's new approach to policing and addressing internal structures of discrimination in the police force is a helpful step toward justice for marginalized groups, it is no strategy of empowerment. Çağrı Kahveci's analysis of empowerment in social movements reveals that empowerment can only be achieved through a form of politics (Ranci re et al. 2001) that disturbs the existing organizational order of a structure and its police. Drawing on Jacques Ranci re's concept of politics as a disruptive power (Ranci re 1999) to evoke social change, Kahveci argues that people can achieve a space for themselves in which they create possibilities for themselves and make room for the oppressed voices of the subaltern to state their ideas and interests (Kahveci 2017, p. 37). Therefore, empowerment involves the authorization of marginalized groups through disruptive politics, so that they can demand their rights, gain access to public resources, and become involved in decision-making processes that promote the development of society as a whole (Kahveci 2017, p. 36).

A close look at the new action plan's proposal for disruptive change in policing, however, reveals that the Commission does not seek to realize effective and sustainable structural changes in law enforcement. Instead, the plan follows an integrationist approach that views the concerns of people who are particularly vulnerable to policing and police brutality as a marginal concern in the overall foundational framework of law enforcement. Furthermore, the new action plan misses the opportunity to implement the strategy of community policing, which the FRA identified as a useful strategy to reduce crime and fear of crime in its 2018 report on the experiences of discriminations that Black people make in Europe (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2018). The measure of the EU anti-racism action plan on policing would benefit from exploring such forms of community policing that redistribute responsibilities to the members of marginalized communities.

Further lack of measures that strive toward the reorganization of different areas of life reverberates the exclusionary strategies typical of the European migration regime and its violent practices in outsourced border control points and refugee camps. The anti-racist interventions proposed to law enforcement agencies via the new action plan can, therefore, only be understood as a strategy to ensure temporary survival. Audr e Lorde famously reflects on her experience as a Black lesbian woman with regard to the notion of survival in the American university context. She writes:

It [survival] is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. (Lorde and Clarke [1984] 2007, p. 107)

While, on the one hand, increased security and protection for people who experience racism may secure their survival, it is not a strategy that would enable them to be recognized as equal members in society. Alana Lentin explains that “if the universalistic ideal of humanity is founded upon the European, white model, it will simply not be possible for the Others that human rights seek to protect to gain entrance to that community of individuals” (Lentin 2004, p. 440). Therefore, arguing for the rights of people who are racialized by way of human rights and protection measures resonates with Lorde’s warning that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde and Clarke [1984] 2007, p. 107). In “Manifesto for Survival”, Sadiya Qureshi elaborates the dimension of survival in that the next needed step would have to be “changing the balance of power” (Qureshi 2019, p. 213) so that marginalized people are included. Policies for meaningful change can be proxies for a transversal reconstitution of power.

6. Conclusions

Overall, the current EU initiative on anti-racism is embedded in a series of concrete steps that the union is taking to ensure that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is realized in all its member states (European Commission 2020a, p. 4). This article has laid out a critical examination of the conceptual and practical suggestions made by the Commission to combat racism and foster empowerment, with particular attention to the language that the new action plan uses. While the Commission aims for a reparative approach through which structural changes for the benefit of racially marginalized people in Europe is to be achieved, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 has its limitations that are grounded in the historical and temporal context in which the plan has been articulated.

There are deep issues with such a universalizing approach to anti-racism. When the specific historical and temporal contexts in which the power dichotomy is articulated are removed or artificially shifted, the historical contingency and the political history are obscured. The Commission seeks to avoid such violent acts, however, simultaneously employs marginalized people as informants for implicit bias trainings and diversity hires.

I have argued that the crux of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 lies in its language. The new action plan is part of the EU integration framework whose political grammar enlists the anti-racism initiative in a range of other issues. On the one hand, anti-racism is conceptually articulated as an integral part of the unity of the EU. On the other hand, engaging in anti-racist practices via the EU institutions, but also in everyday life, contributes to the practice of life as a (White) European.

Enlisting anti-racism as a project within the larger dimension of EU integration reproduces the structures of European imperialism. The new action plan proposes an intersectional approach, but never fully defines what it means by that or how it plans to employ this approach. Consequently, we learn about the voids of both policy measures and the voids made visible by the compounding of different areas of life affected by racialized oppression. However, the plan does take important steps to address these voids. Throughout the future development of anti-racism initiatives, it continues to be of utmost importance that any anti-racism approach addresses the reciprocal connection between universalism and racism, in order to avoid anti-racist initiatives becoming enlisted in idealized pathways to (White) Europeaness.

Furthermore, I have considered the role of the transnationally connected civil society organization ENAR that has long been deeply connected to the EU and its mission to combat different forms of discrimination. While ENAR provides the EU with extensive research and resources, from which the Commission can draw to articulate its policies, there is no reciprocal exchange or agreement that ENAR’s findings will be implemented. The limited opportunities that ENAR has at its disposal for interventions raise pertinent questions about the independence of civil society organizations and the limitations of their work. However, ENAR’s international network of partner organizations, such as ILGA, provides an important tool in exerting political pressure on the EU to act on behalf of ENAR’s concerns. ENAR is fully aware of its role to the Commission and uses its position

as an important entity for policy dissemination to the public as leverage to mobilize internationally. The importance of different forms of civil society mobilization increases and the availability of EU resources for anti-racism initiatives in Europe is guaranteed for the duration of the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. Thus, the shifts in current EU legislation, although they have limitations, warrant a certain degree of hope that there will be space for reparative practices to develop in the future.

Funding: This research received no external funding. The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their thought-provoking suggestions to improve earlier versions of this manuscript and Obenewaa Oduro-Opuni for many helpful conversations.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Agier, Michel. 2011. *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*. Edited by David Fernbach. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Balibar, Étienne. 1991. Racism and Nationalism. In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. Edited by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. London and New York: Verso, pp. 37–68.
- Balibar, Étienne, and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London and New York: Verso.
- Bell, Mark. 1999. The New Article 13 EC Treaty: A Sound Basis for European Anti-Discrimination Law? *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law* 6: 5–23. [CrossRef]
- Bilge, Sirma. 2013. Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10: 405–24. [CrossRef]
- Brown, Wendy. 2002. Suffering the Paradox of Rights. In *Left Legalism/Left Critique*. Edited by Wendy Brown and Janet Halley. Zurich: Duke University Press, pp. 420–34.
- Carastathis, Anna. 2016. *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestation, Horizons*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 8: 139–67.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–99. [CrossRef]
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel HoSang, and George Lipsitz, eds. 2019. *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Dachwitz, Ingo. 2016. Hatespeech-Verabredung zwischen EU-Kommission und Internetfirmen: NGOs kritisieren Willkür. *netzpolitik.org*. June 1. Available online: <https://netzpolitik.org/2016/hatespeech-verabredung-zwischen-eu-kommission-und-internetfirmen-ngos-kritisieren-willkuer/> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- ENAR. 2020. Open Letter to European Commission: Securing Meaningful (...)—European Network Against Racism. October 15. Available online: <https://www.enar.eu.org/Open-letter-to-European-Commission-Securing-meaningful-participation-for-the-EU> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- European Commission. 2014. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Internet Policy and Governance. Europe's Role in Shaping the Future of Internet Governance. COM (2014)/72 Final. Brussels: European Commission, Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0072&from=DE> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- European Commission. 2020a. *A Union of Equality: EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025*. COM (2020) 565 Final. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/a_union_of_equality_eu_action_plan_against_racism_2020_-2025_en.pdf (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- European Commission. 2020b. *Stepping up Action for a Union of Equality*. Factsheet #SOTEU. Brussels: European Commission. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/stepping_up_action_for_a_union_of_equality_-_factsheet_en.pdf (accessed on 31 March 2021).

- European Network against Racism, and Center for Intersectional Justice. 2019. *Intersectional Discrimination in Europe: Relevance, Challenges and Ways Forward*. Brussels: European Network Against Racism. Available online: <https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/intersectionality-report-final-3.pdf> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2017. *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey—Main Results*. EU-MIDIS II. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2018. *Being Black in the EU Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey—Summary*. EU-MIDIS II. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Goldberg, David Theo. 2002. *The Racial State*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación. 2018. The Coloniality of Migration and the 'Refugee Crisis': On the Asylum-Migration Nexus, the Transatlantic White European Settler Colonialism-Migration and Racial Capitalism. *Refuge* 34. [CrossRef]
- ILGA, and ENAR. 2020. Open Letter to President Ursula von Der Leyen: The European Commission Must Prioritise Addressing Police Violence and Structural Racism in the EU | ILGA-Europe. *ILGA Europe (blog)*. December 6. Available online: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/resources/news/latest-news/open-letter-president-ursula-von-der-leyen-european-commission-must> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- Kahveci, Çağrı. 2017. *Migrantische Selbstorganisation Im Kampf Gegen Rassismus: Die Politische Praxis Ausgewählter Antirassistischer Gruppen Türkeistämmiger Migrant*innen*, 1st ed. Münster: Unrast.
- Krizsan, Andrea, Hege Skjeie, and Judith Squires. 2012. Institutionalizing Intersectionality: A Theoretical Framework. In *Institutionalizing Intersectionality*. Edited by Andrea Krizsan, Hege Skjeie and Judith Squires. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 1–32. [CrossRef]
- Law, Ian. 2014. *Mediterranean Racisms: Connections and Complexities in the Racialization of the Mediterranean Region*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lazaridis, Gabriella. 2015. *International Migration into Europe: From Subjects to Objects*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lentin, Alana. 2004. Racial States, Anti-Racist Responses: Picking Holes in 'Culture' and 'Human Rights'. *European Journal of Social Theory* 7: 427–43. [CrossRef]
- Lorde, Audre, and Cheryl Clarke. 2007. *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley: Crossing Press. First published 1984.
- Loutridou, Maria, and Mark Eric Butt. 1999. SOCI 105 EN—Prospects for an Anti-Discrimination Policy—Prospects for an Anti-Discrimination Policy (Social Affairs Series SOCI 105 EN). European Parliament. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/soci/105_en.htm (accessed on 30 March 2021).
- Pascoët, Julie. 2020. EU Anti-Racism Action Plan Explained: A Blog Series. *ENAR-EU (blog)*. October 13. Available online: <https://www.enar-eu.org/EU-anti-racism-action-plan-explained-A-blog-series> (accessed on 3 March 2021).
- Qureshi, Sadiya. 2019. A Manifesto for Survival. In *To Exist Is to Resist. Black Feminism in Europe*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 205–18.
- Rancière, Jacques. 1999. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Rancière, Jacques, Davies Panagia, and Rachael Bowlby. 2001. Ten Theses on Politics. *Theory and Event* 5: 1–16. [CrossRef]
- Rao, Rahul. 2020. *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Röder, Katrin. 2014. Reparative Reading, Post-Structuralist Hermeneutics and T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets. *Anglia* 132. [CrossRef]
- Ruzza, Carlo. 2013. Anti-Racism at the EU Level. In *Anti-Racist Movements in the EU: Between Europeanisation and National Trajectories*. Edited by Stefano Fella and Carlo Ruzza. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 32–52. Available online: <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10636003> (accessed on 1 March 2021).
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, ed. 1997. *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*. Series Q; Durham: Duke University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira, Georgie Wemyss, and Kathryn Cassidy. 2019. *Bordering*. Cambridge: Polity.



Article

The Persistence of Racial Constructs in Spain: Bringing Race and Colorblindness into the Debate on Interculturalism

Dan Rodríguez-García

INMIX-UAB, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, 08193 Barcelona, Spain; dan.rodriguez@uab.cat

Abstract: In this article, I argue that persisting racial constructs in Spain affect conceptions of national belonging and continue to shape and permeate contemporary discriminations. I begin by describing several recent political events that demonstrate the urgent need for a discussion about “race” and racialization in the country. Second, some conceptual foundations are provided concerning constructs of race and the corollary processes of racism and racialization. Third, I present data from various public surveys and also from ethnographic research conducted in Spain on mixedness and multiraciality to demonstrate that social constructs of race remain a significant boundary driving stigmatization and discrimination in Spain, where skin color and other perceived physical traits continue to be important markers for social interaction, perceived social belonging, and differential social treatment. Finally, I bring race into the debate on managing diversity, arguing that a post-racial approach—that is, race-neutral discourse and the adoption of colorblind public policies, both of which are characteristic of the interculturalist perspectives currently preferred by Spain as well as elsewhere in Europe—fails to confront the enduring effects of colonialism and the ongoing realities of structural racism. I conclude by emphasizing the importance of bringing race into national and regional policy discussions on how best to approach issues of diversity, equality, anti-discrimination, and social cohesion.

Citation: Rodríguez-García, Dan. 2022. The Persistence of Racial Constructs in Spain: Bringing Race and Colorblindness into the Debate on Interculturalism. *Social Sciences* 11: 13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11010013>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 8 March 2021

Accepted: 16 December 2021

Published: 2 January 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: race; racism; racialization; discrimination; colorblindness; diversity; multiracial; interculturalism; diversity management; Spain

1. Introduction

In February 2018, on a first official visit to Spain, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent concluded that an alarming “lack of representation of people of African descent was endemic at State, regional and municipality levels, as well as in all three branches of power” in Spain (United Nations General Assembly 2018, p. 8). This fact must be considered with the knowledge that the African-descent population in Spain has now reached approximately two million people (representing 2.2 percent of the country’s total population), according to various estimates reported by civil society organizations (United Nations General Assembly 2018).

Later, in March 2019, the European Parliament issued a statement about protecting the fundamental rights of African-descent populations in Europe, specifically noting that “people of African descent are overwhelmingly underrepresented in political and lawmaking institutions, at European, national and local levels in the European Union”; Member States were called on “to develop national anti-racism strategies that address the comparative situation of people of African descent in areas such as education, housing, health, employment, policing, social services, the justice system and political participation and representation, and to encourage the participation of people of African descent in television programmes and other media, in order to adequately address their lack of representation, as well as the lack of role models for children of African descent” (European Parliament 2019).

A year later, in January 2020, upon the formation of the new coalition government of Spain, Alba González Sanz, the person who had originally been selected by the party

Podemos to head the Directorate of Equal Treatment and Ethnic-Racial Diversity, resigned from the post; she was replaced by Rita Bosaho Cori, originally from Equatorial Guinea, who became the first-ever Black deputy in the history of Spanish Congress. In her explanation of why she had resigned, González Sanz said, “If we know something in feminism, it is that representation and symbolic actions matter. We have reorganized the team of this Ministry so that there is a visible presence of women belonging to racialized groups” (see [Sánchez and Gutiérrez 2020](#)). The Ministry itself also emphasized that such a change was long overdue given the absence of representation of immigrant-origin and racialized persons in government institutions and leadership positions. This situation generated great controversy in the Spanish political domain and in the media around the use of the term “racialized”.

The above examples regarding the serious underrepresentation of Black people in positions of political power in Spain, as well as the recent Spanish political controversy around specifically mentioning “race” and acknowledging structural racism in the country, give purpose to this article. Using the case of Spain—which tends to think of itself as a “post-racial” society and is inclined to overlook the sociocultural repercussions of its colonialist past—I wish to show that the social construct of “race” is a significant boundary driving present-day stigmatization and discrimination, and I therefore argue for the need to bring race into the interculturalism policy debate. First, I will lay some theoretical foundations and arguments concerning the concepts of race, racism, and racialization, defending the use of these terms as an anti-racism tool. I contend that the idea of race, generated by the interpretation of phenotype and other physical features, plays a central role in social dynamics and processes of discrimination, having a real impact on the lives of racialized groups. Simply put, racism cannot exist without the constructed idea of race, so we need to consider these topics together ([Golash-Boza 2016](#)). Second, I will look at historical and recent manifestations of racism in Spain while also reflecting on the broader European context. Third, I will discuss how the “colorblind” or post-racial universalist approach adopted by current European practices of interculturalism might be falling short in the fight against discrimination. I concur with [Bonilla-Silva \(1999, 2013\)](#), [Lentin \(2008, 2020\)](#), [Simon \(2017, 2019\)](#), [Song \(2018\)](#), and [Wise \(2010\)](#), among other scholars, that such an approach, by eschewing discussions of specifically race-related themes and social realities, has the effect of making it more difficult to challenge societal prejudices and structural racism, thereby actually increasing the likelihood of ethnoracial discrimination.

Spain is a unique case study within Europe because it has experienced a massive and sudden increase in its international immigration in recent years. In just 10 years, between 2000 and 2010, Spain’s foreign-born population more than quadrupled, rising from under 1.5 million to over 6.5 million—that is, from less than 4 percent to almost 14 percent of the total population. To put this in perspective, during this time, Spain’s annual net inflow of foreign-born individuals was the highest among all OECD countries, second only to the United States ([Arango 2013](#)). This unique contemporary migration experience, together with the country’s history of colonialism, has made Spain an exceptional laboratory for studying ethnic and race relations.

2. Conceptualizing Race, Racism, and Racialization

“Race”, as a concept to divide humans into different taxonomies or into essential types of individuals based on perceived traits, does not have biological meaning, although it began as a so-called “scientific” practice in the 18th century. From a modern scientific point of view, we know that “races” do not exist ([Ackermann et al. 2016](#); [Cavalli-Sforza 2000](#); [Lewontin et al. 1984](#); [Ruffié 1976](#); see also [Lévi-Strauss 1952](#)). Humanity belongs to a single species (*Homo Sapiens*), and the belief that there are different capacities for producing culture based on genotypic and phenotypic differences—the core belief of racism—is a fallacy.

Yet, the consequences of the construct of race—that is, racism and racialization—are very real. As [Bonilla-Silva \(1999\)](#), nodding to the Durkheimian tradition, argues, race is

a “social fact” that has real effects on people’s lives. This is because the idea of race is structurally embedded in social, political, economic, and cultural institutions (see also [Chun and Lo 2015](#); [Goldberg 2002, 2006](#); [Grosfoguel 2004](#); [Hall 1980](#); [Song 2018](#)). As put by [Hughes \(2017, p. 27\)](#), “race is a biological fiction with a social function”.

In the same way that race is a concept with multiple dimensions ([Roth 2016](#)), racism—that is, prejudice and discrimination based on the idea of race—has many forms and manifestations depending on the context: from biological racism (i.e., the belief in a hierarchy of humans based on alleged biological criteria) to what has been called “new racism” ([Barker 1981](#)), “differential neo-racism” ([Taguieff 1988](#)), or “cultural fundamentalism” ([Stolcke 1995](#)), where culture replaces the idea of biological race as a basis for discrimination or asserted superiority, and differing cultures are viewed as fixed and incompatible entities. Addressing the wide range of discriminations, [San Román \(1996\)](#) coined the encompassing term “alterphobia” to refer to any ideology of exclusion or rejection of the “other”, regardless of the criterion or criteria for exclusion (e.g., biology, culture, religion, social class).

A corollary to the concepts of race and racism, “racialization”, in brief, is the process of ascribing racial meanings to a relationship, social practice, or group ([Omi and Winant 2014](#)). More specifically, it can be understood as the differential treatment of an individual or a group based on a socially attributed racial category—that is, based on perceived visible characteristics (e.g., skin color, clothing, or other aspects of appearance) or perceived cultural distinctions (e.g., language or religion) and the assumptions that are made about these perceived characteristics ([Barot and Bird 2001](#); [Chun and Lo 2015](#); [Gans 2017](#); [Hochman 2019](#); [Murji and Solomos 2005](#); [Omi and Winant 2014](#)). In this essentialization of individual or group characteristics in racial terms, the phenotype plays a fundamental role—that is, “aspects of a person’s physical appearance that are socially understood as relevant to racial classification” ([Roth 2016, p. 1323](#); see also [Jenkins 1997, p. 65](#)). [Grosfoguel \(2004\)](#), for instance, explains how the racialization of Puerto Rican ethnicity in New York is largely based on visible characteristics, such as blackness. As argued by [Daynes and Lee \(2008\)](#), the phenotype or physical visible traits become the object of racial ideas or beliefs through selective perception, a process that is influenced by cultural and historical contexts.

While the concept of racialization is principally associated with the eras of colonialism and postcolonialism ([Balibar and Wallerstein 1991](#)), with darker skin color being assigned an inferior status by the ruling classes, visibility does not always characterize the oppressed or discriminated-against minority ([Song 2020](#)). Populations that were not subject to colonial history or who were not considered “people of color” have also been racialized, such as the Irish or Italians in the United States ([Fredrickson 2002](#); [King-O’Riain 2021](#)). Moreover, as [Meer \(2014\)](#) points out, both Muslims and Jews have historically been racialized as “absolute others”—as have the Romani people throughout history—not only through having their ethnocultural differences treated with contempt but also by having physical differences attributed to them in order to justify their marginalization, exclusion, or even mass murder. Arguably, in present-day Europe, religion (specifically Islam versus Judeo-Christianity) may hold the “master status” ([Hughes 1945](#)) or centrality as a dominant attribute in social relations, much in the same way that race has occupied this position in North America ([Foner 2015](#); [Grosfoguel 2004](#); [Rodríguez-García 2015](#)).

The fact is, any group is susceptible to being racialized, as the idea of race is a social construct—with fluid, cultural, and minority/majority components—that depends on the context ([Telles and Paschel 2014](#)). For this reason, the same person, for example, the actor Antonio Banderas, can be considered White in Spain (in Spain, this would be indisputable) while being labeled as a “person of color” by a number of news outlets in the United States.¹ Another example showing the contextual nature of race is the April 2018 *National Geographic* special issue, titled “Black and White”, which featured two twin daughters of an Anglo/Jamaican intermarried couple: One of the twins looks seemingly “White” because of her light skin color and blonde hair, and the other one looks more phenotypically “Black” ([Edmonds 2018](#)). Racial labels are shown to be arbitrary and

unmeaningful through this case—and clearly a construct of society rather than a fact of biology. Through these examples, we also see how blackness is a category that is constructed in relation to another invented racial category: whiteness. That is, whiteness should not be thought of as “raceless”, but actually as a racial construct, or even as the *primordial* racial construct (Lentin 2020). In this sense, the White population is also racialized (see also Beaman 2019; Lewis 2004; Telles and Flores 2013). At this point, it is important to consider Song’s (2014a, p. 107) argument regarding the need “to differentiate more clearly between ‘racism’ (as an historical and structured system of domination) from the broader notion of ‘racialization’” in order to “[articulate] a more nuanced and complex understanding of racial incidents”.²

Moreover, since racialization is a “dialectical process that involves the processes and resulting structures and institutions in which racialized people participate” (Miles 1989, p. 76), racialization usually intersects with variables other than race, such as gender or occupation. Stereotyped differential abilities may be attributed to both women and men of racialized groups, affecting their access to work. The concept of “gendered racialization” applies to the study of ethnic work niches, where factors of origin/appearance and gender (and class, too) become entrenched in available or common work options. For instance, Asian (Lee 2015), Mexican (Vasquez 2010), and African (Elabor-Idemudia 1999) women have been characterized as having different “essential” skills in the workplace, in turn leading to racialized and gendered economic niches. This ethnoracial homogenization may also be applied to larger groups, such as the Latino population as a whole (Rumbaut 2009; Smith and Abreu 2019; Telles 2014) or immigrants and refugees in general (Aguilar Idáñez and Buraschi 2018; Gans 2017).

In addition to specifically impacting on work opportunities, racialization, viewed as a process, can be a helpful concept for referring to the disproportions that occur between ethnoracial groups in terms of access to goods, resources, services, healthcare treatment, and other needs, and also for describing the social problems disproportionately affecting certain groups as a result of these disparities (e.g., the racialization of poverty, the racialization of crime and incarceration, the racialization of high school dropouts). That is, certain groups are overrepresented in certain areas of social marginalization and disadvantage and are underrepresented in other areas of institutional privilege, such as in the education system, the justice system, the healthcare system, and government (Campos 2012). In this way, racialization can be understood as a process that “reflects the legitimation, rationalization, and justification for racism or the systematic, hierarchical, and unequal distribution of resources and unequal treatment of people once racialized” (Goss and Hughey 2017, p. 1).

3. The Persistence of Racial Constructs in So-Called Colorblind Spain

In the United States, where the Black/White divide predominates owing to the legacy of slavery, the term “race” is still used as an analytical concept and as a popular category within social activism to highlight the importance of color in the dynamics of social inclusion/exclusion. Racial labeling in the United States is embedded in the culture, originally as an obvious tool of oppression, and later as an attempt for certain groups to reappropriate racial terms for both empowerment and anti-discrimination reasons. Black people in the States have been referred to as “colored”, “Negroes”, “African Americans”, and “Blacks”, depending on the historical moment, and at present, some non-White groups use the term “BIPOC” to highlight the unique relationship to whiteness that Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color have.³

In contrast, in Spain—as in most countries in continental Europe since the end of World War II—the word “race” has largely remained a taboo category (i.e., politically incorrect) in academic and political discourse. A classical anti-racism approach has been adopted, according to which making ethnic or racial distinctions is seen to be at the root of racism. The understanding is that equality is achieved through the invisibilization of differences. Nevertheless, the issue of race is certainly not absent in Spain, or in Europe. Policies and national discourses of race and race relations from past colonial times still have an important

impact on contemporary European societies, where forms of racism and discrimination remain ongoing problems. Although Spain may not be a strictly pigmentocratic society like the United States (Alba and Foner 2015; Hunter 2007; Martin et al. 2017; Price 2012) or Brazil (Telles 2014; Telles and Paschel 2014), numerous studies show that skin color and other physical traits are nonetheless crucial markers for social interaction, social inclusion/exclusion dynamics, and differential treatment in Spain (Cornejo Parriego 2007; Flores 2015; Hellgren 2018; Rodríguez-García 2010, 2015; Rodríguez-García et al. 2016, 2018, 2021), as is also the case in other countries in Europe.⁴

Several recent studies conducted by the Federation of SOS Racism Associations (2015, 2019) conclude that discrimination in Spain based on skin color is overwhelming. The first study (2015) reports discriminatory practices in access to housing, noting a considerable difference in the refusal to rent apartments to the “distinguishable” foreign-born population as compared to the native-born Spanish-origin population (70 percent versus 30 percent, respectively). The second study (2019) warns about discrimination arising from police stops based on ethnic profiling: In 2017, in Catalonia, 54.1 percent of the total police stops by the *Mossos d’Esquadra* (the autonomous police force of Catalonia) involved foreign-born individuals, a group that accounts for only 13.7 percent of the total Catalan population. The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent similarly found that “racial profiling of people of African descent is endemic” in Spain, and that “black people [in Spain] run the risk of being singled out 42 times more often in ports and public transport, simply because of the colour of their skin” (United Nations General Assembly 2018, p. 7).

Another recent study focusing on the municipality of Barcelona (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020) also indicates that the main form of discrimination in Barcelona, accounting for 33 percent of reported cases, is racism and racialization, mostly directed towards Maghrebi people and Black African women; similar findings are also reported in France, where discrimination based on skin color or origin is the most common form of discrimination, particularly affecting populations of African origin (including people of Maghrebi origin), regardless of whether populations were born and socialized in France (Brinbaum et al. 2018).

Furthermore, according to the Spanish government’s 2020 domestic report on “Perception of Discrimination Based on Racial or Ethnic Origin” (CEDRE (Consejo para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial o Étnica) 2020), more than half of the minority populations surveyed (51.8 percent) stated that they had felt discriminated against in the past year. This report presents data from a survey conducted with 1600 Spanish residents or nationals from eight different ethnoracial groups (Romani, Maghrebi, Indo-Pakistani, East Asian, Andean, Eastern European, non-Mediterranean African, and Afro-descendant⁵ populations) about their perception of discrimination in different areas of life, such as public education, the healthcare system, government institutions, access to housing, and treatment by the police. Since 2013, the year of the previous government report, the perception of having experienced discrimination in Spain had increased in almost all areas.

These findings can only be explained by the fact that Spain is a society infused with—at all levels of the social structure—the construct of race and the reality of racism, both of which are closely linked to the country’s history of colonialism. Before becoming viewed as a scientific category in the 18th century, the idea of race was formulated as a category of moral, religious, and social status in Spain, intended to protect class privileges. It is important to point out the extent to which Spanish racism has been characterized by the primacy given to Catholicism and a related logic of excluding the racialized “religious other” (see Feros 2017; Méchoulan 1981).⁶ Discrimination based on both skin color and ethnocultural difference has absolutely formed part of this logic of exclusion—one only has to think of the historical persecution of the Roma in Spain (see, for example, Cortés and Fernández 2015) despite their tendency to adopt the state religion of Catholicism or of the famous Spanish-language song “*Angelitos negros*” that was popularized in 1947 by Spanish-Cuban singer Antonio Machín,⁷ which critically questions why there are no Black

angels in the Catholic Church's representations of heaven; however, religion has been a central organizing principle.

The construction of "race" and "whiteness" in Spain can be traced back to the 13th century, when the idea of "blood purity"—a Catholic doctrine of essential/moral distinction between Christians (i.e., Catholics) and non-Christians (i.e., Muslims and Jews)—came into being. In the 15th century, the implementation of the *Estatutos de limpieza de sangre* (Laws of Purity of Blood) sought more clearly to ensure that only people of Christian descent ("Old Christians", interpreted as being "pure White") were able to advance socially and maintain positions of power over Jews, "Moors" (as Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula were called), and converts to Christianity (*conversos*) in mainland Spain, and over Native Americans, Black people (of African descent), and mixed-race people ("mulattos") in the context of the Spanish colonies (Méchoulan 1981). Even the fact of converting to Catholicism, a seemingly inclusive practice that was central to the project of Spanish colonial expansion, did not afford "New Christians" the same status—in terms of both "racial purity" and class privilege—that was held by Old Christians. Thus, in 16th-century colonial America, a caste system was created that matched a person's assigned religious and racial status with the degree of rights and social participation that this individual would have; this system would govern the entire social and economic organization of the colonies. A family's social position (its honor) was based on maintaining the integrity of "blood purity" in its lineage. In this context, the mixing of castes (i.e., of bloodlines) through intermarriage was seen as challenging the hierarchical social order and was considered synonymous with moral and social degradation (Rodríguez-García 2021).

The standards of racial purity in Spain were abolished completely only in 1870. Later, during Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975), the concern of the ruling regime was to morally regenerate what was called "the Spanish race" through a project of national Catholicism and a revival of "authentic" Spanish tradition. The proclaimed notion of *Hispanidad* (Spanishness) was not defined by racial categories per se, but it was highly insular, defined by Catholicism, and deeply antagonistic to "foreign" elements (Campos 2016; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021, p. 841). Since the 1980s, in Spain's post-Franco efforts to assert itself as a modern and civilized European nation that belongs in the European Union, the conceptualization and definition of Spanish society and identity as fundamentally White have continued.

With respect to the ethno-religious origins of Spanish racism, the North African Muslim population in Spain, who are chiefly from Morocco (the largest foreign-born population group in the country), continue to experience discrimination in modern-day Spain, as they have historically been stigmatized and racialized as "absolute others" since the time of the Crusades (Mateo Dieste 2018). As Rodríguez-García et al. (2021, p. 841) have explained, "Islamophobia . . . in Spanish society [has] historical roots dating back to the *Reconquista* [Reconquest], the centuries-long violent conflict in the Iberian Peninsula between Christians and Muslims ("the Moors", from the Maghreb) that predated the era of the Spanish Empire and related colonization. To these intercountry and intercultural tensions, the continual sociopolitical conflict during the Spanish protectorate in Morocco (1912–1958) can be added, as can the widespread suspicion of Muslim communities in the Western world since the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Ramberg 2004)". Given this history, in Spain, even in present times, certain perceived physical traits (such as darker skin color), ways of dressing (such as wearing the hijab), or Arabic accents and names "become signifiers of 'being a Muslim' and elicit social distancing and discriminatory reactions from the mainstream society" (Rodríguez-García et al. 2018, p. 12; see also Rodríguez-García et al. 2016, p. 528; 2021, p. 841; Rodríguez-Reche and Rodríguez-García 2020; Rodríguez-García and Rodríguez-Reche forthcoming).

Spain's historical relationship with the idea of race and with the practice of systemic racism, however, is almost completely overlooked in current times. The disturbing aspects and consequences of Spain's colonialist past—not only its colonization of the Americas but also of parts of Asia and Africa, the latter of where it had colonies in Morocco and Equatorial

Guinea until the late 1960s—as well as the country’s historic ethnic cleansing of Jews, Muslims, and Roma are often disremembered by Spanish nationals. The shocking reality is that in Spain and its colonies, Black slaves were sold until as late as 1846—sales that were advertised in newspapers’ “Sale of Animals” section (see [Viana 2019](#)). In fact, Spain was the last European country to abolish slavery (in 1886). Moreover, playful reenactments of battles between “Moors” and Christians still take place today at schools and popular festivals all over Spain to commemorate the Reconquest of Spain by the Christians. Furthermore, products of popular consumption such as *Cola-Cao* (a widely consumed chocolate drink in Spain, whose early advertisements, remembered nostalgically by many Spaniards, featured a song portraying slaves happily working on cocoa plantations)⁸ and *Conguitos* (literally “little Congolese people”, a very popular Spanish brand of chocolate-covered peanuts) are examples of the internalization and normalization of the racial imaginary in Spain.

The case of *Conguitos*, in particular, is very revealing of the extent to which racist images of Black people in packaging and commercials have changed so little over the decades in Spain. Initially, starting in the 1960s, the *Conguitos* wrapper and advertisements featured colonialist images of “primitive” African people in their huts (always with caricatured features, especially oversized lips). In more recent decades, the product’s packaging and ads have included references to hip-hop culture and to sports, such as basketball. Either way, the product has always maintained a strong stereotype of Black people. The fact that all the *Conguitos*’ faces and characters are consistently Black and that they are being offered up to “be eaten” or consumed by a White majority sends a doubly disturbing message about power relations in Spanish society.⁹ Most Spaniards, young and old, are completely unaware of this normalized form of racism in their society. And not surprisingly, it is still common for kids at school to call their Black peers “*Conguito*” as a pejorative term—and to call their Muslim peers “*moro*”, or “*Moor*” ([Ballestín González 2012](#); [Rodríguez-García et al. 2018, 2021](#)).

One of the ways in which we are able to evaluate and observe the persistence of racial constructs is through the study of mixedness—that is, the study of mixed couples and their multiracial/multiethnic descendants. A recent study conducted in Spain on ethnoracially mixed youth ([Rodríguez-García et al. 2021](#)) demonstrates the ongoing reality of differential social treatment based on constructed, ascribed racial categorizations.¹⁰ The following interview excerpts from native-born Spanish youth who participated in the study show how these respondents, most of whom are multiracial, have clearly been given the message that *they do not belong* on the basis of their perceived physical appearance; only a few examples from the many narratives that articulate similar experiences could be included here owing to space limitations.

The discrimination I have experienced in my life has, above all, been linked to my skin color. At school, there were the typical comments of “*Conguito*”, “*Black*”, etc.¹¹ (. . .) If I do not speak, [people] see me as a total foreigner. But as soon as I speak, [they comment,] “Oh, how interesting! What beautiful and perfect Catalan you have!” (. . .) It might be the darkness of my skin . . . , [but] when I open my mouth and I speak with this deep Catalan, I am forgiven my blackness. Even more so once they know that one of my parents is super White, and that I am in university.

(22-year-old female, Spanish mother and Rwandan father)¹²

Nobody identifies me as Spanish. Instead, as Brazilian, Saharan, Moroccan, Indian, Latin American . . . I have this face [referring to her dark skin color], and they think that I’m a foreigner (. . .) There’s a lot of difference between my sister and me: My sister is very light-skinned, so she is not noticed.

(27-year-old female, Spanish father and Colombian mother)

Eighty percent of the people I have met in my life have asked me what I call “the big question”. They have never taken it as a given that I am from here. They’ve seen me as a foreigner—as Moroccan, Dominican . . . Because of my hair, because

of my skin color (. . .) I've been in line at a disco and girls that I did not know at all have touched my hair.

(24-year-old female, Cape Verdean father and Spanish mother)

If I have to define myself, I will say that I am a Black male born in Spain. I don't feel [Spanish] because people haven't made me feel it. Because of these life experiences, you also have to keep your guard up . . . Here, the Catalans or Spaniards do not see me as Catalan or Spanish, but I see myself as Catalan and Spanish. They just see me as Black. I remember a comment from a co-worker that made me kind of happy and reflective; he said that it was an achievement that there was a Black man working at the Red Cross. That made me think [about how] Black people in Spain have so little power that any minimum achievement means a lot (. . .) When I was a child, I would have liked having had a Black teacher, a Black doctor . . .

(29-year-old male, Spanish mother and Guinean father)

Similar sentiments of experiencing exclusion and imposed “non-belonging”—and, in this case, overt racism—are communicated by a parent regarding her Spanish-born multiracial children:

[My daughters] belong here; they feel they are from here, but people see them as foreigners . . . For example, there was a third-grade teacher who told [my eldest daughter, who was then eight years old,] while preparing for the play *Little Red Riding Hood*, “Since you are Black, you will be the wolf”. That time I went and complained to the principal.

(Dominican woman married to a Spanish man)

All of the above narratives show the relevance of skin color for social inclusion in Spanish society and express the more limited identity options available to Spanish-born ethnoracially mixed individuals who are *perceived* as having “foreign” origins. The following interview excerpt also comments on how having a darker skin color may restrict a Spaniard's personal freedoms in comparison to his or her White-perceived peers:

To be a Black/White [mix] is not at all the same thing as being Black/Black. No comparison. I think I would not have even met my current partner [a native White female] if I was Black/Black (. . .) Racialized people are very constricted. Many times, I would like to be White (. . .) Almost all my friends are White, and I [inline] skate and I really like going out at night with my friends, but they are much more daring than me. They can skate in front of the police or they can drink in front of the police, and I know I can't do that; I don't even try!

(22-year-old male, British mother and Cameroonian father)

The two final narratives reveal not only the privileging of whiteness within Spanish society but also the existence of cultural racism—the privileging of Western cultures and the expression of prejudice towards “non-European” ethnic groups and religions, especially towards Muslims:

I have been turned away from entering a bar, or [have experienced prejudice] when looking for an apartment (. . .) Now that we have signed our rental contract, we have had to put my partner's name on it because his name is more Spanish than mine.

(24-year-old female, Mexican mother and Tunisian father)

My twin sister does not experience [discrimination] as much—because she does not wear the hijab, and she is lighter and has straight hair and such. So, she does not usually receive [racist] comments. Of course, the consequence of wearing the hijab is that you stand out more. I take the subway and I see that people are staring at me—every day.

(19-year-old female, Moroccan parents)

All these examples demonstrate the prevalence of what we can identify as casual racism, micro-racism, “everyday racism” (Essed 1991), or “microaggressions” (Sue 2010)—for example, experiences of verbal slights or insults, being stared at, or being regarded with suspicion and distrust. The findings from this study on multiracial and multiethnic youth in Spain show the important role that *the interpretation* of skin color/physical appearance still plays in social interactions in Spain; these results are largely in line with other studies conducted in Europe and beyond (see below for some examples). Such research indicates that, contrary to what classical assimilation theories had predicted (Gordon 1964), in Western societies, socially transformative processes of intermarriage and mixedness paradoxically coexist with the persistent stigmatization and discrimination of certain groups, particularly people of Black African heritage and people of Muslim background; these racialized groups may be more socially constrained when it comes to having their identity options and sense of belonging validated by the larger society (see, for example, Song (2017) for the nuanced case of the United Kingdom; Beaman (2019) and Brinbaum et al. (2018) for the case of France; Gilliéron (2017) for the case of Switzerland; Brunsmma (2006), Khanna (2010), Lee and Bean (2012), Spencer (2011), and Waters (1996) for the case of the United States; Telles and Paschel (2014) for the case of Latin America; and Chito Childs (2014), Rodríguez-García (2015), and Osanami Törngren et al. (2021) for a global perspective).

4. Colorblind Interculturalism? Bringing “Race” into the Discussion on Managing Diversity

It is clear that the idea of race, perpetuated by the interpretation of phenotype and other physical features, factors importantly into social dynamics and processes of discrimination nowadays, having a real impact on the lives of racialized groups. Daily lives are still marked by racial divides, as this article has shown for the Spanish context through both survey and ethnographic data. Therefore, it would be reasonable to think that this reality should be taken into account in current policies for managing diversity and improving social cohesion. But is this the case?

In an attempt to avoid the limitations and reputed negative outcomes of multiculturalism in the European context, interculturalism—the preferred new paradigm for managing diversity in society—claims to distinguish itself from both the assimilationist policy paradigm (cultural uniformity, in which minority ethnocultural groups are absorbed into the “dominant culture”) and multiculturalist approaches to diversity. Multiculturalism, a philosophy or policy model that stands in opposition to assimilationist (and colorblind) perspectives, involves the state playing an active role in the defense of minority rights and cultural diversity to further goals of equality, inclusion, and anti-discrimination. This policy paradigm has experienced a backlash in recent decades, influenced by events such as the Rushdie Affair of 1989, the 2001 summer riots in northern towns of the United Kingdom, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, among other incidents (Joppke 2004; McGhee 2008; Rodríguez-García 2010; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010; Zapata-Barrero 2019). Over the course of renewed debates about how best to approach and govern diversity in modern times, interculturalism has emerged as a suggested model. While the interculturalist policy paradigm also acknowledges and values diversity in contemporary societies, it is critical of what it views as multiculturalism’s overly strong focus on cultural/group rights and the recognition of differences—a policy focus that has been argued by interculturalists as hindering social cohesion. Zapata-Barrero (2017, p. 1) explains how interculturalism shifts the emphasis to a “contacts-based policy approach, aimed at fostering communication and relationships among people from different backgrounds”, “focuses on common bonds rather than differences”, and “centres its policy goals on community cohesion and reframing a common public culture that places diversity within rather than outside the so-called Unity”. Interculturalism emphasizes contact or “positive interaction” (Zapata-Barrero 2016) and dialogue (Council of Europe 2008) between groups, commonality, community cohesion, identity flexibility, and dynamism; and these goals should surely constitute part of an optimal approach to managing diversity within societies. I myself,

in an earlier publication, have advocated for a model of interculturalism, conceptualized as “the interactive process of living together in diversity, with the full participation and civic engagement of, and social exchange between, all members of society beyond that of mere recognition and coexistence, in turn forming a cohesive and plural civic community”, as this approach, apart from encouraging interaction, “has the merit of focusing on the negotiation and conflict-resolution *process* . . . and of emphasizing the changing nature of cultures and societies” (Rodríguez-García 2010, pp. 260–61). However, my wariness of current European concepts and projects of interculturalism stems from, on the one hand, their presumed cultural evenhandedness, and on the other hand—in their eagerness to distinguish interculturalism from multiculturalism and its perceived failures—their great reluctance to name and defend certain aspects of diversity that still, based on empirical evidence, need specific attention, namely race (see also Keval’s (2014) critical discussion of interculturalism’s “de-racing” and “de-classing” tendencies).

It is beyond the scope of this article to engage with all the features or specific arguments of the interculturalist policy paradigm, many of which are positive and workable, nor is it my goal specifically to enter into the debate about whether interculturalism is a variant of multiculturalism or an entirely new paradigm (see, for example, Barrett 2013; Cantle 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Joppke 2018; Mansouri and Modood 2021; Meer and Modood 2012; Modood 2017; Zapata-Barrero 2017, 2019). Both approaches or frameworks, at a theoretical level, are underpinned by similar principles for managing diversity or pluralism (Young 1990; Grillo 1998): the principle of respecting difference (of origin, culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and so forth) and the principle of trying to foster equality and non-discrimination. Furthermore, the reality is that both multiculturalism and interculturalism in practice combine pluralist and assimilationist perspectives to lesser or greater degrees depending on the context. My concern here, therefore, is not with what the emerging or refined policy model should ultimately be called, but rather with what it proposes to do—and for this reason, in relation to the specific topic raised in this article, I find it necessary to address certain areas of weakness that I perceive in the interculturalist approach that is steadily gaining acceptance in European contexts.

The interculturalist policy paradigm in Europe is premised on a post-racial understanding of contemporary society and a related belief that identity categorizations based on “race”, origin, and nationality are increasingly less pertinent to the diversity debate (Cantle 2012a, 2013; Zapata-Barrero 2016, 2017). Within this framework, the universalist approach to the issues of race and equality is a race-neutral rhetoric and a colorblind public policy¹³—a “post-racial liberalism”, as coined by Wise (2010), which de-emphasizes “racial discrimination and race-based remedies for inequality, in favor of . . . ‘universal’ programs” (Wise 2010, p. 16). This trend of thought, which started with Wilson’s (1978) *The Declining Significance of Race* and underpinned Obama’s successful campaign for the presidency of the United States, is also apparent in contemporary theories of global citizenship (Dower 2003).

However, the post-racial notion that processes of ever-increasing globalization, transnationalism, and “super-diversity” (Vertovec 2007) have rendered the concept of race far less significant is fallacious. Interculturalists tend to present three connected arguments to support a post-racial viewpoint. The first is that in our current global landscape, identities are increasingly multiple and fluid, if not chosen, and that single identifiers of race, ethnicity, or national origin are no longer appropriate or particularly meaningful, nor do they capture the internal diversity within these categories (e.g., Cantle 2012a, 2013; Zapata-Barrero 2016). The second argument is that because of all the diversity that characterizes contemporary Western societies, in which so many citizens are of either second- or third-generation immigrant background or mixed ethnoracial descent, community relations within nations can no longer be approached through the same minority/majority assumptions that have driven multiculturalist policies (e.g., Cantle 2013; Zapata-Barrero 2017), nor can we conceive of social relations in terms of a clearly discernible color/racial divide that is disadvantaging to non-White groups. Cantle (2012a, p. 40), one of the leading advocates of interculturalism

in the British and European contexts, has explicitly stated, “The black–white binary divide is no longer central and should no longer underpin our view of race and racism”. The third post-racial argument that interculturalist discourses employ—an idea that flows from the previous premises—is that given that race, as both a basis for identity and social inequalities, does not hold the same importance that it once did, we need to shift our focus to other areas of difference and regard them as equally significant aspects of identity (Cantle 2012a, 2013; see also Zapata-Barrero 2017).

Based on my own extensive research on mixedness (i.e., mixed unions and mixed-background descendants) during the past two decades (e.g., Rodríguez-García 2015; Rodríguez-García et al. 2018, 2021), in addition to sociological and anthropological data available from multiple research studies conducted in both Europe and North America (see the previous section of this article), these post-racial arguments tell only part of the truth. They tend to minimize the actual importance of race—visible traits that are assigned an ethnoracial meaning or interpretation (e.g., skin color, “non-European” religious dress)—in people’s *lived* experiences (see also Keval 2014) and also to discount the real possibility that these shared experiences, whether in terms of identity or discrimination, may continue to form a basis for collective solidarity. There can be no doubt that hybrid or multiple identities are an ever-growing reality, which means that people may find “self-classification” increasingly difficult and may feel connected to a variety of ethnic, religious, national, and racial identities. However, the fact that identity, like culture, is complex, multiple, and flexible—with multiple layers that intersect—along with the recognition that mixed, pan-ethnic, and cosmopolitan affiliations across the globe are on the rise does not signify that there are no significant positionalities. Complex and multifaceted personal identities do not necessarily indicate that people’s identities have become diluted of all specific ethnocultural, racial, and group attachments and that a sense of sharing collective bonds on these grounds is not experienced.

Moreover, interculturalism needs to better acknowledge that not all individuals can navigate flexibly and freely across their different layers of identity (Rodríguez-García et al. 2021), nor may they wish to (Modood 2016). Some aspects or dimensions of identity, including racial or ethnic heritage, can be more salient than others, whether by choice or imposition. Even though racial categories and identifications are becoming increasingly complex precisely because of super-diversity and the growth of mixed-race populations (see, for example, Song 2014b), the post-racial suggestion that White and non-White phenotypes or that “Western” and “non-Western” physical appearances now carry the same level of inherent social privilege in the European context contradicts what many people of color and many people who are visibly Muslim (especially women), among other racialized groups, are saying about their lived experiences; citizens who are “visible” in relation to White European society frequently find their national belonging questioned in European countries, and they report experiencing microaggressions as well as other forms of exclusionary treatment (e.g., more limited access to housing). Certainly, different countries and cities might experience different issues (see, for instance, Modood (2016) on the British context) and might report varying degrees of prejudice, but we know that pervasive race-based discrimination continues to exist—and it definitely exists in Spain, which is where my primary research has been conducted.

Furthermore, with respect to interculturalism’s questioning of whether contemporary diversity policies can or should still apply the same ethnoracial majority/minority divide in their understanding of societies, this viewpoint strikes me as somewhat paradoxical because of the unacknowledged majority privileged position that seems to be implicit in interculturalist discourse. The interculturalist goal of “placing diversity *within* the mainstream” (Zapata-Barrero 2017, p. 6) is certainly laudable and desired, but the discourse’s post-racial and colorblind approach, as well as its extreme wariness of recognizing cultural or ethnic groups (interculturalism recognizes individuals), makes it difficult to understand which aspects of diversity will be valued and mainstreamed and also who will be determining what inclusions—or exclusions—are made. There seems to be an absence of critical

analysis regarding the power and cultural hierarchies that are embedded in the process. As [Kymlicka \(1995\)](#) has argued, states are never culturally neutral. [Lähdesmäki and Wagener \(2015\)](#) have made similar arguments, pointing out that official European discourses on interculturalism, specifically the 2008 *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* by the Council of Europe, have sometimes approached questions of diversity from a limited Western European viewpoint, generally employing a Eurocentric interpretation of cultures and cultural differences and minimally acknowledging the sociocultural or historical differences between European societies (see also [Lähdesmäki et al. 2020](#)).

As regards interculturalism's claim that race matters less than before and that all aspects of difference should be given equal consideration in the policy arena, of course, diversity and identity are multidimensional phenomena and are not defined only by race. There are certainly multiple other forms of difference, based on religious affiliation, gender, ethnic affiliation, social class, sexual orientation, disability, and age, among other factors, all of which intersect. However, that does not preclude the fact, borne out by empirical evidence provided here and elsewhere, that race is still a crucial part of the equation. While the notion of racial categorization itself can be problematized (as can categorization according to national origin), we cannot ignore the fact that people cannot choose their phenotype, how it is perceived by others, and how this may impact their everyday lives. I would also argue that acknowledging "intersectionality" ([Crenshaw 1989](#)) and the multiple factors that influence identity does not mean that we can assume that all aspects of identity carry the same weight in people's day-to-day lives, their social interactions, or their experiences of social inclusion/exclusion processes. For this reason, theoretical conceptions and proposed policy models related to diversity management must be supported and complemented by an ethnographic approach to the subject that takes peoples' real everyday experiences into account. Authors such as [Bonilla-Silva \(2013\)](#), [Jefferess \(2018\)](#), [Simon \(2019\)](#), and [Wise \(2010\)](#) argue that by dismissing the dynamics of race and racism (i.e., the historical and institutional structures of White domination that so often determine social position and opportunity and that also underlie everyday instances of racism), the "benevolent" public political discourses on post-racial global citizenship normalize, rather than challenge, structures of inequality, in turn making it easier for right-wing xenophobic parties to gain ground. A paradox pointed out by [Lentin \(2008\)](#) is that the silence about race in Europe—notably, the term or concept of "race" is largely divorced even from initiatives specifically undertaken to combat "racism"—has allowed European nations officially to declare themselves non-racist while simultaneously maintaining a conception of a fundamental European superiority, a notion or norm that tacitly presupposes whiteness (see also [Beaman 2019](#); [Roig 2017](#); [Simon 2019](#)). A post-racial or colorblind public policy view, then, while it may in theory seem fair and sensible, is somewhat impractical, as it limits discussion and opportunities concerning difference where they are most needed, effectively diverting attention away from, if not silencing opposition to, ethnic and racial inequality in society.

A further limitation of interculturalism is its insistence on re-centering diversity debates around the issue of *individual* identities, preferences, and practices; such a stance indicates a departure from the multiculturalist practices of recognizing ethnocultural and racial *groups* and protecting what [Kymlicka \(1995\)](#) has called "group-differentiated rights", both of which are disputed ideas in interculturalist discourse (see [Cantle 2012a](#); [Council of Europe 2008](#); [Zapata-Barrero 2016, 2017](#)).¹⁴ In its contemplation of questions of both identity and rights, interculturalism's conceptual separation of the individual from the group seems somewhat flawed in logic to me—which I will go on to explain—and, in my opinion, acts as a potential stumbling block to interculturalism achieving its stated anti-discrimination objectives (see, for example, [Cantle 2013](#); [Council of Europe 2008](#); [Zapata-Barrero 2017](#)).

The argument that has guided the reaction against multiculturalism in recent years, particularly in northwestern Europe, is that the active recognition of minority cultures and rights—a public policy that emphasizes ethnoracial identity, group membership, and cultural rights—reinforces differences and ultimately gives rise to social divisiveness

and group segregation. However, multiculturalism, since its first official formulation by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1971, has been a federal policy that was designed not only to defend ethnocultural diversity and minority rights but also to combat discrimination and promote social cohesion. Cantle (2013, p. 85) has strongly criticized the “outmoded ideas and divisive conception of multiculturalism”, highlighting its policy failures, yet conceding that somehow the “progressive multiculturalism” (2013, p. 77) found in Canada—which he claims differs from “the separationist British model” (2013, p. 77)—has seemed to work; he states that the federal Canadian version “leans towards the concept of interculturalism and relies upon the development of commonality and a sense of belonging and inclusion across all areas of difference” (2013, p. 77). It strikes me as a strange assertion that the *original* fully fledged multiculturalist framework for managing diversity, which is now 50 years old, has been generally successful all these years on the basis that it is some type of “progressive” or exceptional form of this policy paradigm. It is far more likely that outcomes of group separation and social fragmentation in European contexts have been the result of poorly devised and exclusionary national immigration and integration policies (e.g., long-standing “guest worker” or temporary residence policies; very restrictive policies concerning access to citizenship; the absence of multicultural and anti-racism education in schools), among other policies and factors, which in some cases have led to the exclusion and socioeconomic disadvantage of certain groups (see also Grillo 2018, pp. 82–84).

Indeed, multiculturalism as practiced on a national level in Canada—which is a theme I have dealt with in earlier works (e.g., Rodríguez-García 2010, 2012)—demonstrates that a number of interculturalism’s fundamental policy objectives can be achieved. Regarding the need to bridge unity and diversity, as well as to reconfigure these concepts so that they are not viewed as separate entities (Zapata-Barrero 2017), the multiculturalist policy approach in Canada has implemented specific policies regarding the promotion of civic equality that could be argued to be assimilationist and unifying in orientation: for example, non-discriminatory incorporation in the labor market, full participation in Canadian institutions, acquisition of the country’s official languages (with government-funded language courses offered), and so forth (Rodríguez-García 2012). Notably, Canada requires citizenship tests (demonstrating a basic understanding of Canada’s history, geography, government, and laws) and citizenship ceremonies. There is no reason why multiculturalism policies that “heighten the public salience of ethnicity”, in turn “[helping] to combat the stereotypes and stigmatizations that . . . erode feelings of solidarity across ethnic and racial lines”, cannot go hand in hand with “explicit ‘nation-building’ policies” (Kymlicka and Banting 2006, pp. 299–300). As stated by Kymlicka and Banting (2006, p. 299), “We dispute the claim that MCPs [multiculturalism policies] necessarily corrode solidarity”. With respect to Cantle’s claim that “multiculturalism revolved around race and failed to take account of other forms of difference that have moved firmly into the public sphere” (Cantle 2012a, p. 41), the Canadian policy of multiculturalism and the complementary *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) “together draw attention not only to the protection of ethnocultural differences, but also to the rights of many groups who have historically been discriminated against, whether on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or disability, among other factors. Respect for diversity of all types, therefore, becomes a central value-and-practice that unifies citizens and contributes to social cohesion in Canada” (Rodríguez-García 2012, p. 35). This positive outcome also speaks to interculturalism’s wise concern, as articulated by Zapata-Barrero (2017), for the need to foster “a diversity-based common public culture” or to include diversity as a “common value” within the civic national narrative.¹⁵ For these reasons, I would argue that if *actual*—not purely theorized—Canadian diversity management policies and outcomes are seen as meeting key objectives set by the European interculturalist agenda, then the core problem behind poor social cohesion outcomes in Europe has very little to do with multiculturalism’s conceptualization of group identities or its protection of cultural rights—i.e., the rights of cultural minority or visible minority groups.¹⁶ I fail to see the incompatibility between pursuing the contacts-based

approach proposed by interculturalism—which focuses on bringing different people and communities together and fostering dialogue, respect, common bonds, and solidarity—and simultaneously acknowledging that different ethnoracial groups or communities exist in a given society and may need their rights to be protected by the state or municipality. People can simultaneously belong to multiple communities: a national community (or national communities); a residential or municipal community—whose formation can be positively encouraged and consolidated precisely by interculturalist practices designed to bring different people together in shared spaces (Zapata-Barrero 2019); and ethnic or cultural communities, in which shared religion, race, or cultural practices may create common bonds and a shared sense of belonging. Pro-solidarity policies can acknowledge all these things at once. Either—or choices between individuals and groups are not necessary, and such choices may, in fact, be detrimental to outcomes of social justice and social cohesion.

Interculturalism's preference to focus on individual practices and rights tends to stem from two critiques that it makes of multiculturalism. The first is that multiculturalism's "groupist" policies are premised on an incorrect understanding of identity and ethnicity, or culture, as fixed and ascribed entities (e.g., Cantle 2013; Zapata-Barrero 2017). The second is that multiculturalism's focus on accommodating and protecting the rights of ethnic minority groups can give way to what Zapata-Barrero (2017, p. 5) has termed "a boundless multiculturalism", in which illiberal cultural practices that go against human rights may be permitted by the state.

With respect to the first argument, just about all anthropologists and sociologists of contemporary times would—and have—equally argued that cultures cannot be essentialized: that they not only are heterogeneous, but also dynamic and flexible (see also Modood's (2017) discussion of this topic). The notion of identities, both personal and collective, being fluid and having multiple dimensions and affiliations is not a new idea, and it does not make a compelling argument for why states should not offer support and specific anti-discrimination protections to ethnic and racial minority groups. Group identification—self-chosen!—still exists, and sometimes the protection of rights at a group level is needed, especially if a significant or large number of individuals within a given ethnocultural or racial group (however individually diverse these people may be) are making a similar claim. Such group recognition by the state is not some kind of imposition on, or misunderstanding of, individual identities. Indeed, there may be many varied positions, even opposing ones, among individuals who share similar racial or ethnic heritage—and also within activist groups representing certain minorities. However, the reality is that some individuals may not have their individual rights protected if legitimate group claims based on race, religion, or ethnicity are not given policy consideration by the state.

In general, how issues of diversity are approached should not be constructed as a debate between individual-based rights versus group-/minority-based ones, in which upholders of multiculturalism are allegedly arguing that the former should be given diminished consideration in favor of the latter. Instead, I, supported by other scholars, would contend that in a truly liberal context, community rights are an extension of, or a condition for, individual freedoms and equality (Bauböck 2001; Kymlicka 1995; Modood 2007; Parekh 2006; Rodríguez-García 2010; Taylor 1994; Vasta 2007). It is not always so easy to separate individual rights from group rights, as "the reality is that the collective is already present in individuals, who, inevitably, are socialized, politicized, and culturalized beings" (Rodríguez-García 2010, p. 259; see also Grillo 2018, p. 97). The following question, then, might be raised: What should be done if certain cultural practices or purported community rights go against the principles of the larger society? In that case, whose rights do we prioritize, and how do we ensure that societies do not become fragmented? This line of questioning takes us back to the aforementioned second critique of multiculturalism: that it may lead to a permissiveness of illiberal cultural practices that violate individual human rights, not to mention the general moral code of the liberal democratic society.

In addressing this crucially important concern, we need to recognize that matters of collective rights do not concern and affect minority groups only. As I have explained in a

previous publication on assimilationist and multiculturalist approaches to the management of diversity (Rodríguez-García 2010, p. 264), “in democratic societies, the incorporation of difference and particularistic social causes within the larger civil sphere only occurs, as Alexander (2006) argues, when [these views become] the moral choice of the largest number of people in that society. While this reality can, and historically often has, led to the discrimination of minority and/or marginalized groups (e.g., the racial segregation and oppression of American Blacks prior to the civil rights movement), it also is the reason why societies can change and effect what Alexander calls ‘civil repair’; that is, these differences become recognized ‘as legitimate by constructing them as variations on the theme of a common humanity’, thus leading forms of diversity to be welcomed into the mainstream and leading the mainstream to be characterized by increasing diversity (see Alexander 2006, pp. 259, 452)”. By the same token, cultural practices that are viewed as being in violation of the larger society’s moral and human rights code will not be legally permitted; these forms of “diversity” will not be given recognition or accommodation at any official or authorized level within the society, and they may be subject to serious legal consequences. An illiberal cultural practice, therefore, would *not* be construed as a “cultural right”, and if there were any disputes between the state and certain individuals or ethnocultural groups over such matters, interculturalism’s own dialogue-favoring approach is the best tool for promoting better integration outcomes and for preventing social fragmentation. Hearing people out around sensitive cultural practices promotes values of social inclusion, trust, and a general respect for difference, but the willingness to listen to different perspectives (and perhaps, in some cases, to try to understand the symbolic meaning of certain practices) does not mean that the state will make diversity accommodations that endanger or infringe upon individual human rights. It is for this reason that the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/cutting—which clearly goes against principles of gender equality and the protection of an individual’s health and safety—is illegal in both Canada and Australia, both of which are countries that have a strong tradition of multiculturalism. The bottom line is that liberal democracies have protective mechanisms for restricting illiberal or unlawful cultural practices.

In my view, recognizing and supporting diversity at only the individual level or defending difference-based discriminations on a case-by-case basis (e.g., in the case of racism)—as interculturalism tends to propose—will not ultimately make societies more just or cohesive. Interculturalism’s project of fostering common bonds and developing a common public culture among citizens and residents from diverse backgrounds through “contact promotion” and “knowledge exchange” policies (Zapata-Barrero 2019) articulates very important goals and strategies for diversity management. However, I would argue that a focus on positive contact and interaction in public spaces, while it may generate increased trust, respect, and neighborliness, is not in itself enough to shift entrenched power imbalances in society (see also Keval 2014). The diverse identities in societies need to be positivized, normalized, and reflected back at all members of the society; and meaningful interactions between people of diverse backgrounds need to take place in authentic, day-to-day contexts. One important way in which this type of deeper social change occurs is through visible minorities and historically marginalized ethnic groups equally holding positions of leadership, influence, and authority (including as teachers, doctors, nurses, police officers, journalists, politicians and appointed officials, etc.). Affirmative action initiatives—which, by definition, recognize racial, ethnic, and group identity—are still needed as part of diversity management policies to address structural racism and other systemic inequities, and consequently to ensure that diversity truly enters the shared community of a city or country.

Policy paradigms that are designed to reduce prejudice in societies are ultimately abstract theorizations if the people experiencing prejudice continue to feel it. Interculturalism’s emphasis on commonality, coexistence, positive interaction, and negotiation/dialogue is not incompatible with the visibilization and support of ethnic and racial difference precisely because of this diversity model’s policies of equal treatment. The defense of the

rights of groups who, for example, have suffered a long history of racial oppression is perfectly aligned with the interculturalist tenets of equality and anti-discrimination. Indeed, it is possible for diversity management policies to support both individual and group rights, to encourage meaningful common bonds among members of a society while still recognizing differences and addressing historical injustices. Not only are these ideas not contradictory, but by somehow making them compete, we are denying the truth of some people's or groups' lived experiences of social disadvantage—which in turn can create intergroup tensions, rather than achieving interculturalism's objective of improved understanding between diverse individuals and groups and increased social harmony. As pointed out by Young (1990), the notion of "universal citizenship" can homogenize aspects of diversity, limit dialogue and negotiation, favor privileged positions, and, therefore, lead to marginalization.

It is important to point out that interculturalism, at the level of discourse, is already equipped to deal with group protections and to rethink its position on race. In the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, an early but intellectually influential document, the Council of Europe (2008, p. 27) states,

Over and above the principle of non-discrimination, states are also encouraged to take positive-action measures to redress the inequalities, stemming from discrimination, experienced by members of disadvantaged groups. In the public sphere, state authorities must strictly respect the prohibition of discrimination . . . Yet, formal equality is not always sufficient and promoting effective equality could, in some cases, necessitate adoption of specific measures that are coherent with the principle of non-discrimination. In certain circumstances, the absence of differential treatment to correct an inequality may, without reasonable and objective justification, amount to discrimination.

A similar argument is offered by Zapata-Barrero (2017, p. 8):

Antidiscrimination promotion also includes tackling disadvantage, as it is hard to see how the ICP [intercultural policy paradigm] can continue over time if one or more sectors of society are so unequal that people are led to believe they have no real stake in that society.

In sum, whether interculturalism, as a pro-diversity and inclusion-oriented policy framework, is complementary to multiculturalism or is a new paradigm in itself, it needs to recognize the social reality of race and to ensure that anti-discrimination discussions and policies—happening at all levels of government—explicitly address this reality. Interculturalism's post-racial viewpoint may express what is *hoped for*, but policies and actions have to deal with what is socially real. In this respect—and returning our attention to the Spanish context—the interculturalism agenda would need to bolster the affirmative or positive action *measures* (i.e., beyond discourse) that public institutions take in order both to counter the traditional structural barriers that certain ethnoracial minorities face in society and to remedy the underrepresentation of these ethnoracial groups in social and political institutions. That is, there needs to be a reinforced awareness, positivization, and normalization of diversity through the empowering visibilization of minorities that have historically suffered more oppression in Spain, such as Afro-descendant, Muslim, and Romani people, the latter of whom are one of the most overlooked minority groups in diversity policy formulation. Efforts, therefore, need to be strengthened to combat discrimination in its different forms—racism (including "small-scale" or everyday racism), racialization, xenophobia, cultural racism, Islamophobia, etc.—and in all areas of social life (work, education, media, government, etc.). Some examples of active measures that could be taken in Spain might be the following: (a) encouraging the incorporation/recruitment of individuals from minority ethnoracial backgrounds into certain professions and other areas of the labor market (including public office) in which these groups have been underrepresented, also by providing opportunities (e.g., scholarships) in the Spanish education system; (b) modifying and diversifying school curricula to promote values of diversity

and social justice, such as incorporating more information on different cultures and their traditions; including an anthropology of religions course, instead of teaching Religion in the exclusive Catholicism-based form in which it currently exists; discussing the history of the Roma; and providing a greater critique of Spain's history of colonialism, slavery, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia; (c) encouraging multilingualism and the maintenance of first languages in the education system; and (d) implementing goals and targets to increase the amount of multicultural content provided by the media.¹⁷ All these measures would require more training for practitioners working in Spanish public institutions, particularly for those working in the education system.¹⁸

5. Conclusions

In this article, I have shown the historical origins and continued omnipresence of racial constructs and processes of racialization in Spain, situating this discussion within the European context. The aforementioned *National Geographic* "Black and White" feature story on biracial twin sisters makes us question precisely what is meant by race; how appearance, especially skin color, influences how we classify both ourselves and others; and what preconceptions we project upon people. However, offering a critique of race as a concept or construct and wishing for a society without race-based inequities does not mean that we can just pretend that race has no meaning in our present-day society. As Michael Banton (2005, p. 475), the acclaimed sociologist who wrote extensively on racial and ethnic relations, cautioned, "Social scientists will have to pay more attention to the social significance attributed to differences in skin color than the recent preoccupation with racism has permitted" (see also Banton 2012; Solomos 2019).

Of course, diversity is not defined only in terms of race, an aspect of identity that intersects with other significant variables, such as gender, age, social class, sexual orientation, and religion. Moreover, the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment/Islamophobia in Spain (and in Europe in general) further complicates discussions around race and racism, as it is clear that other dimensions of diversity, such as visible non-Christian religion, can be racialized and can become markers for differential (i.e., marginalizing) social treatment, much in the same manner as skin color has been (Foner 2015; Grosfoguel 2004; Rodríguez-Reche and Rodríguez-García 2020). Nevertheless, the fact that we are living in an era of super-diversity, of greater fluidity of identity, and of increased awareness of the multiple aspects of difference and their intersections does not remove the construct of race from being a key part of the identity equation—perhaps even a factor of identity that may be more enduring and salient than the rest. The same logic could be applied to arguing for the continued relevance of social class (based on the persistent hierarchy between the rich and the poor) despite widespread belief in social mobility, or for the relevance of nation-states in the current era of transnationalism, as the reality is that states continue to exercise sovereignty and border control—determining who is permitted to enter a territory and on what terms, and which people are allowed to become members of a national community—as Europe has witnessed in recent years with the ongoing and much-discussed refugee/migrant crisis.

In this article, I have focused on the case of Spain, an archetypal former colonialist nation. While Spain (along with other countries in Europe) thinks of itself as a "post-racial" society that has overcome its colonialist past and in which all citizens are treated equally, the social disparities between different ethnoracial groups—discrepancies that have their roots in historical disadvantages and hierarchies—continue to exist in all areas of the social structure. This article has also shown that even when processes of ethnoracial mixing occur, racial constructs persist and affect people's social inclusion. Racism and racialization are so deeply entrenched in the social order that they often go overlooked, as could be seen in the seemingly "trivial" example of the Conguitos chocolate candy. Yet the contemporary liberal theories of global citizenship, with their distinct post-racial or colorblind approach and their well-intentioned avoidance of reproducing the language of race, serve to evade the social significance of race and the consequences of colonialism; as a result, these frameworks ultimately fail to challenge structures of inequality and they undermine the anti-racism

struggle. As Song (2018), Simon (2017, 2019), Beaman (2019), and Lentin (2020) have pointed out, racialization and racism are normalized and perpetuated precisely by ignoring the issue of race. Moreover, the use of euphemistic, rather than direct, language vis-à-vis race further serves to invisibilize systemic racial differences and lived racial realities, consequently keeping societies from tackling core inequities. As Mazzocco (2015, p. 6) also contends, colorblind racial ideology disallows conversations concerning the role of race in society “and, as such, becomes a powerful mechanism in the continuation of racial disparity” (see also Boulila 2019a, 2019b; Roig 2017).

In this regard, while anti-discrimination and the fostering of positive interaction among people from diverse backgrounds may be inherent principles of interculturalism, this colorblind policy approach, as currently practiced in European contexts, might be falling short in the fight against discrimination by avoiding still-needed discussions around race and by failing to acknowledge sufficiently that racism is a social problem that affects *groups*, not just individuals. Importantly, interculturalist discourse has rightly promoted diversity as “an advantage and a resource” (Zapata-Barrero 2017, p. 1); however, if discrimination against groups and widespread patterns of racism, including cultural racism, are not recognized and addressed at a policy level—with efforts made to positivize ethnoracial difference at a far-reaching level and to rectify the underrepresentation of certain minority groups in social and political institutions—then diversity assets can actually be lost. For example, children from certain ethnoracial minority groups may not become proficient in the language(s) of their immigrant parent(s)—that is, these descendants’ linguistic cultural capital may be diminished—as families may feel discouraged from transmitting or maintaining languages that have a stigma attached to them and that cause their children to be negatively perceived as “foreigners” (see Rodríguez-García et al. 2018).

Precisely because of the reluctance of academia and political institutions to adopt a race-conscious approach in recognizing and confronting social inequalities in Spain, new or revitalized forms of activism, in which racialized and “visible” identity is embraced (e.g., Afrofeminism), are (re)emerging as empowering ways of self-categorizing, as means of reappropriating colonialist constructions (Grosfoguel 2007) of the “other”, and as anti-racism strategies. In Spain, there is now a growing number of Afro-descendant social activists, mostly women, such as Lucía Mbombio and Desirée Bela-Lobedde, who are leading the Afrofeminist movement. Other activists, like Miriam Hatibi and Silvia Agüero, are doing the same around countering Islamophobia and anti-gypsyism, respectively. There is also growing activity at the level of civic/community organizations, such as AfroFemKoop, as well as through social media networks like Twitter, with the establishment of groups such as @Afrofeminas, @blakbarcelona3, @Revista_Negrxs, and @catarsiabcn, the last of which is an anti-racism collective run by activists of Asian descent that focuses on racism directed towards people of Asian ancestry.

Despite the clear persistence of racism and racial “othering” in Spanish society, there is a lack of commitment to discussing race, racism, and racialization issues in the country, as if the problem would just go away by not talking about it, as Lentin (2008, 2020) has similarly stated about the European context in general. Ultimately, the endorsement of colorblind or post-racial perspectives in a society where racial stratification persists, as is the case with Spain, helps to maintain the symbolic, institutional, and interpersonal dimensions of racism. For this reason, in my opinion, if interculturalism wants to succeed as the preferred model for managing diversity and improving social cohesion in the present-day world, it needs to deal explicitly with the social reality of race and to address the question of White (and also White Christian) privilege.

This article has attempted to show that the continued existence of the *social reality* of race is at odds with the colorblind discourse that currently informs diversity and anti-discrimination policies in most European countries. In a global context of increasing xenophobia and growing support for right-wing populism, it is essential to encourage more productive discussions about race in Europe and elsewhere; and scholars need to combine

efforts with policymakers and third-sector practitioners to improve intergroup relations and to strengthen social cohesion.

Funding: The ethnographic data contained in this article was obtained in the course of a funded research project directed by the author of this paper. The project was titled “Social Relations and Identity Processes of Children of Mixed Unions: Mixedness—Between Inclusion and Social Constraints” (2016–2020) and was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness as part of the National Program for Research Aimed at the Challenges of Society (Grant No. CSO2015-63962-R). The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the ethnographic study discussed in this article.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Joanna Freedman for her incredibly helpful and insightful feedback on various drafts of the manuscript. Her excellent suggestions really helped me to improve this paper. I also greatly appreciate her skillful edit of the final article. I am grateful as well to the two anonymous reviewers for their very helpful comments and to Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi for coordinating this special issue, *Racialized Citizenship in Superdiverse Europe*.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

¹ Regarding this discrepancy, see the newspaper articles by Laborde (2020) and Hernandez (2020).

² White people can indeed be racialized and can face stereotypical assumptions and racial pigeonholing based on their skin color; however, this type of racialization does not equate to racism because of the inherent systemic imbalance of power between those with a lighter skin color and people of color. Racism exists only when there is a power structure weighted in favor of a particular race. White people have historically held the power when it comes to racial divides, while people of color have been the ones who have encountered systemic and structural racism and oppression.

³ See, for example, <https://www.thebipocproject.org/> (accessed on 12 December 2021).

⁴ See, for example, Aspinall and Song (2013) and Song (2018) for the case of the United Kingdom, and Simon (2019), Brinbaum et al. (2018), Beaman (2019), and Beaman and Petts (2020) for the case of France; in Beaman and Petts (2020), a comparison is made between France and the United States, showing that colorblind racial ideology, while conceptualized differently in the two countries, ultimately functions similarly in both places. For the EU as a whole, see, for example, the report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2018, pp. 37–38) on the experiences of Black people living in the EU; twenty-seven percent of the survey respondents stated that skin color was the main factor behind the discrimination they had experienced in the areas of work, education, housing, using public services, etc. See also Alba and Foner (2015) for a comparison between North America and Europe, Lentin (2008, 2020) for a theoretical/political discussion of racism in Europe, and Farkas (2017) for a critical report on the reluctance of EU law and courts (both domestic and European) to define and address racial discrimination directly.

⁵ “Afro-descendant” is the term that is commonly used in Spain (including by activist groups and civil society organizations) to refer to people of African descent, so I have used it in this article when specifically discussing the Spanish context.

⁶ For an extensive discussion of the historical construction of Spanish racism and its relationship to Catholicism and imperialism, see Feros (2017) and Sánchez León (2020).

⁷ The song “*Angelitos negros*” is based on the 1940s poem “*Píntame angelitos negros*” [“Paint Me Little Black Angels”], written by the Venezuelan poet and politician Andrés Bello Blanco.

⁸ See https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=vyup1hs-vDA&feature=emb_logo (accessed on 12 December 2021).

⁹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7xx011coJk> (accessed on 12 December 2021).

¹⁰ For this study, 152 in-depth interviews were conducted with Spanish-born youth from very diverse ancestry, representing 51 different nationalities. To know more about the results of this study and the methodology used, see Rodríguez-García et al. (2018, 2021). It should be noted that follow-up interviews, conducted in 2020, have been done with some of the respondents; this article draws on those interviews as well. See also Rodríguez-García et al. (2016) on the prevalence of ethn racial constructs in attitudes towards intermarriage in Spain.

¹¹ This particular comment was made in a follow-up interview with the same respondent when she was several years older. All the rest of the excerpted text was stated in the initial interview with the respondent, when she was 22.

- ¹² In all cases, the name of the country refers to the place of birth, not to nationality.
- ¹³ Bonilla-Silva (2013) defines this type of colorblind ideology as “colorblind racism” and identifies it as the dominant racial ideology circulating in contemporary America; he argues that while racial inequality is no longer perpetuated by overtly racist practices and arguments, in the case of colorblind racism, Whites, under the guise of being colorblind, refuse to acknowledge the continued existence of racism and reject any consideration of how their own racial identity provides them with privileges vis-à-vis people of color.
- ¹⁴ For a helpful analytical summary of how both interculturalism and multiculturalism think about individual identity, collectivities, and collective rights, see Grillo (2018, pp. 95–100).
- ¹⁵ None of this is to say that Canadian multiculturalism has not had its shortcomings or is above criticism. See, for example, Gomá’s (2020) feminist anti-racist critique of the narrative underlying multiculturalism policies and practice in Canada.
- ¹⁶ Modood, who has written extensively on interculturalism’s tendencies to misrepresent multiculturalist concepts and practice (Modood 2017), has also discussed multiculturalism’s overall success as a pro-diversity policy framework in Australia (Mansouri and Modood 2021), both in its original forms and more recently complemented by positive contributions from interculturalism. See also Keval (2014, p. 132), who has stated, “It is the intersectionality and multiplicity of inequalities which have driven wedges between groups of identified ethnic and cultural unities, not the presence of multiculturalism as policy or practice (Rattansi 2011)”.
- ¹⁷ Public broadcasting is more regulated in some European countries and may involve the implementation of affirmative action measures as well as quotas (in an amplifying, rather than a restrictive, manner) on multicultural content (European Commission (Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security) 2010). For instance, “France Télévisions launched a Positive Action Plan for Integration in 2004. In cooperation with Radio France International, it is responsible for the project PlurielMedia, which carries out research on diversity inside France Télévisions, diversity training for managers, intercultural training for journalists, and training of young media professionals from ethnic minority groups working in French television” (European Commission (Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security) 2010, p. 40). According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index, in recent years Poland has also implemented positive action measures, such as the inclusion of minority groups’ representatives in public radio stations; Poland additionally has a special educational track to train Roma doctors and nurses (Niessen et al. 2007).
- ¹⁸ See also the excellent policy recommendations, including positive action measures, that have been provided in the *Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on Its Mission to Spain* (United Nations General Assembly 2018). One important idea emphasized by this report is the need for the Spanish government to collect data disaggregated by ethnicity or race, which the authors state “is vital in understanding the severity and scope of racial discrimination against people of African descent and in developing targeted and holistic responses”; the absence of such data, which is in keeping with Spain’s race-neutral policy approach, actually “leads to the invisibility of the community of persons of African descent and prevents racism, racial discrimination and social exclusion from being effectively addressed” (United Nations General Assembly 2018, p. 12).

References

- Ackermann, Rebecca Rogers, Alex Mackay, and Michael L. Arnold. 2016. The Hybrid Origin of “Modern” Humans. *Evolutionary Biology* 43: 1–11. [CrossRef]
- Aguilar Idáñez, María, and Daniel Buraschi. 2018. Migrantes y refugiados: Apuntes clave para un nuevo relato. *Revista Lusófona de Educação* 37: 103–16. [CrossRef]
- Ajuntament de Barcelona. 2020. *Informe Observatori Discriminacions de Barcelona 2019*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona.
- Alba, Richard, and Nancy Foner. 2015. *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2006. *The Civil Sphere*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Arango, Joaquín. 2013. *Exceptional in Europe? Spain’s Experience with Immigration and Integration*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Aspinall, Peter, and Miri Song. 2013. *Mixed Race Identities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Balibar, Étienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso.
- Ballestín González, Beatriz. 2012. “¡Dile al negro y al Cola Cao que paren de molestarnos!” Sociabilidad entre iguales y dinámicas de segregación en la escuela primaria. In *Segregaciones y Construcción de la Diferencia en la Escuela*. Edited by F. Javier García Castaño and Antonia Olmos Alcaraz. Madrid: Trotta, pp. 119–42.
- Banton, Michael. 2005. Finding, and Correcting, My Mistakes. *Sociology* 39: 463–79. [CrossRef]
- Banton, Michael. 2012. The Colour Line and the Colour Scale in the Twentieth Century. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35: 1109–31. [CrossRef]
- Barker, Martin. 1981. *The New Racism*. London: Junction Books.
- Barot, Rohit, and John Bird. 2001. Racialization: The Genealogy and Critique of a Concept. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24: 601–18. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Barrett, Martyn, ed. 2013. *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Similarities and Differences*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

- Bauböck, Rainer. 2001. Cultural Citizenship, Minority Rights, and Self-government. In *Citizenship Today: Global Perspectives and Practices*. Edited by T. Alexander Aleinikoff and Douglas Klusmeyer. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pp. 319–48.
- Beaman, Jean. 2019. Are French People White?: Towards an Understanding of Whiteness in Republican France. *Identities* 26: 546–62. [CrossRef]
- Beaman, Jean, and Amy Petts. 2020. Towards a Global Theory of Colorblindness: Comparing Colorblind Racial Ideology in France and the United States. *Sociology Compass* 14: 1–11. [CrossRef]
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1999. The Essential Social Fact of Race. *American Sociological Review* 64: 899–906. [CrossRef]
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2013. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Boulila, Stefanie C. 2019a. Race and Racial Denial in Switzerland. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 1401–18. [CrossRef]
- Boulila, Stefanie C. 2019b. *Race in Post-Racial Europe: An Intersectional Analysis*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Brinbaum, Yaël, Mirna Safi, and Patrick Simon. 2018. Discrimination in France: Between Perception and Experience. In *Trajectories and Origins: Survey on the Diversity of the French Population*. INED Population Studies 8. Edited by Cris Beauchemin, Christelle Hamel and Patrick Simon. Cham: Springer, pp. 195–222.
- Brunsmas, David. 2006. *Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the "Color-Blind" Era*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Campos, Alejandro. 2012. Racialización, racismo y racismo: Un discernimiento necesario. *Universidad de la Habana* 273: 184–99.
- Campos, Ricardo. 2016. Authoritarianism and Punitive Eugenics: Racial Hygiene and National Catholicism during Francoism, 1936–1945. *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 23: 131–48. [CrossRef]
- Cantle, Ted. 2012a. Interculturalism: For the Era of Globalisation, Cohesion and Diversity. *Political Insight* 3: 38–41. [CrossRef]
- Cantle, Ted. 2012b. *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cantle, Ted. 2013. Interculturalism as a New Narrative for the Era of Globalisation and Super-Diversity. In *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Similarities and Differences*. Edited by Martyn Barrett. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, pp. 69–91.
- Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca. 2000. *Genes, Pueblos y Lenguas*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- CEBRE (Consejo para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial o Étnica). 2020. *Percepción de la Discriminación por Origen Racial o Étnico por Parte de sus Potenciales Víctimas en 2020*; Madrid: Ministerio de Igualdad, Subdirección General para la Igualdad de Trato y Diversidad Étnica Racial. Available online: https://igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es/destacados/pdf/08-PERCEPCION_DISCRIMINACION_RACIAL_NAV.pdf (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Chito Childs, Erica. 2014. A Global Look at Mixing: Problems, Pitfalls and Possibilities. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35: 677–88. [CrossRef]
- Chun, Elaine, and Adrienne Lo. 2015. Language and Racialization. In *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*. Edited by Nancy Bonvillian. New York: Routledge, pp. 220–32.
- Cornejo Parriego, Rosalía, ed. 2007. *Memoria Colonial e Inmigración: La Negritud en la España Posfranquista*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.
- Cortés, Ismael, and Cayetano Fernández. 2015. Long, Sad History of Roma in Spain. *Le Monde Diplomatique*. May. Available online: <https://mondediplo.com/2015/05/13Roma> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Council of Europe. 2008. *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: "Living Together as Equals in Dignity"*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989: 139–67.
- Daynes, Sarah, and Orville Lee. 2008. *Desire for Race*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dower, Nigel. 2003. *An Introduction to Global Citizenship*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Edmonds, Patricia. 2018. Black and White: These Twin Sisters Make Us Rethink Everything We Know about Race. In *The Race Issue*. Special Issue of *National Geographic Magazine*. April. Available online: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/race-twins-black-white-biggs> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Elabor-Idemudia, Patience. 1999. The Racialization of Gender in the Social Construction of Immigrant Women in Canada. *Canadian Woman Studies* 19: 38–44.
- Essed, Philomena. 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. London: SAGE.
- European Commission (Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security). 2010. *Handbook on Integration for Policy-makers and Practitioners*, 3rd ed. Luxembourg: European Commission. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/sites/default/files/2010-04/doc_12892_168517401.pdf (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- European Parliament. 2019. European Parliament Resolution on Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe (2018/2899(RSP)). Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-8-2019-0212_EN.html (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2018. *Being Black in the EU/Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey*; (EU-MIDIS II). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available online: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-being-black-in-the-eu_en.pdf (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Farkas, Lilla. 2017. *The Meaning of Racial or Ethnic Origin in EU Law: Between Stereotypes and Identities*. Brussels: European Commission, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers.

- Federation of SOS Racism Associations. 2015. *Puertas que se Cierran. Testing Sobre Discriminación a la Población Inmigrante en el Acceso a la Vivienda de Alquiler*. Donostia: SOS Racismo. Available online: <https://sosracismo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Puertas-que-se-cierran-Testing.pdf> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Federation of SOS Racism Associations. 2019. *Informe Identificacions Policials i Perfilació Ètnica a Catalunya*. Barcelona: SOS Racismo. Available online: <https://www.pareudepararme.org/informe-ca/> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Feros, Antonio. 2017. *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Flores, René. 2015. The Resurgence of Race in Spain: Perceptions of Discrimination among Immigrants. *Social Forces* 94: 237–69. [CrossRef]
- Foner, Nancy. 2015. Is Islam in Western Europe Like Race in the United States? *Sociological Forum* 30: 885–99. [CrossRef]
- Fredrickson, George. 2002. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gans, Herbert J. 2017. Racialization and Racialization Research. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 341–52. [CrossRef]
- Gilliéron, Gwendolyn. 2017. Couples mixtes et transmissions familiales: La construction identitaire de jeunes adultes binationaux. *Le Carnet de Recherche du Centre Jacques Berque*. Available online: <https://cjb.hypotheses.org/517> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2016. A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2: 129–41. [CrossRef]
- Goldberg, David T. 2002. *The Racial State*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Goldberg, David T. 2006. Racial Europeanization. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29: 331–64. [CrossRef]
- Gomá, Marina. 2020. Challenging the Narrative of Canadian Multicultural Benevolence: A Feminist Anti-Racist Critique. *OMNES: The Journal of Multicultural Society* 10: 81–113. [CrossRef]
- Gordon, Milton. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goss, Devon R., and Matthew W. Hughey. 2017. Racialization. In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*. Edited by Bryan S. Turner, Chang Kyung-Sup, Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Peter Kivisto, William Outhwaite and J. Michael Ryan. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Grillo, Ralph. 1998. *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference: State, Culture, and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Grillo, Ralph. 2018. *Interculturalism and the Politics of Dialogue*. Independently published.
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2004. Race and Ethnicity or Racialized Ethnicities?: Identities within Global Coloniality. *Ethnicities* 4: 315–36. [CrossRef]
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies* 21: 211–23. [CrossRef]
- Hall, Stuart. 1980. Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance. In *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 305–45.
- Hellgren, Zenia. 2018. Class, Race—And Place: Immigrants’ Self-perceptions on Inclusion, Belonging and Opportunities in Stockholm and Barcelona. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 2084–102. [CrossRef]
- Hernandez, Daniel. 2020. Is Oscar Nominee Antonio Banderas a “Person of Color”? It’s Complicated. *Los Angeles Times*. February 7. Available online: <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2020-02-07/oscars-antonio-banderas-person-of-color-latino-hispanic> (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Hochman, Adam. 2019. Racialization: A Defense of the Concept. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 1245–62. [CrossRef]
- Hughes, Everett Cherrington. 1945. Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status. *American Journal of Sociology* 50: 353–59. [CrossRef]
- Hughey, Matthew W. 2017. Race and Racism: Perspectives from Bahá’í Theology and Critical Sociology. *Journal of Bahá’í Studies* 27: 7–56. [CrossRef]
- Hunter, Margaret. 2007. The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality. *Sociology Compass* 1: 237–54. [CrossRef]
- Jefferess, David. 2018. Benevolence, Global Citizenship, and Post-Racial Politics. *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 25: 77–95. [CrossRef]
- Jenkins, Richard. 1997. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: SAGE.
- Joppke, Christian. 2004. The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy. *British Journal of Sociology* 55: 237–57. [CrossRef]
- Joppke, Christian. 2018. War of Words: Interculturalism v. Multiculturalism. *Comparative Migration Studies* 6: 1–10. [CrossRef]
- Keval, Harshad. 2014. From “Multiculturalism” to “Interculturalism”—A Commentary on the Impact of De-racing and De-classing the Debate. *New Diversities* 16: 125–39.
- Khanna, Nikki. 2010. “If You’re Half Black, You’re Just Black”: Reflected Appraisals and the Persistence of the One-Drop Rule. *Sociological Quarterly* 51: 96–121. [CrossRef]
- King-O’Riain, Rebecca Chiyoko. 2021. How the Irish Became More Than White: Mixed-Race Irishness in Historical and Contemporary Contexts. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 821–37. [CrossRef]
- Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will, and Keith Banting. 2006. Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State. *Ethics & International Affairs* 20: 281–304.
- Laborde, Antonia. 2020. Is Spain’s Antonio Banderas an “Actor of Color”? *El País*. January 17. Available online: https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2020/01/16/inenglish/1579172122_964523.html (accessed on 12 December 2021).

- Lähdesmäki, Tuuli, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, and Susanne C. Ylönen. 2020. Introduction: What Is Intercultural Dialogue and Why It Is Needed in Europe Today? In *Intercultural Dialogue in the European Education Policies: A Conceptual Approach*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–20.
- Lähdesmäki, Tuuli, and Albin Wagener. 2015. Discourses on Governing Diversity in Europe: Critical Analysis of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 44: 13–28. [CrossRef]
- Lee, Jennifer. 2015. From Undesirable to Marriageable: Hyper-Selectivity and the Racial Mobility of Asian Americans. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 662: 79–93. [CrossRef]
- Lee, Jennifer, and Frank Bean. 2012. A Postracial Society or a Diversity Paradox? Race, Immigration, and Multiraciality in the Twenty-First Century. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 9: 419–37. [CrossRef]
- Lentin, Alana. 2008. Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory* 11: 487–503. [CrossRef]
- Lentin, Alana. 2020. *Why Race Still Matters*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1952. *Race et Histoire*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Lewis, Amanda E. 2004. “What Group?” Studying Whites and Whiteness in the Era of “Color-Blindness”. *Sociological Theory* 22: 623–46. [CrossRef]
- Lewontin, Richard, Steven Rose, and Leon Kamin. 1984. *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature*. New York: Pantheon.
- Mansouri, Fethi, and Tariq Modood. 2021. The Complementarity of Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: Theory Backed by Australian Evidence. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44: 1–20. [CrossRef]
- Martin, Lori Latrice, Hayward Derrick Horton, Cedric Herring, Verna M. Keith, and Melvin Thomas, eds. 2017. *Color Struck: How Race and Complexion Matter in the “Color-Blind” Era*. Rotterdam, Boston, and Taipei: Sense Publishers.
- Mateo Dieste, Josep Lluis. 2018. *Moros Vienen. Historia y Política de un Estereotipo*. Melilla: Instituto de las Culturas.
- Mazzocco, Phillip. 2015. *Talking Productively about Race in the Colorblind Era*. Kirwan Institute Research Report. Columbus: The Ohio State University.
- McGhee, Derek. 2008. *The End of Multiculturalism? Terrorism, Integration and Human Rights*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Méchoulan, Henry. 1981. *El Honor de Dios. Indios, Judíos y Moriscos en el Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Argos Vergara.
- Meer, Nasar, ed. 2014. *Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia*. Ethnic and Racial Studies Series. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Meer, Nasar, and Tariq Modood. 2012. How Does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism? *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33: 175–96. [CrossRef]
- Miles, Robert. 1989. *Racism*. London: Routledge.
- Modood, Tariq. 2007. *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Modood, Tariq. 2016. What is Multiculturalism and What Can It Learn from Interculturalism? *Ethnicities* 16: 480–89.
- Modood, Tariq. 2017. Must Interculturalists Misrepresent Multiculturalism? *Comparative Migration Studies* 5: 1–17. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Murji, Karim, and John Solomos, eds. 2005. *Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Niessen, Jan, Thomas Huddleston, Laura Citron, and in cooperation with Andrew Geddes and Dirk Jacobs. 2007. *Migrant Integration Policy Index*. Brussels: British Council and Migration Policy Group.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. New York and London: Routledge.
- Osanami Törngren, Sayaka, Nahikari Irastorza, and Dan Rodríguez-García (co-first authorship). 2021. Understanding Multiethnic and Multiracial Experiences Globally: Towards a Conceptual Framework of Mixedness. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 763–81. [CrossRef]
- Parekh, Bhikhu. 2006. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Price, Patricia. 2012. Race and Ethnicity II: Skin and Other Intimacies. *Progress in Human Geography* 37: 578–86. [CrossRef]
- Ramberg, Ingrid. 2004. *Islamophobia and Its Consequences on Young People*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Rattansi, Ali. 2011. *Multiculturalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodríguez-García, Dan. 2010. Beyond Assimilation and Multiculturalism: A Critical Review of the Debate on Managing Diversity. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 11: 251–71. [CrossRef]
- Rodríguez-García, Dan. 2012. Introduction: Managing Immigration and Diversity in the New Age of Migration: A Transatlantic Dialogue. In *Managing Immigration and Diversity in Canada: A Transatlantic Dialogue in the New Age of Migration*. Edited by Dan Rodríguez-García. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press and Queen’s School of Policy Studies, pp. 1–60.
- Rodríguez-García, Dan. 2015. Introduction: Intermarriage and Integration Revisited: International Experiences and Cross-disciplinary Approaches. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 662: 8–36. [CrossRef]
- Rodríguez-García, Dan. 2021. Forbidden Love: Controlling Partnerships across Ethnoracial Boundaries. In *International Handbook of Love: Transcultural and Transdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Claude-Hélène Mayer and Elisabeth Vanderheiden. Cham: Springer, pp. 923–42.
- Rodríguez-García, Dan, and Cristina Rodríguez-Reche. Forthcoming. Daughters of Maghrebian Muslim and Native Non-Muslim Couples in Spain: Identity Choices and Constraints. *Social Compass*.
- Rodríguez-García, Dan, Miguel Solana, and Miranda Lubbers. 2016. Preference and Prejudice: Does Intermarriage Erode Negative Ethno-racial Attitudes between Groups in Spain? *Ethnicities* 16: 521–46. [CrossRef]
- Rodríguez-García, Dan, Miguel Solana, Anna Ortiz, and Beatriz Ballestín. 2021. Blurring of Colour Lines? Ethnoracially Mixed Youth in Spain Navigating Identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47: 838–60. [CrossRef]

- Rodríguez-García, Dan, Miguel Solana, Anna Ortiz, and Joanna L. Freedman. 2018. Linguistic Cultural Capital among Descendants of Mixed Couples in Catalonia, Spain: Realities and Inequalities. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 39: 429–50. [CrossRef]
- Rodríguez-Reche, Cristina, and Dan Rodríguez-García. 2020. El estigma de la musulmanidad: Visibilidad percibida y racismo en hijas de parejas mixtas con padre/madre de origen magrebí en Barcelona y Granada. *Periferia, Revista de Recerca i Formació en Antropologia* 25: 4–27.
- Roig, Emilia. 2017. Uttering “Race” in Colorblind France and Post-racial Germany. In *Rassismuskritik und Widerstandsformen*. Edited by Karim Fereidooni and Meral El. Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 613–27.
- Roth, Wendy D. 2016. The Multiple Dimensions of Race. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39: 1310–38. [CrossRef]
- Ruffié, Jacques. 1976. *De la Biologie à la Culture*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. 2009. Pigments of Our Imagination: On the Racialization and Racial Identities of “Hispanics” and “Latinos”. In *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*. Edited by José A. Cobas, Jorge Duany and Joe R. Feagin. St. Paul: Paradigm Publishers, pp. 15–36.
- San Román, Teresa. 1996. *Los Muros de la Separación*. Madrid and Bellaterra: Tecnos and Servei de Publicacions de la UAB.
- Sánchez, Gabriela, and Iciar Gutiérrez. 2020. La Elegida para Encabezar la Dirección de Igualdad de Trato y Diversidad Étnico-Racial Renuncia para Evitar el Malestar de Colectivos Antirracistas. *elDiario.es*. January 15. Available online: https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/directora-direccion-igualdad-colectivos-antirracistas_1_1076592.html (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Sánchez León, Pablo. 2020. Civil War, Genocide and Beyond: How to Re-found the Narrative Framework on the Destruction of the Spanish Democratic Republic after 1936. *European Review* 28: 892–910. [CrossRef]
- Simon, Patrick. 2017. The Failure of the Importation of Ethnoracial Statistics in Europe: Debates and Controversies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 2326–32. [CrossRef]
- Simon, Patrick. 2019. L’antiracisme et la race: Colorblindness et privilège blanc. *Les Possibles* 21: 1–6.
- Smith, Jason A., and Randy Abreu. 2019. MOU or an IOU? Latina/os and the Racialization of Media Policy. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 607–25. [CrossRef]
- Solomos, John. 2019. After Michael Banton: Some Reflections on His Contributions to the Study of Race. *Patterns of Prejudice* 53: 321–36. [CrossRef]
- Song, Miri. 2014a. Challenging a Culture of Racial Equivalence. *The British Journal of Sociology* 65: 107–29. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Song, Miri. 2014b. Does a Recognition of Mixed Race Move Us Toward Post-Race? In *Theories of Race and Ethnicity: Contemporary Debates and Perspectives*. Edited by Karim Murji and John Solomos. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 74–93.
- Song, Miri. 2017. Ethnic Options of Mixed Race Young People in Britain. In *Identities and Subjectivities*. Edited by Nancy Worth, Claire Dwyer and Tracey Skelton. Singapore: Springer, pp. 123–39.
- Song, Miri. 2018. Why We Still Need to Talk about Race. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41: 1131–45. [CrossRef]
- Song, Miri. 2020. Rethinking Minority Status and “Visibility”. *Comparative Migration Studies* 8: 1–17. [CrossRef]
- Spencer, Rainier. 2011. *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Stolcke, Verena. 1995. Talking Culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe. *Current Anthropology* 36: 1–24. [CrossRef]
- Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Taguieff, Pierre-André. 1988. *La Force du Préjugé. Essai sur le Racisme et ses Doubles*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Taylor, Charles. 1994. The Politics of Recognition. In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Edited by Amy Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 25–73.
- Telles, Edward. 2014. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Telles, Edward, and René Flores. 2013. Not Just Color: Whiteness, Nation, and Status in Latin America. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93: 411–49. [CrossRef]
- Telles, Edward, and Tianna Paschel. 2014. Who Is Black, White, or Mixed Race? How Skin Color, Status, and Nation Shape Racial Classification in Latin America. *American Journal of Sociology* 120: 864–907. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- United Nations General Assembly. 2018. Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on Its Mission to Spain (A/HRC/39/69/Add.2). Available online: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/69/Add.2 (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Vasquez, Jessica M. 2010. Blurred Borders for Some but Not “Others”: Racialization, “Flexible Ethnicity”, Gender, and Third-Generation Mexican American Identity. *Sociological Perspectives* 53: 45–72. [CrossRef]
- Vasta, Ellie. 2007. From Ethnic Minorities to Ethnic Majority Policy: Multiculturalism and the Shift to Assimilation in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 713–40. [CrossRef]
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-Diversity and Its Implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 1024–54. [CrossRef]
- Vertovec, Steven, and Susanne Wessendorf, eds. 2010. *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Viana, Israel. 2019. “Se vende negra sin defectos”: Así Era la Impune Venta de Esclavos en la Prensa Española del Siglo XIX. *ABC*, March 29. Available online: https://www.abc.es/historia/abci-vende-negra-sin-defectos-impune-venta-esclavos-prensa-espanola-siglo-201903140155_noticia.html (accessed on 12 December 2021).
- Waters, Mary C. 1996. Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only? In *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America*. Edited by Silvia Pedraza and Rubén G. Rumbaut. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp. 444–54.

- Wilson, William Julius. 1978. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wise, Tim. 2010. *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zapata-Barrero, Ricard. 2016. Exploring the Foundations of the Intercultural Policy Paradigm: A Comprehensive Approach. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 23: 155–73. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zapata-Barrero, Ricard. 2017. Interculturalism in the Post-Multicultural Debate: A Defence. *Comparative Migration Studies* 5: 1–23. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Zapata-Barrero, Ricard. 2019. *Intercultural Citizenship in the Post-Multicultural Era*. London: SAGE.



Article

European Muslim Youth and Gender (in)Equality Discourse: Towards a More Critical Academic Inquiry

Colleen Boland

Public Law, Faculty of Law, Autonomous University of Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain; colleen.boland@uab.cat

Abstract: In Europe, gender equality can be framed as a secular value, juxtaposed against affiliation with and practice of Islam. Academic and public debate has either given special attention to the spread of religious fundamentalism in Europe, or to the way Muslim women dress, citing how both purportedly jeopardize gender equality. This is despite findings that a link between gender equality and religiosity or practice of Islam is neither inherent nor circumscribed. Moreover, it is possible to demonstrate that such discourse rests on implicitly racialized conceptualizations of the Muslim “other”. Meanwhile, Muslim youth in particular are benchmarked against these imagined standards of gender equality, as compared with non-Muslim peers. This work examines ways in which normative secular frameworks and discourses, taking ownership of gender equality narratives, have shaped Europe’s academic inquiry regarding Muslim youth. It notes what is absent in this inquiry, including intersections of race and class, which remain divorced from the limited conversation on gender and religious difference. A reflexive, intersectional approach to this discussion, conscious of the importance of embedded racial or structural inequality and what is absent in current inquiry, better serves in understanding and navigating power relations that ultimately contribute to multiple exclusion of these youth.

Keywords: European Muslims; inequalities; gender; youth of migrant origin; knowledge production

Citation: Boland, Colleen. 2021. European Muslim Youth and Gender (in)Equality Discourse: Towards a More Critical Academic Inquiry. *Social Sciences* 10: 133. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10040133>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 8 March 2021
Accepted: 6 April 2021
Published: 9 April 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

In Western Europe, academic thought, public policy and societal rhetoric largely depict secularism as characteristic of liberal democratic regimes and modern society (Mahmood 2015). Religion is argued to serve as a symbolic boundary for migrants and their descendants (Lamont and Molnár 2002), and ascription to Islam in Europe is identified as a “bright” boundary for minorities, migrant or otherwise (Alba 2005). A controversial and frequent target of the religion versus secularism binary debate includes Muslim youth of migrant origin: in both knowledge production and public debate, their religious identity and so-called “cultural behaviours” are viewed as a veritable litmus test of successful “integration”¹ policies and practices. European Muslim youth are not only a growing demographic group that faces structural disadvantages, simply as descendants of migrants; they are simultaneously the subject of othering given a perceived sociocultural divide, in that affiliation with Islam is often cast as illegitimate in a European society drawing from a Christian background and currently ostensibly in pursuit of or engaging in a secular paradigm.

The literature describes how, purportedly due to religious background, descendants of Muslim migrants have more conservative views than peers with native parents and are not positioned to engage cohesively with mainstream European societal values and norms

¹ Integration, a term employed in migration and diversity studies, among other disciplines, can refer to a concept or a policy intervention; it can generally be defined as a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and host societies. However, continued use of the term and concept has become hotly contested in the literature; see (Saharso 2019).

(Casanova 2006; Parekh 2006; Ribberink et al. 2017). Gender equality² is one of the most frequently cited demarcations in this perceived religious or sociocultural boundary, with public debate often depicting the precepts of Islam itself (and as part of wider religion) as a deterrent to such equality (Diehl et al. 2009; Taylor 2011). In this analysis, gender equality discourse is identified as a fundamental component in the othering of Muslim youth. In this regard, academic knowledge production influences public policies and discourses, and thus bears wider societal repercussions. Research trends have indicated, and often championed, an “individualized” approach to religion among European Muslim youth, who may not engage in traditional religious practices, and thus are presumed to more closely ascribe to secular or liberal democratic norms (Cesari 2013). Moreover, European-wide studies and questionnaires directed towards Muslim youth of migrant origin continually inquire as to gender roles and values in order to determine this group’s level of so-called “integration” into society. From the outset, there is a burden of proof on Muslim youth of migrant origin to meet certain supposed standards of gender equality, within the constraints of survey questionnaires that may even direct the participants’ answers. This reflects a broader epistemological tendency to employ a benchmark, imagined society in examining minority reference groups.

Firstly, such an approach to the study of Muslim youth rests on several debatable assumptions regarding secularism, including that it is a depoliticized, non-normative and universally embraced totalizing system of European thought or belief. Literature can often frame secularism as part of an enlightened European perspective or Western exceptionalism (Katzenstein 2006). Alternatively, in addressing Islam in Europe, some authors emphasize the Christian tradition of Europe, while others insist that Western Europe is a collective of increasingly secular societies; still others trace secularism to Christianity’s evolution in that Christianity provided an “exit from religion”, thus producing secularization (Vattimo and Girard 2010). As such, the meaning of secularism itself invokes debate, elaborated upon in this work.

Secondly, it is of note that ascription to Islam is couched in terms of the particular, as compared with the universal “European” Christian or secular concept. Of course, secular and Christian identities are conflated with cultural and national identities, as well as the policies, discourses, and societal practices surrounding them (Casanova 2006; Koenig 2007; Nexon 2006). At the same time, the growing body of literature in European diversity studies demonstrates that European populations are increasingly heterogeneous (Vertovec 2007). Meanwhile, in migration and integration studies of past decades, and even in more recent diversity studies, race as part of this heterogeneous European fabric is often absent in inquiry, as Europe remains “colour blind”, in an allegedly liberal openness to difference.

In fact, the study of “diversity” itself, especially as relates to the subject at hand, can remain limited. As Bracke points out, “diversity all too often carries the imaginary of ethnicity and ‘race’, which provides a useful starting point for a reflection on what the term does: it couches questions of ethnicity and ‘race’ within a wide horizon of different kinds of ‘differences’, without doing the critical work of thinking those together, which includes thinking the particular ways in which each of these sets of power relations work” (Bracke 2014, p. 47). This seems to be particularly the case with European Muslim youth: despite the unpacking of colonial legacies, and an increasing European canon of migration, integration and diversity studies, it still remains to be understood, as El-Tayeb (2011, p. 83) succinctly describes it, “how second- and third-generation Muslim Europeans can be

² “Gender equality” (or inequality), what exactly this entails and how to achieve it can be subject to various normative frames and perspectives, including within Europe. This paper refers to the concept as part of a larger human rights framework to which European states purportedly accede, but acknowledges it can assume varying meanings, as demonstrated by the range of approaches and understandings that could be applied in the case of the United Nations definition: “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.... Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration” (United Nations 2001). While in the context of European policy debates gender equality is defined as such here, the social construction of gender remains a separate and important question that does not fit into the limits of this work’s scope.

perceived as more foreign and threatening than their parents or grandparents who came to Europe from the Middle East, West Africa, or South Asia”.

Indeed, notwithstanding public discourse, the scholarship repeatedly frames inquiry into European Muslim youth in terms of the problematization of religion, the secular, and gender equality. As such, this paper first argues that knowledge production surrounding secularism versus religiosity may rest on normative assumptions and power relations that can exercise discernible effects on individuals, in this case Muslim youth. The study takes as a starting point Mahmood’s injunction to consider how religion can be subjected to a normative secular framework that provides a subjective account of religion as ideological versus material (i.e., religious difference) (Mahmood 2015). Of course, debate on what constitutes secularism has been extensively addressed, and there has been healthy critique of the broader framing of European Muslims in relation to gender equality, particularly in the public and political space (Fadil 2014). Moreover, critique from within European academia itself acknowledges gaps in the gender discussion, including in the continued discussion of intersectionality, a paradigm that points to intersecting power and privilege simultaneously at play in gender, race and class relations (Cho et al. 2013). However, there is still room for further examination or deconstruction of narratives at the intersection of religion, the secular, and gender equality as relates to the study of Muslim youth: specifically, it would be useful to trace how the epistemological terminology has developed, to assess how this may merit critiques, and to explore different or alternative framings of such studies in the future. This is a timely and salient investigative direction, as European academic approaches to Islam and gender equality can mutually affect diversity and inclusion policies, and ultimately influence power relations among European citizens.

The article is divided into theoretical framework, analysis, discussion, and conclusion. In the first section, an exploration of the place of secularism in Europe, including as a social and political project, provides the initial context for investigation into knowledge production surrounding Muslim European youth. The analysis maps out major discursive tropes in scholarly work at the intersection of the study of Muslim European youth and gender, firstly on a broader European scale and then in tracing academic inquiry in both Spain and the Netherlands. It addresses the continued focus on a gender dimension, with reference to this group’s foreign “origin,” yet limited exploration of racial and structural inequality, informed by colonial pasts and influencing this group’s differentiation and exclusion. A discussion of which questions are not asked in this inquiry, and what impact or significance may result for Muslim youth populations, is followed by a concluding summary and suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework: Defining and Debating Secularism in Europe

Deconstructing the approach to the secular, and its proximity or even entanglement with modern religion, precedes a discussion of how gender equality becomes embroiled in the problematization of Islam in Europe. As briefly referenced, the concept of the secular can be defined variously. It may be key to first distinguish that “secularism” can be conceived of as part of a historical or cultural process, and essentially a political ideology in that it refers to what are understood to be various secular regimes. In this way it manifests variously: secularism can ask the state to be “neutral” regarding religion: if conducting a relationship between state law and religion, all religions must remain on the same legal footing (Ferrari and Pastorelli 2016). More strictly, a secularist approach can be defined as the separation of politics and religion, relegating religion to the private sphere (Cesari 2013). In Europe, some scholarship has observed an increasing push for the “privatization” of religion, with secularization viewed as essential to a modern society (Casanova 2006). Moreover, this secularism can be understood as the result or manifestation of modernization, with such modernization being defined as the decline of religion in political and private life (Norris and Inglehart 2011). For this reason, visible religious activity is seen as “illegitimate” in the public sphere, particularly in Europe (Foner and Alba 2008).

It would be remiss not to highlight the relevance of European Union (EU) legal configurations, or normative approaches, in this regard. Both freedom of religion and gender equality remain fundamental rights in EU legal frameworks, although freedom of religion is not an “absolute”, and is considered in relation to other rights, given the circumstance. There is no formal EU policy on religion or exclusive legal jurisdiction regarding the same, and EU laws and policies have a patchwork approach to religion based on various framings or institutional configurations. As such, [Carrera and Parkin \(2012\)](#) estimate that normative approaches to religion in EU policy can be grouped into “citizenship and fundamental rights; (ii) non-discrimination; (iii) immigration and home-affairs; (iv) social inclusion and protection; and (v) education and culture” ([Carrera and Parkin 2012](#), p. 5). These varied approaches and the distinct historical, political and social contexts of each EU Member State demonstrate how the EU or its Member States cannot claim a total neutrality in matters of religion and state. While a Member State like France, for example, may be committed to neutrality in the public sphere, there is still a debate as to, and necessity to balance, other rights to non-discrimination. Encroaching on the right to religious expression or freedom can be viewed as jeopardizing cultural evolution and liberal democracy’s attempts to accommodate individual rights ([van de Vijver 2007](#)). Whether played out in EU legislation, or as debated on the national scale when EU Member States determine the role of religion in public life, all of this points to how national identities or state ideologies become inherent to the secular.

Therefore, ideologically, concepts of privatized religion and secularized Christianity are linked to secular liberal tolerance, often within a narrative of the nation state ([Fessenden and Cady 2013](#)). At the same time, some insist that an understanding of secularism should not be construed as an inevitable result of modernity or rationalization, nor confined to a solely Western political context ([Asad 2003](#)). In fact, there is an argument for the secular reaching beyond the political. For example, rather than defining it as the separation of politics and religion, Mahmood contends that secularism can be conceived of as “transformations wrought in the domain of ethics, aesthetics, and epistemology” ([Mahmood 2010](#)). [Fuchs and Rüpke \(2015\)](#) argue that patterns of “rationalisation, secularisation and individualisation” are traceable throughout history and before the Western Renaissance, in at least Europe, Africa and Asia, outside of Western political systems with secular regimes. These observations encourage a more comprehensive consideration of what secularism is meant to signify, with an aim to step outside of normative frameworks.

This examination of the literature on European Muslim youth works from the premise that differences have already been produced or are reproduced within power relations, and these relationships between culture and power are embedded in state and society, including in knowledge production ([Gupta and Ferguson 1992](#)). In mapping the trajectory of European scholarship regarding Muslim European youth, with particular attention to the entanglement of secularism, religion and gender equality, a Foucauldian discourse analysis is employed: attention is directed not only to what is communicated in this knowledge production, but also on what is never or not said reveals ([Foucault 1972](#)). It examines the more frequently cited literature treating European Muslim youth and gender at the European level and provides an overview of the trajectory of this study in both Spain and the Netherlands. This discourse analysis portends to the more predominating knowledge regimes and policy priorities, and does not pretend to be exhaustive. Moreover, it limits the gender dimension to discourses or conceptualizations of gender (in)equality in order to contain the scope. At the same time, it seeks to highlight certain patterns and tropes before outlining steps towards a more critical, reflexive academic inquiry into a subject that is debated visibly and frequently, yet often within the same discursive boundaries.

3. Analysis

3.1. Framing the Study of European Muslim Youth: Religiosity and Gender

Again, Muslim minorities are highly visible in both the literature and political and social dialectic in discussion of gender roles and equality. It is an important consideration

as, generally, both Muslim minorities and women are not groups that are associated with hegemonic political or social power in Europe. Gender roles and the equality thereof are emphasized in the literature studying Muslim youth of migrant origin, despite feminist scholarship increasingly recognizing that both religious and secular values can shape gender unequal or equal ideologies (Nyhagen 2019). With the assertion that most religions encroach on the rights of women, the rights of European Muslim women have been the topic of debates regarding citizenship or immigration. There is a perception that Islam, as non-Western and “other”, subjects women to a unique oppression. In particular, it is argued that fundamentalist religious movements within Islam are acting in response to global or “Western” changes in gender dynamics (Koopmans 2015). With a similar logic, some studies hypothesize that lessened religiosity would mean less gender inequitable practices and indicate greater integration into secular Europe, including among second or third generation youth of migrant origin (Scheible and Fleischmann 2013). Of course, the counterargument is that this assumption is misguided, in that discriminatory practices towards women can result from enmeshed cultural practices linked to gender inequality, or a discriminatory interpretation of the religion. In Europe in particular, religious women themselves can combine varying understandings of citizenship, gender equality, women’s rights and feminism, that do not fit the secular versus religious binary highlighted in the literature that largely addresses the “perspective” of religious institutions on these issues (Nyhagen and Halsaa 2016). In this sense, it is important to separate out and identify gender unequal practices regardless of ascription to religious or secular ideologies, given that presumably no society to date has achieved true gender equality (Fessenden and Cady 2013; Mahmood 2015).

The premise that greater religiosity is correlated to gender unequal practices can be linked to how Muslim youth are categorized in the literature. The most obvious example includes the observation and sometimes polarizing assertion that Muslim youth in Europe are embracing increased religiosity rather than secular values in a manner that indicates withdrawal from wider European society. Islam is argued to serve as an “oppositional identity” for Muslim youth of migrant origin, when they face rejection, discrimination or marginalization in their societies (Foner and Alba 2008, p. 373). Such reactivity can take the form of fundamentalist belief and extremist behaviour, which is argued to result in violence against Muslim women or even against all groups of women in the given society (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009). Especially in light of a rise in extremist attacks in recent years and the political discourse linking these attacks to European Muslims, alongside the various political leaders and parties throughout Europe fomenting Islamophobia, this trend of reactive identity among Muslim youth has perhaps been disproportionately emphasized.

The literature is not limited to this single typification of Muslim youth, however. The concept of Islam translating to a value system that neglects gender equality can also underly other theories regarding European Muslim youth. For example, there are observations as to a trend towards individualization of religion among Muslim youth in Europe. This individualization is understood as a privatization of faith, entailing a decrease in manifestations of traditional or outward religious practices and engagement with authoritative religious actors; instead, such “individualization” involves restricting religious belief and practice to private life. There is then a turn towards painting this religious individualism as “European Islam”, with non-traditional, privatized religious identity reflecting successful adaptation to the surrounding society—an effort to act in compatibility with European ideals (Nielsen 1997; Kashyap and Lewis 2013).

These observations must be conducted from a critical point of view, however. First of all, individualization and privatization of faith do not necessarily present a lessened version of religiosity, but rather a different form and manner of belief. In fact, Cesari finds that Muslim youth may strive towards what they understand to be a “real Islam,” separated from the cultural traditions of their parents (Cesari 2002). Apart from problematic engagement with the concepts of secularism, religion and religiosity, these categorizations and analyses of European Muslim youth demonstrate a marked vocabulary of integration.

With continual reference to fixed standards of a Western, European or national framework of secularism couched within liberal democratic societies, Muslim youth's religiosity and identity is a variable put to the test. Investigation of this population often weighs the effects of institutions, policy and society on a broader scale in assessing such integration; observations as to structural impediments or individual agency, in addressing this population (in general or specifically in relation to gender) is less systematically and comprehensively explored. In short, how the study of this population in relation to gender equality is framed becomes a highly influential and defining component in shaping any knowledge production as to the very differentiated individuals and groups broadly categorized as European Muslim youth.

3.2. *The Spanish Example: Academic Inquiry as to Islam, Gender Equality and Muslim Youth*

Within the wider European problematization, tracing the inquiry as to Muslim youth and gender equality in Spain provides specific insight. In contextualizing the Spanish case, there are claims that Islamophobia can be traced back to perceived historical conflict and the presence of the caliphate on the Iberian Peninsula from roughly 711–1492 (Corpas Aguirre 2010). In the contemporary context, Islam as the “other” continues as, with increased immigration flows beginning around the late 1970s and becoming significant at the turn of the century, the modern study of Islam in Spain has initially and largely been framed in terms of migrant minorities. In the 1990s, Spanish immigration legislation was marked by a move towards integration policies, albeit in tandem with control measures (Relaño Pastor 2004). The study of Islam in Spain through the 1990s was rather limited, often consisting of ethnographic studies and a few “Arabist” scholars, in conjunction with the study of migration from the Maghreb region and its integration. Following this, Téllez Delgado and Ramírez Fernández note that the attacks of September 11 caused a transition from terminology of “Moroccans” to that of “Muslim”, creating an “Islamization” of such migration and integration studies (Téllez Delgado and Ramírez Fernández 2018). The 11 March 2004 attacks in Madrid then led to a focus on fundamentalism and re-Islamization, reflected in wider literature throughout Europe and the world (Ibid) (Téllez Delgado and Ramírez Fernández 2018).

Spanish studies that more pointedly address gender equality or gender roles in relation to Islam in Spain at first particularly focused on examining practices of Moroccan women (Ramírez 1998). This type of approach often analysed or observed any transformations in gender roles, identity or values when these Moroccan women in particular migrated to Spain (Ramírez 1998). An emphasis on the autonomy of women being limited in the origin country, as well as practices of gender separation, could be cited as the point of comparison when investigating how Moroccan women inserted (or did not insert) their beliefs and practices upon their arrival and continued life in Spain. Researchers often identified a value shift, distinguishing differences in gender dynamics in origin countries versus host country. For example, a 2002 study of Moroccan women in Catalonia organizes observations in terms of “strategies of female cultural insertion”, or how migrant women strategically “integrate” into Catalonia into three categories: women that continue with so-called tradition, characterized by male and female segregation in certain activities; women that engage in a transition strategy and incorporate “elements of change” into their traditional roles; and finally, women who develop strategies and changes in gender roles that are good for “insertion” into a plural society (Alcalde et al. 2002, pp. 42, 43). This clearly frames gender and gender equality within the context of shedding old cultural values and adopting presumably gender equal new ones. Another example includes a study in Huelva, Spain, evaluating whether views on gender equality and education among migrant Moroccan women change based on length of residence in Spain (Bedmar and Caro 2013). The semi-structured interviews asked questions including “Do you think girls’ education should be equal to that of boys?” or “Do you believe school is important in your daughters’ education?” (Bedmar and Caro 2013). Again, the interview script implies

that gender equality would be the norm in Spain, and that the more equal the participants believe education should be, the more they manifest signs of integration.

Muslim youth of migrant origin have also been an object of study in Spain from the point of view of integrating or measuring up to host culture practices. Migration studies of Muslim youth approach the population as 1.5, second and third generation migrants (Portes et al. 2016). In other words, they can be studied within the context of being the children of immigrant parents that came to Spain largely from Morocco during the 1990s, and in some cases from the Levant region during the 1980s. Most empirical studies regarding second generation youth have been qualitative and relatively limited in scope, with a few exceptions. Some of the studies continue to evaluate gender with the same approach as those investigating the first generation. For example, a 2006 survey of second-generation Moroccans, Dominicans and Peruvians examines their opinion in comparison to “native” European youth, and notes that children of Moroccans tend to emphasize the importance of couples sharing the same religion, and link women with domestic tasks more so than second generation participants of a different background (Aparicio and Tornos 2006). A report published in 2012 surveying second-generation children of Maghreb migrant origin in the neighbourhood of San Cristobal, Madrid, argued that this second-generation population suffered unequal treatment, with girls restricted in public life due to Islam (Díaz López and López 2012).

Key in this outline is how public discourse, including in the media and political rhetoric, guides or influences academic investigation, and vice versa. In relation to the present topic of Muslim youth, the dangers of fundamentalism remain emphasized in the political and public sphere, with concerns as to the prevention of Moroccan origin Spanish youth and other second-generation Muslims from choosing radicalism. An example includes the public-school curriculum for religious instruction in Islam. While the right to religious education in the religion of preference is recognized in public or subsidized private schools, the availability of such instruction according to the autonomous community is limited, and there is often the complaint that the instruction is vastly disproportionate, in favour of Catholicism versus Islam.³ Moreover, as of March 2016, the Ministry of Education, with assistance from the Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence, issued a curriculum and materials for secondary schools discussing extremism and terrorism, which Planet Contreras describes as cautioning against “‘overstepping’ in religious practice” and encouraging the study of “marriage from the perspective of rejecting misogynist violence” (Planet Contreras 2018, p. 45).

It is of note that these studies of integration or migration, which hold migrant origin Muslims to standards of wider, allegedly mainstream Spanish gender equality, posit assumptions regarding mainstream Spanish cultural or societal values that may not be black and white. A February 2018 survey by the Spanish State Centre for Sociological Investigation (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2018) found that 60.6% of Spaniards at age 16 remembered their mother as “inactive”, or engaged in unremunerated household work (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2018). Furthermore, while it would be difficult to review the entire canon of literature on gender equality in Spain, it is of note that in recent years it has been observed that post-crisis Spain has experienced austerity politics that negatively impacted gender equality legislation and institutions (Lombardo et al. 2017). Moreover, Spanish women still undertake the majority of unpaid care work

³ A 1996 Spanish law allows for religious instruction in publicly funded primary and secondary school, for those students who want to exercise their right to receive religious education (in all faiths); this law would presumably level the playing field, as some Catholic schools up until that point had received state funding. However, it is argued that funds remain unequally distributed among faiths, as in 2019, while there were 326,359 Muslim students, the community school systems throughout Spain only employed 80 professors of Islam (Andalusi 2019).

(Lombardo et al. 2017).⁴ In sum, while young Spanish Muslims of migrant origin are juxtaposed with paradigmatic gender equality expectations,⁵ and subject to implicit or explicit interrogation that can result in an alienating experience, the reality of gender (in)equality in Spain undermines this juxtaposition.

3.3. Academic Inquiry at the Intersection of Gender Equality and Muslim Youth: The Dutch Case

Dutch academic inquiry as to Muslim youth and gender presents a different context and trajectory, given that it is embedded in a distinct national context, but ultimately manifests similar patterns of knowledge production. Scholars often pointedly assess Dutch Muslims through the lens of secularism, reflecting how Islam is framed in both academic and public discourse as in opposition to Dutch liberalism, and research indicates high levels of anti-Muslim sentiment in Dutch society (de Bruijn et al. 2020). The study of Dutch Muslims began to take root in the 1980s: while Muslim-identifying migrants from Turkey and Morocco began to arrive in the 1960s, by the 1970s only a few studies addressed Islam in the Netherlands, with the term Muslim more frequently cited in early 1980s literature (de Koning and Sunier 2020).

This increased academic study paralleled the heightened public visibility of Islam: in 1983, the Dutch Constitution was amended, putting an end to formal relationships with the Protestant Church, and all religions were recognized as equal under the law via the ‘non-recognition’ principle; this provided Muslims with the opportunity for equal participation. At the same time, ‘non-recognition’ in practice could be applied by authorities in methods of non-intervention towards or exclusion of the Muslim population (de Koning and Sunier 2020). As the number of migrants with Muslim background increased throughout the 1980s, and Islam became more visible, the government began to adopt migrant integration policies. Islam was correspondingly addressed in the literature as a foreign import, from a migration perspective, despite these migrants’ permanent move to the Netherlands. At the same time, Rath et al. (1997) argue that although Muslims were called on to “integrate,” the boundaries between them and the rest of society were seen as permeable, and ultimately the integration project sought inclusion.

Koning and Sunier point to the Rushdie Affair⁶ as a turning point in discourse surrounding Islam, when both liberal and right-wing policymakers articulated the possibility of Islam or “Islamification” as incompatible with and a threat to a liberal, Dutch identity (de Koning and Sunier 2020). This coincided with a backlash against “multiculturalism” policies throughout Europe. Moreover, the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, the assassination of Pim Fortuyn by an activist that accused the Dutch politician of exploiting Muslims, as well as the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004 by a self-professed Islamist, provided fodder for political and public rhetoric framing Islam in terms of securitization (Brouwer et al. 2017). Dutch politician Geert Wilders famously founded the far-right Freedom Party (PVV), attacking Islam openly, and leads his party in Dutch Parliament as of 2021 (Moors 2009). In the past decade, right-wing populist parties,

⁴ It should be noted that the majority of the literature assessed here, and studies on Spanish Muslims or Spanish Muslim youth for the most part, often examine populations in urban areas, which can differ demographically from those dwelling in rural areas of Spain; the analysis may be skewed or limited in this regard, especially in a discussion of gender equality or roles. For example, a 2006 government-sponsored report on Moroccan immigrants in Spain notes a more equal balance of Moroccan or Moroccan origin Spanish (presumably Muslim-identifying) men and women in Spanish urban areas with service sector employment, as opposed to a majority of Moroccan men in rural, agricultural-dependent areas of Spain (López García and Berriane 2006). Of course, more detailed examination is required too when examining gender in labour and employment among the wider Spanish population.

⁵ Some recent qualitative studies of Spanish Muslim youth explore identity and practices, emphasizing the current reality of a plural and diverse Spain. While empirically they may not be quantitatively significant, these more recent studies often go beyond studying this population as the children of migrants, turning towards examining identity construction in relation to a minority religion or other identification. See (Adlbi Sibai 2010; Téllez Delgado 2014) or (Mendoza Carmona 2017) for examples. In these studies, if there is reference to gender at all, there is less of an overemphasized inquiry into gender roles, or a lack of binary separation between a “Muslim” approach to gender versus that of mainstream societies, as compared with literature from previous decades. Still, the othering of Islam within the frame of gender inequality continues in the wider academic and public debate.

⁶ The Rushdie Affair here refers to the worldwide reaction of some self-identifying Muslims to the 1988 publication of Salman Rushdie’s book “The Satanic Verses”.

if not making political gains in the Netherlands, have at least established a firm foothold as the “opposition” to main liberal parties in recent years, and continue to purportedly champion the “emancipation” of migrant or Muslim women (Cuperus 2021; Kešić and Duyvendak 2019; de Lange and Mügge 2015; Vieten 2016).

Beyond the sentiments of radical right or populist societal factions and political forces, it is argued that strong, more extensive Dutch societal criticism of what is perceived as constituting a Muslim way of life is not uncommon. Verloo and Roggeband (1996) explain how policy frames frequently employ the term “allochthonous”, to refer to Muslim youth of migrant origin or their parents, which can refer to “foreign descent” and literally means ‘different in relation to’; it is used to distinguish migrants from the ‘autochthonous’ population (2007). Meanwhile, these debates also invoke the notion of ‘Dutch exceptionalism,’ championing alleged Dutch tolerance in general, specifically as linked to securitization and sexual politics (Bracke 2011). The course of these perceptions of and narratives on Islam in the Netherlands, shifting from one of migration to one of religious threat, can impact Dutch Muslim youth of migrant origin, specifically those with Moroccan-born parents. They face exclusionary discourses, articulated in securitisation or oppression of women narratives, with their religious background cast as a threat to tolerance and liberalism (Prins et al. 2015). Korteweg and Yurdakul note an uneven public and political preoccupation with honour killings as representative of Dutch Muslim violence against women (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009).

Simultaneously, in the literature Muslim youth of migrant origin are also evaluated in terms of their religiosity and gender ideology, even if it is to evidence that this association is ill-founded: Scheible and Fleischmann determine in a 2013 study that the “prominently discussed negative association between Islamic religiosity and egalitarian gender ideology among the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan” is insignificant (p. 390). As with the Spanish case, some more recent qualitative studies of Dutch Muslim youth have offered Muslim youth accounts within this discussion. A 2018 study of Dutch Muslim girls playing football notes that while the girls are expected to participate in this activity to demonstrate their gendered integration, they are still othered in a religious, ethnic or gendered way in their lived experiences on the football field (van den Bogert 2018). Another qualitative study of digital practice of Islamic Moroccan-Dutch youth addresses “religious, ethnic, and gender positioning” in describing how boys and girls relate differently to Dutch identity or their faith. It argues that the racism they experience differs, explaining that within Dutch society, the boys are cast as criminals and girls as oppressed (Leurs et al. 2019). On the other hand, a larger study in the migration literature from 2016 remains concerned with “cultural integration” and emphasizes gender ideology among second generation Muslims in the Netherlands, noting in this regard the “intergenerational shift in the Muslim population in the Netherlands, toward socio-cultural assimilation, on the one hand and reactive ethnicity, on the other . . . the aggregate picture appears to be one of movement toward the more liberal Dutch mainstream” (Maliapaard and Alba 2016, p. 90). Indeed, heated public debate about perceived or real Muslim practices, prevalent in politics and the media, may not have been explicitly fomented by scholarship; at the same time, the approach to Islam as foreign and diametrically opposed to Dutch liberal values can shape and lead to these gendered discourses.

Meanwhile, and as can be observed also in the Spanish example, expression of egalitarian gender ideology among the wider population does not necessarily translate to gender equal behaviours throughout wider or “autochthonous” Dutch society. van de Vijver’s (2007) study notes how gender role beliefs may “differ” among “mainstreamers and immigrant groups in The Netherlands”, but that there was little difference in the division of household labour or childcare responsibilities when comparing the two groups (p. 824). Academic literature has conducted a significant number of gender policy evaluations, as Dutch policy measures have consistently sought gender equality in both rights and opportunities for several decades (Roggeband and Verloo 2007). However, as measured by the OECD, women’s employment remains unequal: in 2016, 60% of employed women

were contracted for less than 30 h a week, and a gender pay gap of 14% in the Netherlands is below the OECD average (OECD 2019). Again, as with the Spanish example, Muslim youth of migrant origin are thus being held to gender equal ideologies or practices that correspond to wider societal standards unrepresentative of real behaviours; moreover, it is often the case that ideology and practice are conflated in these imagined standards.

4. Discussion: Implications of the Literature's Reoccurring Discursive Tropes

Research focus throughout the European literature, as well as in the specific cases of Spain and the Netherlands, manifests notable patterns in the intersection between the study of Muslim youth and gender equality. European Muslim youth are often investigated from the point of view of migration studies, where a subtle "othering" can take place. Positioned from the beginning as minorities due to religious belief and presumed accompanying values, academic discussion of the gender dimension with regards to Muslim youth frequently revisits themes of either radicalization or oppression, continuously interrogating gender equal ideology or behaviours. Whether this investigation is led by or is responding to the political, public and media discourse, knowledge production's embeddedness in societal power relations equips it to exacerbate the marginalization or exclusion of this population.

Again, the youth addressed in this study, along with any migrant parents, are often examined in the way they relate to "liberal values", "secularism" or "gender equality" supposedly definitive of the European imaginary. Here, the debate as to what constitutes "liberalism" and "secularism" once again emerges, including how, as either concepts or normative systems, both may be employed as superficial or blanket markers, or even serve as a distraction, in scholarship that lacks a more thorough discussion inclusive of race and racism. In this narrative, with regards to the religion and secularism debate, "secular liberalism" is argued to be ultimately illiberal in the sense that it eliminates the freedom and rights of religious-identifying individuals (Woodhead 2013). Within this context, scholarly work then addresses how European Muslims and Muslim youth in particular can "legitimately" engage in religious practice or individualized religiosity.

At the same time, what defines "liberalism," or "liberal values" is very much nebulous and contested, and liberalism has even been critiqued as a civilizational project resting on racialized and colonialist hierarchies (Jones 2020; Lentini 2014). For example, Muslim youth are studied and understood as "integrated" (whether migrants or citizens) if their beliefs and practices conform to certain "liberal" values. Preoccupation with Muslim European women's autonomy as part of such liberal values continues, despite mounting feminist scholarship that contests the link between religion or religiosity and women's oppression, and asks for redirected attention to broader intersectional dimensions (Taramundi 2015). Essentially, in framing academic discussions in terms of religious freedom and gender equality exclusive to what is "liberal", or "European", problematic racial inequalities are side-stepped.

As Essed and Trienekens (2008) point out in the Dutch case, "people can rather easily suppress statements about race, about being white, about whiteness, about racism, exactly because there is ample space to be vocal about (perceived) cultural vices of allochtonen"—in this case, the "cultural vice" constitutes Islamic practices or identification. In exploring post-race and contemporary racisms, Valluvan (2016) notes that while categorizations as to religious or cultural difference perhaps may not name "race" as such, they are formulated in combined reference to "ethno-racial, ethno-religious, and ethno-legal", including as directed towards Muslims in Western Europe. Indeed, few studies in the discussion of gender and religion or culture include these various other dimensions related to structural inequality, in particular race. Acknowledging and exploring race and class in such an examination of European Muslim youth can fill gaps and hold knowledge production more accountable.

First of all, the power differentials and structural inequalities inherent to a post-colonial Europe marked by racial inequality can provide novel insights. For example, Eneverri's qualitative study carried out from 2010 to 2013 in Madrid signals how among

second generation or migrant origin youth in Madrid (Dominican, Ecuadorian and Moroccan origin, with the latter generally presumed by the literature as Muslim-identifying), she did not observe the separation of gender cited by studies from the United Kingdom and France, due to the economic necessity of seeking work (Eseverri Mayer 2017). Such a contribution provides a new and counter-perspective, making a distinction between the need to work versus the desire to work, an important and little explored qualification when examining gender (in)equality among European Muslim youth. This demonstrates the importance of considering inclusions and exclusions of race and class to better understand how multiple dimensions of power and structural dynamics affect gender equal norms and practices (or their investigation).

Secondly, the invisibility of race in this discussion can reflect a disconnect between lived experiences of this population under study, limiting the purported “examination” of the same. Race, or the intersection of race, religion and citizenship, is embedded in securitization and migration public and political discourse, and hierarchies of power in this regard are clearly in operation. Young Muslim Europeans are persistently the target of veiled or overt racist statements that paint them as a public threat to European values. While the literature addresses Muslims’ access to societal participation or rights such as religious freedom or personal expression, it often limits the conversation to the institutional and policy reform or intervention that could or should improve access. Investigation must further address the psychosocial effects, compounded disadvantage and wider societal repercussions such stereotyping engenders (Moghissi and Ghorashi 2010).

For example, in the case of gender, inquiries as to the use of the Islamic veil record personal experiences of discrimination experienced by young Muslim women in the exploration of this group’s relationship with autonomy and feminism on the one hand, or institutional rights to individual expression on the other (Fokas and Richardson 2017; Halrynjo and Jonker 2016). Meanwhile, in Spain and the Netherlands, at least, there has been little work comprehensively exploring employment policies and practices within the private sector, outside of any claims regarding the legal system,⁷ in this way, discussion of gender balance and roles exclusively examines young Muslim women, overlooking other actors (beyond the state) contributing to layered inequalities or racism.

These scholarly discussions of European Muslim youth at an intersection with gender equality, or as framed in terms of gender inequality, rest on predominant knowledge regimes, or are conducted through normative, implicitly racialized approaches. Ultimately, many research questions are not neutral, because they begin with a subjective answer. Muslim youth are not asked what they perceive gender equality to mean, but are instead met with inquisitions into their practice, and judged by how they measure compared to a supposedly fixed and non-normative gender ideology paradigm. To what extent such gender equal beliefs and practices exist, especially in these European countries of study, undergoes less scrutiny; moreover, a full conversation as to the context of societal gender constructs is sometimes entirely absent. The beliefs and practices surrounding gender equality among the general, “mainstream” youth population perhaps do not go unquestioned, but certainly are significantly less questioned. This demonstrates how the repeated interrogation as to specifically European Muslim youth’s relationship with gender equality elicits scrutiny and deconstruction.

5. Conclusions: Deconstructing Hegemony and Understanding What the Unmasked Reveals

In sum, the study of European Muslim youth is notably linked to gender (in)equality and often articulated in terms of the veil and outward manifestations of religiosity as visible and identifiable markers of difference. Meanwhile, dimensions of race and class remain present, but frequently evaded, with colonial pasts merely offered a nod. In short, these themes are analysed almost in response to an allegation of “otherness,” in lieu

⁷ (Planet Contreras 2018). Discussion with Colleen Boland. 15 March 2019. Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona.

of a more neutral inquiry. Especially given the interdependent research policy nexus, those engaging in knowledge production are tasked with accountability, as demonstrated by the exclusion created in both academic narratives and public or policy discourses surrounding European Muslim youth. While critical inquiry is always emphasized, it seems exceptionally necessary and neglected in this case.

As such, firstly, how can we incorporate voices and perspectives outside of the hegemonic paradigms, particularly in the academic setting? In her essay on minorities in Dutch academia, Essed suggests financial interventions related to diversity, evening courses and language politics that are open to difference (Essed 1999). Indeed, attention to structural inequalities and room for agency could facilitate a more robust knowledge production. In fact, admittedly, even while this work criticizes the current framing of European Muslim youth within gender discourse, it still perpetuates predominant tendencies to prioritize the subject of Islam and gender in research, when perhaps other more useful, divergent and objective inquiries fall by the wayside. In this sense, simply challenging dominant knowledge regimes and policy concerns falls short of a truly reflexive project.

This leads to the second step in pursuing a more critical inquiry: understanding why these hegemonic regimes remain entrenched, apart from the more obvious dynamics of self-reconstituting power structures and relations. In particular, what is not said is evocative of how contemporary study of these debates is directed, and offers a starting point from which to critically re-evaluate the current predominant course of study. What does the construction of multiple difference through the lens of solely religious difference reveal about dominant European societal discourse and academic inquiry? Why the discomfort with articulating and problematizing race, and how can this be rectified? How can attitudes toward gender equality be studied in conjunction with real behaviours, setting aside the notion that European liberal societies or thought exclusively provide the paradigmatic example of gender equality? Ultimately, remaining open to a more nuanced debate that provides due consideration to all dimensions of power relations, including race and class in addition to religion and gender, can improve the integrity of systems of thought and knowledge production that discernibly impact European Muslim youth.

Funding: This research was funded by the ITFLOWS project of the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 882986. The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Adlbi Sibai, Salam. 2010. 'Sometimes I Am Spanish and Sometimes Not': A Study of the Identity and Integration of Spanish Muslim Women. *Research in Comparative and International Education* 5: 185–204. [CrossRef]
- Alba, Richard. 2005. Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28. [CrossRef]
- Alcalde, Rosa, Cristina García, Raquel Moreno, and Marta Ramírez. 2002. Las Mujeres Marroquíes En Cataluña: Entre La Transgresión y El Cambio. *Revista Catalana de Sociologia*. [CrossRef]
- Andalusí, Observatorio. 2019. *Estudio Demográfico de la Población Musulmana*. Madrid: UCIDE, Available online: <http://observatorio.hispanomuslim.es/estademograf.pdf> (accessed on 30 March 2021).
- Aparicio, Rosa, and Andrés Tornos. 2006. *Hijos de Inmigrantes Que Se Hacen Adultos: Marroquíes, Dominicanos, Peruanos*. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración.
- Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Bedmar, Vicente Llorent, and Teresa Terrón Caro. 2013. La Inmigración Marroquí En España: Género y Educación. *Estudios Sobre Educación* 24: 37–69.
- Bracke, Sarah. 2011. Subjects of debate: Secular and sexual exceptionalism, and Muslim women in the Netherlands. *Feminist Review* 98: 28–46. [CrossRef]
- Bracke, Sarah. 2014. The Unbearable Lightness of 'Gender and Diversity'. *DiGeSt. Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies* 1. [CrossRef]

- Brouwer, Jelmer, Maartje van der Woude, and Joanne van der Leun. 2017. Framing Migration and the Process of Crimmigration: A Systematic Analysis of the Media Representation of Unauthorized Immigrants in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Criminology* 14. [CrossRef]
- Carrera, Sergio, and Joanna Parkin. 2012. The Place of Religion in European Union Law and Policy: Competing Approaches and Actors Inside the European Commission. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. [CrossRef]
- Casanova, José. 2006. Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration. *Religion in an Expanding Europe*. [CrossRef]
- Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas. 2018. Barómetro de Febrero 2018. Estudio 3205. Madrid. Available online: http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/3200_3219/3205/es3205mar.pdf (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- Cesari, Jocelyne. 2002. Islam in France: The Shaping of a Religious Minority. In *Muslims in the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [CrossRef]
- Cesari, Jocelyne. 2013. *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies*. Culture and Religion in International Relations. Berlin: Springer.
- Cho, Sumi, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall. 2013. Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38. [CrossRef]
- Corpas Aguirre, María A. 2010. *Las Comunidades Islámicas en la España Actual (1960–2008) Génesis e Institucionalización de una Minoría de Referencia*. Madrid: UNED.
- Cuperus, René. 2021. Dutch Elections: The Triumph of Two Liberalisms. *International Politics and Society*. Available online: <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/future-of-social-democracy/dutch-elections-the-triumph-of-two-liberalisms-5058/> (accessed on 30 March 2021).
- de Bruijn, Ymke, Chantal Amoureux, Rosanneke A. G. Emmen, and Judi Mesman. 2020. Interethnic Prejudice Against Muslims Among White Dutch Children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 51. [CrossRef]
- de Koning, Martijn, and Thijl Sunier. 2020. Page after Page I Thought, That's the Way It Is. *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 1: 1–28. [CrossRef]
- de Lange, Sarah L., and Liza M. Mügge. 2015. Gender and Right-Wing Populism in the Low Countries: Ideological Variations across Parties and Time. *Patterns of Prejudice* 49. [CrossRef]
- Díaz López, Mónica, and Elisa Lillo López. 2012. *Los Hijos de La Inmigración Magrebí En San Cristóbal de Los Ángeles*. Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid.
- Diehl, Claudia, Matthias Koenig, and Kerstin Ruckdeschel. 2009. Religiosity and Gender Equality: Comparing Natives and Muslim Migrants in Germany. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32. [CrossRef]
- El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2011. *European Others Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe (Difference Incorporated)* by Fatima El-Tayeb (z-Lib.Org). Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Eseverri Mayer, Cecilia. 2017. A Spanish Ghetto? The Effect of Intermediary Structures on the Integration of Second Generation Immigrants. *Migraciones Internacionales* 9. [CrossRef]
- Essed, Philomena. 1999. Ethnicity and Diversity in Dutch Academia. *Social Identities* 5. [CrossRef]
- Essed, Philomena, and Sandra Trienekens. 2008. 'Who Wants to Feel White?' Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31. [CrossRef]
- Fadil, Nadia. 2014. Islam and Feminism: A Vexed Relationship? Thinking Through the 'Muslim Question' and Its Epistemological Conundrums. *DiGeSt. Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies* 1. [CrossRef]
- Ferrari, Silvio, and Sabrina Pastorelli. 2016. *Religion in Public Spaces: A European Perspective*. London: Routledge. [CrossRef]
- Fessenden, Tracy, and Linell E. Cady, eds. 2013. *Religion, the Secular and the Politics of Sexual Difference*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fokas, Effie, and James T. Richardson. 2017. The European Court of Human Rights and Minority Religions: Messages Generated and Messages Received. *Religion, State and Society* 45. [CrossRef]
- Foner, Nancy, and Richard Alba. 2008. Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion? *International Migration Review* 42. [CrossRef]
- Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fuchs, Martin, and Jörg Rüpke. 2015. Religious Individualisation in Historical Perspective. *Religion* 45. [CrossRef]
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1992. Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *Cultural Anthropology* 7: 6–23. [CrossRef]
- Halrynjo, Sigtona, and Merel Jonker. 2016. Naming and Framing of Intersectionality in Hijab Cases—Does It Matter? An Analysis of Discrimination Cases in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. *Gender, Work & Organization* 23. [CrossRef]
- Jones, Stephen H. 2020. *Islam and the Liberal State: National Identity and the Future of Muslim Britain*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Kashyap, Ridhi, and Valerie A. Lewis. 2013. British Muslim Youth and Religious Fundamentalism: A Quantitative Investigation. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36. [CrossRef]
- Katzenstein, Peter J. 2006. Multiple Modernities as Limits to Secular Europeanization? *Religion in an Expanding Europe* 1–33. [CrossRef]
- Kešić, Josip, and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 2019. The Nation under Threat: Secularist, Racial and Populist Nativism in the Netherlands. *Patterns of Prejudice* 53. [CrossRef]
- Koenig, Matthias. 2007. Europeanising the Governance of Religious Diversity: An Institutional Account of Muslim Struggles for Public Recognition. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33. [CrossRef]

- Koopmans, Ruud. 2015. Religious Fundamentalism and Hostility against Out-Groups: A Comparison of Muslims and Christians in Western Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Korteweg, Anna, and Gökçe Yurdakul. 2009. Islam, Gender, and Immigrant Integration: Boundary Drawing in Discourses on Honour Killing in the Netherlands and Germany. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lentin, Alana. 2014. Post-Race, Post Politics: The Paradoxical Rise of Culture after Multiculturalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Leurs, Koen, Eva Midden, and Sandra Ponzanesi. 2019. Digital Multiculturalism in the Netherlands: Religious, Ethnic and Gender Positioning by Moroccan-Dutch Youth. *Religion and Gender* 2. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lombardo, Emanuela, Petra Meier, and Mieke Verloo. 2017. Policymaking from a Gender+ Equality Perspective. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 38. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- López García, Bernabé, and Mohamed Berriane. 2006. Atlas 2004 de La Inmigración Marroquí En España. In *Taller de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos*. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2010. Can secularism be other-wise? In *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*. Edited by Warner Michael, Jonathan Van Antwerpen and Craig Calhoun. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2015. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Maliepaard, Mieke, and Richard Alba. 2016. Cultural Integration in the Muslim Second Generation in the Netherlands: The Case of Gender Ideology. *International Migration Review* 50. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mendoza Carmona, Blanca Edurne. 2017. *187751Historias y Trayectorias de Éxito Académico: Jóvenes Musulmanas de Origen Marroquí En La Educación Superior de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.
- Moghissi, Haideh, and Halleh Ghorashi. 2010. *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*. *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*. Farnham: Ashgate. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Moors, Annelies. 2009. The Dutch and the Face-Veil: The Politics of Discomfort. *Social Anthropology* 17. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nexon, Daniel. 2006. Religion, European Identity, and Political Contention in Historical Perspective. *Religion in an Expanding Europe* 256. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nielsen, Jørgen S. 1997. Muslims in Europe: History Revisited or a Way Forward? *International Journal of Phytoremediation* 8: 135–43. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2011. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nyhagen, Line. 2019. Contestations of Feminism, Secularism and Religion in the West: The Discursive Othering of Religious and Secular Women. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 32. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nyhagen, Line, and Beatrice Halsaa. 2016. Christian and Muslim Women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom Talk about Faith, Citizenship, Gender and Feminism. In *Religion, Gender and Citizenship: Women of Faith, Gender Equality and Feminism*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan.
- OECD. 2019. *Part-Time and Partly Equal: Gender and Work in the Netherlands*. Paris: OECD. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Parekh, Bhikhu. 2006. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Planet Contreras, Ana I. 2018. *Observing Islam in Spain: Contemporary Politics and Social Dynamics*. Leiden: Brill.
- Portes, Alejandro, Rosa Aparicio, and William Haller. 2016. *Spanish Legacies: The Coming of Age of the Second Generation*. Oakland: University of California Press. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Prins, Jacomijne, Francesca Polletta, Jacquelin van Stekelenburg, and Bert Klandermans. 2015. Exploring Variation in the Moroccan-Dutch Collective Narrative: An Intersectional Approach. *Political Psychology* 36. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ramírez, Ángeles. 1998. Islam, género y migraciones. Mujeres marroquíes en España. Madrid: AECID.
- Rath, Jan, Astrid Meyer, and Thijl Sunier. 1997. The Establishment of Islamic Institutions in a De-Pillarizing Society. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 88. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Relaño Pastor, Eugenia. 2004. Los Continuos Cambios de La Política de Inmigración En España. *Migraciones Internacionales* 2. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ribberink, Egbert, Peter Achterberg, and Dick Houtman. 2017. Secular Tolerance? Anti-Muslim Sentiment in Western Europe. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Roggeband, Conny, and Mieke Verloo. 2007. Dutch Women Are Liberated, Migrant Women Are a Problem: The Evolution of Policy Frames on Gender and Migration in the Netherlands, 1995–2005. *Social Policy and Administration* 41. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Saharso, Sawitri. 2019. Who Needs Integration? Debating a Central, yet Increasingly Contested Concept in Migration Studies. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Scheible, Jana A., and Fenella Fleischmann. 2013. Gendering Islamic Religiosity in the Second Generation: Gender Differences in Religious Practices and the Association with Gender Ideology among Moroccan- and Turkish-Belgian Muslims. *Gender and Society* 27. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Taramundi, Dolores Morondo. 2015. Between Islamophobia and Post-Feminist Agency: Intersectional Trouble in the European Face-Veil Bans. *Feminist Review* 110. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Taylor, Charles. 2011. Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism. In *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*. Edited by Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 34–59.

- Téllez Delgado, Virtudes. 2014. La Sospecha y El Cuestionamiento de Los Vínculos Transnacionales y Globales En La Identificación Civil de Musulmanes Españoles Jóvenes En Madrid. *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterraneos* 16: 1–17.
- Téllez Delgado, Virtudes, and Ángeles Ramírez Fernández. 2018. La Antropología de Los Contextos Musulmanes Desde España: Inmigración, Islamización e Islamofobia. *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* 73. [CrossRef]
- United Nations. 2001. Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality. In *OSAGI (Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women)*. Rome: United Nations. Available online: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet1.pdf> (accessed on 31 March 2021).
- Valluvan, Sivamohan. 2016. What Is 'Post-Race' and What Does It Reveal about Contemporary Racisms? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39. [CrossRef]
- van de Vijver, Fons J. R. 2007. Cultural and Gender Differences in Gender-Role Beliefs, Sharing Household Task and Child-Care Responsibilities, and Well-Being Among Immigrants and Majority Members in The Netherlands. *Sex Roles* 57. [CrossRef]
- van den Bogert, Kathrine. 2018. Religious Superdiversity and Intersectionality on the Field. *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies* 21. [CrossRef]
- Vattimo, Gianni, and Rene Girard. 2010. *Christianity, Truth, and Weakening Faith. A Dialogue*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Verloo, Mieke, and Connie Roggeband. 1996. Gender impact assessment: The development of a new instrument in the netherlands. *Impact Assessment* 14. [CrossRef]
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-Diversity and Its Implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30. [CrossRef]
- Vieten, Ulrike M. 2016. Far Right Populism and Women: The Normalisation of Gendered Anti-Muslim Racism and Gendered Culturalism in the Netherlands. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37. [CrossRef]
- Woodhead, Linda. 2013. Liberal Religion and Illiberal Secularism. *Religion in a Liberal State* 93–116. [CrossRef]



Article

Racialization and Aporophobia: Intersecting Discriminations in the Experiences of Non-Western Migrants and Spanish Roma

Zenía Hellgren * and Lorenzo Gabrielli *

GRITIM-UPF, Department of Political and Social Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, 08005 Barcelona, Spain

* Correspondence: zenia.hellgren@upf.edu (Z.H.); lorenzo.gabrielli@upf.edu (L.G.)

Abstract: In this article, we address a gap in the scholarship on (super)diversity, discrimination and racism by placing the experiences of non-western migrants and Roma people in the same conceptual framework of stigmatization based on racialization and aporophobia. Including a (formally non-recognized) national minority, the Spanish Roma, in such an analysis implies moving from a framework of superdiversity applied to immigrants to a broader one, which also applies the notion of superdiversity to the racialized citizens of a country, shifting the focus from inner-group features to exogenous othering processes by the mainstream society. We aim to also contribute to the literature on the race–class binary with our empirically grounded analysis of how racialization and aporophobia intersect in the negative stereotyping of people who are cast as outsiders based on both their race/ethnicity and (assumed) socio-economic status. Data from several different research projects on migrant and Roma inclusion/exclusion in Spain were used for the analysis, which focuses on the intersections between race and class in the narratives on exclusion and discrimination by 185 migrant and Roma men and women that were interviewed between 2004 and 2021. The analysis shows that our Roma and migrant respondents perceive forms of discrimination based on racialization and aporophobia that are similar in several ways. In turn, the “double stigmatization” experienced by many of our respondents reinforces their actual precariousness, which may be understood both as a cause and consequence of this stigmatization. We found that these experiences were salient in the narratives of both non-western migrant and Roma respondents who find themselves part of a “racialized underclass” and struggle with finding ways to exit the vicious circle of devalued identities and material deprivation.

Keywords: racialization; aporophobia; class; discrimination; immigration; Roma

Citation: Hellgren, Zenia, and Lorenzo Gabrielli. 2021. Racialization and Aporophobia: Intersecting Discriminations in the Experiences of Non-Western Migrants and Spanish Roma. *Social Sciences* 10: 163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10050163>

Academic Editor: Virginie Guiraudon

Received: 8 March 2021

Accepted: 27 April 2021

Published: 6 May 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

After having studied different forms of inclusion/exclusion and perceived discrimination among migrants in Catalonia/Spain for nearly two decades, in recent years, we expanded our focus to also include the native Roma population¹. We found striking similarities between the Roma and the non-western migrant respondents in terms of both experiences of ethno-racially based forms of rejection, and of mistreatment based on being, or being assumed to be, poor. These narratives constitute the empirical basis for the analysis on intersecting discriminations that we will develop in this article, conceptualized as *racialization* and *aporophobia* (i.e., rejection of the poor; see Cortina Orts 2017).

The marginalization of the migrant population in a country is often considered, both by scholars and politicians, to be associated with the fact that they are newcomers, because of their role as exploitable workers, or because of cultural differences. From this perspective, immigrant disadvantage is largely expected to diminish over time and across the generations (e.g., Haller et al. 2011; Portes and Zhou 1993; Hadj-Abdou 2019). As Zick et al. (2008) state, discrimination may explain why if this improvement does not take place. However, though it is widely known that the Roma people have suffered marginalization and racism for centuries, and still often are otherized in harmful ways despite

being native citizens of the countries where they live, in Spain as elsewhere (McGarry 2017; Fejzula 2019; Ringold et al. 2005), research on the Roma has generally been analytically separated from research on migrants.

In this article, we aim to advance the analysis of discrimination and disadvantage in “superdiverse” (Vertovec 2007) societies by placing the Spanish Roma people and non-western migrants in the same conceptual framework of stigmatization based on racialization and aporophobia. While by no means neglecting the specificities of different discriminations related to, for instance, prejudices about a certain ethnic group, culture, religion or origin, for the analytical purposes of this article we will focus on the similarities between experiences of exclusion and rejection that are related to the condition of being (or being assumed to be) poor and racialized. Including Roma people in the analysis implies moving from a framework of superdiversity applied to immigrants (Vertovec 2007) to a broader one, which also applies the notion of superdiversity to the racialized citizens of a country. This will also allow us to switch from a notion of superdiversity that mainly addresses inner-group features—such as nationality and ethno-linguistic characteristics—to a focus on exogenous othering processes resulting in the creation of “diversity”.

We argue that in order to conceptualize the exclusion and discrimination that Roma people and non-western migrants are subject to, an intersectional approach taking into account the dimensions of race/ethnicity and class is necessary². We believe that there is a class-related dimension of racialization that cannot be left out of any serious discussion on discrimination (Hellgren 2019). Yet, we also argue that the stigmatization of migrants and Roma people cannot be reduced to mere “aporophobia”, as Cortina Orts (2017) claimed in her popular essay on this topic. Several studies highlight the political and economic dynamics of marginalization by the capitalist system. Bhattacharyya (2018, p. 102), for instance, explains that it is possible to analyze racial capitalism by looking at how “economic exploitation and racist othering reinforce and sometimes amplify each other”. Waquant (2009), in addition, underlines that an increasing social insecurity is intertwined with the evolution of criminal justice that determines a punishing of the poor; we will incorporate the criminalization of Roma and migrants as a component of the intersection between racialization and aporophobia in our analysis.

Our aim is to provide an empirically grounded contribution to the analytical framework of race and class developed by Balibar and Wallerstein (1991), in light of new conceptual developments in the field of racialization and othering processes, as well as the treatment of the poor in a late capitalist society marked by social inequalities that were seriously aggravated by the Great Recession (Hellgren and Serrano 2019; Mari-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015; Medina Moral et al. 2010), and currently are further intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic (FRA 2020a, 2020b; GRITIM-UPF 2020; Fakali 2020). We rely on extensive qualitative data material on the self-perceived discrimination of migrants and Roma people in Spain, collected from several of our research projects³. Here, we will use these data in order to examine the race- and class-related dimensions of discrimination, both individually and in intersection. By applying this perspective, our analysis sheds light on the racial dimension of perceived exclusion and discrimination, as well as its intersection with the class stigma.

In the following parts of this article, we will first discuss the historical racialization of Roma people in Spain and how it contributed to create structures of inequality that still continue to define the life conditions of the Roma, before turning our lens to the newer arrivals of racialized people through migration. In this section, we will also situate our work in relation to contemporary research on discrimination against migrants and Roma people. Then, we will provide a theoretically grounded analysis of our key concepts, racialization and aporophobia, and their relevance for a renewed, fundamentally intersectional approach to the debate on race and class. In the empirical section, we will describe our ethnographic data material, and analyze this along the lines of racialization/aporophobia and their intersections.

2. Histories of Discrimination: Antigypsyism and Xenophobia in “Superdiverse” Spain

The Spanish history of racism goes back to the Middle Ages, including the expulsion of Jews and Moors from the country, the colonization of Latin America, the marginalization of the Roma population, and the scientific racism during the 19th and 20th centuries, which under the Franco dictatorship was inspired by contemporary European doctrines on “racial biology” (Van Dijk 2005, p. 70). In contemporary research on othering processes, there is also an increasing focus on borders: the high visibility of irregular crossings at several points of the Spanish borders—Ceuta, Melilla, the Gibraltar straight or more recently the Canary Islands—plays a key role in the demonization of migrants (Gabielli 2021; Carlotti in this Special Issue). Visual and textual narratives in media and in political discourses tend to overemphasize the weight of the flows of “non-whites”, defining them as an “invasion” or an “avalanche”, and framing them as a central security threat for the state, the welfare system, or the “national culture”, and thereby justifying the “obscene character of exclusion” (De Genova 2013, 2018). In this section, we will provide a contextual background to the exclusion and discrimination of Roma people and more recently arrived, non-western migrants in Spain.

To a great extent, the history of the Roma, or *gitanos*⁴, in Spain is also a history of persecution and exclusion (Motos Pérez 2009; Martín Sánchez 2018). The construction of Spanish Roma as a group of “others” occurred over time through different political, legal and social mechanisms. Some authors point out the primacy of the legal mechanisms to generate this othering/racialization of the Roma population (Motos Pérez 2009; Vázquez García 2009; Filigrana 2020). Since the late 15th century, Spanish laws specifically targeted the ways of life of the Roma people and the typologies of their economic activities (unpaid work, mainly livestock trade, or work as blacksmiths), and also their place of settlement, the use of their language, their cultural expressions, and their very identification as Roma (e.g., Filigrana 2020; Vázquez García 2009). During these five and a half centuries of legislation, several negative characteristics have been associated with Roma people: vagrants, loafers, cheats, evildoers, crooks, thieves, tricksters, child kidnappers, lazy, idle and criminal people (Motos Pérez 2009; Vázquez García 2009). It is not surprising to see the echoes of this labeling in contemporary stereotypes related to the Roma population in Spain. Moreover, the historical marginalization of the Roma generated economic disadvantage in very concrete terms (exclusion from most economic sectors, stigmatization of “gypsy professions”, forced inclusion in low-wage and degrading activities, also through forced labor sanctions), and a mutually reinforcing process in which racialization and class stigma became intimately intertwined. The last racist legislation targeting the Roma population in the country was withdrawn as the democratic constitution of Spain was approved in 1978 (Motos Pérez 2009). Still today, however, despite formally being recognized equal rights to any Spanish citizen, the Roma people suffer from negative prejudices and are overrepresented in situations of poverty and marginalization (Damonti and Arza Porras 2014; Filigrana 2020). Contemporary antigypsyism appears closely linked to aporophobia in social and political narratives (Filigrana 2020; Cortés Gómez and End 2019).

Spain does not recognize ethnic minority statuses, which by several activists has been highlighted as problematic since it results in the lack of data on ethnicity and ethnic discrimination. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to give an accurate account of the number of Roma people in the country—currently estimated to be about 2% of the population (FSG.org 2020)—or the discrimination they face (Agüero Fernández 2020). It is, however, well known that discrimination and social exclusion affect the Roma population severely. Roma children fail in Spanish schools to an alarming extent (Hellgren and Gabielli 2021; FSG.org 2020) and, as O’Hanlon (2016, p. 7) recently stated: “Roma students aren’t in the classrooms, and their history isn’t in textbooks: 500 years of Roma contributions to Spain fails to merit a single mention in school history books”. Therefore, apparently a vicious circle is continuously reinforced: Roma people are repeatedly mentioned in negative terms,

as in media articles of “clan fights” and welfare dependence, while non-Roma continue to reject Roma people as classmates, employees, or tenants.

The history of migration to Spain, in turn, is comparably recent in a European perspective. Stimulated by the fast economic growth after the Spanish entry into the European Union in 1986, non-western immigration started to increase in order to cover mainly low-paid, low-qualified positions in sectors such as agriculture, construction or domestic work, rejected by the Spaniards. The proportion of the Spanish population represented by immigrants increased from 0.9% in 1991 to 11% in 2020 (representing a small decrease since the peak of 12.20% in 2010 and 2011⁵). This migration from northern and sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia was largely irregular (residence permits were granted subsequently under certain conditions) (Izquierdo 2005; Moreno Fuentes and Callejo 2011; Moreno and Alòs 2015) and, it could be said, led to the gradual formation of a large “migrant precariat” (Standing 2014). Immigration in Spain became closely linked to precariousness (Moreno and Alòs 2015); an immigrant in people’s minds would typically be synonymous with a poor, exploitable worker from a non-western country (Hellgren 2019). Just as racialization and aporophobia intersect in the negative prejudices affecting the Roma people, these categories also shape the “immigrant stigma”.

The situation of non-western migrants in Spain is similar to that of the Roma people in several regards: immigrants are overrepresented in situations of social exclusion and lacking opportunities (Catalan Government’s Integration Report 2016; Mari-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015; Moreno and Alòs 2015), and immigrant children fail disproportionately in Spanish schools (though numbers are not as bleak as for the Roma) (Bayona and Domingo 2018). Additionally, though there is increasing recognition of ethnic pluralism, at least in Catalonia, in line with the interculturalist policy agenda (Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2010; Catalan Policy Document 2017, 2019), it is unclear to what extent discourses are translated into practice in terms of improved life conditions for migrants. Much of the research on the disadvantage of non-western migrants in Spain focuses on socio-economic inequality and the links between migration and precarious employment (e.g., ILO 2014; Porthé et al. 2010; Ramos 2020; Moreno and Alòs 2015). However, in recent years, several studies have also emphasized the problem with racism/discrimination, generally by focusing on racialized people’s own experiences and perceptions (e.g., CIS 2018; Bobowik et al. 2014; Hellgren 2019; Spanish Government’s Report 2020). Simultaneously, discrimination by the police and the criminalization of racialized groups are increasingly highlighted by several Spanish anti-racist actors (SOS Racisme 2020; Rights International Spain 2020). A recent report on stereotypes of Roma people in the Spanish legal system underlines the existence of a large unconscious bias in criminal justice systems that “leads to mistrust of the criminal justice system by Roma people, who define it as both racist and classist, as it discriminates according to race and socio-economic situation” (Rights International Spain 2020, p. 60). Considering the situation in the Barcelona area (where most of the fieldwork upon which this article is based was conducted), a recent report by the Barcelona City Council on discrimination underlines the systematic detention and police stops based on racial profiling, affecting racialized people from the migrant and Roma population (Barcelona City Council 2020, pp. 43–44). Discrimination and racist attitudes are also signaled in access to housing, in the media, and in relation to school segregation (SOS Racisme 2020; Barcelona City Council 2020). Moreover, the Barcelona City Council also stresses the fact that the low number of complaints received by their Office for Non-Discrimination is most likely explained by underreporting, which, in turn, may reflect a widespread lack of trust in the system rather than the absence of actual discrimination, particularly among Roma people (Barcelona City Council 2020). As one of our respondents put it, “if I report when I am discriminated against, it would just be like double discrimination, being humiliated again by the person I report to” (Roma woman, Barcelona, Interview 2020).

At present, the situation has apparently worsened. Both migrants and Roma people were among the groups most severely hit by the financial crisis in 2007–2008 (FSG.org

2013; ENAR Report 2013–2017; Marí-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015; Hellgren and Serrano 2019), accentuating the poverty that many of them already lived in. Then, the COVID-19 crisis struck against a country that never fully recovered after the financial collapse post-2008. The social and economic consequences are already devastating for people with scarce resources, including a large part of the migrant population (particularly individuals without residence permits) and many Roma people who are highly dependent on incomes from street vending and market sales (GRITIM-UPF 2020; FRA 2020a; Fakali 2020). In addition, there are indications that racism and discrimination are currently growing, a tendency that is intensified by the expansion of the anti-immigrant political party Vox (Spanish Government's Report 2020). As the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU underlines: "the pandemic is increasingly being used as a pretext to target minorities who already suffer racial discrimination and hate crimes, such as migrants, people of immigrant descent and Roma, particularly on social networks" (FRA 2020a, p. 1). Consistently, several reports by civil society organizations working on rights, discrimination and racism underline an alarming rise of racism and racial discrimination against both migrants and Roma people in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., African Descent/Rights International Spain 2020; Fakali 2020).

3. Intersecting Discriminations: Racialization and Aporophobia as Mutually Reinforcing Categories

In contemporary scholarship on racism and discrimination, the intersectional approach requested by Crenshaw (1991) is increasingly common (e.g., Seng 2012; Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2012), though there are different and sometimes contradictory currents in the migration and diversity literature. At present, there is an emerging focus on race and racialization, which has hitherto largely been absent from the European discourses (Small 1994; Dalal 2002; Leach 2002; Grosfoguel 2004; Silverstein 2005; Lentin 2008, 2011, 2015; Vincze 2014; McDowell 2016; Gans 2017; De Genova 2018; Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019; Johansson 2020). This "racial turn" has recently been fueled by the global Black Lives Matter movement. It links exclusion and disadvantage to the overt or hidden racism that affects many non-white people in European societies, as elsewhere in the world, and reflects the polarization in social research between this perspective on the one hand, and the defenders of the "post-racial society" on the other hand (Leach 2002; Waquant 2009; Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2012; Bhattacharyya 2018; Bhattacharyya et al. 2019; Warmington 2020). At least for some, indeed, to recognize the existence of racial hierarchies in European societies collides with the highly held ideal, or illusion, that there is equality of opportunities (e.g., Leach 2002; Silverstein 2005; Lentin 2008; Vincze 2014; Hellgren 2019). Moreover, in the broader context of research on racism and discrimination, antigypsyism is often approached by focusing on the specificity of the kinds of racism and exclusion that the Roma are exposed to (e.g., Cortés Gómez and End 2019; O'Hanlon 2016). Without questioning the purposiveness of such an approach, both at the analytical and claims-making levels, in this article we do instead intentionally focus on the similarities between the stigmatization of Roma people and of migrants. Research on poverty and social class, in turn, is a classical field in the social sciences. It seems to have experienced a kind of renaissance in recent years, not the least in the wake of the enormous attention to Standing's work on the "new underclass", the precariat (Standing 2014), and the impoverishment of large segments of people across the western world since the Great Recession (Marí-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015; Hellgren and Serrano 2019). By this article, we wish to contribute to a more explicit focus on the specific situation that the racialized members of this precariat face.

We situate our work in the intersection between the fields of race and class, bringing together two frameworks that have not only been analytically separated, but often placed in direct opposition to each other (Bhattacharyya et al. 2019; Sayyid 2017; Hollinger 2011). Marxist scholars have, for instance, accused defenders of Critical Race Theory and other scholars focusing on race/racialization for downplaying the recognition of class inequalities (Warmington 2020). In this theoretical section, we will further define how we use the concepts of racialization and aporophobia, and discuss the relationship between

them. Indeed, the debate on the intersections between race and class is not a new one (see, for instance, the seminal work by [Balibar and Wallerstein 1991](#)). However, in using the concepts racialization and aporophobia (meaning, as we apply it: rejection or stigmatization of the poor) rather than possible alternatives such as simply talking of “race/ethnicity”, “poverty”, or “social class”, we intend to place emphasis on how people are categorized and assigned socially constructed categories (being racialized, or labeled as “undeserving poor”) rather than what they objectively “are”, which is a precondition for discrimination to occur and not only disadvantage. Thus, the labeling itself and its consequences are what primarily interest us.

First, we understand racialization as the differentiation between people based on “racial” characteristics, most typically skin color, but also, for instance, appearance, clothes or other items that contribute to a person being identified as a member of a certain ethnic, cultural or religious minority that is framed as “different” (often with negative connotations) in relation to the (white, western) majority society ([Gans 2017](#); [Burgett and Hendler 2014](#); [Dalal 2002](#)). [Omi and Winant \(\[1986\] 2015](#), p. 111) in turn define racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group”. Racialization then becomes a way to understand racial meanings both at the micro and macro level. Following [Small \(1994](#), p. 30), “race relations are linked with economic, employment, politics and demography issues, as well as nationality, language and religion”. This author points out two main axes of a racialization theory, involving power and social stratification. Firstly, he highlights the differential power relations among those defining race and those who are defined. Secondly, he stresses the need to look at the intersection of racialized relations at the economic, political and social levels ([Small 1994](#)).

How such differentiations are made has tangible consequences for the treatment and opportunities of the affected individuals. There are numerous studies confirming the discrimination that immigrants and racialized minorities suffer in European societies, and the severe consequences it has for them in terms of damaged material and psychological wellbeing (e.g., [Zick et al. 2008](#); [Crul and Schneider 2009](#); [Safi 2010](#); [Bobowik et al. 2014](#); [ENAR Report 2013–2017](#)). Moreover, though there are several reports on the serious increase in racist hate crimes, hate speech and other overtly aggressive manifestations of xenophobia across Europe ([Cortés Gómez and End 2019](#); [2020a](#); [FRA 2019a, 2019b](#)), racialization and the discrimination it results in are most often manifested as subtle forms of rejection that can hardly be proved. Not seldom, even the person affected by it cannot be fully certain that he or she has actually not been selected for a job position or a rental contract because of his or her ethno-racial features. However, when individual incidents of rejection are repeated, across the life course and among large numbers of people with similar characteristics, at some point these incidents turn into patterns of exclusion. In [Lamont and Molnár’s \(2002](#), p. 138) words, they become social boundaries; “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities”. Precisely the relationship between racialization and such unequal access to and distribution of resources is fundamental for our argumentation, in which we focus on racial categories and poverty as mutually reinforcing elements rather than debating “which one trumps the other” ([Balibar and Wallerstein 1991](#); [Cortina Orts 2017](#); [Warmington 2020](#)).

Second, the concept of aporophobia, conceived by the Spanish philosopher [Adela Cortina Orts \(2017\)](#) by merging the two ancient Greek words *áporos* (indigent, poor) and *fobia*, has not yet become “mainstreamed” or accepted at a general level in academia, though there has been at least one early, tentative attempt to start constructing a full theory of aporophobia (see [Comim et al. 2020](#)). Thus, this is still work in progress, to which we aim to contribute. We find that the term aporophobia is particularly useful, and significantly different from concepts such as “social class” or “poverty” in that it specifically addresses stigmatization/discrimination of the poor, not the poverty itself or the social exclusion it generates, as is the case for much of the literature on class ([Warmington 2020](#)). In addition, we understand the relationship between actual poverty and aporophobia

as complementary and mutually reinforcing: the first refers to actual deprivation, the other to the contempt that this (real or assumed) socio-economic vulnerability causes. As [Comim et al. \(2020\)](#) accurately point out, aporophobia is a concept that focuses on what others—that is, the established, non-poor classes⁶—think of poor people. It may thereby serve to problematize the stereotyping, and blaming, of the poor rather than focusing on the poor themselves as “the problem”. This represents a relational and potentially more controversial, conflict-focused approach to social exclusion, which we find particularly useful for our focus on discrimination.

Third, we shift focus from each of these concepts defined separately to the intersection between them. Starting by again turning to Cortina, at the core of her defense for the concept of aporophobia lies the belief that the rejection of poor people overshadows other forms of stigmatization, such as racism/xenophobia, and that racialized others therefore are only stigmatized in case they are also poor ([Cortina Orts 2017](#)). Similar to this line of argumentation, [Balibar and Wallerstein \(1991\)](#) argue that class is more relevant for who is labeled as an “immigrant” than race or ethnicity. Indeed, we recognize the importance of the wealth/poverty binary and the stigmatization of all poor people, racialized or not. However, where Balibar and Wallerstein, just as Cortina, make the case that a wealthy individual, though visibly different in racial terms, will be fully accepted because of his or her class or wealth, we shall instead argue, based on our empirical studies, that racialization as a mechanism of exclusion operates alone as well as in intersection with aporophobia. To use a concrete example, a black business man or football star may also be, and too often is, subject to racist insults, to institutional discrimination or other forms of mistreatment based on racialization. In practice, moreover, the boundaries between the concepts are often blurred and mutually reinforcing. [Gans \(2017\)](#), as well as a declaration of the UN’s International Organization for Migration ([IOM Website 2020](#)), provide useful examples of how discrimination based on racialization accentuates and perpetuates poverty, since racialized individuals are often denied access to the means that could improve their situation, such as quality employment. In such cases, to put it simply: it is rather a matter of people staying poor because they are racialized, than of being racialized because they are poor others.

We argue that racialization and aporophobia are two central categories of disadvantage and discrimination by themselves, and are also intimately intertwined in the specific forms of discrimination that affect non-white migrants and Roma people. Additionally, which is important, both racialization and aporophobia are concepts that focus on what the (white, non-poor) majority thinks of others and how they are constructed as fundamentally different, with stigmatizing consequences.

4. The Ethnographic Data Material

This article is based on extensive qualitative fieldwork about racialized people’s perceptions on discrimination and belonging, conducted within the frameworks of several research projects in Spain, mostly in the autonomous region of Catalonia with emphasis on the city of Barcelona, between 2004 and 2021 (see footnotes 1 and 3). The literal transcripts from altogether 185 interviews with migrants (both with regular and irregular legal status) from North and sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, Spanish-born descendants of immigrants, and Roma men and women were used. These different research projects all had their own principal foci, including the life conditions of undocumented migrants, migrant claims-making, precarious work, self-perceptions on integration, school inclusion, and discrimination. However, there were also important similarities between them, justifying their inclusion in the present analysis. In all the projects, an inductive approach was applied. Semi-structured or unstructured interviews were conducted, in which the respondents were encouraged to talk openly about their experiences of racism, discrimination, exclusion, and disadvantage. For all of the respondents that are included in this article, such experiences had a significant

influence on their sense of belonging and identification with society as a whole, as well as their wellbeing in general.

The transcripts had already been analyzed and coded with the data analysis software Dedoose (Los Angeles, CA, USA: SocioCultural Research Consultants) in relation to the research projects that they correspond to, and were now recoded for the purpose of this article. Specifically, we traced the experiences of being exposed to racism/ethnic discrimination and to stigmatization based on being, or being assumed to be, poor, applying the two main codes of “racialization” and “aporophobia”. For the racialization code, we found that experiences of othering and discrimination based on being labeled as “non-white” appeared as a determinant for the respondents’ life quality and sense of belonging throughout the interviews, despite their differences in terms of origin, migrant trajectories, socio-economic situations, different contexts, and at different times. For the aporophobia code, we found that there was a central difference between those respondents who lived in actual situations of poverty and precariousness, and those who were rather subject to classist prejudice and derogatory treatment for being assumed to be poor, marginalized, “problematic”, or even criminal, based on factors such physical appearance, neighborhood of residence, or race/ethnicity, thus revealing how intimately intertwined the concepts of racialization and aporophobia are in the experiences of these persons.

5. Migrant and Roma Experiences of Exclusion and Disadvantage

In this section, we will describe the results of the empirical analysis. We have already discussed how the class dimension often intersects with ethno-racial differentiation, and it may indeed be hard, if even possible, to distinguish between these grounds for discriminatory treatment, exclusion or disadvantage (Hellgren 2019). For the analytical purposes of this section, to the extent we considered this reasonable, we aimed to apply the conceptual distinction used during the coding between experiences of racialization, on the one hand, and of aporophobia, or class-related stigmatization, on the other, while also illustrating how numerous lived experiences of discrimination precisely reflect their intersection.

5.1. Self-Perceived Racialization among Roma People and Migrants

As stated above, it may be difficult for somebody belonging to several categories of discrimination⁷, for instance, a female migrant domestic worker from the Dominican Republic, to determine whether she is being discriminated against for being poor, for being a woman, or for being racialized, which is why an intersectional perspective is fundamental in discrimination research overall (e.g., Seng 2012; Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2012; Young 2009). In this article, we apply an intersectional approach by also analytically separating these concepts, in order to shed light on “what is what” and better understand their feedback.

Indeed, discrimination is often expressed as subtle forms of rejection, which sometimes makes it difficult even for the person affected by it to feel sure of what actually happened. Not being chosen for a job or a rental contract, or yet more subtle, constantly perceiving that public servants, hospital staff or the teacher at the children’s school act annoyed, disliking or derogatively, are common experiences among the racialized people we interviewed, but can hardly ever be contested due precisely to their subtleness.

In this section, we focus on the many subtle and overt experiences of racism and discrimination that are perceived as solely or primarily based on ethno-racial differentiation, regardless of the person’s socio-economic level. Most typically, this kind of discrimination is related to skin color, which is reflected through many of the interviews and is particularly tangible in the black respondents’ narratives.

“I have a high level of Spanish and Catalan [level C diplomas], and native English and French, and I took a course to become a flight attendant. At the end there was a test, those who approved were sent to an interview at a large airline. I was the only black person there but I didn’t think it mattered. But then . . . none of the others spoke foreign languages and I scored third on the test, but out of 13 people, 12 were hired, everyone except me. They told me outright that ‘at this airline we

are not used to working with colored people, you should move to London, or France, they are more used to immigration there'. I told him how unfair it was, I scored higher than most and speak more languages, and I'm the one who should have to move abroad to find work?" Male migrant from Cameroon, 2015.

Additionally, among people who are not black, but considered "darker than average" (or non-white), skin and hair color, or characteristic features recognized as indicators of a certain ethnic origin, are mentioned as common grounds for being treated as less, among, for instance, North African and Latin American migrants, and Roma people.

"Being as dark as I am, they either discriminate me for being gypsy or because they think I am a 'Moor' [moro], it doesn't really make a difference". Roma man, 2017.

"My daughter is born here, but they will always look at her and say, 'that's the Moor's daughter'. Because I know children of Moroccans, born here, speaking perfect Catalan, but they are always called the 'Moors'. And look at France, Holland, Germany ... they have 4 generations of immigrants but it's still the same. Nothing changes, we will always be immigrants for them, always". Female migrant from Morocco, 2015.

However, just as Silverstein (2005), we understand racialization as broader than limited to the most typical, visual markers of "race". Being racialized and discriminated against based on a visible difference that is valued negatively by the native majority society is also a common experience among migrants and Roma who could pass for white (Piper 1996). Such markers of difference may be, for instance, religious clothing and attributes, Roma women's way of dressing, which often attracts attention in Spain, or ways of speaking and acting that are otherized.

"I started wearing the hijab during my second year at the university, I was a more religious person then. I studied a lot about Islam and decided to use the headscarf. And at first I felt very happy, but then I started feeling bad about how people stared at me in the streets, and always having to explain to everyone why I wore the hijab, that I decided myself and was not oppressed ... after a year, I decided to take it off. It's only when I wear the hijab that people notice that I'm not from here". Spanish woman of Moroccan origin, 2014.

For many of the respondents, there is a clear link between being racialized and not having the same opportunities as other, whiter migrants or ethnic majority citizens. Some express a critical consciousness of such injustice, which they attribute to discrimination, though most of them rather take this situation for granted and doubt that it will change for the better.

"Very few Latin Americans or people from Black Africa, or Asia, have become included in politics, or in the security forces ... it is very difficult to find black or Latin politicians in the governments or city councils. This is a covered-up disintegration, we can say that ok, there are migrants here, they integrate, but as third-degree citizens. In other parts of Europe you can see black police officers or members of parliament, that is very rare here". Male migrant from Peru, 2015.

"One of my daughters is blond, blue-eyed, she looks German. If she doesn't dress up like a gypsy you know, with all the jewelry and stuff, nobody thinks that she is one. But my other daughter is so dark, she looks Pakistani ... it will be much more difficult for her, for sure". Roma woman, 2018.

Moreover, there is further one category of racialization that proved relevant for our findings, and that serves to illustrate how the boundaries between racialization and "apophobia" become blurred. People who are not visibly different from the native majority or from other "high-status groups" (such as Eastern European migrants resembling western expats in Spain) still had several experiences of racialization that were closely related to

prejudices about their (poor) countries of origin, and other people's ideas of themselves as being needy, desperate and in a socio-economically subordinate position, sometimes bringing about contempt. In these cases, it was the origin rather than general class-related markers that created rejection—just saying where one comes from would often be enough to receive a negative reaction.

5.2. Self-Perceptions on Aporophobia

In this section, we will illustrate some of the experiences of our respondents that are related to their perceptions on being subject to classist stigmatization, that is, aporophobia. In many cases, these experiences do not have to be different from those of poor or “underclass” white people from the ethnic majority population; it is when they intersect with the experiences of racialization as described above that disadvantage is further accentuated. It is important to note that though many people of migrant or Roma origin in Spain indeed live in situations of economic scarcity, or even, and in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis increasingly, acute precariousness, the “aporophobic stigmatization” that people in these categories are often subject to is not necessarily grounded in actual poverty. To this categorization, we therefore add the stigmatization of people perceived as “underclass”; for instance, people who dress and act according to suburban ghettoish aesthetics, which, in combination with being “dark”, non-white, easily generates a specific form of “low-life” label. The “ghetto underclass” label—in itself encompassing both racialization and aporophobia—is, in turn, closely related to the Roma and migrant respondents' frequent experiences of criminalization, such as being stopped and questioned by the police or security staff on a regular basis, based on how they look and where they live and/or move:

“When I travel by car, if we are 3 or 4 gypsies in the car, the police always stop us, always. They ask “where are you going, what are you doing?” And if I ask why they only stop us and let all the other cars just pass by, they say “man, 4 gypsies in a car, where are you going, how could we not stop you?” Roma man, 2021.

“The police always stopped me when I was younger, I mean, being Moroccan, and living in a shanty neighborhood . . . that made me want to prove them wrong, I wanted to become a police officer myself”. Spanish man of Moroccan origin, 2020.

“The security guard always walks up close behind me when I enter a supermarket, it is so humiliating and awkward. The other day one guard asked me to open my jacket, just like that, saying “I'm sure you're robbing, all you gypsy women come here to steal”. Roma woman, 2020.

The relationship between the concepts becomes yet more tangible when we compare the experiences of African-origin respondents with different socio-economic statuses. The first respondent quoted below is a black female migrant working as a waitress in Barcelona, while the second one is a young black woman of African descent who grew up in a comparably wealthy, Barcelona-based family, went to an international school and is fluent in several languages. She has largely perceived that her Africanity is treated as something exotic, sometimes stereotypical, but she has, in her own words, not felt very discriminated against in negative ways, and attributes this to her high social status. The quotes serve to illustrate how racialization strikes differently depending on whether it is combined with aporophobia or not:

“It's like you have to apologize for existing all the time. Everybody thinks that we are poor and will rob them. People here take a deep bow when they meet someone rich, they feel so small, but rich people are very scared. And at the same time they don't even think we have the right to look them in the eyes”. Female migrant from Cameroon, 2015.

“People always liked to touch my hair and so [. . .] But this [discrimination] is simply an economic question. If I were in a position in which I was forced to

become a prostitute and walk *Las Ramblas* at night, people would surely treat me differently". Spanish woman of Congolese origin, 2015.

The intersections between racialization and aporophobia (and, indeed, gender) are perhaps most explicitly expressed in the situations of many female migrant domestic workers in Spain, who represent a significant share of our sample⁸. In a context of financial crisis and tough competition also over the most precarious jobs, ethno-racial hierarchies are accentuated. Several of the migrant domestic worker respondents with the most explicit experiences of racialization and racism, many of whom are Latin American women from countries such as Bolivia, Honduras and Ecuador, with an appearance that is perceived as "indigenous", explain that they are constantly rejected or treated without respect based on the perception of them as poor, uncultured, "savage" and incompatible with "European manners". Again, racialization and aporophobia intersect in the negative stereotyping of certain nationalities and countries of origin.

"The lady I used to work for told me all kinds of things, that I didn't know how things should be done, that I couldn't speak properly, things about my country ... I wanted to say look, we have television there too, we live in houses, not small apartments like here, you are the ones who are poor". Female Bolivian migrant/domestic worker, 2014.

"To be honest it is very difficult for me to find a job. The families look at you, and according to their prototypes and preferences, they don't like someone like me. They tell me "cut your hair like this, style yourself like that". There is much everyday racism, and prejudice against my country, I have not felt very valued in Spain I must say". Female Bolivian migrant/domestic worker, 2013.

The interviews with workers in the domestic sector reflect that native workers are preferred over migrants if available, and that ethnic hierarchies operate by also stratifying among migrants, favoring those perceived as whiter and "more western" over the more racialized workers (Hellgren and Serrano 2019). However, as the next quote shows, the exploitation that affects workers who are completely dependent on their wages and whose bargaining power is extremely low may be "colourblind" and strike migrants and natives equally:

"I was working in a textile factory in Gavà [outside of Barcelona], the owners were Spanish but they refused to fix the papers for us. They locked us up inside the factories like the Chinese do, we could not exit between 8 in the morning and 7 pm, we only had a 15 minutes break during all that time. Lots of people worked there, Spaniards too at first, but they couldn't stand it. We were treated like garbage". Female Romanian migrant, 2014.

Nevertheless, in these cases, the origin usually places the migrant worker in a more vulnerable position with fewer exit options compared to poor natives.

The different narratives on discrimination and disadvantage that we shared in this section reflect different dimensions of how racialization and aporophobia, alone or in intersection, operate to otherize people, denying them the right to form part of the "mainstream citizenry", the collective "us". A common consequence of repeatedly being treated in ways as those described above is what several of the respondents define in terms of a normalization or interiorization of discrimination, so that those affected by it take for granted that they will continue to suffer from it, an experience that may even be passed on from one generation to the next:

"We know since we're children that as Roma we are always discriminated against. There has always been persecution. This is something that we transmit from parents to children. If I go somewhere to look for a job and I'm discriminated for being a gypsy ... oh. That is just what I expected, because it happened to my father, to my grandfather and to my great grandfather. We are used to it". Roma man, 2020.

Perhaps the narratives of those who constantly avoid places and situations where they, based on previous experiences, consider it likely to suffer discrimination are the ones that most explicitly make clear how stigmatization based on racialization and aporophobia harms social mobility and contributes to perpetuate exclusion and disadvantage through the reproduction of a differentiated citizenship.

6. Concluding Discussion

This article has intended to fill a gap in the literature on (super)diversity, discrimination and racism by including migrants and racialized citizens (the Roma) in the same conceptual framework, and adding the concept of aporophobia to the analysis of the stigmatization of racialized others. We have applied an intersectional approach in order to provide an empirically grounded contribution to develop the underexplored relations between racialization and aporophobia, complementary to the vast scholarship on race and class. This intersectional analysis shows that there is a class-related dimension of racialization that cannot be neglected in discrimination debates, and also that the stigmatization of migrants and racialized national minority groups, such as the Spanish Roma, cannot be reduced to mere “aporophobia”. Our ethnographic data lend support to our initial assumption that non-western migrants’ and Roma people’s experiences of racism, discrimination, exclusion, and disadvantage based on racialization and aporophobia are similar in several ways. We found that these experiences were salient in the narratives of both non-western migrant and Roma respondents who form part of a “racialized underclass”, which is reinforced by factors such as living in a marginalized housing area with a “ghetto label” (as has earlier been underlined for the Roma in the Italian case by [Claps and Vitale 2011](#); and in the French case by [Vacca et al. 2021](#)), and reversely, alleviated when there is the absence of poverty and “underclass markers”. Analyzing the narratives of middle class non-white respondents, however, also lent further support to our assumption that racialization also generates discrimination when it does not intersect with aporophobia. This is indeed hardly remarkable; it basically just suggests that “racism exists” as a category in itself ([Warmington 2020](#)). In turn, the “double stigmatization” that many of our respondents were subject to brings about a double disadvantage that is mutually reinforcing: real precariousness and prejudices related both to (assumed) ethno-racial identities and (assumed) poverty. In practical situations, this stigmatization often translates into derogative treatment related to both racialization (racist insults, rejection based on physical appearance and/or assumptions about cultural or religious traits, etc.) and aporophobia (insults related to assumed welfare dependence, assumed unwillingness to work, labels such as “low-level/problematic/ghetto people”, etc.).

Before concluding this discussion, we wish to say a few words about the relevance of applying a framework of superdiversity to our work. In his seminal theorization around the concept of superdiversity, [Vertovec](#) underlines that this new demographic reality is the result of a complex interplay of factors related to newcomers, including country of origin, ethnicity, languages, religious traditions, migration channels, legal status (the access to rights), migrants’ human capital, access to employment, locality, transnationalism, and responses by local authorities, service providers and local residents ([Vertovec 2007](#), p. 1049). Including both Roma people and non-western migrants in our analysis implies moving from a framework of superdiversity that mainly focuses on migrants to a broader one, including the racialized citizens of a country. This allows us to displace the focus of superdiversity from inner-group features to the exogenous othering processes. We consider our analysis as complementary to [Vertovec’s](#) understanding of superdiversity, in showing that racialization and othering processes may affect both newcomers and racialized national minority groups, following very similar dynamics and producing similar outcomes. Moreover, our analysis underlines that when these racialization processes pair up with aporophobia, reflecting either severe poverty and real marginalization or “just” the prejudice that racialized people are also poor, disadvantage is accentuated. In this sense, racialized citizens such as the Roma people indeed have more in common with non-western migrants than

with non-racialized members of the mainstream society—though it is important to bear in mind that class draws sharp lines that also significantly determine the life conditions and opportunities among white natives.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Z.H. and L.G.; methodology, Z.H.; software, Z.H. and L.G.; validation, Z.H. and L.G.; formal analysis, Z.H. and L.G.; investigation, Z.H. and L.G.; resources, Z.H. and L.G.; data curation, Z.H.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.H. and L.G.; writing—review and editing, Z.H. and L.G.; visualization, Z.H. and L.G.; supervision, Z.H.; project administration, Z.H. and L.G.; funding acquisition, Z.H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union under Grant Agreement number 881875, within the framework of the research-action project AGREP (Action program for effective reporting of anti-gypsyism and discrimination), with Zenia Hellgren as Principal Investigator (PI). The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Data Protection Officer of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, which has reviewed the material submitted to the Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects (CIREP-UPF) by Zenia Hellgren, Principal Investigator of the project Action program for effective reporting of antigypsyism and discrimination-AGREP-Application Nr. 0188 and 0144.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ We have directed two recent research-action projects on Roma inclusion and struggles against anti-gypsyism: AGREP (Action program for effective reporting of anti-gypsyism and discrimination), co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union under Grant Agreement number 881875; and VAKERIPEN (Roma inclusion in education: fostering constructive attitudes and good practices in the Barcelona area), co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union under Grant Agreement JUST/2015/RDIS/AG/DISC/9372. This article is partly based on data from both these projects. It should be noted that though more than half of the respondents are women, the gender dimension is not included in the analysis for the reason that it was not as salient as a category of self-perceived discrimination and exclusion in the interviews (which focused on the relationship between the (racialized) respondents and the ethnic majority society) as race and class.
- ² It should be noted that though more than half of the respondents are women, the gender dimension is not included in the analysis for the reason that it was not as salient as a category of self-perceived discrimination and exclusion in the interviews (which focused on the relationship between the (racialized) respondents and the ethnic majority society) as race and class.
- ³ Including, besides the two projects already mentioned in footnote 1, the following research projects involving one or both of the authors: REPCAT (The Role of the Ethnic Majority in Integration Processes: Attitudes and Practices towards Immigrants in Catalan Institutions). Funded by a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship under Grant Agreement: 747075—REPCAT—H2020-MSCA-IF-2016/H2020-MSCA-IF-2016. 2018–2020. PI: Zenia Hellgren; DIASPORA LINK: Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship as a Development Link between Home and Residence Countries. Funded by the European Commission, H2020 Marie Curie Actions RISE; IMMIGRANTS' PERCEPTIONS ON INTEGRATION IN TWO INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS, SWEDEN AND SPAIN. Funded by a postdoctoral grant from the research foundation ahlstromska.se/Stockholm University. PI: Zenia Hellgren; FAMILIES AND SOCIETIES. Funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme). WP9.8: Migration and Care (on the labor conditions and life situations of migrant domestic workers) in Madrid, Barcelona and Stockholm.
- ⁴ The Spanish or Catalan word for “gypsy” is widely used and accepted by Spanish Roma people and is also the term generally applied in, for instance, policy programs and other official documents about the Roma population

(e.g., [Pla Integral del Poble Gitano 2017–2020](#)); however, depending on how it is used, it can also have derogative connotations.

- 5 Own elaboration based on data of INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística), Main series of population data, Continuous register (Padron Municipal) and Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración (OPI), Main series.
- 6 Indeed, the dichotomy of “majority vs. minority” that is often used in diversity studies can also be applied to studies on the relations between poor and “non-poor”.
- 7 For instance, the European Union’s anti-discrimination directives apply an extensive list of such categories in declaring that discrimination on the grounds of “sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited” ([European Commission Key Note Speech 2020](#)).
- 8 The transcripts from 60 interviews with migrant domestic workers in Madrid and Barcelona, from the EU funded project Families and Societies (see footnote 3), were used for this article.

References

- African Descent/Rights International Spain. 2020. Crisis Sanitaria COVID-19. Racismo y Xenofobia Durante el Estado de Alarma en España. Available online: http://www.nadiesinfuturo.org/IMG/pdf/INF_Racismo_y_Xenofobia_Est_de_Alarma.pdf (accessed on 16 April 2021).
- Agüero Fernández, Silvia. 2020. Informe Sobre la Situación del Pueblo Gitano en España. Pretendemos Gitanizar el Mundo/Plataforma Ciudadana Rosa Cortés por la Memoria Gitana/Camelamos. Available online: https://arainfo.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Informe-situaci%C3%B3n-Pueblo-Gitano.Final_.pdf (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso.
- Barcelona City Council. 2020. Report: Informe de l’Observatori de les Discriminacions a Barcelona 2019. Available online: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/premsa/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INFORME_DISCRIMINACIO_2019_A4_CA-1.pdf (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Barcelona Interculturality Plan. 2010. Barcelona City Council. Available online: https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnacciointercultural/sites/default/files/documentos/web_bcn_angles.pdf (accessed on 16 April 2021).
- Bayona, Jordi, and Andreu Domingo. 2018. El fracaso escolar de los descendientes de la inmigración en Cataluña: Más que una asignatura pendiente. Working paper, Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, UAB, Barcelona. Available online: https://ced.uab.cat/PD/PerspectivesDemografiques_011_ESP.pdf (accessed on 3 March 2021).
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi. 2018. *Rethinking Racial Capitalism*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi, Satnam Virdee, and Aaron Winter. 2019. Revisiting histories of anti-racist thought and activism. *Identities* 27: 1–19. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Bobowik, Magdalena, Nekane Basabe, and Darío Páez. 2014. Heroes of Adjustment: Immigrants’ Stigma and Identity Management. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 41: 112–24. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Burgett, Bruce, and Glenn Hendler. 2014. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. New York: New York University Press.
- Catalan Government’s Integration Report. 2016. Available online: https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematic/05immigracio_refugi/dades_immigracio/informe_integracio/2015/EN_Informe-integracio-immigracio-2015.pdf (accessed on 25 November 2020).
- Catalan Policy Document. 2017. Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017–2020. Available online: http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/web/.content/01departament/08publicacions/ambits_tematic/immigracio/Plans_i_programes/06plainmigracio_cat_2017_2020/Pla_inmigracioue_CAT_OK.pdf (accessed on 12 March 2021).
- Catalan Policy Document. 2019. The Catalan Government’s Diversity Management Guide “Fer nova Ciutadania des del Món Local Propostes per a la Inclusió, la Interacció i la Diversitat”. Available online: https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/el_departament/publicacions/immigracio/publicacions_fora_de_col_leccio/Fer-nova-ciutadania/ (accessed on 12 March 2021).
- CIS (Spanish Center for Sociological Research). 2018. *Report: Evolución de la Discriminación en España*. Madrid: CIS.
- Claps, Enrico, and Tommaso Vitale. 2011. Not Always the Same Old Story: Spatial Segregation and Feelings of Dislike against Roma and Sinti in Large Cities and Medium-Size Towns in Italy. In *Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Romany Studies*. Budapest: Central European University Press, pp. 228–53.
- Comim, Flavio, Mihály Tamás Borsi, and Octasiano Valerio Mendoza. 2020. The Multi-dimensions of Aporophobia. MPRA Paper n. 103124. Available online: https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/103124/1/MPRA_paper_103124.pdf (accessed on 13 April 2021).
- Cortés Gómez, Ismael, and Markus End, eds. 2019. *Dimensions of Antigypsyism in Europe*. Brussels: ENAR.
- Cortina Orts, Adela. 2017. *Aporofobia, el Rechazo al Pobre. Un Desafío para la Sociedad Democrática*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–99. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Crul, Maurice, and Jens Schneider. 2009. The Second Generation in Europe: Education and the Transition to the Labour Market. Amsterdam: TIES. Available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.307408> (accessed on 1 December 2020).
- Dalal, Farhad. 2002. *Race, Colour and the Processes of Racialization*. Sussex: Brunner-Routledge.

- Damonti, Paola, and Javier Arza Porras. 2014. Exclusión en la Comunidad Gitana. Una Brecha Social que Persiste y se Agrava. Fundación Foessa, Documento de Trabajo 3.5. Available online: http://www.foessa2014.es/informe/uploaded/documentos_trabajo/15102014151523_8331.pdf (accessed on 8 February 2021).
- De Genova, Nicholas. 2013. Spectacles of migrant 'illegality': The scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36: 1180–98. [CrossRef]
- De Genova, Nicholas. 2018. The "migrant crisis" as racial crisis: Do Black Lives Matter in Europe? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41: 1765–82. [CrossRef]
- ENAR (European Network against Racism) Shadow Report. 2013–2017. Racism and Discrimination in Employment in Europe. Available online: https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport_2016x2017_long_final_lowres.pdf (accessed on 5 March 2021).
- European Commission Key Note Speech. 2020. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/black-lives-matter-europes-anti-racism-moment-european-policy-centre-keynote-address-16-july-2020_en (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Fakali (Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres Gitanas). 2020. Fakali, antigitanismo y Covid-19. Informe del Impacto del Antigitanismo en la Sociedad del Coronavirus. Available online: <https://fakali.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Informe-FAKALI-Antigitanismo-y-Covid-19.pdf> (accessed on 27 April 2021).
- Fajzula, Sebijan. 2019. The Anti-Roma Europe: Modern ways of disciplining the Roma body in urban spaces. *Revista Direito e Práxis* 10: 2097–16. [CrossRef]
- Filigrana, Pastora. 2020. *El pueblo Gitano Contra el Sistema-Mundo. Reflexiones desde una Militancia Feminista y Anticapitalista*. Madrid: Akal.
- FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency). 2019a. Being Black in the EU. Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Report EU-MIDIS II. Available online: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-being-black-in-the-eu-summary_en.pdf (accessed on 12 April 2021).
- FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency). 2019b. Fundamental Rights Report 2019. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union. Available online: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf (accessed on 12 April 2021).
- FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency). 2020a. *Coronavirus Pandemic in the EU—Impact on Roma and Travellers*. Bulletin #5, 1 March—30 June. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union.
- FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency). 2020b. *Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on Roma and Travellers Communities*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union.
- Fundación Secretariado Gitano. 2013. *El Impacto de la Crisis en la Comunidad Gitana. Informe Julio 2013*. Madrid: Fundación Secretariado Gitano.
- Fundación Secretariado Gitano. 2020. Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on the Roma Population. Report. April. Available online: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/05/37/EN_ENCUESTA_PARTICIPANTES_FINAL.pdf (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Gabrielli, Lorenzo. 2021. El espectáculo fronterizo en las representaciones fotográficas contemporáneas de la frontera de Melilla. Un sesgo de género. In *'Espectáculo de Frontera' y Contranarrativas Audiovisuales*. Edited by Amarela Varela Huertas and Mar Binimelis Adell. Bern: Peter Lang, forthcoming.
- Gans, Herbert J. 2017. Racialization and Racialization Research. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 341–52. [CrossRef]
- Gonzalez-Sobrinó, Bianca, and Devon R. Goss. 2019. Exploring the mechanisms of racialization beyond the black-white binary. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 505–10. [CrossRef]
- GRITIM-UPF. 2020. COVID-19's Impact on Migration and Migration Studies. Exploring Directions for a New Migration Research Agenda. GRITIM-UPF Policy Brief No. 9. Available online: <https://repositori.upf.edu/bitstream/handle/10230/44614/2020-GRITIM-UPFPolicyBrief9.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y> (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2004. Race and ethnicity or racialized ethnicities? Identities within global coloniality. *Ethnicities* 4: 315–36. [CrossRef]
- Hadji-Abdou, Leila. 2019. Immigrant integration: The governance of ethno-cultural differences. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7. [CrossRef]
- Haller, William, Portes Alejandro, and Scott M. Lynch. 2011. Dreams Fulfilled and Shattered: Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation. *Social Forces* 89. [CrossRef]
- Hellgren, Zenia, and Lorenzo Gabrielli. 2021. The Dual Expectations Gap. Divergent Perspectives on the Educational Aspirations of Spanish Roma Families. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 42. [CrossRef]
- Hellgren, Zenia, and Inma Serrano. 2019. Financial Crisis and Migrant Domestic Workers in Spain: Employment Opportunities and Conditions during the Great Recession. *International Migration Review* 54: 1209–29. [CrossRef]
- Hellgren, Zenia. 2019. Class, race—And place: Immigrants' self-perceptions on inclusion, belonging and opportunities in Stockholm and Barcelona. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42: 2084–101. [CrossRef]
- Hollinger, David. A. 2011. The concept of post-racial: How its easy dismissal obscures important questions. *Daedalus* 140: 174–82. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- International Labor Organization (ILO). 2014. A Precarious Position? The Labour Market Integration of New Immigrants in Spain. Report. Available online: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_313708.pdf (accessed on 12 March 2021).

- International Organization for Migration Website. 2020. Available online: <https://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en/blog/intersecting-discriminations-migrants-facing-racism?page=30> (accessed on 14 April 2021).
- Izquierdo, Antonio. 2005. La inmigración irregular en el cambio del milenio: Una panorámica a la luz de las regularizaciones y de los contingentes anuales de trabajadores extranjeros en España. In *Integraciones Diferenciadas: Migraciones en Cataluña, Galicia y Andalucía*. Edited by Carlota Solé y and Antonio Izquierdo. Barcelona: Anthropos, pp. 73–88.
- Johansson, Yilva. 2020. Black Lives Matter: Europe's Anti-Racism Moment European Policy Centre Keynote Address 2020. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/black-lives-matter-europes-anti-racism-moment-european-policy-centre-keynote-address-16-july-2020_en (accessed on 16 April 2021).
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 167–95. [CrossRef]
- Leach, Colin Wayne. 2002. Democracy's Dilemma: Explaining Racial Inequality in Egalitarian Societies. *Sociological Forum* 17: 681–96. [CrossRef]
- Lentin, Alana. 2008. Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory* 11: 487–503. [CrossRef]
- Lentin, Alana. 2011. *Racism and Ethnic Discrimination*. New York: Rosen Publishing.
- Lentin, Alana. 2015. What does race do? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38: 1401–6. [CrossRef]
- Marí-Klose, Pau, and Álvaro Martínez Pérez. 2015. Empobrecimiento en tiempos de crisis: Vulnerabilidad y (des)protección social en un contexto de adversidad. *Panorama Social* 22: 11–26.
- Martín Sánchez, David. 2018. *Historia del Pueblo Gitano en España*. Sevilla: Catarata.
- McDowell, Amy. 2016. This is for the Brown Kids! Racialization and the Formation of 'Muslim' Punk Rock. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3: 159–71. [CrossRef]
- McGarry, Aidan. 2017. *Romaphobia. The Last Acceptable form of Racism*. London: Zed Books.
- Medina Moral, Eva, Ainhoa Herrarte, and José Vicens Otero. 2010. Inmigración y desempleo en España: Impacto de la crisis económica. *Revista de Economía* 584: 37–48.
- Moreno, Sara, and Ramon Alòs. 2015. La inmigración en España: ¿Una integración con pies de barro? *Política y Sociedad* 53: 509–28. [CrossRef]
- Moreno Fuentes, Francisco Javier, and Maria Bruquetas Callejo. 2011. *Inmigración y Estado de Bienestar en España* [Immigration and the Welfare State in Spain]. Social Studies No. 31, Obra Social La Caixa. Barcelona: La Caixa.
- Motos Pérez, Isaac. 2009. Lo que no se olvida: 1499–1978. *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 25: 58–74.
- O'Hanlon, Christine. 2016. The European Struggle to Educate and Include Roma People: A Critique of Differences in Policy and Practice in Western and Eastern EU Countries. *Social Inclusion* 4: 1–10. [CrossRef]
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2015. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge. First published 1986.
- Piper, Adrian. 1996. *Out of Order, Out of Sight, Volume I: Selected Essays in Meta-Art 1968–1992*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Pla Integral del Poble Gitano. 2017–2020. The Catalan Government's Plan for Roma Integration. Available online: https://treballiafersocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits_tematicos/accio_comunitaria_i_voluntariat/accio_comunitaria/poble-gitano/pla-integral/2017-2020/ (accessed on 13 March 2021).
- Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530: 74–96. [CrossRef]
- Porthé, Victoria, Emily Ahonen, M. Luisa Vázquez, Catherine Pope, Andrés Alonso Agudelo, Ana M. García, Marcelo Amable, Fernando G. Benavides, and Joan Benach. 2010. Extending a model of precarious employment: A qualitative study of immigrant workers in Spain. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. [CrossRef]
- Ramos, Cristina. 2020. Searching for Stability: Onward Migration and Pathways of Precarious Incorporation in and Out of Spain. *International Migration*. [CrossRef]
- Rights International Spain. 2020. Roma Project. Fight against Unconscious Bias towards Roma People in the Criminal Justice System. Report, June. Available online: <http://www.rightsinternationalspain.org/uploads/publicacion/0ed57e0664ca283a0b89372cb0e9245a531975c6.pdf> (accessed on 18 March 2021).
- Ringold, Dena, Mitchell A. Orenstein, and Wilkens Erika. 2005. *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*. Washington, DC: World Bank, Available online: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/14869> (accessed on 18 April 2021).
- Safi, Mirna. 2010. Immigrants' Life Satisfaction in Europe: Between Assimilation and Discrimination. *European Sociological Review* 26: 159–176. [CrossRef]
- Sayyid, Salman. 2017. Post-racial paradoxes: Rethinking European racism and anti-racism. *Patterns of Prejudice* 51: 9–25. [CrossRef]
- Seng, Julia S. 2012. Marginalized identities, discrimination burden, and mental health: Empirical exploration of an interpersonal-level approach to modelling intersectionality. *Social Science & Medicine* 75: 2437–45.
- Silverstein, Paul A. 2005. Immigrant Racialization and the New Savage Slot: Race, Migration, and Immigration in the New Europe. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 363–84. [CrossRef]
- Small, Stephen. 1994. *Racialized Barriers: The Black Experience in the United States and England*. New York and London: Routledge.
- SOS Racisme. 2020. *Invisibles. L'estat del Racisme a Catalunya. Informe 2019*. Barcelona: Pol-len Ediciones.
- Spanish Government (Ministerio de Igualdad). 2020. Report: Potential Victims' Perception of Discrimination Based on Racial or Ethnic Origin. Available online: https://igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es/destacados/pdf/05-PERCEPCION_DISCRIMINACION_RACIAL_RESUMEN-EN.pdf (accessed on 11 March 2021).

- Standing, Guy. 2014. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Vacca, Raffaele, Cañarte David, and Tommaso Vitale. 2021. Beyond ethnic solidarity: The diversity and specialisation of social ties in a stigmatised migrant minority. In *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. [CrossRef]
- Van Dijk, Theun A. 2005. Discourse and Racism in Spain. *Associació de Professors d'Anglès de Catalunya*, 5. Available online: <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Discourse%20and%20racism%20in%20Spain.pdf> (accessed on 12 April 2021).
- Vázquez García, Francisco. 2009. *La Invención del Racismo: Nacimiento de la Biopolítica en España*. Madrid: Akal.
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 1024–54. [CrossRef]
- Vincze, Enikő. 2014. The Racialization of Roma in the 'new' Europe and the political potential of Romani women. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21: 443–49. [CrossRef]
- Viruell-Fuentes, Edna A., Patricia Y. Miranda, and Sawsan Abdulrahim. 2012. More than culture: Structural racism, intersectionality theory, and immigrant health. *Social Science & Medicine* 75: 2099–106.
- Waquant, Loic. 2009. *Punishing the Poor. The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Warmington, Paul. 2020. Critical race theory in England: Impact and opposition. *Identities* 27: 20–37. [CrossRef]
- Young, Iris Marion. 2009. Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference. In *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*. Edited by Thomas Christiano and John Christman. West Sussex: Blackwell.
- Zick, Andreas, Thomas F. Pettigrew, and Ulrich Wagner. 2008. Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination in Europe. *Journal of Social Issues* 64: 233–51. [CrossRef]



Article

“Race”, Belonging and Emancipation: Trajectories and Views of the Daughters of Western Africa in Spain

Laia Narciso

Social and Cultural Anthropology Department, Autonomous University of Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain; Laia.Narciso@uab.cat

Abstract: Young Spanish Black people born to migrant parents continue to be either invisible or problematized in public discourses, which project a monocultural and phenotypically homogeneous Europe. Research in countries with a long immigration history has shown that in the process of othering minorities, gender ideologies emerge as ethnic boundaries and feed the paternalistic treatment of women while accusing their families and communities of harming them through atavistic traditions. However, little research has focused on girls’ and young women from West African immigration and Muslim tradition in Spain, a country where they represent the first “second generation”. In order to gain a deeper insight into their processes and views, this paper describes and analyses the educational trajectories and transitions to adult life of a group of young women with these backgrounds who participated in a multilevel and narrative ethnography developed in the framework of a longitudinal and comparative project on the risk of Early Leaving of Education and Training in Europe (ELET). In the light of the conceptual contributions of the politics of belonging and intersectionality, the responsibilities regarding the conditions for gaining independence are relocated while assessing the role of the school in the processes of social mobility and the development of egalitarian aspirations in the labor market and in the family environment. The findings show how the limits encountered by these young women in their trajectories to an independent adult life are mainly produced by processes of racialization conditioned by class and gender, ironically in key spaces of social inclusion such as schools and the labor market rather than, or mainly by, an ethnic community that subjugates them.

Citation: Narciso, Laia. 2021. “Race”, Belonging and Emancipation: Trajectories and Views of the Daughters of Western Africa in Spain. *Social Sciences* 10: 143. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10040143>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 8 March 2021

Accepted: 7 April 2021

Published: 16 April 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: politics of belonging; narratives; black youth; gender ideologies; Spain

1. Introduction

While Europe was becoming a destination for many people undertaking an international migration project, the integration of immigrants and their descendants was emerging as a major political issue. This is reflected in the fact that integration policies and specific references to this population as vulnerable or at risk, occupy a central role in the European Commission’s Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission 2010). However, this interest in managing diversity, especially ethnic and religious diversity, is explained by the discourse of the clash of civilizations and the politics of fear (Huntington 2000; Roth 2016), in view of the consideration that the multicultural project has failed or is incompatible with the European liberal tradition. This process has consolidated an imaginary of allegedly common values in which minorities, including their children born in Europe, and especially Muslims, have a problematic place. Not only has global Islamophobia increased (Morgan and Poynting 2016), but the formation of a joint grammar on citizenship, built on different models of integration and colonial pasts, has demonized certain citizens who have been considered a threat to the “common achievements” of European democracy (Kymlicka 2010; Modood et al. 2006). This includes the clearly racist and xenophobic positions of populist and far right movements, and progressive ones, which fear seeing some of their pillars threatened, such as gender equality and sexual freedom (Yilmaz 2012). Thus, gender ideology takes on a key role as a cultural marker turned into

an ethnic border (Barth [1969] 1998; Alba 2005) and emerges in the hegemonic narratives of belonging that distinguish the “us” from the “others” in Europe and alter minorities (Yilmaz 2015).

Like the other southern European countries, Spain later joined the debates on citizenship and social cohesion, which began with the processes of family reunification led by Africans in the 1990s. The “migratory boom” in Spain and its role as a southern border, together with the onset of the world economic crisis and austerity policies have placed social inequality in Spain at the highest levels in the EU-27 with the greatest impact on migrant population (Parella 2016). The first generation of children of this migration flow has reached adulthood and it is necessary to assess the conditions they have encountered in their trajectories while coming of age. It is essential to consider that they have grown to a context characterized by the dualization of the labor market, youth unemployment and structural precariousness (Feixa et al. 2017) together with the weakening of social policies, previously underdeveloped and family-dependent, with weak policies to combat social inequality (Serracant 2013). Moreover, the children of immigrants from West Africa, a new¹ young generation of Black Spaniards, are generally invisible or represented in a problematic way through a discourse of paternalistic subalternity, especially women, including those born in Spain. They emerge into the public sphere when the limits between cultural diversity and fundamental rights are addressed, in issues such as female genital mutilation or arranged and/or polygyny marriage, from perspectives that criminalize their community (Narciso and Carrasco 2017).

However, Spanish research, prolific in works on the high academic disadvantage² of the children of immigrant families since they first arrived in schools at the turn of the century, with few exceptions, has not analyzed the social processes that affect young people from these origins (Narciso 2010). Although according to data from the Institute for National Statistics (INE) they represent 6% of the foreigners in this region, there is a population hidden in the data due to the processes of nationalization, and they have maintained their presence over three decades, going from initial male migration patterns to family ones, with a first “second generation” who have spent their entire school career in Catalonia and who face specific experiences of racial discrimination in school, the labor market and public space (Vives and Sité 2010).

This article aims to contribute to filling this gap and explores the academic and emancipation trajectories of young people born in Spain to immigrants of Gambian and Senegalese origin, specifically focusing on young women, and gauge their impact on the ties of belonging and the processes of collective identification, reflecting on the effect of their experiences of racism and sexism. Firstly, the educational paths followed are described. Secondly, it analyses how the social positions they occupy in relation to the hegemonic discourses and politics of belonging have affected their daily lives, detailing the processes of racialization experienced in the school. Finally, their processes of identity negotiation with the previous generation and their gender values and ideologies are examined. Both contrast with the social representations that project a retrograde community and young women subjected to tradition. Instead, the agency of these young women emerges to confront both the patriarchal forms of power produced in the community in the transnational context and the racialization experienced in the spaces of contact with the majority population.

Intersectionality, Citizenship and Belonging

The relevance of migration and youth studies derives from their privileged position in the political agenda on integration and social cohesion. This has meant that research on the children of immigrants often focuses on questions of identity and belonging based on

¹ Previous population flows from Equatorial Guinea are distinguished by a stronger link to colonial relations and by political and educational migration and, to a lesser extent, labor migration (Aixelà 2012). The population of black slave descent, not estimated due to the lack of an official census, should be added.

² Spain has the highest gap in early school leaving and other educational indicators between native students and the children of immigrants in the European Union (Carrasco et al. 2018).

the ethnic border (Anthias 2009; Yuval-Davis et al. 2006). Critical intersectional theory has questioned this approach by overstating a single aspect of collective identification, as well as the methodological dangers involved in it.

Most definitions understand intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989) as an epistemology centered on narratives about the processes of subjectivity of the gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized and colonized “others”, including religious identity among other categories of difference, and make visible how hegemonic forms of power constitute and impact on everyday life experiences, while responding to them (Brah and Phoenix 2004; Mirza 2008; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006). These processes are changing and interrelated with the historical and geographical context, the process of “being and becoming” (Mirza 2008) or the analysis of “lived life” (Mirza 2013). In each case, it is necessary to identify the lines along which differences are created that become relevant to the particular experience and although they are intertwined, they cannot be treated in the same way (Lombardo and Verloo 2010) or reduced to each other (Yuval-Davis 2006). They are not additions, as in the additive models of Marxist feminism, but each division is constitutive in intersection with another, so that “social class is always gendered and racialised, gender is always classed and racialised, and so on” (Anthias 2009, p. 10)

How can this epistemology contribute to the study of the processes of social incorporation experienced by the children of immigrants in Europe? The contributions of the British intersectional perspective, and specifically the concepts of Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis about the processes of collective identification, citizenship and belonging can help to operationalize the analysis. Anthias (2002, 2009), argued that the study of collective identification processes had overemphasized ethnic issues, even though people do not make links solely in these terms, but through other social relations and categories such as gender, age or life cycle, social class, political beliefs and values, among others.

According to this author, the concept of identity questions “too much and too little” by asking subjects to explain coherently who they are and what and who they identify with, while forgetting aspects of structure and context. The notion of multiple identities reproduces this problem. To overcome this approach, she proposed the concept of “translocational positionality” (Anthias 2002, 2009) as a methodological tool.

Narratives about location and positionality are more useful for analyzing the processes and results of collective identification than a concept of unitary identity that reduces difference and inequality to individual characteristics. Paying attention to the location and not to the group helps to contextualize the system of social stratification and the forms of inclusion and exclusion, even if they are not conscious elements or do not produce an identity. Focusing on “positionality” combines an element of social position resulting from intersection (outcome) and positioning through a set of practices, actions and meanings (process), that is, both the impact of the social structure and the individual agency. The term translocated suggests the concept of diasporic identity as a hybridization and reflects the complexity of the positionality of subjects in the interaction of locations and dislocations of gender, ethnicity, nationality, belonging, class and racialization. This concept allows to privilege the formation of specific categories (e.g., gender or class) at a conjunctural and non-essentialist or a priori level.

Yuval-Davis (2006) insisted on the need to distinguish between belonging and politics of belonging, defining the different analytical levels of each concept. Through the analysis of the British context, this author shows how discourses on belonging tend to be constructed with respect to specific projects which select only a few levels to support their arguments. In particular, in Yuval-Davis’ work, belonging is defined as an emotional bond that can be multiple and vary over time. An act of self-identification or identification by others, elaborated in a dynamic process. It includes both identifications and emotional ties as well as social positions and ethical systems and political values that judge membership. Emotional constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments, or the desire for them, work to project a future path, but this belonging to a group implies a location in the power axes of society. Include both the way in which these locations

and identifications are judged and valued, and the attitudes and ideology upon which categories and boundaries are drawn, in a more permeable or exclusive way.

Instead, politics of belonging are ethical and ideological contestations to maintain and reproduce the boundaries that define the community of belonging by hegemonic powers or other agents. Social positions and narratives on identity are usually presented as elements of emotional bonding, in an essentialist and racialized way, hiding the role of the axes of power and privilege. On the contrary, referring only to social positions would also forget the importance of the elements of emotional bonding and hide the fact that constructions about one's identity, as Fanon (1952) showed in his classical work, have sometimes been generated in processes of forced internalization.

According to the same author, it is relevant to differentiate two levels in the politics of belonging: Citizenship and rights and status, which are not always correlated. Although in the global world the lives of individuals are constituted with rights and obligations in the local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, transnational and international context, in a simultaneous and interconnected way, citizenship continues to be understood closely, as the relationships of rights and obligations that individuals and/or communities establish with the nation-state.

However, formal citizenship does not imply actually belonging to the nation-state community for those constructed as others (whether ethnic, racial or national others), (Yuval-Davis 2007). In different projects of belonging, the characteristics that define it can become requirements, ranging from social positions (origin, place of birth or ethnic group), those that are less permeable and more racialized, to cultural aspects such as language or religion, accessible by assimilation, or apparently permeable borders, such as values such as democracy or human rights. These three levels can overlap in specific cases and are often presented in a more open way than they really imply. An example is the migration and membership policy of the British context of liberal multiculturalism and social cohesion, analyzed by Yuval-Davis et al. (2006), in which the defense of civic and democratic values is not only a marker of identity but also an argument for defending the "civilising mission" carried out by the United Kingdom and the USA and extended to other European countries, including Spain. This apparently progressive policy, in contrast to the discourses of the right-wing or the assimilationist perspective, understands integration in a unidirectional way on the part of migrants and holds them responsible for the lack of social cohesion, resulting in equal exclusion.

This theoretical framework will allow, in the following sections, to complicate the debate from ethnic identifications and borders to the impact of social positions and agency, in a contextualized way.

2. Method

This paper is based on a multilevel (Ogbu 1981) and narrative (Ellis 2004) ethnography, focusing on the life and academic trajectories and experiences of a group of young people, children of immigrants from West Africa, in processes towards adulthood. Fieldwork was carried out in the region of Barcelona where their presence is over-represented (according to data from the local census, in 2016, these nationalities represented 20.8% of the foreign population, over the average in Catalonia). The author has prior personal and professional experience of collaboration with the Black African organizations and families of the area who had expressed concerns about their children's risk of exclusion in the Catalan society. As an outsider, adult woman, the researcher displayed several strategies to ensure ethical relations with the subjects, trying to enhance common positions and experiences with the young women, for example, motherhood or schooling. The research has focused on two groups of young people at different stages of transition to adult independent life, young-adolescents and young-adults, selected through a snowball strategy.

This article uses part of the biographical reconstructions elaborated with a counter-narrative objective (Solórzano and Yosso 2002), through various interviews carried out over three years in the group of young adult woman (17–24 years old), from eight families

belonging to the flow of ethnic communities (Jabardo 2006), This approach has been complemented by the analysis of their public profiles on social networks and interviews with some of the parents, as well as participant observation in family and community events and interviews with different members of Black African associations.

The data analysis has been carried out with the qualitative analysis software Nvivo. All the material has been transcribed, coded in two phases, first thematically and second, compared through the program visual tools, case classifications and matrix analysis. Special importance was given to the emotional climate that emerged in the interviews themselves and the stories constructed by the young women (Mattingly and Lawlor 2000).

The recurrent typological variety identified in the fieldwork is illustrated in Table 1 and in the text through the analysis of the narratives of six girls born in Catalonia, Spain, to Gambian and Senegalese parents, all of them naturalized, and belonging to working class families in low skill jobs in the destination country. All of them define themselves as Muslims, none of them wear a veil, all dress in the Western style and usually speak Spanish with their peers, even though they are competent in Catalan mostly through schooling and despite the fact that their parents insist on maintaining the family language.

Table 1. Main socio-demographic data.

	Age *	Ethnic Group	Parents' Place of Birth	Parents' Job (or Tutors or Heads of Household)	Marital Status	Residential Pattern and Number of People in the Household	Number of Children
Case 01: Adama	19–23	Fula	The Gambia Rural area	Hotel gardener (father) and hotel cleaner (mother)	Single	Dependent 7 (Father, mother and 4 siblings)	0
Case 02: Fatou	17–20	Fula	The Gambia Rural area	Factory operator (father), hotel cleaning (mother)	Single	Dependent 7 (Father, mother and 4 siblings)	0
Case 03: Isatou	24–26	Fula	Senegal Rural area	Unemployed (cleaning) and kitchen manager (husband) /mechanic (father); cleaning (mother) and geriatric assistant (father's wife)	Married	Independent 5 (Husband, 2 children and 1 sister)	2
Case 04: Maimuna	17–20	Sarahule	Senegal (father); The Gambia (mother), (both rural areas)	Self-employed trader (father), kitchen assistant (mother), housework (father's wife)	Single	Dependent 15 (Father, mother, father's first wife, 11 brothers and sisters)	0
Case 05: Mariama	19–23	Fula	Senegal (father, rural area; mother urban area)	Unemployed (last job carrier)	Single	Dependent 7 (Uncles, 3 cousins and 1 brother)	0
Case 06: Sayo	19–21	Fula	Senegal Rural area	Unemployed/Retired gardener (grandfather), geriatric assistants (2 wives of grandfather)	Single	Independent 2 (She and her son)	1

(*) Age at the first and last interview.

3. Results

The academic trajectories and the level of education achieved are described below, creating two groups based on the threshold set by the Europe 2020 strategy as the minimum to guarantee the labor and social inclusion of EU citizens (post-compulsory secondary education, or being in education or training to achieve it). This will provide a picture of the tools with which they face their transitions into adulthood, clearly divided into young women who left school and training early versus young women with post-compulsory education continuity

3.1. Prolonged Trajectories and Insurmountable Barriers

The trajectories of the young women of this group have been characterized by school dropouts in the transition to secondary education and their experience shows a clear lack of support to facilitate their return to the educational system.

Isatou is 26 years old and unemployed. She lives with her husband (kitchen manager), two children and her sister in a city on the outskirts of Barcelona, in a neighborhood with a high concentration of third country nationals. During her childhood and adolescence, she lived in the area where the ethnography took place, with her father (a pioneer and promoter of an association of Senegalese), her mother, her father's first wife and seven brothers and sisters. Her academic career ended early, although she was considered a good student in primary school. After completing five years of secondary education in a public high school, she did not manage to graduate. According to her, exclusion by her classmates made her relate to "bad company" by starting nightlife early and avoiding the limitations of her parents who told her "to study, that she would have time to go out". Although she would like to become a hairdresser, she currently has no plans towards that goal.

Sayo is 21 years old and lives in a city in the Maresme region with her year and a half old son in a social flat provided by the Social Services. She spent her childhood and adolescence in the care of her maternal grandfather, living with his two wives and three children each, after her mother died when she was 4 years old and having spent some time in a foster home. She did all her schooling in public schools. From being a very good student in primary school she went on to "become lazy" in secondary school and repeated twice until she left Secondary Education in the second year at the age of 16. Later she started a training which she did not finish because of a trip to Senegal, and the same thing happened with the course to get the compulsory secondary education certificate in an adult school, in a second trip to which she was dragged by her grandfather, abandoning the idea of continuing her studies. She met the father of her son, who was born in Senegal and arrived in Spain as an unaccompanied minor, when she was going out in Barcelona with her friends, all Black African, and although they do not live together due to their irregular situation and his activities, they keep in touch. Her current objective is to find a job to support herself and her son.

3.2. Adjusted Path: Vocational Training Itineraries

The young women in this group opted for the vocational training route, guided by the teachers and, in two cases, to the disappointment of their families. While for some obtaining a profession was the objective, for others it was a narrow aspiration and their path became a long-distance race.

Maimuna is a 19-year-old girl who works as a geriatric assistant (chaining short-term contracts in different companies) after having studied a Vocational Education and Training (ISCED 3) of social and health care and lives with her family (father, mother, father's first wife and siblings). Her peer group is the girls she plays basketball with (all white, from lower-middle class or working-class families). After spending her early childhood in Valencia with an aunt, she returned to her parents and started school. She had to try to overcome the shyness that, according to her, limited her and that led her to a reinforcement group until fourth grade of primary school. Finally, she got the Secondary education certificate in an ordinary group, a great success being the first in her family to achieve it. Her wish was to be incorporated into the labor market at an early age and so she thought of a profession through vocational training. Although she fulfilled her objective, she began to realize that it did not allow her to combat precariousness and temporary work.

Fatou is 19 years old, she is in a Vocational Training of social integration and working as a geriatric assistant in an old people's home. She lives with her parents and siblings. Her school experiences have been tinged with the impact she has had in embodying "the difference", feeling out of place in a Christian private school (state-funded) in primary education, and suffering bullying in the first years of Secondary education in a public high school. Her school performance was medium-high, but "for fear of failure" and

disappointed her parents who want her “not to have a bad time like them”, she decided to take a longer route (vocational training) to fulfil her academic aspirations and reach higher education. She keeps a friend from high school, “her white friend”, as she says, but increasingly relates to a group of boys and girls who are all children of immigrants from West Africa.

Mariama is 21 years old. She now lives with her father’s family and her younger brother in France and is studying at university. She was born in Catalonia, the daughter of Senegalese parents of Fula ethnicity, but decided to leave once she graduated from Vocational training in search of greater educational and employment opportunities. Although her family was originally from the middle classes, in Spain her parents held low-skilled jobs (father a transport worker and mother a nurse’s assistant and kitchen assistant in hotels), both of whom are currently unemployed, being one of the families affected by mortgage debt and having been divorced. During her childhood she lived in a town in French Provence, where she spent part of her schooling. In contrast to her schooling experience in Spain, she had the support of her teachers, her cousins and an organized “school-to-home” life that offered her the supervision of her extended family, who were well off in France and not in the initial phase of incorporation, like her parents in Spain. Her return meant a repeat of the course and a lowering of her aspirations, being oriented to vocational training, which she attended and certificated, although it was not satisfactory for her.

3.3. *A Path of Naturalised Progress: Academic Itinerary, Moving Smoothly towards Higher Education*

The young woman who exemplifies this typology is characterized by academic achievement and direct transitions, following the most prestigious itineraries. It can be said that this more successful path has been an exception among the cases encountered during the field work.

Adama is 22 years old and lives with her parents and four siblings, all students. Currently, about to graduate in psychology, she has never been in the working world. Her academic career is known among the young children of Gambians and Senegalese in her area, as she is a pioneer and a reference, although at school her success was either unnoticed or surprisingly exceptional. Her parents, who belonged to a prestigious family in her home village, always had high expectations of her, sending her messages of academic achievement as well as reinforcing her intra-ethnic identity. Her friends (all white middle class) were also a great support.

The itineraries and experiences described above show, first of all, the risk of social exclusion faced by young women who left education and training early, without mechanisms to encourage them to change their situation. However, secondly, a range of successful trajectories emerges that are invisible in the face of a widespread idea of failure or early leaving among this group of children of immigrants. In some cases, these are short-lived trajectories that raise other notions of success; in others, long-distance careers with greater risks of abandonment, and, finally, itineraries and experiences associated with the notion of hegemonic notions of success.

4. Ties of Belonging and Collective Identification Processes

We will then focus on some key aspects to assess the ties related to belonging and the processes of collective identification: Emotional identifications, social positions and gender values and ideologies, in order to answer the question about which lines of difference emerge as relevant and how they impacted on their daily experience.

It is clear that their narratives contrast with the main social representations, which project a retrograde community and young women subjected to tradition. In contrast, the agency of these women in confronting the patriarchal forms of power that emerge in the community is shown, as well as the racialization experienced in the contact spaces with the majority population.

4.1. *Embodying Difference and the Collective: Social Positions*

A common element among these young women is how the intersection between racialization and social class is transferred into their daily lives in the form of discomfort, exclusion, loneliness and insecurity.

They recalled episodes in which the difference in which they were placed was built up from negative stereotypes, associating blackness, foreigners and poverty. An example of this is the disengagement that Fatou described in the primary school (subsidized school assigned by the desegregation policy of balanced schooling)³ in contrast to the well-being she felt in the “Centre Obert” (an after-school socio-educational service offered by local social services) where the children belonged to the same social class and many were Black African, the children of immigrants: “I felt good (. . .) I understood them better. I understood them better. There were so many of them” (Fatou).

Similarly, Isatou told how she felt excluded at the high school (also a subsidized center, assigned by the same policy) and was mocked and commented on as a non-national, but above all for being built up as a poor person. She recalled how on one occasion her wallet was taken away to show the rest of the class how she did not have an ID card like the others, how she noticed gossip about her clothes or the frequent questions about whether they paid for school. The cause she attributes to this experience of discrimination once again suggests the construction of an inverse relationship between racialization and social class: “Because I was Black, and they were all posh there” (Isatou). Moreover, while most deny racism, many have perceived gossip, especially in schools. This is how Mariama summed it up: “It’s just that the Moroccans and the Black people here, I don’t know what . . . they come here for this and that and smell like that, you know? and I was left listening . . . I think they beat up the Moroccans a bit more, but we Black people are always in there” (Mariama).

This reminder of the difference was also constructed from “positive” stereotypes, such as compliments on their hair, color, curves or the rhythm of “las negras” (the blacks) so that their presence embodied not only their person but also a whole “group” in which they were located, based on their phenotype from which cultural racism was constructed, and dislocated from belonging to the “we”. This also happened with supposedly neutral questions about their family customs (food, polygyny, etc.) or other cultural elements, to which some girls expressed their discomfort that in some cases, like Isatou’s, embarrassed her to the point of making her avoid the presence of other Black people. Another way in which they felt this location in the otherness, was evidencing the surprise that their behavior caused by opposing the expected. Adama remembers that “If I did something right it was like, ‘Oh, good’, but it was like . . . I was flattered more just because I did it right, I don’t know . . . like they underestimated me.”

Finally, through explicit comments that denoted the association of their phenotype with the foreigner. From statements that referred to “their country” to congratulations for a supposed assimilation. For example, when strangers spontaneously address them with a “you’re from here, eh!” if they hear them speaking Catalan, while they abandon the idea of continually explaining that they were born “here”. Clearly the black phenotype emerges above the competence of the language as a marker of non-belonging, being stripped in a supposedly positive commentary of the status and rights that citizenship entails. So, in a way, it cannot be just them, but their presence represents the whole of young Black women. Faced with this, they develop different strategies that range from ignorance “passing”, to avoidance, shaping their personality or hiding their way of being, not without emotional impact, or even, as explained by the girls who suffered most constantly and explicitly from discrimination by their peers, with violent reactions, “making themselves respected” or “defending themselves and taking out their character”. In the words of Fatou: “Every time I said something to myself, I would shut up, I would scold myself, you know? I once had a problem with a child because he was always bothering me and I got angry, I grabbed him

³ There are two types of schools: privately owned but State-funded ones and public ones.

by the neck and I pulled him up against—I wanted him—I was already fed up with him, he always came home crying, why didn't they stop!"

They also told of other strategies that originated not from specific episodes but from having developed, over the years, an awareness of racialization and the embodiment of the difference it makes. This has caused some girls to avoid relationships with non-black youth. Isatou recalled this personal process and that of other girls: "Bintu left her white circle of friends and I left it too and we Black girls got together. And we said to each other we are very good, very good".

In some cases, all this had an impact on their self-perception as students and, although some obtained good results during their schooling, they did not feel capable of following the most valued academic paths—the Baccalaureate and/or the university—becoming aware of the difficulty of accessing prestigious professions even if they have a degree to do so. In this way, the emigration of the children of Black African immigrants can be considered a strategy to confront the experienced racism that many of the young women fantasize about, and that others have done or have acquaintances who have done so:

"Everyone gets bored here. I would go to France if I could. You have more opportunities there. Even if they say no, there is a little bit of racism. There you get the title of what you want and you work in that sector. Here my cousins have studied and they don't work from that. One is a nurse, went to university and everything. The other did a higher degree in administration and then university; another, tourism; none of them is working at what they want, or as a waitress or cleaner (. . .) it's the fact of being Black". (Isatou)

4.2. *Negotiating Intergenerational Boundaries: Gender Values and Ideologies*

Most girls felt that their fathers' generation had become more Muslim. They did not remember their fathers praying, nor that their mothers wore veils when they were young, nor that they supervised whether or not they performed the prayers, in a possible process of ethnic withdrawal (Moreras 2006). Nonetheless, beyond the religious aspect, some young women showed frustration with ideals about children based on maintaining tradition, for example through knowledge of the mother tongue, or on marriage as an institution for building the family. Adama and Isatou expressed it this way:

"She should listen to her parents, help out around the house and so on, and about traditions . . . like—"Look how well the daughter talks about this or that, she talks perfectly (. . .) it made me feel bad, like I don't know how to talk well!". (Adama)

"Sidy Saho's daughter had given birth a month ago. My father was "-Uuuh, look! Did you see? She has to leave school now . . . I hope that at least you will leave until you get married . . . ". (Isatou)

Although in its traditional definition marriage places them in a subordinate position with respect to the men of their generation, it should be noted that the main arguments used by parents were precisely messages that valued education, although they did not conceive of the compatibility of both spheres: Studying and forming a family. On the other hand, although the rule is clear, failure to comply with it has not always been penalized, and for example in the case of Isatou, his father celebrated being a grandfather and "called everyone".

In the face of this, all the young women resisted these locations by opposing the preferential marriage forms: In the most traditional definition, marriage with the crossed cousins; and more widespread in migration, marriage agreed with fictitious relatives: The son of a friend of the father (whom they call an uncle). However, most families have abandoned the idea of maintaining the practice of an agreed marriage without the consent of their daughters, even if they put forward their preferences, such as the bond with fictitious relatives:

“Yes, they want me to marry the son of one of my father’s friends, and they’ve told me about it and . . . I’m not too happy about it either, am I? Because I don’t know, it’s a bit like telling me what to do”. (Adama)

Or, with whomever they choose, provided that he is a Muslim:

“My father there is a little bit more . . . if I have to marry someone who is a Muslim, to continue being . . . not to lose . . . because if I marry a white man, because I am a girl I would lose my religion and . . . I would cling more to my partner’s religion”. (Mariama)

Even one of the girls (Maimuna) who refers to having a “very traditional”, “very religious” father, states that she would oppose an arranged marriage, especially early on, and develops different forms of resistance (hiding practices that the father would consider inappropriate, such as going to the beach or having a boyfriend) with the help of her mother, who considers that she should “act like here, since she was born here”. However, this pressure to comply with a gender and age model that she feels oppressive has not limited her academic career or social relations. She herself gave the example of her refusal to participate in school camps, although it could be assumed that it was for economic reasons or because of her father’s strict control attitude, it was she who did not want to be away from her family. Her father did not deal with school issues, a role assumed by her mother (as is the case in economies with a clear division of reproductive labor), so he did not have a limiting role either. “My father didn’t pay much attention. It was my mother who paid. She paid for the outings . . . ”.

While some young people, provided they had the capacity to decide, considered valuing family opinions, such as Mariama, who reflected on the difficulties a non-Muslim husband can have in maintaining practices such as holding Ramadan, there are other issues that were strongly opposed by all, and clearly one of them is polygyny, a type of marriage that is not in the majority but is an element of social distinction between previous generations.

“That the husband has many women, that seems to me, I don’t know, this makes me very angry, it doesn’t seem right to me. Maybe they accept it. Look at the case of African women who marry out of obligation, have children, but are not in love, they have to be there for the children. These women suffer too, and nobody listens to them”. (Fatou)

A significant case is that of Adama’s family, who lived through their father’s “temporary” polygamy with such bewilderment that forced the father to divorce his second wife soon after, an example she recounted with awe.

In the discourse of these young women, it is usually valued that their parents have developed a negotiating style of upbringing, agreeing on aspects such as the times of departure, and many consider themselves lucky not to have a father or mother who is “as closed” as other Muslims. Gender roles in most families have also become more flexible, with men, for example, carrying out household tasks, although not in a corresponding way, even though they continue to assume more household responsibilities than their brothers. In short, while they are pressured to represent family prestige, maintaining sexual honor (and other practices associated with cultural non-assimilation, such as maintaining the family language or identifying themselves as Muslims), they respond to this by negotiating what they see as boundaries with the previous generation.

4.3. *Fitting in with Modernity: Main Emotional Identifications*

In relation to emotional identifications, gender emerges as a key element for the experience of blackness. It becomes a central aspect of positionality and belonging, but not independently but in intersection with other variables, in this case, racialization, that is, the social construction of difference based on skin color, as well as age or generation: The set of young Black girls.

Firstly, the girls' narratives show a lack of identification with Black boys. In contexts where there are no other young Black women they feel "the only one". This feeling of uniqueness, of otherness, is common to all the stories, especially when they refer to the academic world. Adama described it this way: "I was the only Black woman in class, a girl, the others were Black boys, and well . . . little by little I adapted. My mother said at the beginning.—Isn't there more like you . . . ? And I said:—it's just me in class," said Maimuna, or "When I've been around campus and seen other Black girls it's like, there are more people! I'm not the only one! In the same way, they also distinguish themselves from women of the previous generation in many ways and even go so far as to construct a stereotype about them or what women in West Africa are like: 'close-minded' Muslims" (Fatou), "very covered" (Maimuna) or considering themselves "more European" than the "typical Black African" (Mariama).

Secondly, all the young women except Sayo explained that they considered themselves to be Muslims, but that they intended to be able to know their religion better (e.g., recite the Koran with knowledge of its content) in order to be able to discern what they thought was appropriate or not. This critical approach allowed them to decide not to wear a veil or to consider arranged marriage or polygyny unacceptable. For this reason, some say they consider themselves "less" Muslim than their parents (now, not when they were little), although some attended weekly Koranic classes. Furthermore, one of the girls, Isatou, explained how she was fascinated by a new view of the family culture given to her by her husband, an immigrant of Senegalese origin, which she did not know, and by an approach to religion that her family had not taught her. Specifically, she referred to the initiatory, productive and contemplative side of Islam practiced by the Murid diaspora, which I recognized from a large poster on the wall as the only decoration in her house: "I saw them praying, they were with the book of the Koran [with a fascinated voice], if I loved it, they told us the stories and I liked it a lot".

In general, many argued paradoxically, "I don't know much about my culture" (Fatou). While they let the emotional identification with the family culture or, as Maimuna said, "their country", rectifying at once to say "the country of my parents", they assert a great lack of knowledge that does not allow them to identify fully either. Adama, for example, describes a situational identification. "When I am at home for example I feel more Gambian, I don't know, when I am with friends I feel more Spanish" or Mariama, who explains how she was only defined as Spanish when she was in France "they always called me the Spanish one".

Thirdly, their ethnic identification was undefined and they narrated it full of nuances, highlighting for example their place of birth, or desisting from elaborating a geographically located belonging: "I have not been made to feel from here, from situations of the past . . . nor from there, why I do not know it" (Fatou).

Finally, it is revealing to analyze their future projections as significant elements in emotional identifications. All the young women projected themselves as mothers and wives, without questioning marriage (from a position critical of tradition) or motherhood (which they pose in the long term and with fewer children than their families). At the same time, some of them prioritize developing their high professional aspirations and emancipating themselves as independent women (Adama, psychologist; Mariama, translator/interpreter; Fatou, child educator or social integrator). Although, in general, their stories show a lack of models or references in this aspect, being themselves the pioneers in their environments. Only the girls who have experienced mobility describe models of women in which they are reflected: A "modern African woman", says Mariama, repeating the hegemonic discourse based on a dichotomous identity: Either African or European, linked respectively to tradition or modernity:

"I, my aunt there, she is very modern, very . . . related to the parents of . . . because here the whites always relate a lot to their children's parents when they go to school. But here . . . I've hardly seen any Black women who go and perhaps relate to the parents of . . . ". (Mariama)

Another part of the young women aspires to a professional life that provides them with agency and independence “to help out around the house, or when I have my own house, to put things in,” says Maimuna, (reproducing the role expected of an adult woman in West Africa) and within this logic they limit their aspirations. For example, in the case of Isatou, who would like to be a hairdresser, or Maimuna, who would like to be a nurse: One gave up and the other adapted it to being a geriatric assistant, prioritizing a quick incorporation into the labor market and considering that extending the education years would be “a waste of time” (Sayo) or “a waste of more time” (Maimuna).

5. Conditions for Emancipation: Resituating Responsibilities

This work reveals the importance of an intersectional approach for the analysis of the processes of belonging of young Black women in Europe. The experiences presented and the analysis used add evidence about the nuances of the replications of assimilation theories coming from the American context in Europe. As [Crul and Schneider \(2013\)](#) pointed out, in the European context, both patterns of downward assimilation and upward mobility through intra-ethnic cohesion can occur within the same group or ethnic community. In the above case, this diversity translates into different conditions for emancipation. Transition paths to adulthood based on rapid incorporation into the labor market or on motherhood show a reproduction of the social position occupied by women of the previous generation (migrants without academic training). It is not possible to explain this situation solely by a “more” patriarchal intra-community system, of which young women do not feel fully a part and of which some aspects are resistant, but to which young women with long and successful academic careers have also been subjected, which should make upward social mobility possible. In contrast, the experiences of educational continuity show the importance of the cultural capital provided by education as “emancipatory capital”. This expands the tools to combat hegemonic racialized positions, conditioned by class and gender, which place these young women in subordinate positions, not without them finding the gaps to be able to develop their projects.

In the cases analyzed, although the young women’s families insist on transmitting specific ethical and moral values to define femininity based on a patriarchal system, these discourses coexist with high educational expectations. We can identify in their narratives recurrent themes in the literature on minority youth and gender. For example, the increased domestic responsibilities and parental control in relation to male peers, which [Suárez-Orozco and Qin \(2006\)](#) interpreted as an intensification carried out by families in the face of the danger of assimilation, with sexual honor being a key indicator that establishes their prestige in the community in the transnational context. Or, as [Espiritu \(2001\)](#) pointed out, a display of moral superiority in the face of Western culture, responding to the subordination and stereotypes that hypersexualized “other” women.

Issues such as polygyny and arranged marriages emerge as symbolic boundaries with respect to the previous generation, revealing the resistance of young women to central aspects of traditional gender ideology that can lead to intergenerational conflict. However, these messages coexist with other egalitarians, which were realized especially by the mothers, transferring their desire for more equitable relations, in the same way as had been observed in the case of young Roma women with successful educational careers ([Abajo and Carrasco 2004](#); [Bereményi and Carrasco 2017](#)).

Thus, the counter-narrative that emerges from the stories paradoxically gives a leading role to the school environment which, as [Carter \(2005\)](#) argued, systematically ignores and devalues non-dominant forms of cultural capital, demanding conformity with the dominant white⁴ and middle class culture. Now, what impact does this have on the academic and life trajectories of young women? Firstly, as [Archer \(2008\)](#) identified in the British context where discourses about the “ideal student” excluded minority students, some young women

⁴ Although racial ideology based on black/white dualism is not applicable to the Spanish context, racial categories are present in social discourses (e.g., “negro” or “negrito”) and “Spanish” national identity has been racialized as synonymous with European origin and whiteness ([Banton, quoted in Keaton 2005](#)).

integrated a limited self-perception of the student. This is clearly the case of young women with ELET, but it is relevant for those who, with good performance, did not conceive of following the paths built as successful, nor were they oriented towards it. Although it could be considered a pragmatic decision (Mirza 1992), adapting their aspirations to the awareness of the unequal opportunities they find in the labor market, as well as, from this same logic, some propose their own migration projects, mobilizing the migration capital they have (Narciso and Carrasco 2017).

Secondly, an impact on the processes of subjectivation, as indicated by studies of post-colonial feminism. Racialized subjects and minority and working-class women do not manage to see themselves as appropriate, they are constructed in a devalued way, with inadequate females, generating painful processes that reproduce colonial relations, and placing them in a continuum of normalized absence/pathologized presence. In the face of this, some young women become “ashamed” and choose to avoid affiliation with members of their own group, or they shape themselves by trying to achieve academic success, which from the ecological-cultural theory was defined as “acting white”, or in the opposite sense, as some girls explained, they “act out” with definitions of femininity that do not fit in with those promoted by the school (less docile) and/or choose the alliance with their peers in more protective relationships by assuming the academic risk that may be involved (Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein 2011; Fordham 1993, 2008). As we have seen, these processes are not exclusive and are transformed over time.

Finally, the desire to project themselves as modern women is identified, distancing themselves from the women of the previous generation and the migrants of their family origin, over whom they have internalized the hegemonic stereotypes and the supremacist discourse that hierarchically dichotomizes “us/them” with an image of West Africa that does not recognize its cosmopolitanism and defines it in an atavistic way, in the same way as Muslim membership. The new constructions of Islam, to which some feel affiliated, offer them a certain authority and grounds for rejecting traditional practices without appearing excessively “westernised”, as Ryan (2013) showed in the case of young Muslims in London, and can be interpreted as processes of additive acculturation (Gibson 1988). They clearly associate modernity with freedom, inter-community relations and the development of professional life, assuming hegemonic gender definitions that include public/private and production/reproduction dichotomies. Moreover, their break with aspects such as polygyny also deprives them of the feminine space that characterizes the sex/gender system in West Africa and which Jabardo and Ródenas (2017) define under the rules of cooperation and competitiveness, and which migrant women “both accept and challenge, in processes of hybridisation that reflect the emergence of other, new modernities”. This implies, for example, that among these young women there are no institutionalized forms of horizontal social capital, such as the female associative practices of the generation itself, which their mothers did have, in a possible subtractive process, similar to that described by Valenzuela (1999), pointing to school, and which is reminiscent of the situation that Keaton (2005) showed in the case of young Black African women in France, where school was key to assimilating and at the same time excluding these young women.

In conclusion, in this article I have tried to show how the limits of social inclusion in their processes to adulthood life of these young women are produced mainly by the racialization experienced, intertwined with social class and gender, paradoxically in key spaces of social inclusion, such as the school and the labor market, and not by an ethnic community that subjugates them. This idea derives from the politics of racialized belonging, although it avoids racial-biological labels, rhetorically maintains national-ethnic categories, ultimately considers difference a threat, and while it promotes assimilation it perpetuates forms of social exclusion.

Funding: This research has received funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 320223. The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole

responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Author's custody, available on demand.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Abajo, José E., and Silvia Carrasco. 2004. *Experiencias y trayectorias de éxito escolar de gitanas y gitanos en España*. Colección Mujeres en la Educación, 4. Madrid: CIDE-Instituto de la Mujer.
- Aixelà, Yolanda. 2012. Entre las dictaduras y el petróleo: Las migraciones transnacionales de Guinea Ecuatorial. *Revista Andaluza de Antropología* 3: 80–93. [CrossRef]
- Alba, Richard. 2005. Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. [CrossRef]
- Anthias, Floya. 2002. Where Do I Belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality. *Ethnicities*. [CrossRef]
- Anthias, Floya. 2009. Translocational Belonging, Identity and Generation: Questions and Problems in Migration and Ethnic Studies. *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration* 4: 6–15.
- Archer, Louise. 2008. The Impossibility of Minority Ethnic Educational 'Success'? An Examination of the Discourses of Teachers. *European Educational Research Journal*. [CrossRef]
- Archer-Banks, Diane M., and Linda S. Behar-Horenstein. 2011. Ogbu Revisited: Unpacking High-Achieving African American Girls' High School Experiences. *Urban Education* 47: 198–223. [CrossRef]
- Barth, Fredrik, ed. 1998. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Long Grove: Waveland Press. First published 1969.
- Bereményi, B. Ábel, and Silvia Carrasco. 2017. Bittersweet Success. The Impact of Academic Achievement among the Spanish Roma after a Decade of Roma Inclusion. In *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*. New York: Springer International Handbooks of Education, pp. 1169–98.
- Brah, Avtar, and Ann Phoenix. 2004. Ain't I A Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5: 75–86.
- Carrasco, Silvia, Jordi Pàmies, and Laia Narciso. 2018. Abandono escolar prematuro y alumnado de origen extranjero en España ¿Un problema invisible? *Anuario CIDOB de la Inmigración*. [CrossRef]
- Carter, Prudence. 2005. *Keepin' It Real: School Success beyond Black and White*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Legal Forum.
- Crul, Maurice, and Jens Schneider. 2013. Second-generation migrants: Europe and the United States. In *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*. Edited by Immanuel Ness. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. [CrossRef]
- Ellis, Carolyn. 2004. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2001. We Don't Sleep around like White Girls Do: Family, Culture and Gender in Filipina American. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26: 415–40. [CrossRef]
- European Commission. 2010. *Europe 2020. A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. Brussels: EC.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1952. *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Paris: Seuil.
- Feixa, Carles, Clara Rubio, and Joan Ganau Casas Solsona, eds. 2017. *L'emigrant 2.0. Emigració juvenil, nous moviments socials i xarxes digitals*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Dep. de Treball, Afers Socials i Famílies, Col·lecció Estudis, n° 35.
- Fordham, Signithia. 1993. Those Loud Black Girls: (Black) Women, Silence, and Gender 'Passing' in the Academy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 24: 3–32.
- Fordham, Signithia. 2008. Beyond Capital High: On Dual Citizenship and the Strange Career of acting White. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 39: 227–46.
- Gibson, Margaret A. 1988. *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 2000. The clash of civilizations? In *Culture and Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 99–118.
- Jabardo, Mercedes. 2006. *Senegaleses en España. Conexiones entre origen y destino*. Madrid (SP): Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración. Portal de La Inmigración, Documentos del observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración.
- Jabardo, Mercedes, and Beatriz Ródenas. 2017. Más allá de las dicotomías. Un análisis de la actividad del trenzado en la diáspora senegalesa desde el Feminismo Negro. *Revista Española de Sociología* 26: 373–84. [CrossRef]
- Keaton, Trica. 2005. Arrogant Assimilationism: National Identity Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36: 405–23. [CrossRef]
- Kymlicka, Will. 2010. The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism? New Debates on Inclusion and Accommodation in Diverse Societies. *International Social Science Journal* 61: 97–112. [CrossRef]

- Lombardo, Emanuela, and Mieke Verloo. 2010. La Interseccionalidad Del Género Con Otras Desigualdades En La Política de La Unión Europea. *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 23: 11–30.
- Mattingly, Cheryl, and Mary Lawlor. 2000. Learning from Stories: Narrative Interviewing in Cross-Cultural Research. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 7: 4–14.
- Mirza, Heidi S. 1992. *Young, Female and Black*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mirza, Heidi S. 2008. *Race, Gender and Educational Desire: Why Black Women Succeed and Fail*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mirza, Heidi S. 2013. A Second Skin': Embodied Intersectionality, Transnationalism and Narratives of Identity and Belonging among Muslim Women in Britain. *Women's Studies International Forum* 36: 5–15. [CrossRef]
- Modood, Tariq, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ricard Zapata-Barrero. 2006. *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Moreras, Jordi. 2006. ¿Que vuelvan los reyes católicos! Los conflictos en torno a la presencia musulmana en Catalunya. In *Polítiques de l'Islam y models d'Europa*. Barcelona: Caixa Sabadell, pp. 159–86.
- Morgan, George, and Scott Poynting, eds. 2016. *Global Islamophobia: Muslims and moral panic in the West*. New York: Routledge.
- Narciso, Laia. 2010. Comentari: Producció científica sobre la immigració negroafricana a Espanya i Catalunya. Revisant els objectius de l'acadèmia. *Quaderns-e de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia* 15: 76–95.
- Narciso, Laia, and Sílvia Carrasco. 2017. Mariama on the Move. Capital migratorio y segundas generaciones en la emigración juvenil española. *Migraciones* 43: 147–74. [CrossRef]
- Ogbu, John U. 1981. School Ethnography: A Multilevel Approach. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 12: 3–29.
- Parella, Sònia. 2016. Panoràmica de la pobresa de la població immigrada a Catalunya. *Revista d'economia catalana i de sector Public* 103: 124–32.
- Phoenix, Ann, and Pamela Pattynama. 2006. Editorial. Intersectionality. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13: 187–92. [CrossRef]
- Roth, Kenneth. 2016. *Politics of Fear Threatens Rights. World Report 2016: Events 2015*. Philadelphia: Seven Stories Press.
- Ryan, Louise. 2013. 'Islam Does Not Change': Young People Narrating Negotiations of Religion and Identity. *Journal of Youth Studies* 17: 446–60. [CrossRef]
- Serracant, Paucoord. 2013. Enquesta a la joventut de Catalunya 2012. In *Transicions juvenils i condicions materials d'existència*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Col·lecció Estudis, Núm. 34. Volume 1.
- Solórzano, Daniel G., and Tara J. Yosso. 2002. Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 8: 23–44. [CrossRef]
- Suárez-Orozco, Carola, and Desirée Baolian Qin. 2006. Gendered Perspectives in Psychology: Immigrant Origin Youth. *International Migration Review* 40: 165–98. [CrossRef]
- Valenzuela, Angela. 1999. *Subtractive Schooling, Caring Relations, and Social Capital in the Schooling of US-Mexican Youth*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Vives, Luna, and Sesé Sité. 2010. Negra Española, Negra Extranjera: Dos historias de una misma discriminación. *Revista de Estudios de Juventud* 89: 165–86.
- Yılmaz, Ferruh. 2012. Right-Wing Hegemony and Immigration: How the Populist Far-Right Achieved Hegemony through the Immigration Debate in Europe. *Current Sociology* 60: 368–80. [CrossRef]
- Yılmaz, Ferruh. 2015. From Immigrant worker to Muslim Immigrant: Challenges for Feminism. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22: 37–52. [CrossRef]
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. Belonging and the Politics of Belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40: 197–214. [CrossRef]
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2007. Intersectionality, Citizenship and Contemporary Politics of Belonging. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 10: 561–74. [CrossRef]
- Yuval-Davis, Nira, Floya Anthias, and Eleonore Kofman. 2006. Secure Borders and Safe Haven: The Gendered Politics of Belonging beyond Social Cohesion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28: 513–35. [CrossRef]



Article

The Charnegroes: Black Africans and the Ontological Conflict in Catalonia

Saiba Bayo

Department of Political and Social Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, 08005 Barcelona, Spain; saiba.bayo@upf.edu

Abstract: This paper frames an in depth reflection on the current social and political changes and the emerging phenomenon of body politics of migrant and racialized groups in Europe. The ongoing discussion aims to address the meaning of “being” Catalan for Black Africans in Catalonia. It is grounded on a criterion of ontological commitment and the epistemological aspect of ethnography. I dig into the debate about what makes a racial identity salient in the context of national identity rhetoric. I look thoroughly at the outcomes of the encounter between Black African migrants and the constant resignification of Catalan national identity. I aim to disentangle the racial premises and tackle what Black Africans share once the racial questions are removed. My approach stands within the growing field of postcolonial criticism to understand historical continuities and ontological conflicts. I focus on culture, race, and identity to analyze the cultural dynamics of Senegalese migrants and Equatoguinean communities within the national identity building process in Catalonia. I coined a new concept, *Charnegroes*, to propose a practical explanation of the emergence of body politics and the changing reality of the relationship between the “us” and the “other” under the recurrent transitions between old and new, colonial and postcolonial, the past and the future.

Keywords: Charnegroes; Black Africans; Catalonia; national identity; racism; Africanness

Citation: Bayo, Saiba. 2021. The Charnegroes: Black Africans and the Ontological Conflict in Catalonia. *Social Sciences* 10: 257. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10070257>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 12 May 2021
Accepted: 1 July 2021
Published: 7 July 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

From the aftermath of Spain’s integration into the European Union in 1986, an important number of Black Africans have settled in Catalonia, pushing the regional government to implement policies to integrate these newcomers into the Catalan society. Meanwhile, Catalonia was experiencing a process of nation building (Solé 1982; Candel 1985; Shafir 1995). Since the 1980s, the building of national identity in Catalonia has produced a passionate debate on cultural identity and citizenship (Conversi 1997; Ainaud 1980; Barreda 1985). Still today, the debate on national identity in Catalonia constitutes a controversy. Jordi Pujol—the former president of Catalonia and one of the theoreticians of “catalanity”—remains the Catalan nationalist leader who deploys the most powerful political discourse to “re-adjust” the notion of citizenship to the idea of national identity in Catalonia. He then declared: “Is Catalan anyone who works and lives in Catalonia and wants to be it” (Pujol 1976).

The narrative on national identity in Catalonia unravels an ontological commitment beyond the facticity of cultural encounters. It places before us an emotional debate that encompasses awareness of being Catalan within history and the controversy surrounding the need to preserve the language, political system, and institutions Catalonia inherited from the medieval era (Cingolani 2015; Sobresques 2015). Such a debate is mainly rooted in a “utilitarian cultural orientation” (Fok et al. 2016), which implies that all those who had settled in Catalonia and had improved their living conditions and accomplished their economic aspirations would adhere to a kind of “civic nationalism” (Roshwald 2016).

However, one should wonder if the change from the status of migrant to citizen will turn them into a Catalan. The idea of being/becoming Catalan constitutes a challenge for minorities and presents a dilemma about “what exists out there” in terms of identity. It

understands identity as an attribute or a political reification of subjectivities that relies on theoretical constructions and psychological boundaries. In this sense, even if one endorses a multicultural interpretation (Kymlicka 2010; Taylor 1992) of the Catalan national identity, he or she might expect social minorities like Black African collectives to reproduce their cultural dynamics as a subcategory of the Catalan national identity.

This paper delves into the growing field of postcolonialism¹ to engage in a critical dialogue to elucidate the cultural dynamics of Black Africans in Catalonia to show how they contribute to creating new spaces for diversity in a multiracial society. It examines the relationship between the management of identity politics and the forms and conditions of representation in the context of building a national identity. Moreover, despite the extensive literature on integration policies and attitudes towards immigrants in Europe (Morales et al. 2015; Zapata-Barero 2000; Zapata-Barero et al. 2003, 2008; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Penninx et al. 2014), an analysis of racialized groups that considers the phenomenon of cultural negotiation in the context of ontological conflict is still neglected.

It is then tempting to ask how the cultural background of Black African collectives in Catalonia fit with the idea of “being Catalan”? Answering this question will allow us to tackle Black Africans’ cultural dynamics, either as a form of mimetism or a cosmopolitan prescription of being as part of a universal human nation. Can Black Africans in Catalonia and their descendants become Catalan? If national identity relies on historic prescripts or the cultural determinism of belonging to a group, then it would be stimulating to ask whether becoming Catalan can be the claim or the aim of Black Africans and their descendants.

I do not seek to privilege Black African migrants’ rights to preserve their cultural identities over Catalonia’s national identity. Instead, I intend to deal with a critical and contextual analysis of cultural negotiation in a multiracial and multiethnic society. My approach consists of assessing the social conditionings and normalizations that incorrectly assume a stable nature of identity and power relations. I rely on a criterion of ontological conflicts and the epistemological aspect of ethnography (Blasser 2013; Bricker 2016; Abid 2017), followed by a critical analysis of institutional forms of negation and exclusion. Black Africans’ cultural dynamics allow us to understand their capacity to build a sphere of representation.

For a cultural dynamic is nongenetic information that is transmissible from one person/group to another, which can potentially affect the behavior (Kashima 2014, p. 3); and I compare two social groups: the Senegalese and the Equatoguineans collectives in Catalonia. For instance, I consider the sociocultural associations founded by Black Africans and their role in the dynamics of representation in discourse and the promotion of their cultural dynamics. I assess the colonial legacy and the postcolonial realities of these two groups. I consider three headings: (1) The management of integration policies and the rhetoric of national identity in Catalonia. (2) The cultural dynamics of Black Africans in the broad context of postcoloniality. (3) The emergence of the body politics of the *charnegroes*², based on the exhibition of Blackness by Black African descendants.

I examine essays, novels, stories, academic literature, and newspapers, combined with interviews, observations, and debates with members of both the Equatoguineans and Senegalese collectives. I begin by discussing the rhetoric of national identity and its impact on some aspects of integration policies in Catalonia. Later, I address the colonial legacy, ontological commitment and cultural practices of the Senegalese and the Equatoguineans. Finally, I coined the new concept of *Charnegroes* to assess the cultural encounter and define the emergent “body politics” (Brown and Gershon 2017) shaped by Black African descendants in Catalonia. The results offer new paths to understand the complexity of cultural encounters and how migration and mobility play into this identity construct. It offers the possibility to undertake research on the cultural dynamics of Black African collectives in Catalonia and provides some conceptual tools to challenge the possibility/impossibility of becoming Catalan for a category of citizens.

2. Theoretical Discussion

The triumph of ideologies hostile to cultural diversity and the changing phenomenon of global migration requires new conceptual spheres that can tackle the complexity of cultural dynamics and national identity in a multicultural and multiethnic society. The early ideas that one usually has in mind when considering national identity often connect us with the visible aspects of national symbols such as monuments, the buildings, the national flag, anthem and motto. Doubtlessly, these elements represent strong emotional ties and shape a feeling of belonging to a group and an environment, underpinning the right to claim a common history. Nevertheless, there are also abstract or nonrational factors such as languages, symbols, beliefs, legends, or stories that are relevant in shaping the national identity.

Edouard Glissant is undoubtedly one of the postcolonial thinkers whose contribution to national identity remains crucial. Almost all of Glissant's work explores the conscious construction of a collective identity. For instance, he considers national identity as the prelude to resistance and national liberation (Glissant 1981). However, such a perspective of national identity has undergone considerable changes throughout Glissant's career. Identity is also the result of profound changes and transformations in contact with the other (Glissant 1990). In this sense, the concept of identity fluidity will end up determining Glissant's positioning. Indeed, Glissant believes that it is through contact with others that one discerns different ways of being and frames one's identity based on intercultural exchanges (Glissant 2006).

Frantz Fanon's influences in the formulation of Glissant's earlier theoretical work is remarkable. National consciousness and national culture are two fields of criticism that attract Fanon's attention. Regarding culture, Fanon holds that "Extracted from the past to be displayed in all its splendour, is not necessarily that of his own country" (Fanon 1963, p. 211). Substantially, national consciousness concerning culture is also the fruit of institutional performance. As Fanon writes: "National consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been" (Ibid, p. 148).

Arguably, national identity aims to define peoples according to what they should (or could) be, instead of who they are and where they belong; its construction implies (or requires) the suppression of the cultural identities of minority groups (Rex 1996; Scott 1990). National identity then places us before an ontological conflict, for it tries to simplify the competition between different realities and the multiplicity of histories, cultures and subjectivities. Ontological conflicts emerge as forms of contestation in the context of political and ideological reification, which claim to reduce the existence of communities to a simple convergence of identities.

Ontological conflicts are, therefore, the result of the resistance to the modern assumptions of cultural hegemonies and the colonial mimesis. Mario Blasser (2013) identifies two headings in approaching ontological conflicts in social sciences: First, "to consider ontological conflicts as a possibility, one must question some of the most profoundly established assumptions in the social sciences, for instance, the assumptions that we are all modern and that the differences that exist are between cultural perspectives on one single reality" (Blasser 2013, p. 1). The second heading has a methodological feature, for it outlines that "ontological conflicts pose the challenge of how to account for them without reiterating (and reenacting) the ontological assumption of a reality "out there" being described" (ibid).

We should bear in mind that beyond the controversy on cultural encounters, the story of the postcolonial world is the history of a hegemonic world order shaped by the clichés of an "overhang universalism" (Diagne and Amselle 2018). From these remarks, it becomes necessary and even demanded to consider, at least through our research methods applied in social sciences, that "there are also histories of the diverse traditions and practices that cannot be reduced to ways of generating surplus or of conquering and ruling others" (Asad 1973, p. 49).

Suppose one acknowledges the right—of the State or a political entity—to build a national identity by imposing a cultural standard for all. In that case, it should be crucial to be aware of the desire of minorities to keep existing according to their ways of life. For instance, during colonialization, the colonial empire imposes different cultural standards on building a sense of belonging to a (French, British, Spanish, etc.) nation. In this sense, the central inquiry is that colonialism produces the cultural encounter between the West and the nonwestern world that had induced the profound ontological conflict between “intimate enemies” (Nandy 1983).

Nowadays, formerly colonized peoples and their former colonizers share a common space under postcolonial uncertainty. This coexistence becomes a complex issue in global migration, where the formerly indigenous have evolved to the status of second class citizens (Cash and Kinnvall 2017). The claim for particularities imposes overcoming the colonial rationality. However, forty years after Claude Levi-Strauss proposed methods to innovate social and cultural diversity, Samuel Huntington will point out the danger of the “Clash of Civilizations” (Huntington 1993). In sum, the anxiety of the postcolonial transition exacerbates the tensions between the identities of dominant groups and subalterns (Spivak 2010).

In that context, fostering a national identity remains crucial in Europe. For instance, in *Democracy without Nations?* Pierre Manent’s (2007) approach of rethinking the social world in Europe oscillates between colonial anthropology and the dogma of frozen identities. Manent failed to propose a practical explanation of the social European. Instead, he paints a “self-schema” of Europe, grounded in the foundations of a nation state. His idea of national identity is simplistic, essentialist and monolingual. Manent writes: ‘Our languages do not express a sublime “cultural” essence that is fundamentally apolitical or metapolitical. Rather, they express the history of our respective political regimes’ (Ibid, p. 30). Thus, for Manent, European cultural values encompass the totality of universal principles, rely on a “moral compass” and cannot coexist with other cultures; thus, it cannot contemplate cultural diversity as political expression.

Accordingly, the concern for national identity in European democracies highlights a passionate debate on identity politics. The general trends of identity politics, according to Jürgen Habermas (1998, p. 48), consist of the “democratic management” of the public sphere and the establishment of a normative and cultural “framework” that would apply to all. These republican principles continue to influence policy making on identity politics in European democracies. Beyond, it shapes the foundations of political rhetoric and reveals a fear that the cultural practices of some migrants could undermine national identity.

Meanwhile, multiculturalism emerged as a theory of cultural diversity to tackle conflicts of coexistence in a multiracial society. One of its well known theorists, Charles Taylor criticizes the modern notion of identity (which includes national identity) in western democracies. Taylor asserts that radical identity management is embedded in a liberal view and follows two main models of politics: a “politics of difference-blind”, which focuses on the idea of the recognition of the unique identity of each individual or group, and a “politics of equal dignity” that relies on the idea of equal dignity for all the citizens (Taylor 1992, p. 42). However, both models have followed the notion of public good, have failed to manage the problem of recognition, and have promoted a discriminatory view of identity.

Other scholars have severely criticized multiculturalism, which they consider obsolete and unable to provide a practical explanation of the complexity of the current social and political reality (Chapman 2010; Ercan 2012; Levey 2009). Postmulticulturalism (Kymlicka 2010; Vertovec 2010) was then expected to better understand present social and political changes, such as the changing nature of global migration, new social formations, and the persistently weak socioeconomic standing of immigrant and ethnic minorities (Vertovec 2010). Postmulticulturalism might help to better accommodate social minorities and foster, at the same time, national identities.

However, postmulticulturalism entails significant paradoxes, for it reinforces rather than counteracts the problematic features of multiculturalism (Gozdecka et al. 2014, p. 51).

In recent years, the narrative of the integration of migrants in Europe appeals to a hierarchical view of the society, promotes the imposition of western values, and does not fully recognizing the possibility that the cultural dynamics of immigrants can coexist with the culture of the host society. The white paper of the Council of Europe highlights that “[Strategies for integration must necessarily cover all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects . . .]” (Council of Europe 2008, p. 11). However, the vagueness of its contents means that immigrants from nonwestern countries would have to abide by the laws but also the cultural heritage of Europe.

3. Integration Policies and National Identity in Catalonia: A Taxonomy

After Pujol published his essay on *Immigració: problema i esperança de Catalunya* in 1976, he defended his work by saying that he had intended to avoid jeopardizing Catalans.³ However, “behind this supposedly inclusive speech and politically correct, they exist and have existed in Catalonia situations of marginalization and social exclusion towards immigrants” (Clua 2014, p. 37). Pujol’s assumptions rely on a strong political agenda and reveal the concern for setting a benchmark for the nationalist project. He adopts orthodox “cultural politics” (Vertovec 2011) to foster a collective national identity; maybe to claim for a sovereign state or the right to decide which relationship with Spain Catalonia deserves (Vázquez 2013b; Guibernau 2014).

The idea of “being Catalan” is embedded in historical essentialism muddled with geographical conditions, for it claims that “the set of mountains, plains, rivers, wetlands, forests, beaches, caves that constitute the territory of Catalonia, has contributed powerfully to make the Catalan as they are. It has helped to cut out the character of people of Catalonia” (Parés and Borràs 1999, p. 4). Thus, “being Catalan” entails the assumption of propositions that conceive the nation of Catalonia as fixed and homogeneous entities that express the particular spirit of a particular people—the people of Catalonia—who remain circumscribed to a culture, a history and a territory.

During the 2010 regional elections, Artur Mas appealed to a strong emotional political message through the slogan “the will of the people”. Mas had a specific idea about the significance of the “people of Catalonia” which proved to be a very closed concept determined according to a racial construction. For him, “Catalan cultural DNA is shaped during the belonging to the Franco-Germanic world. Thus, something must remain in our DNA, because Catalans have umbilical ties with their past that makes us more Germanic and less Roman”.⁴ Otherness characterizes the construction of national identity in Catalonia. For instance, the term “charnego” was coined to identify the children of mixed marriages between Spanish migrants and native Catalan (Clua 2011; Aramburu 2016). However, the term will later be extended to all native Catalan of Spanish descendants. Montserrat Clua i Faine places the origin of the word around the 1490s however, she explains that it was from the 1970s that it acquired a pejorative meaning in Catalonia (Clua 2011, p. 67).

This racial conception of Catalan identity has deeply stained the perceptions of integration policies. Two dimensions constitute the backbone of Catalan integration policies: (1) participation in public culture and (2) promoting the Catalan language to build public culture. Catalan authorities conceive integration programs to promote participation in public life and coexistence in a religious plurality by maintaining a good level of coexistence and offering many people opportunities for better lives (Generalitat 2014). However, politics has often been limited to more or less rigid protocols, which have not been far beyond the providing of language assistance to newcomers and public officers (Carbonell 2006). Integration politics often relies on discriminatory programs influenced by political discourses (Rubio-Carbonero and Zapata-Barrero 2017).

The action program of Catalan identity politics pursues the purpose of the educational success of the children of immigrants, social inclusion of vulnerable groups of immigrants, and access to public services by immigrants (Generalitat 2017, pp. 22–23). Such a proposal may achieve the recognition and inclusion of all, regardless of their origin and cultural background. Political participation in Catalonia is salient in the political slogans underpinning

the moral standards of the institutions. However, the achievement of equality, inclusion, diversity, and respect remains a basic discourse, and its implementation is superfluous. For instance, equal opportunities for all is still at the stage of conceptualization and the right to vote of immigrants is subordinate to external factors despite the endowment of institutions on this issue.

The Catalan language is considered the “common public language for all citizens” (Generalitat 2008). For instance, in 2004, Catalonia’s authorities launched the schooling plan for migrant children who were born outside of Catalonia and arrived at schooling age. This was supposed to be a pragmatic action program to achieve the full integration (Carbonell 2006, p. 9). However, it embraces the ideological assumption that the teaching of the Catalan language determines the interaction of students from other countries (Generalitat 2005). Doubtlessly, the content was not intended or designed to be adapted to the needs of the immigrant’s children. On the contrary, it requires that migrant children adapt to the cultural reality of Catalonia. That poses the serious problem of learning for most immigrant children, especially those of Black African communities.

Migrant integration has been a controversial social issue to which institutions and concerned agents have tried to provide some solutions. For instance, in 2008, left wing political parties and nonprofit organizations signed an intersectional pact called *Pacte Nacional per a la Immigració*, “Immigration National Pact” (Generalitat 2008). The content bears on an assumption of multiculturalism even though, according to Artur Mas, it was a simple declaration of intentions. Meanwhile, Mas proposed to subordinate the citizenship of migrants to an effective integration to Catalan culture. The idea is that immigrants must identify themselves with Catalan cultural background and identity.⁵ Josep Antoni Duran i Lleida⁶ would go further, declaring that “not everyone fits here, and those who have to stay have to be perfectly integrated”⁷.

Arguably, some categories of migrants from west African countries who arrived in Catalonia en masse between 2000 and 2008 are seen by Duran i Lleida and Artur Mas as a threat to Catalans’ culture and ways of life. The crucial point of this controversy is that the integration process begins with the migrant’s contact with the host society, but we can hardly attest to when it ends. Cultural and administrative barriers raised during the process turn migrants into residual citizens and mere consumers of public services. For instance, the implementation of most proposals of integration is performed by the political parties. Likewise, CDC founded the *Fundació Nous Catalans* (New Catalans Foundation) to promote newcomers’ integration in Catalan society. That project was an extension of the *Casa Gran del Catalanisme* (the great house of Catalanism), conceived by Artur Mas himself in 2007, to “refound the idea of being Catalan”⁸.

A section assigned to the Black Africans was created within *Fundació Nous Catalans* and was named *Espai Afrocatalan* (the place for Afrocatalan). “The place for Afrocatalan” was intended to promote the participation of Black Africans in Catalonia. However, the purpose of the organization was focused on promoting Catalan culture, language, and militancy for Catalonia independence. Inclusion into so-called public culture only exists in political discourses (Sepa Bonaba 2017, p. 337). The manager of the “place for Afrocatalan” had to file a lawsuit against *Fundació Nous Catalans* for nonpayment of his salary for two years.⁹

Moreover, despite the ambitious agenda on integration and cultural diversity, the debate on racism in Catalonia is downplayed in theoretical studies on diversity management. On the contrary, due to the implication of national identity for the integration of migrants, Catalan institutions normalize the exclusion/inclusion of minorities such as Black Africans. Beyond the tolerance of racist arguments that link national identity and the management of identity politics, racism remains taboo for Catalan institutions. This institutional racism is based on a perverted alteration of cultural and sociological difference, which appears as a question of a relationship with the “other”, but which are instrumentalized and broadcasted by the public institutions.

Practices such as racial/ethnic profiling by the police, the harshness of renting a house, and hate crimes are common in Catalonia (Añón et al. 2013; Garcia Matin and Sánchez 2020). Despite Catalan institutions trying to project an image of a diverse and inclusive society, the celebration of public events, sponsored by institutions, promote phenomena like blackface. These remarks point out Black peoples' invisibility in public spaces. Beyond the actions of nongovernmental organizations like SOS Racism¹⁰, there are no concrete politics against racism. The defense of diversity Catalan institutions pursue consists of absorbing Black African cultural dynamics into a public culture, which does not differ from fostering Catalan cultural hegemony. However, we have to remember that cultural diversity does not mean the domestication of the culture of the other.

4. Black African Cultural Dynamics

The Black African community is racially homogeneous but very diverse ethnically and culturally. However, colonialism has obscured such "social divergence". Western and Arab domination created conditions for the emergence of new subjectivities and identities in African societies. Some identities of Black Africans are products of their interaction with other civilizations (Glissant 1997, 2006). Arguably, Black African cultural dynamics in Catalonia would be difficult to understand without examining its colonial legacy. In fact, the colonial legacy of Equatoguineans continues to influence their relationship with the rest of the Black Africans in Catalonia.

However, the main differences between the Equatoguinean and Senegalese's cultural dynamics in Catalonia are religious, linguistic, and intergroup relational (Sow 2003). In addition to this, the arrival of boat peoples from Senegal to the Spanish coasts and the popularity of street vendors, known as "top manta"¹¹ have determined the main image we often have of the Senegalese in Spain/Catalonia. These two phenomena have overshadowed the reality and complexity of the Senegalese community in Catalonia. These differences are crucial when analyzing the groups' concerns, how their collectives are organized, and their relation with the phenomenon of national identity and integration politics in Catalonia.

4.1. Equatoguineans between Colonial Legacy and Cultural Dynamics

Donato Ndongo highlights the burden of the colonial legacy by considering the national Culture of Equatoguineans as "undeniably Hispano-Bantu" (de Castro Rodríguez 2019, p. 246). This statement underpins an ontological conflict. It shows that there is no single definition of Equatoguineans as one people and that the colonial alienation had profoundly provoked the "culturally anaesthesia" of Equatoguinean intellectuals (Evita 1996). The self-identification with the Spanish culture that claims Donato relies on his assumption of the colonial legacy. However, despite this cultural alienation, Equatoguineans collectives have been struggling to preserve part of their collective memory, like most Black Africans.

For instance, Juan Balboa's (1985) autobiographical novel narrates the ambivalence and ontological conflict among Equatoguineans. Despite the sophisticated Christian education he received in Spain, the protagonist decides to return to his homeland, on the island of Bioko, to become involved in recovering the traditional spirituality of the Bubi people. In María Nsue-Angué's (2008) novel, we can appreciate the sorrows of N'nganga, Ekomo's wife, for having to bury the corpse of Ekomo in Spain and against the traditional beliefs of her people. In this novel, Maria rescues the figure of the elder, the Father of Nnanga, who guides her to recover her traditional identity. These traits are characteristics of traditional African Societies.

The point is to know which dimension of Equatoguineans' subjectivity is subordinated to the Spanish/Catalan colonial legacy. It is well known that colonial governmentality consisted of exacerbating ethnic confrontation among the colonized society. "The colonial government began to practice a policy of separation of different ethnic groups, favouring, above all, Bubies and Ndowes, and presenting them in the eyes of the Fang as the smartest, hard-workers, intelligents and, therefore wealthier. On the contrary, the Fang were lazy, uneducated, and poor. Still, they represented a permanent danger to the Bubis"

(Ndongo 1977, p. 74). The implications of such considerations on the relationship between the groups is crucially dire.

Although Equatorial Guinea became independent from Spain in 1968, the colonial rationality is perpetuated by postcolonial political elites (Mbana 2004). The different ethnic groups find themselves in a new political reality and social context where the notion of national identity is displaced by the “Witchcraft of the Fangs” (Mbana 2004, p. 45). Mbana points out that postcolonial nationalism toils with the dynamics of subjugation led by the dominant group of the Fang people. The distortion and perversion of the history of Equatoguineans impacts the relationship between the different groups, both in Equatorial Guinea and the Diaspora, mainly present in Spain.

Catalonia became the homeland of many Equatoguineans fleeing the atrocities of the dictatorship of Francisco Macias (1968–1979) followed by the current dictator, Obiang Nguema. One can expect that the historical connections that tie Equatoguineans to their colonial legacy continue to influence the intergroup relations of the different groups. However, it is important to pay attention to tensions between Spanish mainstream cultural heritage and Equatoguineans’ ways of life. Equatoguineans in Catalonia have created new spaces and set up new forums to talk about themselves and tell their histories and experiences. For years, they organized events and established forums to transmit their histories, values, and culture, and to teach their children their languages. They undertake a collective project to remember and practice their traditions and spiritualities, tell their stories and rewrite their history outside Spanish/Catalan institutions.

The collective dynamics of Equatoguineans is not often linked to the national identity of their country of origin, nor to the Black African cultural demonstration. The weight of the Spanish cultural heritage often inhibits their possibilities of undertaking a challenge to Spanish/Catalan institutions. Their closeness to the Spanish/Catalan cultural background and the disconnection with Black Africans have possible explanations. Sharing part of the Spanish/Catalan cultural heritage entails an ontological commitment. Equatoguineans use the Spanish language and their children born in Catalonia speak both Catalan and Spanish. Even the children of those married to their fellow (racially and ethnically speaking) communicate between themselves in Spanish or Catalan. Most of them do not even speak the African language of their parents (Sepa Bonaba 1993, p. 33). However, the reaction of Equatoguineans before the Catalan integration policy is marked by a cultural duality.

4.2. *The Preserving the Collective Memories among the Equatoguineans*

“I have been living in Catalonia since I was seventeen, and I somehow feel Catalan. However, I cannot stop being Bubi for it”.¹² Most Equatoguineans have achieved primary studies before their arrival in Spain, and many others have continued to higher education (Fall 2017). This means that integration into the host society is less problematic than that which we can understand among other Black Africans. The cultural background and their concern for political life are quite different from most of the Black African collective. Although their collective’s fragmentation weakens the intergroup relationship within their community and among Black Africans. However, the vindication of their peculiarities has maintained their cultural dynamism.

The Equatoguinean collective in Catalonia (but also in other parts of Spain) founded four sociocultural associations, according to ethnic affiliation, to encourage sociability and foster their traditional identities cultural identities. For example, the association Rieba-pua groups the Bubi, the Viyil represents the Anobonese (ambö), the Fangs created the Biafang, and the Ndowe founded Rhombe. These ethnic based associations had promoted successful cultural events in Catalonia. Nevertheless, there is still a feeling of nonrecognition and a lack of actions that promote their inclusion. “During thirty years our associations are involved in organizing events to promote our culture. However, there is still no clear policy to promote our participation as part of the society.”¹³

Bubi collectives have been involved in organizing celebrations like the day of “E’lo e Ritta” that allow them to bring their children together in a single space to teach some

aspects of Bubi Culture and history. They also celebrate other events such as the *Bisila* and the day of “E’lo oté e Ria”. These celebrations offer the opportunity to learn the traditional Bubi spirituality and help to strengthen brotherhood. However, the particularity of these events is the considerable trait of syncretism due to the influence of Christianity. All these celebrations constitute a resistance mechanism against Catalan/Spanish cultural assimilation.

Due to the reduced number of the collective membership, the *Ambö* founded the association *Viyil* to foster intergroup relationships. *Viyil* means parliament in Annobonese. The association enables *Ambö* to recreate a symbolic representation of the traditional political sphere. The purpose consisted of promoting the Annobonese Culture among native and other collectives while they inform about the reality of the island of Annobon and the dictatorship of Equatorial Guinea. The *Ambö* self-published the “*VYIL*” cultural outreach magazine. According to the former president of the association, “Our main action is focused on disseminating the pieces of information and the news they receive from the Island of Anobon to denounce the repression of its people by the Obiang Ngeuma’s dictatorship.”¹⁴.

Although some of these associations still exist officially, most of them are no longer operating. We must bear in mind that the particularity of the Equatoguinean community (e.g., its fragmentation and its ethnic orientation) in Catalonia complicates the articulation of collective dynamics. However, the lack of support from public institutions makes it difficult to develop cultural activities through their associations. The promotion of cultural events undertaken by these collectives would foster diversity. Since some characteristics of Equatoguineans’ cultural dynamics reflect some aspect of cultural resistance, an analysis of the relationship between the Senegalese’s cultural practices can reveal interesting information to continue to deal with ontological conflict.

4.3. Senegalese Collective Consciousness and the Question of Representation

The first Senegalese associations created in Catalonia were informal organizations that brought together immigrants from a specific area (town, village or region) in Senegal. They were mainly focused on gathering funds to help members who were sick, expatriate corpses, assist their fellows in administrative regularization, job search and housing (Giró-Miranda and Romeu 2013). However, as the population of Senegalese migrants in Catalonia increased, the registration of associations went up as well. Around 2015, the Senegalese community had registered almost 200 associations, but only about 80 were operating. The majority of these associations were founded to undertake social and communitarian projects (school, hospitals, services) in their area of origin.¹⁵

The community undertook a collective dynamic to promote intergroup relationships between the different organizations and strengthen ties with their country of origin. Hence, in 2003, they founded the Federation of Senegalese Associations of Catalonia (CASC). Therefore, the priority of the CASC is to carry out a diagnosis to find the tools that enable them to combine different sensibilities around the specific issues that affect the Senegalese community.

The strategy of CASC consists of promoting dialogue between Catalan institutions and the community, while fostering their members’ religious and traditional practices. This allows them to filter some information and avoid a possible crash. Although most the associations are not affiliated—due to the informal nature and the programmatic orientations—CASC constitutes one of the best solutions for cultural intermediation. Founded by an immigrant community, its institutional dimension makes it the ideal interlocutor between Senegalese collectives and Catalan institutions.

Senegalese migrants deploy dynamics to correct some discriminatory aspects of integration policies that harm the interest of their community members. Due to cultural and linguistic barriers, many Senegalese have to struggle to fulfil the schooling of their kids in an environment that requires them to become a citizen under the new cultural burden of

Catalanità. The context poses a challenge, for compulsory schooling does not fit with the traditions and the reality of the majority of Senegalese migrants.

Most Senegalese migrants are Muslim, which means that most were sent to Koranic school during their childhood. Consequently, even if their children have to attend public school in Catalonia, it is common to see an informal organization of Senegalese that allows them to send their kids to afternoon classes to learn Koran and Islam's practices. Moreover, due to the French colonial heritage, official public education in Senegal is highly elitist (Sabatier 1978). It is common in Senegal to abandon basic schooling to learn a trade or profession in an informal school.

We should add that some aspects of Catalan integration policies provoke negative attitudes towards Catalan institutions among Senegalese communities. There is neither an explicit protocol nor a clear idea about including foreign culture in the teaching of migrant children. Catalan integration policies propose generic texts where specific mentions are made to inclusion and equal opportunity for all, but when push comes to shove, each school manages matters as they please. This induces some parents' lack of participation in public spaces, such as school's parents' clubs, where their presence is crucial for their children's schooling.

Leaders of the Senegalese collectives are aware of this problem, and they know that "Catalan institutions will not facilitate access to public spaces. They probably don't know how to do it, because they ignore our reality. That is why we will have to conquer those spaces by our own strategies".¹⁶ CASC has implemented different programs to fill the gap created by the integration policies. The strategy of CASC can be considered a cultural resistance, for their cultural dynamics are focused on creating a space for participation in their community while maintaining institutional relations with Catalan institutions. Despite this close relationship, being or becoming Catalan is not a concern.

4.4. The Dynamics of Cultural Resistance

The Senegalese filmmaker, Ousmane Sembène, depicts the clash of civilizations (African, European and Arabic) in his film *Ceddo* (Sembène 1977). *Ceddo* is about the beginning of French colonization in the 19th century while Islam, through the Almoravids¹⁷, was consolidating its influence in Senegal. During colonization, two forms of cultural movements—led by Muslim leaders and native popular communities—emerged simultaneously to wage resistance against the colonizers.¹⁸ The Islamic brotherhood then focused their religious practices and preached to contain French cultural alienation (Grandhomme 2009; de Jong 2010; Diouf 2000; Bruschi 2005). Encouraging nonviolence in the resistance against Western cultural domination, these religious organizations remain influential in the social life of the Senegalese.

In Catalonia, there is a strong representation of these religious brotherhoods. As in their country of origin, Senegalese migrants replicate the cultural dynamics and forms of organization of the Islamic brotherhoods. Likewise, they celebrate the *Magal* to remember Ahmadou Bamba's ostracism by the French colonial administration from 1895 to 1907. Members of the Malick Sy brotherhood and Baay Ibrahim Ñas identify themselves with the *tijaniyah*. The Malick Sy brotherhood followers proclaim themselves *tijan*, while the followers of Ibrahim Ñas coin the appellation *talibe baay* (disciples of Baay). They celebrate events following the *tijaniyah* calendar but also with the so called *Gamu* (spiritual retirement). The brotherhood of the Layen is very singular among Senegalese religious organizations. In Senegal, they are mostly settled in the suburb of Dakar. In Catalonia, members of the Layen brotherhood celebrate the anniversary of the death of Limamou Laye every year.

The Dahira (Islamic school and place of spiritual retirement) is the name given to the Senegalese Islamic brotherhood organizations. The membership of a Dahira is open to everyone, and the Dahiras are known for their hospitality towards newcomers. Most of them play the role of "social house" for immigrants in need of help. Due to their religious patterns, the Dahiras are the best organized and operating organizations among

the Senegalese immigrant collective. They are autonomous, nonprofit and self-financed organizations that often carry out their activities outside the institutional framework.

We have eight Dahiras of the murid brotherhood in Catalonia, seven Dahiras of *tijaniya* (two of them are managed by the *Talibe baay*), and four Dahiras of *layen*. Membership neither requires belonging to a specific ethnic group nor being from a particular part of Senegal or the world.¹⁹ Dahiras do not defend ties to a region, a city or town of Senegal. They do not even claim Senegalese nationality. Each of these organizations has its calendar of events related to a specific moment of their history. The organization of these events serves to ground their collective consciousness and strengthen their intergroup relationships.

Apart from the Muslim brotherhood, Christianity's followers also have their communities and organize their activities both in parallel and in close collaboration with Senegalese non-Christians. Most of these collectives carry out their events outside institutions' umbrella. Their relations with Catalan institutions are insignificant and often limited to petitioning public spaces for important events when access to public spaces is necessary.

5. Claiming Particularities: Struggles against Exclusion and Racism

Almost thirty five years have passed since *La dialéctica de la identidad en Cataluña* (the dialectic of identity in Catalonia) by Andrés Barreda (1985). Barrera's study contains an in-depth sociological reflection to understand the complex phenomenon of group identities. It highlights the political rhetoric in the national identity building and strengthening process in Catalonia. A decade ago, Javier Pérez Andujar published *Paseos con mi madre* (Pérez Andujar 2011), which was followed by Jorge Javier Vázquez' autobiographical novel, *La vida iba en serio* (Vázquez 2013a). Despite the long horizon that separates these later two publications and Andrés Barrera's work, we remain at a crucial point of cultural clash in Catalonia that underpins otherness and racism in Catalan public institutions.

Desirée Bela-Lobedde's (2018) autobiographical book is part of the important productions of Black African descendants in Catalonia. "Being a black woman in Spain" intends to spark a debate on the burning issue of recognition in Catalonia, but also Spain. As an oeuvre of denunciation, Desirée does not claim for her Africanness, although she raises some interesting questions about the feeling of being black or Blackness. The text lacks a solid theoretical basis to enable the criticism of racism, and the style is very typical of a personal blog. However, Desirée achieved the goal of pointing out the discrimination and racism surrounding access to public spaces. As a young lady born to an African parent, the testimony of Desirée is valuable for understanding the context of social exclusion in Catalonia.

While the Senegalese and Equatoguineans cultural dynamics are marked by the consciousness of being part of groups shaped by culture and history, the strategy of Black African descendants focuses on the struggle against racism. In recent years, Black African descendants have undertaken some cultural dynamics.²⁰ We can see that their concern remains focused on the struggle against racism. Born in Catalonia/Spain, the agenda of Black African descendants substantially differed from that of their parents. Their aspirations are no longer the preservation of African cultural heritage. Moreover, for them, African cultures represent a "ghosted sanctuary". Self definition and self representation became the basis of creating an imaginative world, where they can create conditions for the redemption of the Black community.

The dynamics of Black African descendants are mainly framed in discourse production. Their agenda and program action aim to reject the homogeneity of the Catalan society to claim a space for the expression of their particularity. Silvia Albert's plays, such as *no es país para negras* "This is no country for negroes" (2016), provides us with some ideas with which to understand the concerns of Black African descendants. As Silvia herself states: "I was born and raised in a country where my nationality is not recognized because I have a different skin colour . . . I grew up with the feeling of not belonging anywhere".²¹ This self schema depicts a psychological fissure where the idea of being and belonging points out the problem of presence and representation.

Due to the complexity of cultural encounters in an environment marked by deep alienation and the social rejection of difference, this collective often deal with the crucial question of the social construction of “black identity”. An awareness of the social conditioning of the idea of being and belonging to a marginalized community brings them to assume their Blackness. They try to answer so many questions: What does it mean to be black or African in Spain/Catalonia? Are they blacks, Africans or “Afro-Catalan/Afro-Spanish etc.”? What does it mean to be Afro-Spanish/Afro-Catalan? Does the Catalan/Spanish national identity offer them the possibility to build their black referents? This conflict of identity underpins the traumatic self schema caused by the nonrecognition of racial and ethnic diversity and the rejection of the cultural background of their progenitors.

Some performances undertaken by Black African descendants in Catalonia show that their strategies remain a rejection of the stereotyped and discriminatory construction of the Catalan national identity. They experienced a trauma (of being nowhere), nourished by the genealogies of misery and the historical humiliation of the black nations due to slavery and colonization. Frantz Fanon described this psychological trauma: “In almost every case; we could see that the symptoms were, so to speak, like residues of emotional experiences” (Fanon 1963, p. 111). Fanon emphasizes that “it was not always a single event that was the cause of the symptom; most often, on the contrary, it arose out of multiple traumas, frequently analogous and repeated” (Ibid). Arguably, the collective memory of Black African descendants is often linked to traumatic scenes, wherein they represent “enemic residues” (Ibid).

Almost all of Silvia’s plays are about racism and Black invisibility in Spanish/Catalan society. Both “No es país para negras” and “blackface y otras verguenzas” depicts how Black African descendants are exposed to exclusion and humiliation both by society and Catalan public institutions. Silvia writes: “they do not realize that we are black, in fact, in Catalonia they are so busy with their affairs that they have not acknowledged that Black women exist” (Albert Sopale 2021, p. 341). As Desirée Bela, Silvia Albert does not claim an Africanness, nor the cultural background of Catalonia. Moreover, Silvia aims to raise the voices of Black African descendants to draw attention to their presence and claim their rights to be accounted not as passive citizens, but as an active part of society. That is, the claim is to be accounted for according to their particularities. It is a claim to be who they are and not what Catalan institutions want them to be.

Edouart Glissant (1997) explored the shallowness of judging the other according to one standard cultural autarchy, which loses sight of the exultant divergence of humanities. The interesting point to be emphasized here is that the possibility of being Catalan might not need to be defined by institutions; it does not have to be fixed or static and bounded by an essentialist understanding of national identity. The idea of being and belonging implies that every human being should consider the opacity of the other. Since to feel in solidarity with the other and build with her/him or to like what he/she does, it is not necessary to grasp him/her. It is not necessary to become him/her, nor to make him/her in one’s image (Glissant 1997, p. 193). Indeed, the claim of Black Africans and their descendants is more than a claim for recognition. It is also a struggle against racism and the defense of radical diversity.

6. Results: The Charnegroes and the Emergence of a Body Politic

Considering the context of globalization, we can argue that the dynamics of Black Africans and their descendants rely on a cross cultural construction of identity from a cosmopolitan perspective. For instance, based on the idea of the *Teranga*, a Wolof term that means hospitality and building community, Senegalese associations are more than cultural organizations, for they remain open to all and serve as a mechanism of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These are social groups where people gather efforts to help the community, celebrate a wedding, build a hospital in a town of origin, and build the relationship between their host society and their country of origin. The development

of cultural dynamics and collective actions of Senegalese is inextricably linked to the environment and the conditions of departure.

However, Black Africans in Catalonia give a critical place to the conservation of the culture and the histories that have been transmitted to them for generations. The aim of both Equatoguineans and the Senegalese is to transmit the cultural legacy of their communities (bubi, fang, wolof, Mandinka etc.) to their descendants without a specific focus on national identity. Some of them have partially achieved this task. "When asked for her origin, my daughter, born in the Sant Pablo hospital in Barcelona of a Catalan father, often answers that she is Equatoguinean. She does not refer to the nationality of Equatorial Guinea but to her Bubi cultural heritage".²² This means that Black African migrants focus on fostering spirituality, telling stories, and promoting folklore to produce and maintain their collective memory while creating a space for representation.

Keeping in mind the description that surrounds the conceptual vagueness of being African or "Afro" in Catalonia/Spain, Black African descendants' strategy rejects the racist assumptions of Pujol's notion of "being Catalan" that poses the serious problem of being citizens. For instance, "when I arrived in Catalonia I could read and count in French. However, they put me in a separate class where I was supposed to learn Catalan while my colleagues learned mathematics and English."²³ Figures like Silvia would become the spokespeople of Black African descendants in their struggle against racism and exclusion. Silvia offers, through theatre, the possibility to create a discourse that enables the resolution of two critical questions: the representation of real Black people and visualizing the reality of Black African descendants.

The agenda of Black African descendants differs radically from that of their parents. They do not seek to recreate a space of "Africanity" to reproduce the folklore their parents intended to preserve and promote. Instead, they experience a feeling of strangeness in their contact with Africa. Indeed, ties with Africa are full of images they created to fill the gap. Their imagination relies on a strange emotional relationship with Africa, shaped by broadcasting misery and the "backwardness" of the Black African fleeing the continent. The collective consciousness of Black African descendants is shaped by their individual experience and collective exclusion within Catalan/Spanish society.

To build the self image of an empowered Black community, Black African descendants select some references based on racial elements. The self referenced and self represented heroes are often selected from the Black diaspora (often among the Black heroes of the Americas). In their racially built identity, Africa is often superseded by the concept "Afro". The part of the history of Africa they claim is the one that took place before the slave trade of Black Africans and colonization. The reproduction of the glorious past of Africa helps them to fill the gap created by a single history, where being Black is a synonym of being savage, backward and naïve. In sum, one can argue that the postcolonial Africa of their parents cannot offer them anything other than wars, diseases, misery, and death. In terms of cultural expression and dynamics, the relationship with postcolonial Africa is practically the same as any white European.

I call this category of Black African descendants the *charnegroes*. Etymologically, *charnegroe* is the merging of the Spanish term *Charnego* and the English word "negroes". This "play on words" allows me to emphasize two basic ideas: ontologically, being *charnegroe* describes the idea of being black in a white dominant European society and rejects the political project of reifying citizens, such as in Catalonia. It is an act of refusal of Black African descendants in Catalonia that points out the complexity of cultural encounters and captures a significant self invention required in the challenge of the Catalan hegemonic cultural background.

The concept of *charnegroe* rejects the negative description of the Catalan discriminatory word of *charnego*. Being a *charnegroe* is an election compared to the institutional and imposed concepts of *(Afro)Catalan* and *(Afro)spanish*, which emphasize a duality between the "African identity" and the Catalan national identity. By addressing the cultural dynamics of Senegalese and Equatoguineans migrants, we have seen that being African entails

a conceptual vagueness. If Africa itself is an invention (Mudimbe 1988), and although Africanness serves to reflect the cultural unity among African peoples (Diop 1979), thus we can argue that being “Afro . . . ” is a way of downplaying and excluding particularities.

There is a need for a practical explanation of being a Black African descendant beyond the trauma of slavery and colonization. From the understanding of postcolonial claims and the phenomenon of global migration, being *charnegroe* opposes the notion of *Afro-catalan/Afrospanish*, since the use of the epithet “Afro” (in Afro-Catalan, Afro-Spanish, etc.) does not provide anything except shaping a subcategory of Catalan/Spanish identity. Moreover, this “Afro epithetism” represents the construction of a “subaltern identity” which encapsulates the categories of Black Africans in an imaginary way, based on the genealogy of the race without denouncing racism. For instance, being Afro-Catalan—which some of Black African descendants identify themselves as—reproduces the very idea of Catalanism promoted by Catalan institutions as the foundation of *Nous Catalans*. It is nourished by a Eurocentric understanding of identity and highlights the nationalist and Jacobin character of belonging.

By conceptualizing the *charnegroes*, I also propose the possibility of escaping “nominal” Africanness. By so doing, *charnegroe* does not engage with an Afropolitan description of a diasporic identity (Mbembe 2007) since they do not seek a cosmopolitan African identity. On the contrary, the racial identity of the *charnegroes* imbibes Black African descendants’ collective awareness in the building process of a body politic not necessarily connected to their African roots. The concept of *charnegroe* is then framed by cultural mobility, and the lived experiences of the descendants of Black Africans in a particular time and place, for instance, Catalonia, as we have seen. In this sense, the claims of the *charnegroes* neither embrace the Eurocentric construction of identity nor a universalist subalternity.

Ultimately, the concept of *charnegroe* describes the being in the world of Black African descendants, despite the will of Catalan institutions to place them into a taxonomy of national identity, appealing to false recognition and permissive cultural diversity. However, the self-referring identity based on Blackness and belonging to a “Black nation”, spread by black African descendants, sparks a passionate debate to be explored in depth. As far as Frantz Fanon puts it in a very provocative way: “. . . the expression black nation is an entity, . . . once cultural influences are removed, nothing else remains” (Fanon 2001, p. 26).

7. Conclusions

Arguably, common sense would provide us with an adequate means of determining people’s association with the society to which they belong, instead of stereotypical ideas that tend to lead towards dogmatic proclamations to build nationhood. Ontological commitment among Black Africans and their descendants takes place in a sociopolitical tension. The claim for a national identity underpins the praise of the Catalan “differential fact” from Spaniards. After the organization of the referendum of October 2017, it became clear to the world that Catalans have their particularity, and their voices deserve to be heard. For the first time, Black Africans and their descendants could observe that even those who share their main cultural traits want to point out their differences. The Catalan/Spanish dispute then poses a dilemma of “being” and belonging for Black Africans and their descendants in Catalonia.

It was then justified for Black African descendants in Catalonia to claim their particularity and rights beyond the colonial legacy and postcolonial trauma. Their goal focuses on an inverted axiological activity, which makes possible a valorization of the rejected. This endowment of Blackness is brilliantly depicted by Jean-Paul Sartre²⁴ and as Aimé Césaire (2005) puts it poetically, *Nègre je suis, nègre je resterai*. While African immigrants struggle to maintain a traditional cultural background, Black Africans’ descendants build a new identity by claiming their Blackness. This metaphysical experience and ontological claim of Black Africans coincided with the political experience of national identity building in Catalonia.

The cultural dynamics of Black Africans and their descendants are articulated around three axes of agenda setting strategies: (1) The claim of inclusion and recognizing their particularity in the society they belong, without having to adhere to the Catalan national identity. (2) Strengthening the intergroup relationship among Black Africans to promote collective consciousness. (3) Building new spaces for cultural representations of Black Africans and expression, to address social challenges and the struggle against racism.

Funding: This research did not receive any funding. The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Ethical review and approval were waived for this study, due to information used are freely available in the public domain and the data used cannot be used to identify the participants, for any personal data is used.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ For a better understanding of postcolonialism please see (Said 1993; Mudimbe 1988; Nayar 2015; Radhakrishnan 1993; Bhabha 1994). Postcolonialism is a set of discursive methods that critically addresses modernity/postmodernity but also the postcolonial context to “rethink” the contemporary world. Postcolonialism focuses on the histories and cultures of the peoples, races, and groups excluded by imperialism and hegemonic cultures
- ² Etymologically, I create this term from the merging of the Spanish term *charnego* and the English word “negroes”. This “play on words” allows me to emphasize two basic ideas that encompass the concept of *charnegro*.
- ³ Pujol write an opinion article to answer the critics on his book the text is still available online in the newspaper “El País”: https://elpais.com/diario/1977/03/25/espana/228092428_850215.html (accessed on 15 November 2020).
- ⁴ The full declaration of Artur Mas is available in the online version la Vanguardia. <http://www.lavanguardia.com/magazine/20120224/54258645650/arturmas-generalitat-psoe-pp-cataluna.html>. (I made the translation and adaptation of the original speech). (accessed on 15 November 2020).
- ⁵ See the argument of Artur Mas’s original statement in <https://directe.larepublica.cat/noticia/11423/mas-veu-el-pacte-dimmigracio-com-un-acord-incomplet-i-delega-la-signatura-11423> (accessed on 15 November 2020).
- ⁶ Josep Antoni Duran i Lleida was one of the leaders of the coalition of political party CIU, the political formation of Jordi Pujol headed by Artur Mas.
- ⁷ The original speech in Catalan was “Aquí no hi cap tothom, i els que hi caben han d’estar plenament integrats”; the press conference of Duran I Lleida was held on on 14 May 2007 and is available on the website of *naciodigital* <https://www.naciodigital.cat/index.php?seccio=noticies&accio=veure&id=5945> (accessed on 15 November 2020).
- ⁸ The article on the idea of the big house of Catalanism was published on 30 June 2014 in the newspaper Ara, and it is available at https://www.ara.cat/politica/casa-gran-catalanisme-precedent-desus_1_2882490.html (accessed on 20 November 2020).
- ⁹ See interview with Edmundo Sepa Bonaba, the exdirector of Espai Afrocatà. <https://www.elmundo.es/cataluna/2016/06/20/5766c70aca4741da578b45ab.html> (accessed on 10 January 2021).
- ¹⁰ Since 1995, SOS Racismo has published a yearly report on racism in Spain. the reports are available through <https://sosracismo.eu/informe-sos/> (accessed on 10 November 2020).
- ¹¹ Street vending is a cultural practice among the Senegalese community in Spain. It is enough to visit the ecosystem of Spanish cities to realize that most of those involved in selling in the street are Senegalese immigrants. Most of them are from rural areas. They start selling items on the street to survive in harsh living conditions. However, we should recognize that street vending is also a cultural practice. The practice of street selling is so widespread in the country of origin that it has given rise to terms like *gorgorlu*, a Wolof word that means “to get by as you can”. Street vending activity has also given birth to other words using the English jargon like “hustle-man”.
- ¹² A face to face interview with guinean lady in Barcelona in Mayo 2019.
- ¹³ In a face to face interview with Guniean Lady *ibid*.
- ¹⁴ Phone interview with a member of the association *Viyil*, 12 November 2020.
- ¹⁵ In a phone conversation with the General Secretary of the Federation of the Senegalese Association of Catalonia (CASC), on 15 November 2020.
- ¹⁶ In conversation through Google Meet with the President of CASC, IN 12 November 2020.

- ¹⁷ The Almoravids are an Arab tribe that dominated northern Africa and Spain during the second half of the 11th century and the first half of the 12th.
- ¹⁸ While the colonizers occupied the political and economic life, the religious movement deployed strategies to prevent fashioning the faith and belief of the “indigenous”. Spiritual leaders such as Ahmadou Bamba (1853–1927) founded the Murid brotherhood inspired by the Islamic branch of Sufism (Mbacke 1998). Malick Sy (1855–1922) and Baay Ibrahima Ñas (1900–1975) would follow his example, but these texts would be rather influenced by the Tijania, also an expression of North African Sufism. The Layen brotherhood was founded by Limamou Laye (1843–1909). Limamou presented himself as the reincarnation of the prophet of Islam. Then and now, his followers insist that he had a special supernatural gift that enabled him to mediate between them and the almighty (Thomas 2012).
- ¹⁹ Phone interview with Abacar Thiakh, General coordinator of the Murid Dahira of Catalonia.
- ²⁰ See for example Black Barcelona, the main event organized by Black descendants in Catalonia and where they focus the message to build a sense of belonging through artistic demonstrations <https://blackbarcelona.es/> (accessed on 5 January 2021).
- ²¹ My translation. The original text by Silvia is written in Spanish and it appears on the official website of the play to which I had access on 25 December 2020. <https://noespaisparanegras.es/no-pais-negras-teatro-negro-todos/punto-de-partida/> (accessed on 25 December 2020).
- ²² In a face to face interview with Guinean Lady on 15 May 2019 at Altair book store.
- ²³ Woman 25 years of Senegalese Origine, during an online debate organized by the CASC in December 2020.
- ²⁴ One of the greatest French intellectuals who gives his support to the actors of the negritude movement, Jean-Paul Sartre prefaced the anthology of the new negro and Malagasy poetry directed by Léopold Sédar Senghor (2002). The text of Sartre is considered one of his greatest contributions to French literature.

References

- Abid, Ed. D. 2017. Ethnography: Linking Theory and Practices. *Indonesia English Department, Gorontalo State University* 7: 601–5. [CrossRef]
- Ainaud, Josep Maria. 1980. *Immigració i reconstrucció nacional de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Blume.
- Albert Sopale, Silva. 2021. Blackface y otras vergüenzas. *Acotaciones N* 46: 339–61.
- Añón, Jose Garcia, Antoni Llorente Ferreres, Ben Bradford, Jose Antonio García Sáez, and Andrés Gascón Cuenca. 2013. *Identificación Policial por perfil étnico en España: Informe sobre experiencias y actitudes en relación con las actuaciones policiales*. Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch.
- Aramburu, Mikel. 2016. Vindicating the Charnego? Classism and segregation in Javier Pérez Andújar’s and Jorge Javier Vázquez’s autobiographical discourse. *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* LXXI: 129–49. [CrossRef]
- Asad, Talal. 1973. *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*. London: Ithaca Press.
- Balboa, Juan. 1985. *El reencuentro: el retorno del exiliado*. Malabo: Ediciones Guinea.
- Barreda, Andrés. 1985. *La dialéctica de la identidad en Cataluña: Un estudio de antropología social*. Madrid: Centro de investigaciones sociológicas.
- Bela-Lobedde, Desirée. 2018. *Ser mujer negra en España*. Barcelona: Ediciones B.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Blasser, Mario. 2013. Ontological Conflicts and the Stories of Peoples in Spite of Europe: Toward a Conversation on Political Ontology. *Current Anthropology* 54: 547–68. [CrossRef]
- Briker, Phillip. 2016. *Ontological Commitment*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. Stanford: The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Available online: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-commitment/> (accessed on 20 April 2020).
- Brown, Nadia, and Sarah Allen Gershon. 2017. Body politics. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5: 1–3. [CrossRef]
- Bruschi, Francesca. 2005. Politique indigène et administration au Sénégal (1890–1920). *Il Politico* 70: 501–22.
- Candel, Francesc. 1985. *Els altres Catalans vint anys després*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Carbonell, Francesc. 2006. *L’acollida: Acompanyament d’alumnat nouvingut*. Vic: Fundació Jaume Bofill.
- Cash, John, and Catarina Kinnvall. 2017. Postcolonial bordering and ontological insecurities. *Postcolonial Studies* 20: 267–74. [CrossRef]
- Césaire, Aimé. 2005. *Nègre je suis, nègre je resterai. Entretien avec Françoise Vergès*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Chapman, Roger. 2010. *Culture Wars: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints and Voices*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Cingolani, M. Stefano. 2015. *La formació nacional de catalunya i el fet identitari dels catalans (785–1410)*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Clua, Montserrat. 2011. Catalan, immigrants and charnegos: “race”, “cultura” and “mixture” in Catalan Nationalist Rhetoric. *Revista de Antropologia Social* 20: 55–75. [CrossRef]
- Clua, Montserrat. 2014. Identity and Politics in Catalonia: The Rise of Independentism in Contemporary Catalan Nationalism. *Institut Català d’antropologia* 19: 79–99.
- Conversi, Daniele. 1997. *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
- Council of Europe. 2008. *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. “Living Together As Equals in Dignity”*. Starsbourg: Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial Session.

- de Castro Rodríguez, Mayca. 2019. Escritora, editora, lectora. La condición triangular de las letras afrohispanas a través de la práctica editorial de Remei Sipi Mayo". *Lectora* 25: 241–51. [CrossRef]
- de Jong, Ferdinand. 2010. Remembering the Nation The Murid Maggal of Saint-Louis Senegal. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 50: 123–51. [CrossRef]
- Diagne, Souleymane Bachir, and Jean Loup Amselle. 2018. *Enquetes d'Afrique. Universalism et pensée décolonial*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1979. *Nation nègre et Culture*. Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Diouf, Mamadou. 2000. Assimilation coloniale et identités religieuses de la civilité des originaires des Quatre Communes (Sénégal). *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34. [CrossRef]
- Ercan, S. A. 2012. Beyond Multiculturalism: A Deliberative Democratic Approach to "Illiberal" Cultures'. Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- Evita, Leoncio. 1996. *Cuando los combes luchaban*. Madrid: CSIC.
- Fall, Abdoulaye. 2017. Migraciones y programas de asistencia a la migración senegalesa en Cataluña: Inmigración y retorno. Doctoral's thesis, Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra, Spain.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (Translation of Constance Farrington). Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Fanon, Frantz. 2001. *Pour la révolution africaine. Écrits Politiques*. Paris: La découverte.
- Fok, Lillian Y., Dinah M. Payne, and Christy M. Corey. 2016. Cultural Values, Utilitarian Orientation, and Ethical Decision Making: A Comparison of U.S. and Puerto Rican Professionals. *Journal of Business Ethics* 134: 263–79. [CrossRef]
- García Matín, Alberto, and Esteban Buch Sánchez. 2020. *Se alquila? Racismo y Xenofobia en el mercado del alquiler*. Mountain View: Creative Common.
- Generalitat. 2005. *Plan de Ciutadania i Immigració 2005–2008*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Generalitat. 2008. *Pacte Nacional per a la Immigració*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Generalitat. 2014. *Plan de Ciutadania i Immigració (2009–2014)*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Generalitat. 2017. *Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017–2020*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Giró-Miranda, Joaquin, and Ana Mata Romeu. 2013. Structural associations of senegalese in Spain. *Revista Internacional de Sociologia* 71: 91–115. [CrossRef]
- Glissant, Edouard. 1981. *Le Discours Antillais*. Paris: Edition Seuil.
- Glissant, Edouard. 1990. *Poétique de la Relation*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Glissant, Edouard. 1997. *Poetic of Relation*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Glissant, Edouard. 2006. *L'Afrique, les Afriques*. Presence africaine. Paper presented at the 50th Anniversary of the 1st International Congress of Black Writers and Artists, Paris, France, September 19–22; Available online: <https://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/Black%20Liberation%20Disk/Black%20Power!/SugahData/Journals/Presence.S.pdf> (accessed on 10 January 2021).
- Gozdecka, Dorota A., Selen A. Ercan, and Magdalena Kmak. 2014. From multiculturalism to post-multiculturalism: Trends and paradoxes. *Journal of Sociology* 50: 51–64. [CrossRef]
- Grandhomme, Hélène. 2009. Connaissance de l'islam et pouvoir colonial: L'exemple de la France au Sénégal. *French Colonial History* 10: 171–88. [CrossRef]
- Guibernau, Montserrat. 2014. Catalan Secessionism: Young People's Expectations and Political Change. *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 49: 106–17. [CrossRef]
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1998. *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Translated by C. Cronin. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2014. Public Attitudes toward Immigration, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration Department of Economics. Discussion Paper CDP15/13. Available online: https://cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_15_13.pdf (accessed on 6 February 2021).
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72: 22–49. [CrossRef]
- Kashima, Yoshihima. 2014. How can we capture cultural dynamics? *Frontiers* 5: 995. [CrossRef]
- Kymlicka, Will. 2010. The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism? New Debates on Inclusion and Accommodation in Diverse Societies'. In *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. Edited by S. Vertovec and S. Wessendorf. London: Routledge, pp. 32–50.
- Levey, G. B. 2009. What Is Living and What Is Dead in Multiculturalism. *Ethnicities* 9: 75–93. [CrossRef]
- Manent, Pierre. 2007. *Democracy Without Nations? The Fate of Self-government in Europe* Trans Paul Seaton. Wilington: ISI Books.
- Mbacke, Khadim. 1998. *La tariqua des mourides* Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto-italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente. *Africa* 53: 102–120.
- Mbana, Juanquin. 2004. *Brujería fang en Guinea Ecuatorial. El Mbwo*. Madrid: SIAL Ediciones.
- Mbembe, Achille. 2007. *Afropolitanism*. In *Africa Remix*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- Morales, Laura, Jean Benoit Pilet, and Didier Ruedin. 2015. The Gap between Public Preferences and Policies on Immigration: A Comparative Examination of the Effect of Politicization on Policy Congruence. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41: 1495–516. [CrossRef]
- Mudimbe, V. Yves. 1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1983. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under the Colonialism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nayar, Pramod K. 2015. *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary*. Malden and Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

- Ndongo, Biyogo D. 1977. *Historia y Tragedia de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Madrid: Cambio16.
- Nsue-Angué, María. 2008. *Ekomo*. Madrid: Sial.
- Parés, E. Español, and S. Bartomeu Borràs. 1999. *Llibre d'or dels parcs naturals de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Penninx, R., With S. Blom, Tiziana Caponio, Blanca Garcés Mascareñas, B. P. Matusz Protasiewicz, and Hanna Schwarz. 2014. *European Cities and Their Migrant Integration Policies: A State-of-the-Art Study for the Knowledge for Integration Governance (KING) Project*. Milan: ISMU Foundation.
- Pérez Andujar, Javier. 2011. *Paseos con mi madre*. Barcelona: Tusquets.
- Pujol, Jordi. 1976. *La Immigración, problema y esperanza de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya.
- Radhakrishnan, R. 1993. Postcoloniality and The Boundaries of Identity. In *Autumn Callaloo. On "Post-Colonial Discourse": A Special Issue*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 750–71.
- Rex, John. 1996. National Identity in the Democratic Multi-Cultural State. In *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations*. Edited by John Stone. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons. [CrossRef]
- Roshwald, Aviel. 2016. Civic and Ethnic Nationalism. In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism*. Edited by John Stone, Rutledge M. Dennis, Polly S. Rizova, Anthony D. Smith and Xiaoshuo Hou. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rubio-Carbonero, Gema, and Ricard Zapata-Barrero. 2017. Monitoring discriminatory political discourse on immigration. *Discourse & Society* 28: 204–25. [CrossRef]
- Sabatier, Peggy R. 1978. "Elite" Education in French West Africa: The Era of Limits, 1903–1945. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11: 247–66. [CrossRef]
- Said, Edward. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Scott, J. C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden transcripts*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Sembène, Ousmane. 1977. *Ceddo*. Dakar: Felmi Domirew.
- Senghor, L. S. 2002. *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, 6th ed. Paris: PUF.
- Sepa Bonaba, Edmundo. 1993. *Es negres catalans: la immigració africana a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Alta Fulla.
- Sepa Bonaba, Edmundo. 2017. *Convergentes convenientes o intruso*. Barcelona: Wanafrica.
- Shafir, Gershon. 1995. *Immigrants and Nationalists*. Nueva York: State University of New York Press.
- Sobresques, Jaume. 2015. *Consolidació i majoria dedat del fet identitari català (1410–1714)*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Solé, Carlota. 1982. *Los inmigrantes en la sociedad y la cultura catalanas*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Sow, Pape. 2003. Senegaleses y gambianos en Cataluña (España): Análisis geo-sociológica de sus redes especiales y sociales. Doctoral thesis, Departament de Geografia, Facultat de Lletres i filosofia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra, Spain.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 2010. "Can the Subaltern Speak?": Revised Edition, from the "History" Chapter of Critique of Postcolonial Reason. In *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Edited by Morris Rosalind C. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 21–78.
- Taylor, Charles. 1992. *Multiculturalism and 'the Politics of Recognition'*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thomas, Douglas H. 2012. *Sufism, mahdism and Nationalism Limamou Laye and the Layenes of Senegal*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Vázquez, Jorge J. 2013a. *La vida iba en serio*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Vázquez, Silvina. 2013b. *Identidad nacional y autogobierno. Un estudio cualitativo sobre las configuraciones identitarias nacionales en la Cataluña contemporánea*. Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió.
- Vertovec, Steven. 2010. Towards Post-multiculturalism. Changing Communities, Conditions and Contexts of Diversity'. *International Social Science Journal* 61: 83–95. [CrossRef]
- Vertovec, Steven. 2011. The Cultural Politics of Nation and Migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 241–56. [CrossRef]
- Zapata-Barero, Ricard. 2000. La época de la inmigración y su tratamiento político: Una nota bibliográfica. *Revista Española de Ciencias Políticas* 3: 167–80.
- Zapata-Barero, Ricard, Ferran Requejo, David Sancho, and Borja Rius. 2003. *Estudi de les polítiques d'integració dels immigrants a partir del disseny dels plans comarcals enfocament comarcal per a la gestió local de la immigració*. Barcelona: Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- Zapata-Barero, Ricard, Elizabeth Gonzalez, and Elena Sánchez Montijano. 2008. *El discurso político y la inmigración en España y en la UE*. Madrid. *Documentos del observatorio permanente de la inmigración*. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.



Article

Structural Racism and Racialization of Roma/Ciganos in Portugal: The Case of Secondary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Olga Magano ^{1,2,*} and Maria Manuela Mendes ^{1,3}

¹ Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia, Iscte—Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 649-026 Lisbon, Portugal; mamendes@fa.ulisboa.pt

² Department of Social Sciences and Management, Open University, 1269-001 Lisbon, Portugal

³ Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon (FAUL), 1349-063 Lisbon, Portugal

* Correspondence: olga.magano@uab.pt

Abstract: The aim of this article is to contribute to the analysis of the structural racism and racialization that exists in Portugal against Roma people. Racialization takes place in various dimensions of life, but we will focus here on issues of schooling and education, which were accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic and revealed a lack of social deprotection and inequalities between Roma and non-Roma students. This analysis, focusing on the impact on young people attending secondary education, is based on a qualitative study carried out in the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto using data from three focus groups and in-depth interviews with 33 secondary school students. Several public policies currently cover the Roma/Ciganos, but social inequality persists in terms of basic subsistence conditions and civic participation, as well as in the form of structural racism, with little Roma participation in political life and the invisibility of representation. The situation has worsened exponentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the combination of “classic” forms of racism and discrimination and the new forms of exclusion that have also appeared. We argue that the implicit acceptance of poverty and marginalization among Roma people needs to be viewed as a component of the racialization and antigypsyism to which they are subjected, and this dimension needs to be further investigated by scientific agendas.

Keywords: Ciganos/Roma; racism; social inequalities; COVID-19 pandemic; Portugal

Citation: Magano, Olga, and Maria Manuela Mendes. 2021. Structural Racism and Racialization of Roma/Ciganos in Portugal: The Case of Secondary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Social Sciences* 10: 203. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060203>

Academic Editors: Zenia Hellgren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 12 April 2021

Accepted: 27 May 2021

Published: 31 May 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Portuguese Roma are the biggest victims of racism in Portugal and of socio-economic vulnerability, constantly confronted with xenophobic, racist attitudes and hate speech by extreme right-wing political party members, as well as with hate comments on social networks. Systemic and historical racism toward Roma is rooted in the social structures of Portuguese society (Mendes 2007; Bastos et al. 2007; Marques 2013). The resurgence of racist narratives, which incite hatred towards Roma people, are offensive and humiliating, and legitimize structural and institutional inequalities, shows that throughout history, Roma have been one of the main targets of historically systematic and structural discrimination rooted in society and in the main institutions (Mendes 2007). These forms of everyday racism are deep-rooted in Portuguese society, manifesting in everyday situations and contexts in the lives of Roma people (Magano 2010) and frequently seen as trivial, “normal” and legitimate (Mendes 2007).

In 2020, the world was confronted with a global pandemic that had and continues to have an impact in all countries, not only in terms of people infected with the disease and the death toll, but also due to its repercussions in diverse areas of daily and structural life, such as employment and access to foodstuff and basic services. While we are experiencing a situation that embodies a threat to each and every one of us, worldwide, there are strong

asymmetries in the way that the virus affects different social groups and how people deal with and manage these impacts.

The lockdown measures implemented by governments meant that a large number of people have been prevented from exercising their professional activities, with the consequent loss of income, in many cases by 100%. It should be noted that the closing of schools and the wholesale adoption of online teaching are based on the assumption that all families are able to source the necessary materials and technological resources to meet these new educational needs.

This article seeks to expand our knowledge about a phenomenon that is still relatively unknown, the persistence of the racialization processes of Roma people that are reflected more sharply in times of social and economic crisis. Indeed, to date, there are not yet any studies analyzing or assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among ethnic cultural minorities, such as in the case of the Portuguese Roma and the reinforcement of racism and discrimination against Roma within the pandemic context.

For the Portuguese Roma, the pandemic scenario has been even more serious, because, in addition to exacerbating the banalization of anti-Roma attitudes, it has meant that the families who lived under precarious conditions before the pandemic have experienced a further worsening of their already disadvantaged position. In fact, many Roma parents have low schooling levels or are illiterate, and simply do not have the technological resources and digital knowledge to enable their children or young people to follow the educational path established for the academic year. In the context of this analysis, the argument of this article is based on the idea that the implicit acceptance of the poverty and marginalization of the Roma people should be considered as a relevant dimension to the process of racialization and antigypsyism to which they are subjected.

Based on the testimonies of Roma students who are resident in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto and attend secondary education, and of various participants in focus groups, we sought to examine the impacts of the pandemic on education pathways, taking into account not only the social inequalities and the role of public policies, but also exploring the responses of the school system, of the young people and of their families in relation to the challenges facing them.

1.1. Race and Racism against Roma

Race constitutes a semantic nucleus around which identity systems (individual, group, national) and ideological systems of social organization are organized. Race remains an organizing idea/principle for the social and political life of human communities. It is still a criterion for the access and distribution of socially significant resources. Race discourse can often be used to mobilize individuals and groups in the struggle for power and for economic and political resources, and can be a platform for class action (Anthias 1990). In this regard, it is important to underline that racial classifications themselves are triggered and updated with the aim of defending privileges, limiting access to power, and regulating competition for access to socially and politically scarce positions and resources (Banton 1991).

The race category continues to be a sociologically relevant variable, insofar as the observable physical and biological traits (skin color, hair texture, etc.) are social notions that shape attitudes and behaviors. There has been a persistent trend for some time toward making race an element of ethnicity, which is nothing more than a strategy to hide segregationist intentions (Oommen 1994).

Racism encompasses a wide spectrum of phenomena, since it refers not only to aspects of an ideological order (forms of biological, social and cultural classification and hierarchization), but also to the unintended practices and processes of unexpected consequences (institutional racism), extending its meaning to all practices and activities that lead to the subordination and continued exclusion of a given group, and to maintaining the domination of one group over another (Miles and Brown 2003). This inflation is explained by historical reasons that are rooted in the interdependence of capitalist development, at the expense of the exploitation of colonized populations (before the 20th century), and in the

perpetuation of mechanisms of subordination, with the exploitation of immigrants from the periphery by the center (Miles and Brown 2003). Over time, the concept has gained sophistication and complexity and, in parallel with its inflation, Miles and Brown (2003) allude to its conceptual deflation, claiming that, being more than a doctrine, racism must be defined narrowly as an ideology in order to have some operational and analytical value. Thus, although in the public arena there is a loss of importance of the belief that there is a biological hierarchy of races, the “race” discourse continues as a kind of “myth of eternal return”, accentuating the somatic traits and the attribution (positive or negative) of certain characteristics to certain groups. The reification of racial and cultural difference remains, even though the basic referents of racial discourse are no longer biological aspects. Racist discourse uses ethnic categorizations, built around cultural, linguistic, territorial and supposedly biological boundaries, perceived as an immutable and deterministic difference (Anthias 1990). From Banton’s perspective, when someone defines another person as belonging to another racial category, he is simultaneously giving him rights and obligations different from those attributed to members of the subject’s category of belonging (Banton 1991).

Salomos and Back (1996) show racism as an exclusionary practice that can take different forms. Wieviorka (1992) also points out that racism can be even more virulent when cultural difference becomes inseparable from social exclusion, as, for example, in the case of Roma.

It seems important to maintain the distinction between racism, discrimination and segregation, although divergent positions are found in this regard. For Michel Wieviorka (1992) discrimination and segregation are nothing more than concrete manifestations of racism. Segregation refers to practices that place the racialized group at a distance and separate, reserving its own, more or less restricted spaces, while discrimination imposes a different treatment on the racialized group in different areas of social life, lowering the ways and forms according to which one participates. Racial discrimination thus refers to the unequal and unfavorable treatment of individuals, taking into account their racial origins. In addition to race, other criteria from which discriminatory behavior can be generated are color, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, etc.

However, Roma are very susceptible to everyday racism, which is not only manifested in impersonal and anonymous relationships, it also extends to the institutional sphere. The concept of everyday racism thus allows its articulation at the micro-level (personal experience) and the macro-level (institutional and ideological structures), thus perceiving and perpetuating its continuity (Oommen 1994). For Essed (1991), this type of racism materializes in a form of diversity ideology that underlies the anti-racist (flagrant) norm. The author goes further and explains her manifestations: the objectification of the Other, overestimating and exaggerating differences; the cultural defamation of the Other, implying it is inferior and uncivilized; she also alludes to what she calls “Eurocentrism”. This ideology of diversity is based on the objectification of the Other, tending to overestimate and exaggerate differences, and it is often seen that these differences are more felt than they are communicated and verbalized.

In addition, threat theory (Stephan and Stephan 2000) considers that different types of threats correspond to different levels of prejudice against “outgroups”. For example, realistic threats are related to issues of political power, economic resources and the ingroup’s physical and material well-being. The symbolic threat is related to differences between groups in terms of morals, values, beliefs and attitudes (Devos et al. 2002). According to this model, in certain circumstances, these two types of threat are predictors of attitudes towards Roma or immigrants (Mendes 2007).

1.2. The Racialization of Portuguese Roma

Article 13 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic establishes that all citizens have the same social dignity and are equal before the law, and that no one can be privileged, benefited, harmed, deprived of any right or exempt from any duty due to ancestry, sex, race,

language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological beliefs, education, economic situation, social status or sexual orientation.

The frequent declarations that Portugal is not a racist country are recurrent considering its colonial past and the coexistence of different peoples and cultures (Marques 2007), which refers to a certain illusion of easy “Lusotropicalist” coexistence and reveals the denial of racism in Portugal as an ideological and political construction. This ideology gives the Portuguese special abilities in terms of relations with other peoples, namely, with Africans (Vala 1999). The idea that the Portuguese are endowed with a special, radical tolerance, according to Corkill and Eaton (1999, pp. 159–60), “in Portugal’s imperial past”, aligns with the common claim that “racism does not exist or (at worst) is less pervasive among Southern Europeans”.

Over time, the image that persists of Roma is a negative one, since the first complaints that reached the Cortes more than 5 centuries ago to all the measures introduced in the legislative framework until the implementation of its democratic system (25 April 1974). Regarding the Roma population, it seems evident that there is a widespread attitude of blatant racism, and it is even possible to obtain statements in which their perception as a threat and a refusal of any intimacy is clear (Pettigrew and Meertens 1993). However, it is also true that this attitude is combined with forms of subtle racism such as, for example, the tendency to exaggerate differences and the refusal of positive feelings towards Roma. In our view, a double perspective is widespread in this society: on the one hand, there are representations that associate the group with a certain romanticism and mysticism; on the other hand, a tendency that is negative and strongly rejects Roma.

In the case of Roma, they are confronted by racism with a differential configuration that has its sources in the “heavy prejudices of the past, both in the changes suffered by Portuguese society and by their own ways of life” (Marques 2007, p. 19). Roma are the target of discriminatory racism reflected/manifested in forms of structural and institutional racism. Although racism in the classic sense (biological differentiation) has fallen into disuse or is no longer politically correct, these forms of racism have given rise to other forms of racism, called neo-racism, cultural racism or subtle racism (Marques 2007).

After 1945, the designation “Roma race” was replaced by the more neutral term of “ethnicity” (Marques 2007) on the basis of what Bader (2008) calls “ethnisms”, but this is not just a way to mask the deterministic conception of human behavior. In other words, it consists of enclosing members of minorities in essential categories, supposedly permanent and immutable, with which certain ways of thinking and acting would be associated. This “closure” in homogeneous and essentialist social categories is at the basis of stereotypes and prejudices (Goffman 1988). This mental scheme persists and is triggered against Roma people.

1.3. Public Policies to Promote the Citizenship and Equality of Portuguese Roma

In Portugal, public policies are universal to all citizens, but ethnic and cultural minorities are not recognized by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. Accordingly, there are no public policies exclusively directed at Roma people. Indeed, it has only been since the National Strategy for Integration (ACIDI 2013) that the first set of specifically directed measures have arisen under the auspices of the High Commission for Migration, rather than actually placed within the corresponding government ministries. The National Strategy for the Integration of Roma, drawn up in Portugal, is based on four intervention axes: health, education, housing and employment, and vocational training. This strategy was reviewed in 2018¹ as it was recognized that, despite the societal evolution experienced over the last few years, there are still persistently high levels of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion experienced by many Roma people and families, in addition to strong ignorance about the Roma and mistrust between non-Roma and Roma people. This new strategy sought to foster an improvement of the indicators on the wellbeing and integration of Roma people, and to improve mutual trust, positive interaction and the deconstruction of stereotypes. The National Strategy of 2013 provided the necessary framework for dia-

logue between the public administration, Roma people and the civil society organizations that work for and with these communities. Nevertheless, in the meantime, it was felt that changes should be made both to the definition of the strategy, especially in the clarification and operationalization of the measures, and to the determination of priority areas of intervention, namely, gender equality, knowledge on Roma people, and their participation in the implementation of this strategy (ENICC 2018).

1.4. Persistence of Low Levels of Education as a Racialized Process

Despite the concern that European and Portuguese government authorities have shown over the past few years in relation to the inequalities in access to and exercise of citizenship by Roma people, there are still persistent problems of poverty and exclusion, and it is among these people that we find the most extreme cases of poverty, illiteracy and social discrimination (European Commission 2004; ERRC/NÚMENA 2007; FRA 2012). The most recent reports of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) continue to reveal the deprived situation in which the Roma people live throughout Europe and, likewise, the Roma people in Portugal, exacerbated by the attitudes of segregation and racism to which they are subject (FRA 2014, 2018a, 2018b). It is still possible to observe situations of blatant racism and subtle racism (Pettigrew and Meertens 1993) against Roma people.

Nevertheless, the social policy measures implemented over these past years have been insufficient to effectively and structurally overcome the problems faced by Roma people, to a large extent because they are not adapted to Roma particularities but are instead universalist, inadequate and fail to address the cultural features and social origins of the different users and beneficiaries (ERRC/NÚMENA 2007; Santos 2013; Mendes et al. 2014).

While there are no statistical data on the Portuguese Roma population, due to the collection of ethnic data or data of any other differentiation not being permitted by Portugal's Constitution, there are fragmented datasets that enable piecing together a portrayal, both sociodemographic and regarding living conditions (Mendes et al. 2014).

Regarding the schooling of Roma people, although there has been a widespread increase of the basic level of education, schooling levels continue to be much lower than for the rest of the population. The mandatory schooling established in Portugal, with the completion of secondary education (12th year of schooling and compulsory permanence in the school system up to the age of 18), is quite beyond the expectations of many Portuguese Roma young people. School continues to be seen as a place, above all, for children and adolescents, rather than for young or fully grown adults (Magano and Mendes 2016). The new data gathered at a national level by the Directorate General of Education and Science Statistics (*Direção Geral de Estatísticas de Educação e Ciência* DGEEC) of the Ministry of Education was published based on a survey sent out to schools in mainland Portugal regarding the academic year of 2018/2019, in which 808 schools answered, with a response rate of 99%. The overall picture is similar to the findings of previous studies, where only 2.6% of the Ciganos attending public education are enrolled in secondary education.

There are high rates of Roma pupils repeating the year, on average 15.3% (22.1% in the first cycle and 17.7% in the second cycle), in addition to regional disparities. The highest school retention rates are in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area with 23.5%, in Alentejo 22.3%, in Algarve 21.9%, and 9.5% in the north (*Direção Geral de Estatísticas de Educação e Ciência* DGEEC).

The *Direção Geral de Estatísticas de Educação e Ciência* (DGEEC) highlighted early school-leaving by Roma children and youth, and two DGEEC studies, from 2016–2017 (*Direção Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência* DGEEC) and 2018–2019 (*Direção Geral de Estatísticas de Educação e Ciência* DGEEC), demonstrate that this figure shifted from 5.9% to 8.1%, meaning that early school-leaving has increased.

2. Methods and Fieldwork

The EDUCIG project—school performance among the Roma: research and co-design project², underway up to 2021—primarily aims to identify and understand the school trajectories of Roma students integrated into secondary education in the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Porto, as well as their aspirations of accessing higher education. This project is planned to take place over various stages of methodological implementation, to gain an understanding of the constraining factors and the school trajectories of these students, combining quantitative, qualitative and participatory methods. To this end, the survey involved two questionnaires sent out to the teachers and persons in charge of public schools, and to the employments and vocational training staff of the Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional, I.P. (IEFP). In-depth interviews were also conducted with the Choices Program staff, with young Roma of both sexes, and various ethnographies, focused on the daily life of young students, enabling a non-intrusive capture of the tensions, dilemmas and opportunities they experience as they move within different relational spheres (Roma and non-Roma).

The pandemic situation caused by COVID-19 constrained the continuation of the fieldwork of the EDUCIG project, requiring methodological readjustments both for interviewing young people and conducting focus groups, as the project had primarily envisaged the application of participatory methods.

The first part of the research was undertaken between 2019 and 2020 and was mainly based on a qualitative approach. A total of 33 interviews were undertaken (21 male and 12 female). Some interviews were conducted in person, but others were conducted via Zoom during the first lockdown (between March and May 2020). The main topics of the interview were their personal life history (namely, places of residence and mobility, and the structure of their own family and work), the characterization and history of the family of origin (in terms of education, professional occupations, ethnic attribution), their relationship with the school (school career, experiences of discrimination), free time and leisure, religious practices, associative sports, cultural and recreational practices, future expectations, and opinions about strategies to improve the situation of young Roma in school during the first lockdown. These topics were selected according to a snowball approach; in addition, we carried out three focus groups from March to July 2020.

2.1. Focus Groups: Procedures and Composition

At this point, we reflect on the perspectives of participants in the study concerning the impact of COVID-19 on the developments of the academic year, and how this reflects social inequalities between Roma and non-Roma students. We were interested in knowing what they have to say about their family and scholastic situation due to COVID-19, and how they overcame the problems. The data came from focal groups held via the Zoom digital platform with young Roma students, parents and other social intervenors. Three focus groups were held, aimed at reflecting on some of the results obtained in previous stages of our research, such as the statistical analysis of the online questionnaires, the content analysis of the in-depth interviews and the ethnographic work. The objective of these focus groups was to discuss our main findings up to that date, to enable a diagnosis of the need for training and employment suited to the profile of young Roma, and to foster the collective sharing of opinions, clarify points of view and indicate guidelines for the design of a training offer. We also sought to appraise the Roma students' perceived difficulties in education pathways regarding underachievement, logistical support, the reasons underlying demotivation and dropout, and feelings of discrimination; discuss the reasons that enabled certain young people to continue their education pathways beyond the ninth year of schooling; identify the training needs of professionals who work with young Roma (teachers, program/project staff); identify critical factors and successful practices for schooling processes, and appraise the most pertinent features, format and contents in the design of a certified training program equivalent to the 12th year of schooling, directed at 15- to 18-year-old Roma who dropped out of school before completing compulsory education.

These young people reveal the embedded perception of difference, that they are victims in society in the sense developed by [Wieviorka \(2002\)](#), and that our societies welcome and reproduce differences but also often invent them under the weight of tradition.

The composition of the three focus groups tried to reflect a diversity of geographic regions of residence of the participants (Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and Porto), to select participants with different education pathways and contrasting socioeconomic backgrounds (in the cases of group 1 and 2) and have gender-balanced groups. We also tried to ensure that the focus group participants had not been involved in previous research stages (interviews with young secondary school and higher education students, technical staff and teachers, Choices project coordinators, mediators and activists).

Due to the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to adjust our methodology, with the focus groups being conducted online through the Zoom platform. Moreover, the circumstances of the state of emergency and the material constraints hampered the harmoniously planned participation of those invited to join these groups.

2.2. Data Analysis

The scripts of the focus groups were designed, taking into account the results of the project's previous tasks. The content analysis was carried out using MAXQDA, and the classification into categories followed the aspects and concepts outlined in the focus group script. Data were coded collectively using a systematic thematic analysis approach to identify the key themes raised by respondents. This involved interpretive code-and-retrieve methods wherein the data were transcribed, coded, and an interpretative thematic analysis was undertaken. This code system was devised using MAXQDA. We followed the same standardized procedure for collecting information in each of the territories.

Group 1 comprised young Roma students attending secondary education or in their first year of higher education, with contrasting education pathways and lifestyles. Group 2 involved families, mediators, activists and association members, where we sought to incorporate families with diverging lifestyles with youth at secondary school, ensure balanced gender and residency in the two metropolitan areas, and include school mediators, activists and association members with experience in working with young students. Group 3 involved the participation of project staff, teachers and technical staff of the Priority Intervention Educational Territories (TEIP) program; project staff (Choices and other locally based projects) who work on a daily basis with young students in the metropolitan areas, and are engaged in firmly rooted and continuous work with the Roma people; secondary schools attended by Ciganos; and TEIP schools. Group 1 had three participants, aged between 19 and 20 years old, two being male and one female, coming from different parts of the country: Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Cascais), Porto Metropolitan Area (Maia) and Castelo Branco (Idanha-a-Nova). Two of the participants attend higher education and one participant had just completed his 12th year of regular education. In Group 2, interviews were conducted with parents of Roma students attending various education levels, including secondary and higher education, activists within the Roma families, Roma cultural mediators and evangelical pastors, where these different roles very often intersect. This group consisted of 11 people, five men and six women, aged between 20 and 55 years old. Two of the group members live in the Porto Metropolitan Area and the rest in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, within which different zones were represented. Group 3 was composed of 10 participants, reflecting varied ages from 24 to 50 years old. We sought to diversify sex and municipality of residence and/or territories of action by having seven female participants and three male participants, two of whom live in Lisbon (Vila Franca de Xira is the municipality of residence of one of the female participants, but the municipality of action of the project in which she works is Lisbon) and the rest are from the north of the country (Porto, Vila Nova de Gaia, Matosinhos and Espinho). In terms of schooling level, they all possess higher education, except for one of the participants, a Roma intercultural mediator with 9th year schooling.

3. Findings

During the pandemic, one extreme right-wing political party and its leader called for differentiated measures to be imposed on clusters of Roma families, specifically, forced “sanitary cordons”³. However, this was not an isolated case; when faced with an outbreak in a council housing neighborhood inhabited by Roma, several representatives of local government, even of the center-left political forces, namely, those of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, advocated the need to apply a sanitary cordon, stating that “[The cordon] would ensure that they remain confined inside their homes, which is difficult because they have many children and are constantly outdoors” (local government representative) (Moreira 2020).

Portugal decreed its first state of emergency in the pandemic scenario, covering six weeks in March and April, and face-to-face classes were stopped in mid-March, with the majority of Portuguese students not having returned to school in the academic year of 2019–2020. It was expected that the students and their families should manage, using their own means, to provide the necessary material, digital and supporting circumstances for educational purposes. Portuguese students were all treated equitably, in the same way, regardless of their material living conditions, with the impact in terms of failure to pass the year and dropout numbers being as yet unknown.

3.1. The Pandemic Impacts on Schooling Paths

In this article, we shall present some of the findings arising from the exploratory analysis of the focus groups and regarding the impact of the pandemic on daily school life and family life. It is important to clarify that this technique does not involve a collection of individual interviews but is instead “synergetic”, based on structured discussion with different participants in which there is a collective sharing of opinions and elucidation of points of view, with the data being generated from the group interaction between the participants (Rabiee 2004).

3.2. Perspectives on the Pandemic

3.2.1. Perspective of the Students

Various topics were addressed in these focus groups; however, regarding the impact of COVID-19 on school and family life, despite being directly asked about this issue, none of the young people were invested in the differences and/or difficulties experienced at a family level. Only one of the female participants complained about having a “noisy” family, which made it difficult for her to concentrate on schoolwork and attend classes:

“It’s like this, I live with a very noisy family; really, we even have a parrot making even more noise, so, it was horrible, I couldn’t do the lessons, I couldn’t study, it was too noisy and the teachers didn’t . . . I simply couldn’t participate in the lessons, because my teachers are not, in general, they’re not people who . . . who allow the students to participate, but here it was enormously obvious, they just dumped content for three hours.” (Young woman, 19 years old, higher education, Maia)

The focus centered primarily on assessing the difference between face-to-face and online teaching, rather than on the difficulties experienced in material terms. There is a preference for face-to-face teaching because online teaching has caused a drop in academic performance (“my average grade fell”, commented a young female Roma participant in the group).

Nevertheless, two important factors were addressed, relative to the social impacts of the pandemic among Roma children and young students. The first, in the words of that young woman, has to do with the pre-existing social inequalities which the pandemic exposed:

“For example, something that . . . that I think was very [unrecognized] in distance learning were the many social inequalities . . . as I was saying, there are many . . . many Roma families that do not have access to electricity, to water, etc., and

many students have been at a loss during this . . . these months, due to the fact that they literally have no way of learning anything.” (Young woman, 19 years old, higher education, Maia)

However, one of the young men offered some clues regarding the social impacts of the pandemic that are not as visible to the naked eye as the short-term impacts and consequences, since they refer to the long-term impacts. This young man noted that, in terms of inter-peer social relationships, at the university, he viewed his Roma identity as an instrument able to change mentalities: before the pandemic, he thought that he would be able to counter some racist comments about the Roma people by stating that he was a Roma in higher education. Due to the pandemic, this participant felt that a step backward had been taken along his path of friendships and the dissemination of Roma culture, and in the symbolic capital he had been accumulating at university.

3.2.2. Perspective of School Agents

The participants in Group 3 highlighted the double impact of COVID-19 in school life. One of these impacts refers to the planning of the academic year’s activities, which is common to the entire school community; namely, having to plan the activities of an academic year in an unpredictable and unprecedented scenario for both students and teachers:

“Right now, for example, I can give you a very ordinary example, what are we doing at school at the moment? We are planning an upcoming year in three different ways for contexts that are still unknown to us, we are trying to do a PAA, which is an annual activities’ plan, according to a completely different situation, like the one we are currently experiencing, in which many of the activities can’t be done as the rules are completely different. And we don’t know the context of our students . . . ”. (Teacher, Vila Nova de Gaia)

The other impact, extremely specific to Roma families (and other social and economically deprived households), has to do not only with the structural material conditions (such as not having access to computers or the internet to follow remote lessons), but also family conditions regarding the ability to provide support for homework, the encouragement and actual motivation to continue studying during confinement, or even in terms of knowing how to handle the technology. This issue was brought out by an intercultural mediator, as a member of the technical staff of a local support project, who recounted the way he sought to get around and minimize this impact during quarantine:

“(. . .) if the majority community was frightened, let’s say, was affected by the pandemic, it was even more worrying in the Roma community. So, some people are doing school online, but there are people who don’t have a computer, people who don’t know their way around the technology, don’t know how to handle computers. So, we decided, as a street project, to go to each home. The teachers send us the files, the homework, and we went to each home distributing it to people who didn’t have a computer or who didn’t know how to work with computers. We distributed the homework, helped the children, encouraged them to study and then we had a day for collecting it. As technical staff, we sent this homework to the teacher. We have had some success throughout this period; nowadays, some children even ask us if we are sick, if we have . . . and we say ‘No, school has finished’, now we’re going to continue with the street project, yes, with some recreational activities, with children and young people . . . ”. (Intercultural mediator, Porto)

Curiously enough, the teachers and mediators did not refer to difficulties in giving lessons online (maybe because among the participants of Group 3, the only one who is actually a teacher already had experience in distance teaching), but do report the difficulties of the Roma student population related to socioeconomic shortcomings that, in relation to school, were reflected in difficulties regarding access to the internet, for example, which are also mentioned by the other two groups.

3.2.3. Perspective of the Families

The participants asked about the impacts of COVID-19 on school and family life also give convergent opinions, in that the difficulties experienced by each group complement one another, and involve the roles of the persons comprising these groups within the school system: while the young people found it difficult to adapt to online education, and report that their academic performance declined, the group of parents recounts having found it difficult to support their children in studying and in helping them to create strategies to organize their schoolwork and school routines inside the home:

“I just said, there’s been a complete decline in my children, completely. Why do I think my children showed a decline? Because of their habits, because they don’t follow schedules, basically. They’re at home, they’re protecting themselves, right, they’re not always outside, basically, they live indoors and so, what happens? At home, they don’t have hardly anything to do, they don’t feel like doing their schoolwork, they sleep, as if they would do it (. . .) And at school, they had to go to school, socialize with other children, might not seem that way, but they had other activities, more motivation to do their schoolwork, to do better, and like this there isn’t that, and this situation is more difficult.” (Male activist, Lisbon)

The pandemic has largely banished young people from the context of relationships with others provided by school, and that the lack of socializing has generated some demotivation and apathy. Moreover, the scarcity of computer equipment and access to information online has hindered their follow-up and understanding of educational materials. Here, it should be said that a number of local institutions and civic societies reorganized themselves and, in some cases, provided equipment and follow-up. However, the real scale of the effects of the pandemic on early school-leaving and academic underachievement is unknown.

4. Discussion

Systemic and historical racism toward Roma is deeply rooted in the very structures of Portuguese society (Bastos et al. 2007; Mendes 2007; Silva 2014). Occasionally, this may actually seem to be apparently “dormant” for some time, but the pandemic has rekindled and strengthened feelings and expressions of racism in relation to Portuguese Roma. The historical and structural inequalities (Bastos et al. 2007) have been exacerbated and the impacts of the pandemic have been multifaceted; for many Roma, the major priority has been to assure subsistence and attending to the basic needs of their household. Racist perceptions and feelings are manifested by some politicians, and also by people in general, on social networks, with the exacerbation of hate speech.

Digital media has played, and continues to play, an important role in the spreading of manifestations of racism and xenophobia against the Roma, both by politicians and in the comments shared by anonymous or named citizens through social networks. In Romania, Facebook discussions, posts, and the media coverage of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country blame the Roma for spreading this disease, and consider them responsible for contaminating the Romanian nation, likewise in other central and southern European countries (Plainer 2020; Costache 2020). Whenever news about the Portuguese Roma is published, social networks such as Facebook recurrently backlash with a proliferation of racist comments (this is also evident in the links of one of the main Portuguese daily newspapers, the *Público*).⁴ Once again, the Roma have become a scapegoat, been held responsible for contagion, faced manifest rejection (Berta 2020), been pelted with accusations of being “antisocial”, of not observing the confinement rules, of disrespecting the rules on social distancing and hygiene, and accused of continuing to travel around and engage in very intense sociability (cultural specificities). The resurgence of these racist narratives that are incitements to hatred of the Roma people, that are offensive and humiliating, that legitimize the existing structural and institutional inequalities, demonstrate the fact that the Roma have been a major target throughout history and that racism remains embedded in the collective memory and in the ideological and political frameworks of the Portuguese.

The attacks on Roma populations are inscribed in a much broader context, marked by historically systemic and structural discrimination that is deep-rooted in its society and its institutions. Likewise, racism on a daily basis (Essed 1991) is firmly entrenched in Portuguese society, encapsulated as a complex of accumulated practices, manifesting as banal, “normal” and legitimate. This racial differentiation also arises in the form of “softer” designations such as “ethnicity” or “ethnic minority” or, as Bader (2008, p. 85) refers to ethnicity, as a contained concept in which the most varied criteria of strict closure are the combined, real or assumed common characteristics of skin color, the territory of common origins, culture, habits, lifestyles, etc. But, for these authors, we cannot forget that at the center of racist categorizations are socially defined criteria, externally visible and at the core of ethnic categorizations as socio-historical or cultural criteria (Bader 2008, p. 85). Generalization and stigmatization are implicit, as noted by Memmi (1993), since the individual is no longer considered a person but is, rather, merely labeled as a member of a social group that has negative features and a negative identity. Here, the accusation is unlimited by time and covers all the group’s members (Mendes 2020).

The Roma are almost always considered as a homogenous mass, in a stereotyped manner, but they are not all the same, nor do they all live in the same way (Magano 2010). Some identify themselves as Roma, but neither fall within a profile of poverty or social exclusion, nor reside in specific territorial contexts of a concentration of families, nor in poor housing conditions (Magano 2013). Other individuals and families have lifestyles that are closer to the classic portrayal of Roma tradition and live a “Roma lifestyle” (Mendes 2007; Magano 2010). Many have embarked on life trajectories marked by educational attainment and employment in areas not traditionally explored by Roma, but even so, they are frequently confronted with representations and stereotypes about their “being an untrustworthy sort of people”, “traffickers”, “nomads”, etc. (Magano 2010; Silva 2014). In the professional world, many of those who worked in fairs and markets have readapted and started to engage in online selling via Facebook, in reaction to having been barred from selling in public places, which has obviously led to a drastic reduction in their income level.

It should be highlighted that the housing conditions in which many Roma still live have also suffered a further worsening of sanitary situations of major complexity, which stubbornly persist in many national territories. The situation of Roma who live in spontaneous settlements (e.g., in Bairro da Torre in Camarate), in tents and caravans (e.g., in Évora) or in the street (the forced evictions in Bairro Bensaúde, Lisbon) is particularly precarious, inhumane, and represents a risk in sanitary terms. These circumstances are inconsistent with the social distancing measures, the confinement rules and with the required hygiene practices, in addition to the fact that there are many children whose housing conditions do not enable them to follow education by digital means. Their degree of exposure to this pandemic was and continues to be enormous (Mendes 2020).

In this article, we found that in Portugal, structural racism and daily racism persist in relation to Roma people, and that it is possible to verify this in various dimensions of life, not only in housing, training, access to employment or education but also in everyday social relations. In some way, racism against Roma is normalized and accepted by non-Roma, and they are often seen as directly responsible for the situation in which they find themselves. An example of this situation of racialization is the issue of education, in which responsibilities are attributed to the Roma people and also to Roma cultural issues, but not to structural problems in the education system or pedagogic issues. It is extremely worrying to see the inability of the education system to incorporate Roma culture and to promote plural and comprehensive educational policies, capable of being attractive to all students.

The educational landscape of Roma people is still not very favorable, and continues to demonstrate high percentages of school dropout, and educational paths marked by retentions and a hint of racist attitudes on the part of the teaching team, which tend to highlight negative and stereotyped aspects about Roma people, such as the preconception that “everyone gets married early”.

In turn, the reflective analysis presented by the young people shows them having to permanently demonstrate their value and their ability to learn, which is always required more of Roma than of other young people. In the case of the concept of agency and the articulation between individual agency and social change (Giddens 2004), this involves an individual agency used to benefit the deconstruction of stereotypes relative to the Roma identity, and its relationship with the social impacts of the pandemic, which are reflected in the “isolation” of a symbolic and/or identity capital that is no longer able to interact with or relate to others; in other words, an identity that can no longer grow as capital but which also highlights the material difficulties of the families and students in successfully overcoming these new educational challenges.

5. Conclusions

In fact, in view of the situation of pandemic calamity, the state took universal decisions without taking into account the diversities between households concerning access to computer technology, access to the internet, the possibility of family tutoring to support schoolwork, and very often, the lack of comfortable and salubrious housing conditions.

The historical and socially consistent racialization and discrimination vis-à-vis Portuguese Roma (Bastos et al. 2007) seem to be associated with a combination of defensive strategies (behaviors marked by a certain closure and a greater separation between real and virtual social identity, which includes explicit allusions to the “secret of the group”, as demonstrated by Roma) and offensive strategies by those discriminated against (visible expressions of revolt, which include recourse to options that may arouse fear on the part of the majority, manifested in externalized, emotional, uncontrolled, verbal and/or symbolic violence, etc.) (Mendes 2007). In fact, the racialization of poverty expresses itself as a “practice of coupling ‘the Roma’, perceived as the ‘racial other’, with ‘the poor’, and explaining ‘Roma poverty’ as a ‘natural result’ of the cultural traits of an ‘inferior race’ trapped in pre-modern (‘non-civilized’) and subhuman forms of existence” (Vincze 2014, pp. 445–46). In conclusion, in Portugal, the tolerance and acceptance of the state and society of poverty and marginalization of Roma people is an aspect that is still seldom explored in the literature. However, based on the empirical evidence presented, it seems clear that this attitude is part of the historical processes of racialization and antigypsyism to which they continue to be subject, and this dimension needs to be further investigated by scientific agendas.

Author Contributions: Both of the authors contribute equally to this study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: The translation of this text was supported by FCT through the Strategic Funding of the R&D Unit Cies-Iscte, Ref. UIDB/03126/2020. The content of this publication represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee of ISCTE, University Institut of Lisbon.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The results was archived in datasets generated during the study. After the end of the project the data will be deposited in FCT—Foundation for Science and Technology, Portugal.

Acknowledgments: This text benefited from the research work carried out within the scope of the EDUCIG project—school performances among Roma: action–research and co-design project. This project is funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), coordinated by Maria Manuela Mendes and co-coordinated by Olga Magano.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Council of Ministers Resolution 154/2018, Diário da República, 1st series, No. 230, 29 November 2018.
- ² This project is funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), coordinated by Maria Manuela Mendes and co-coordinated by Olga Magano.
- ³ https://ionline.sapo.pt/artigo/695215/chega-quer-plano-of-confinamento-especifico-para-comunidade-cigana?secao=Portugal_i (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- ⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Publico/posts/10159561434756983> (accessed on 28 May 2021); <https://www.facebook.com/Publico/posts/10158687090611983> (accessed on 28 May 2021); <https://www.facebook.com/Publico/posts/10158687270301983> (accessed on 28 May 2021).

References

- ACIDI. 2013. *Estratégia Nacional para a Integração dos Ciganos*. Lisbon: ACIDI.
- Anthias, Floya. 1990. Race and class revisited—Conceptualising race and racisms. *The Sociological Review* 38: 19–42. [CrossRef]
- Bader, Veit-Michel. 2008. *Racismo, Etnicidade, Cidadania. Reflexões Sociológicas e Filosóficas*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.
- Banton, Michael. 1991. The race relations problematic. *The British Journal of Sociology* 42: 115–29. [CrossRef]
- Bastos, José, André Correia, and Elsa Rodrigues. 2007. *Sintrensos Ciganos. Uma Abordagem Estrutural-Dinâmica*. Lisbon: ACIDI and Câmara Municipal de Sintra.
- Berta, Peter. 2020. Ethnicizing a pandemic: COVID-19, culture blaming and Romanian Roma. *Society for Romanian Studies Newsletter* 42: 1–7.
- Corkill, David, and Martin Eaton. 1999. Multicultural insertions in a small economy: Portugal's immigrant communities. In *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe*. Edited by M. Baldwin-Edwards and J. Arango. London: Frank Cass Publishers, pp. 149–68.
- Costache, Ioanida. 2020. "Until We Are Able to Gas Them Like the Nazis, the Roma Will Infect the Nation": Roma and the Ethnicization of COVID-19 in Romania. *Revista DOR*. April 22. Available online: <https://www.dor.ro/roma-and-the-ethnicization-of-covid-19-in-romania> (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- Devos, Thierry, Lisa A. Silver, Diane M. Mackie, and Eliot R. Smith. 2002. Experiencing intergroup emotions. In *from Prejudice to Intergroup Emotions: Differentiated Reactions to Social Groups*. Edited by Diane M. Mackie and Eliot R. Smith. New York and Hove: Psychology Press, pp. 111–314.
- Direção Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência (DGEEC). 2018. *Perfil Escolar da Comunidade Cigana 2016/17*; Lisbon: DGEEC. Available online: <https://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/906.html> (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- Direção Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência (DGEEC). 2020. *Perfil Escolar das Comunidades Ciganas 2018/2019*; Lisbon: DGEEC. Available online: <https://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/97/> (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- ENICC 2018. *Estratégia Nacional para a Integração das Comunidades Ciganas 2013-2023*. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 154/2018, Diário da República, 1.ª série—N.º 230—29 de Novembro de 2018. Available online: <https://dre.pt/home/-/dre/117142865/details/maximized> (accessed on 28 May 2021).
- ERRC/NÚMENA. 2007. *Os Serviços Sociais ao Serviço da Inclusão Social—O caso dos Ciganos*. Lisbon: ERRC—European Roma Rights Centre and NÚMENA—Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas.
- Essed, Philomena. 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- European Commission. 2004. *La situation des Roms dans une Union Européenne*. Report. Direction by Générale de L'Emploi et des Affaires Sociales. Luxembourg: European Commission.
- FRA. 2012. *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States Survey Results at a Glance*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- FRA. 2014. *Roma Survey—Data in Focus. Education: The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Luxembourg: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
- FRA. 2018a. *Fundamental Rights Report 2018*. Technical Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- FRA. 2018b. *Transition from Education to Employment of Young Roma in nine EU Member States*. Luxembourg: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
- Giddens, Anthony. 2004. *Dualidade da Estrutura—Agência e Estrutura*. Oeiras: Celta Editora.
- Goffman, Erving. 1988. *Estigma—Notas Sobre a Manipulação Deteriorada*, 4th ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Guanabara. First published in 1963.
- Magano, Olga. 2010. *Tracejar Vidas Normais. Estudo Qualitativo Sobre a Integração Social de Indivíduos de Origem Cigana na Sociedade Portuguesa*. Ph.D. thesis, Open University, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Magano, Olga. 2013. Percursos de integração de ciganos portugueses. In *Ciganos Portugueses. Olhares Plurais e Novos Desafios Numa Sociedade em Transição*. Edited by Maria Manuela Mendes and Olga Magano. Lisbon: Editora Mundos Sociais, pp. 191–205.
- Magano, Olga, and Maria Manuela Mendes. 2016. Constrangimentos e oportunidades para a continuidade e sucesso escolar das pessoas Ciganas. *Configurações* 18: 8–26. [CrossRef]
- Marques, João Filipe. 2007. *Do «não Racismo» Português aos dois Racismos Portugueses*. Lisbon: ACIDI.

- Marques, João Filipe. 2013. O racismo contra as colectividades ciganas em Portugal. In *Ciganos Portugueses. Olhares Plurais e Novos Desafios Numa Sociedade em Transição*. Edited by Maria Manuela Mendes and Olga Magano. Lisbon: Editora Mundos Sociais, pp. 111–21.
- Memmi, Albert. 1993. *O Racismo*. Lisbon: Ed. Caminho.
- Mendes, Maria Manuela. 2007. Representações Face à Discriminação. Ciganos e Imigrantes Russos e Ucrânicos na Área Metropolitana de Lisboa. Ph.D. thesis, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Mendes, Maria Manuela. 2020. Anti ciganismo em contexto de pandemia. *Público*, December 12.
- Mendes, Maria Manuela, Olga Magano, and Pedro Candeias. 2014. *Estudo Nacional sobre as Comunidades Ciganas*. Lisbon: Alto Comissariado para as Migrações.
- Miles, Robert, and Malcolm Brown. 2003. *Racism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Moreira, Cristiana Faria. 2020. Autarca da Azambuja insiste em cordão sanitário a prédio habitado por famílias de “etnia cigana”. *Público*, June 2.
- Oommen, Tharailath K. 1994. Les relations entre race, ethnicité et classe. *Revue Internationale des Sciences Sociales* 139: 101–11.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F., and R. W. Meertens. 1993. Le racisme voilé: Dimensions et mesure. In *Racisme et Modernité*. Direction by Michel Wieviorka. Paris: Ed. La Découverte, pp. 109–26.
- Plainer, Zsuzsa. 2020. The Roma in Tândărei”: A few thoughts on prejudices and groupism in media representations of the Romanian Roma during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Szociális Szemle* 13: 5–10. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Rabiee, Fatemeh. 2004. Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* 63: 655–60. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Salomos, John, and Les Back. 1996. *Racism and Society*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Santos, Sofia Aurora. 2013. O Rendimento Social de Inserção e os Beneficiários Ciganos: O caso do concelho de Faro. Master’s thesis, Universidade do Algarve, Faro, Portugal.
- Silva, Manuel Carlos. 2014. *Sina Social Cigana. História, Comunidades, Representações e Instituições*. Lisbon: Edições Colibri.
- Stephan, Walter G., and Cookie W. Stephan. 2000. An integrated threat theory of prejudice. In *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination*. Edited by S. Oskamp. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 225–46.
- Vala, Jorge, ed. 1999. *Novos Racismos: Perspectivas Comparativas*. Oeiras: Celta Ed.
- Vincze, Enikő. 2014. The racialization of Roma in the ‘new’ Europe and the political potential of Romani women. *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21: 443–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Wieviorka, Michel. 1992. *La France Raciste*. Paris: Éd. du Seuil.
- Wieviorka, Michel. 2002. *A Diferença*. Lisbon: Fenda.



Article

Hate Speech, Symbolic Violence, and Racial Discrimination. Antigypsyism: What Responses for the Next Decade?

Ismael Cortés

Unidas Podemos/En Comú Podem, Congreso de los Diputados, Carrera de San Jerónimo, S/N 28071 Madrid, Spain; ismael.cortes@congreso.es

Abstract: This paper aims to fulfill a double objective: on the one hand, to explain how hate speech works as a mechanism of racialization towards the Roma, resulting in a concrete form of symbolic violence. On the other hand, to analyze the most relevant institutional responses to fight against antigypsyism, looking at the new EU Roma Framework 2020–2030 with a special attention on the recent developments in Spain. The paper discusses the fact that a focus on symbolic violence and more concretely on hate speech would produce considerably differing approaches to Roma inclusion policies. The paper is divided into three sections: the first section will conceptually address the notions of “antigypsyism”, “racial discrimination”, “symbolic violence”, and “hate speech”. The second section will present and contextualize a series of illustrative cases of antigypsyist hate speech in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain. The third section will examine the most relevant legislative and policy initiatives adopted to fight against antigypsyism. The paper will wrap up with a discussion and some conclusions on the functioning of hate speech as a symbolic mechanism of racialization; and its capacity to articulate moral hierarchies and social divisions among the Roma and the rest of society.

Keywords: antigypsyism; hate speech; racial discrimination; symbolic violence; racialization; EU Roma framework; Spanish politics; COVID-19 pandemic

Citation: Cortés, Ismael. 2021. Hate Speech, Symbolic Violence, and Racial Discrimination. Antigypsyism: What Responses for the Next Decade?. *Social Sciences* 10: 360. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10100360>

Academic Editors: Zenia Helligren and Bálint Ábel Bereményi

Received: 20 May 2021

Accepted: 10 September 2021

Published: 27 September 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction: Theoretical Framework

1.1. Symbolic Violence and Hate Speech

Different postcolonial authors have reported that in the post-apartheid period, and in the resulting globalization of anti-racist laws, new processes of racialization became predominantly symbolic, thereby (re)articulating a new hierarchy of peoples, social divisions, and economic inequalities (Bhabha 2011; Mbembe 2017; Carty and Mohanty 2018). Thus, in the fight for racial equality new approaches to use symbolic power are crucial to (re)think and (re)formulate anti-racist policies.

According to Bourdieu, symbolic power establishes a gnoseological order of social divisions, in which logical integration is the precondition of moral integration (Bourdieu 1979). Symbolic power is present in virtually all social relations, though this kind of power is frequently veiled. Yet there are some groups that concentrate the symbolic resources and the technical and institutional tools to construct the social perception of reality. Social perception refers to identifying and utilizing social cues to make judgments about social roles, rules, relationships, context, or the characteristics of others (i.e., trustworthiness) (McCleery 2014).

Meanwhile symbolic violence concerns the oppression of people who seemingly have come with their position as symbolically diminished (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). In contrast to hegemony, which rests on consent, symbolic violence rests on misrecognition and asymmetric access to fields where social perception is constructed (Burawoy 2019; Rowlands 2015). The exercise of symbolic violence has been conceptualized in overtly unidirectional terms as “a kind of violence being perpetuated on those not belonging to the dominant social groups” (Grenfell 2012, p. 267).

To the purpose of this paper, we may ask the following question: Can hate speech be considered as a form of symbolic violence? Prima facie, there is a common element that connects them: hate speech is always directed towards those subjects categorized as protected groups by law (minorities and other vulnerable groups) (Dauris and Lorenzo 2021). Though there is enormous variation in the definition of hate speech (and the subsequent protected groups), legislation to ban hate speech exists in a wide range of democracies including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, India, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, among many others (Waldron 2012). From another legal tradition, the USA holds uncompromisingly that laws perpetrating discrimination on the basis of viewpoint (Godwin 2003), especially those that suppress the expression of certain moral and political convictions, violate the First Amendment¹.

At the theoretical level, there is an irresolvable dilemma between either banning hate speech or protecting freedom of expression without restrictions: security vs. freedom. Hypothetically, in an equal society the preferability of counter-speech over coercion would prevent us from any potential abuse of state power (Howard 2019). Nonetheless, in a society where all individuals and communities have no equal access to symbolic power, the unlimited production and distribution of any kind of discourse (including hate speech) will reinforce the vulnerability of certain groups. This dilemma is nothing new: in the classical liberal debate on freedom of expression, Mill (1859) advocated for absolute freedom of opinion and feeling on any subject. However, he introduced a limit to absolute freedom: the “principle of harm”. According to this principle, free speech should be limited in those cases when it could imply a direct violation of the fundamental rights of any person. Thus, the central liberal value—the state’s commitment not to interfere in the lives of citizens—is sometimes nullified (Riley 1998). Of all the possible types of hurtful speech mentioned by Mill (1859), including defamation, offense, harassment or threat, we could agree that hate speech is the most serious category because it can evolve into incitement to violence (Bilgrami 2015).

In the European context, there is a common agreement on the need to ban hate speech tracking from the incendiary power of Nazi propaganda and the tragic experience of the World War II and the Holocaust.² In fact, the European Union (EU) has been very active in addressing hate speech in coherence with article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon:

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the member states in a society with pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality. (European Union 2007)

The Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, approved by the Council of the European Union, affirms that

racism and xenophobia are direct violations of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles upon which the European Union is founded and which are common to the Member States. (European Union 2008)

This decision obliges each member state of the EU to take the necessary measures to ensure that public inciting to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, color, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as publicly condoning, denying, or grossly trivializing crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes are punishable. The Framework Decision is silent, however, about incitement to discrimination (Pejchal 2020). On this matter, the Recommendation No. 15 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) goes beyond the Framework Decision and it defends that

hate speech is based on the unjustified assumption that one person or group of people is superior to others; incites acts of violence or discrimination, which undermines respect for minority groups and damages social cohesion. (ECRI 2015)

In the case of Spain, freedom of speech is limited by the Penal Code, which characterizes several criminal offenses related to hate speech:

Art 510:

- a. *They will be punished with a prison sentence of one to four years and a fine of six to twelve months: a. Those who publicly encourage, promote, or directly or indirectly incite hatred, hostility, discrimination, or violence against a group, a part of there, or against a person determined by reason of their membership, for racist, anti-Semitic or other reasons related to ideology, religion or beliefs, family situation, the belonging of its members to an ethnic group, race or nation, national origin, sex, or sexual orientation or identity, for reasons of gender, illness, or disability.*
- b. *Those who produce, elaborate, possess for the purpose of distributing, provide access to third parties, distribute, disseminate, or sell written documents or any other kind of material or media that, due to their content, are suitable to encourage, promote, or incite direct or indirectly to hatred, hostility, discrimination, or violence against a group, a part of it, or against a person determined by reason of their belonging to it, for racist, anti-Semitic, or other reasons related to ideology, religion or beliefs, family situation, the belonging of its members to an ethnic group, race or nation, their national origin, sex, or sexual orientation or identity, for reasons of gender, illness, or disability.*
- c. *Those who publicly deny, seriously trivialize or extol the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or against persons and property protected in the event of armed conflict, or extol their perpetrators, when they have been committed against a group or part of it, or against a person determined by reason of their belonging to it, for racist, anti-Semitic or other reasons related to ideology, religion or beliefs, family situation or the membership of its members to an ethnic group, race or nation, their national origin, their sex, sexual orientation or identity, for reasons of gender, illness or disability, when in this way a climate of violence, hostility, hatred or discrimination against them is promoted or favored (Código Penal 2015).*

1.2. What Is Antigypsyism All About?

The fight against antigypsyism is part of a wider fight against racial discrimination. According to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination:

racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (UN/ICERD 1965)

Following the last developments of the United Nations on this matter, I support that the study of situations of exclusion and discrimination should not only describe a certain state of deprivation of fundamental rights, but it should also include an analysis of the cultural, political, and economic processes that led to that state and sustain it (UN/OHCHR 2021; UN/ECOSOC 2018). In the EU context, the understanding of racial or ethnic discrimination includes the unequal access or treatment of certain groups in areas such as employment, education, security, healthcare, housing, and the supply of goods and services (European Union 2000, Directive 2000/43/EC).

In recent years, the notion of “antigypsyism” has received increasing attention in the political and scholarly fields across Europe (Agarin 2014; End and Selling 2015; European Parliament 2015, 2017; Carrera et al. 2017, 2019; EUFRA 2016, 2018; Cortés 2018; Cortés and End 2019). The following different definitions have been proposed at the institutional and civil societal levels:

- *Antigypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, and a form of dehumanization and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed through, among other things, violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization, and the most blatant kind of discrimination (ECRI 2011).*
- *Antigypsyism is a specific nature of racism directed towards Roma, on par with anti-Semitism. It is persistent both historically and geographically (permanent and not decreasing), systematic (accepted by virtually all the community), and often accompanied by acts of violence and discrimination (Council of Europe 2012).*
- *Antigypsyism is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigmatized label of “Gypsy”, or other related terms. It includes the homogenizing and essentializing perception and description of these groups, the attribution of specific characteristics to them, and discriminatory social structures and violent practices that emerge against this background, and which have a degrading and ostracizing effect, and reproduce structural disadvantages (Alliance against Antigypsyism 2017).*

Different studies have approached the notion of “antigypsyism” through the analysis of material processes of exclusion. Picker (2017) considers urban segregation to be the fundamental matrix of racial exclusion. He has reported that segregated urban areas, which are partially or completely occupied by Roma households, can be observed across Europe. These are regularly marked by higher rates of unemployment than other areas, with few or no public services, substandard housing, low-quality education, and unsuitable sanitary infrastructure. Ryder and Taba (2018) focus on the effect of economic intervention and redistribution on diminishing antigypsyism. They recommend active welfare state measures and special efforts for job creation. Rostas (2019) emphasizes the role of an active Roma citizenship. He claims that the rise of Roma participation in decision-making processes may be a crucial element in bringing about systemic transformations and eliminating discrimination. There have been also recent studies that pointed to the power of symbolism to construct mechanisms of othering towards the Roma people (Kóczé and Rövid 2019; End 2019; Mladenova 2019). Complementary to all the cited studies, this paper aims to explain how hate speech constitutes a core mechanism of racialization directed towards the Roma, which results in a concrete form of antigypsyism that must be combatted by institutional means.

2. Case Study: Analysis of Antigypsyist Hate Speech

Committed with my double role as a policy analyst and a policy maker, I have been watching very closely the rapid spread of anti-Roma messages across Europe since the World Health Organization (WHO 2020) declared the state of pandemic caused by COVID-19 (11 March 2020). The immediate response of the European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, who called on the EU member states “to do everything possible to prevent national or ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, from becoming scapegoats” (European Commission 2020a), should be underlined. A special mention is also deserved for the statement by Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, calling on governments to ensure equal protection and care for Roma during the COVID-19 (Council of Europe 2020a).

In Spain, I have been in a constant dialogue with the main national Roma NGOs (Khetane, Unión Romani, FAGIC, and Fundación Secretariado Gitano). Dozens of cases were reported early, alerting the use of racist discourses that portrayed Roma communities as a threat to public health. The social climate of panic that prevails in times of pandemic is crucial to assessing the possible effects of this type of accusatory speech, which can generate an intimidating and hostile, if not directly violent, climate of public opinion against Roma communities and individuals. According to data collected by the Victim Assistance and Orientation Service on Racial or Ethnic Discrimination, at the request of the General Directorate for Equal Treatment and Ethnic-Racial Diversity, as of 8 May 2020, 53 cases of hate speech were detected within the context of the pandemic in Spain. Of these cases, 46 directly affected Roma people (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2021).

Next, I will present three cases of hate speech produced by political, social, and media actors. These cases illustrate how liquid the functioning of antigypsyism is. It equally operates through the speech of daily common citizens, the editorial of a well established newspaper, or the mayor of a little village. In all cases, the use of racist expressions is once and again normalized and the Roma communities are subjected to stereotypes and fake accusations based on moral divisions: those who follow the rules and those who do not (good and bad citizens).

Case 1. In the Cantabrian municipality of Santoña, at an early stage of the pandemic, the mayor of the town explained in an interview that

Of the six deaths registered in Santoña, five would be from the Gypsy community ... It is very likely that this contagion that has been spreading in Santoña, could have been brought by the Gypsy community because of some event, celebration or funeral that took place outside of our province on dates prior to declaring the state of alarm ... We must be vigilant because the Gypsy community is suffering particularly from these infections. It is a significant number, much higher than the rest of the population, and we must be especially vigilant. (Eldiario.es 2020a)

In the next days, the Spanish Roma rights' organization Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) compiled a series of Whatsapp messages distributed among the neighbors of non-Roma districts that would have been triggered by the mayor's words. One of these Whatsapp chats contained the following message:

Let catch them all and take them to prison ... and let have them there, inside the walls, let them sing and dance locked up like in a concentration camp until they all die... They are infecting everyone... Let see if all those sons of the great whore, little ones, children, grandparents and their fucking mother die. (Eldiario.es 2020b)

Case 2. The Commissioner for the Polígono Sur (a Roma district in Seville) requested the entry of the Army into the Three Thousand Homes, a neighborhood where most of the residents are Roma. The Commissioner declared to the media, "We cannot allow a minority to do what they want." This statement came after the publication of some images in which around ten persons (supposed to be Roma) appeared praying in the street ignoring the state of alarm. The Commissioner explained that these were "unstructured family clans" and that "they are not used to public order, discipline". He ended up declaring that the Administration must "impose the law". The day after the Commissioner's statement, the deputy editor of the newspaper *ABC de Sevilla*, blamed the residents of the Three Thousand Homes for its own situation of marginalization and exclusion. The deputy director's column concluded as follows:

When everything returns to normal, they will ask us for help and accuse us of letting them in abandonment. Let's not fall into the trap of good-naturedness again. Either we isolate ourselves from them, or they will contaminate us with their misery. (ABC 2020)

Case 3. A neighbor from Karrantza (Bizkaia) threatens to "set on fire" a Roma family falsely accused of being a source of contagion. After receiving several threats in their own building, the Roma family found out that an accusatory message was circulating via Whatsapp among the residents of the town:

I'm fucking upset! My daughter went for a run this morning and she found seven Gypsies walking together and they told her that a family of Gypsies from Santoña, whose relatives are infected with the virus, had come to this town. It turns out that they arrived by train to Karrantza. The City Council spoke with the Ertzaintza (local police) and they cannot do anything. What can we do as citizens? We all must go and take the streets in protest. Or go and set them on fire. I am a bad host and will make them go out or burn them out. Those fucking Gypsies. Holy shit! (Amuge and SOS Racismo Bizkaia 2020)

As an MP, I supported the Spanish government's efforts to recognize the vulnerability of Roma to the social effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 crisis, the government has been taking urgent measures to strengthen the public health system and to provide medical and social care to those who need it (Cortés 2020a). However, this is not enough. We must be also vigilant to prevent any violation of fundamental rights. The pandemic activated the old archetype of the "Gypsy menace" (Stewart 2012). In fact, racism manifests in a more acute manner in critical junctures of crisis, when social anxiety and discontent search for available channels of expression. And the Roma have historically proved to be an easy target, due to a sense of impunity linked to a widely accepted form of racism.

As I have explained in previous studies (Cortés 2020b, 2021), the social imaginary of (historically rooted) antigypsyist stereotypes nurtures racist narratives with three main effects for the Roma: damaging the reputation of an entire ethnic group; creating a fear-based public opinion; and ultimately legitimizing the social and economic gap they face. In this regard, as an MP, I have said in different forums that all socio-economic policies directed at Roma will prove fruitless if they are not backed up by a commitment to stop racism and its manifestations, including hate speech. Roma inclusion—understood as equal participation in all areas of society—seems unlikely to happen when harsh stigmatization of and hatred against Roma communities continue to be allowed.

3. Institutional Responses to Fight against Antigypsyism

The making of the new EU Roma strategic framework came out in the first wave of the pandemic (European Commission 2020b). The COVID-19 crisis accelerated the worsening trend toward more catastrophic figures of Roma for being at risk of poverty (Jovanovic and Korunovska 2020; OSCE 2020). On the other hand, across Europe, local and national newspapers have waged a racist, hateful, and life-threatening campaign of anti-Roma propaganda (Matache and Bhabha 2020; European Roma Rights Centre 2020). Parallel to that, social media platforms were used to spread racist hate speech and deeply offensive fake accusations against Roma. This highly hostile scenario made even clearer the need to adopt a comprehensive approach towards a new EU Roma Strategy integrating the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The previous framework ended in 2020 and focused primarily on socio-economic integration (European Commission 2011). Meanwhile, the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation 2020–2030 (European Commission 2020b) introduced a specific focus on non-discrimination by tackling antigypsyism. In this regard, the last recommendation on Roma equality of the Council of the European Union acknowledged the dynamics of racist discrimination and social and economic exclusion as intimately intertwined (European Union 2021). The in-depth evaluation of the last EU Roma Framework and the conclusions drawn from it by the Council, the European Parliament, and several Europe-wide and national civil society organizations show the need for a renewed and stronger commitment to Roma inclusion and anti-discrimination policies. Next, I will examine the genesis of policy initiatives that seek to offer institutional responses to structural antigypsyism: looking at past and new trends from a European and a Spanish perspective.

3.1. European Initiatives

On 8 April 2015, on the occasion of the International Roma Day, the European Parliament approved the resolution on "Anti-Gypsyism in Europe and recognition by the EU of the day of commemoration of the genocide of the Roma people during the Second World War" (European Parliament 2015). This resolution recognizes that antigypsyism is the root-cause of the historical exclusion suffered by Roma in Europe. The resolution sets a milestone, expressing a deep concern about the non-decreasing antigypsyist rhetoric. This resolution emphasizes that social exclusion is never due to an inherent weakness of

specific individuals or communities; rather, it is derived above all from the inability of state institutions to ensure full access to fundamental rights of all members of society.

On 25 October 2017, the European Parliament adopted the resolution “On fundamental rights aspects of Roma integration in the Union: combating anti-Gypsyism” ([European Parliament 2017](#)). This resolution emphasizes the urgency of combatting stereotypes and any use of antigypsyist language. In particular, the resolution emphasizes that the prohibition of racial discrimination forms an integral part of fundamental rights, and that, as such, falls within the scope of the Union’s values. With regard to hate speech, this resolution calls on the Member States to:

Art. 16. Strongly condemn and sanction incitement to hatred and the search for scape-goats by politicians and public officials at all levels and in all social media, given that they directly reinforce anti-Gypsyism in society, take additional measures to prevent, condemn and combat incitement to hatred against Roma, also making use of cultural dialogue. (European Parliament 2017)

On 17 September 2020, the European Parliament approved the resolution on the “Implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: fighting negative attitudes towards people of Roma origin in Europe” ([European Parliament 2020](#)). This resolution recognizes that the Roma population suffers from an increasing level of hate speech. It calls on the member states to officially recognize antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against the Roma population. It also calls on member States to:

Art. 22. Redouble their efforts to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes within the framework of national and European anti-discrimination legislation, especially in relation to monitoring the situation of affected Roma victims and the provision of assistance judicial. (European Parliament 2020)

3.2. Spanish Initiatives

On 26 October 2020, in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, the Home Affairs Committee approved an initiative that urged the Government to adopt the necessary measures aimed at preventing the spread of hate speech in the digital space. This initiative relied on the Code of Conduct published by the European Commission, in 2016, to counter illegal hate speech online ([European Commission 2016](#)). This parliamentary initiative calls on ICT companies for simplifying available mechanisms to report hate speech, as well as for accelerating the process to denounce racial or ethnic discriminatory contents. It also calls on the state to increase cooperation between the operators of ICT companies with the competent police authorities:

ICT operators will have the obligation to temporarily store the reported content and make it available to the judicial authority in order to investigate, identify and prosecute criminal offenses. (Congreso de los Diputados 2020a)

On 14 December 2020, in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, the Social Rights Committee approved an initiative that urged the adoption of a State Pact on fighting against antigypsyism ([Congreso de los Diputados 2020b](#)). On 20 May 2021, after a debate, the plenary session of the Congress of Deputies approved the creation of a Subcommittee to draw a State Pact against antigypsyism. This parliamentary initiative calls for the development of awareness-raising narratives to counter anti-Roma prejudices and stereotypes in the fields of arts, culture, media, and education. This initiative expresses too the need to monitor, collect, and report, from governmental and non-governmental organizations, cases of hate speech or discriminatory language targeting Roma in social media. It also calls for a legal evaluation to include antigypsyism, as a specific category, in the Penal Code following the recommendation of the Council of Europe on October 2020 ([Congreso de los Diputados 2021](#); [Council of Europe 2020b](#)).

To elaborate this Pact, the new ad hoc Subcommittee will count on the assessment of competent authorities, legitimate representatives of the third sector and the private sector, as well as experts from the university field. This Pact defines the operative policy

framework that will develop the Spanish transposition of the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation 2020–2030 (European Commission 2020b; Congreso de los Diputados 2021). Beyond the state projects, this new and ambitious policy process may influence the local and regional governments that might apply to state funds for projects on combatting antigypsyism. On the other hand, civil society movements are already advocating for getting through similar policy processes at different levels, aiming to spread the State Pact on antigypsyism to each and any autonomous community of Spain.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

By doing a grounded analysis on three concrete cases, this article has shown how antigypsyist hate speech operated as a symbolic mechanism of racial discrimination in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The Roma were portrayed as diverging from common norms and were presented as a social threat to public health. In all three analyzed cases, the common denominator of antigypsyist hate speech was the presumption of fundamental moral differences between “them” and “us” (bad and good citizens); which symbolically (re)activated inherited group divisions among Roma and non Roma: those who follow the rules and those who break the rules; those who deserve state protection and those who deserve being prosecuted by the state; those who deserve social solidarity and those who deserve social exclusion; those who deserve democratic justice and those who deserve popular justice.

In the act of “othering”, the function of the analyzed discourses was to establish the “otherness” of the Roma, labeled as “Gypsies”, to evoke a moral division on the basis of ethnicity. The analyzed discourses intentionally highlighted the ethnic affiliation of some individuals and communities perceived as “dangerous Gypsies”. Thus, as an effect of the discourses studied here, the common belonging to the civic community was symbolically torn apart through an ethnic and moral grouping. Another function of the analyzed discourses was to make a call for action on active discrimination or even on violent attacks against Roma; which have a degrading and ostracizing effect on an entire ethnic group and spark latent inter-ethnic conflicts.

This paper has not eluded the responsibility of democratic institutions to combat antigypsyism. The initiatives presented here still require concrete programmatic and legislative translation. Undoubtedly, new developments will need further coordination and dialogue among the political, the academic, and the citizenship spheres. The road to justice is long, but steps are being taken, and every day more lights are turning on to illuminate this grim historical problem. In the case of the ongoing State Pact against antigypsyism, in the Spanish Congress of Deputies, along with the areas of residential and labor inclusion, a set of new measures have been considered for approval:

- Awareness-raising narratives to counter anti-Roma prejudices and stereotypes in the fields of arts, culture, media, and education.
- To monitor, collect, and report, from governmental and non-governmental organizations, the phenomena of hate speech or discriminatory language targeting Roma people in social media.
- A call for a legal evaluation to include antigypsyism, as a specific category, in the Penal Code.

The persistence of Roma exclusion in virtually all European societies requires an analysis that goes beyond the dynamic aggregation of individuals competing for economic opportunities. We need to look at social dynamics of group formation, hierarchies of peoples, and social divisions to understand long lasting economic inequalities. On this matter, a decade ago the World Bank (WB) recognized that Roma exclusion cannot be understood by merely looking at economic decision-making criteria. In fact, the exclusion of Roma causes significant economic losses (World Bank 2010). Some activists have defended that the Roma, as a young, vibrant, and fast-growing segment of Europe’s population, might be a crucial contributor to face the present and future challenges of European economies to aging populations and other negative demographic trends (Jovanovic and Korunovska 2020). However, all this

potential will not be profited from unless the EU and its member states do in advance their homework on symbolical deconstruction and reconstruction of the social imaginaries on the Roma as peer trustable and respected citizens.

The new Roma policy trends presented here, articulated both at EU and national levels, spotlight the symbolic dimension of group formation and social divisions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013; Wacquant 2013). This approach to policy making assumes that material relations of exclusion, such as those analyzed by Picker (2017) on housing or by Ryder and Taba (2018) on labor, cannot be sustained over time without the effect of social distinctions which operate through perceived status and reputation. The desirable goal of an equal participation of Roma in all areas of society cannot be fulfilled in a climate of misrecognition, distrust, fear, or hatred against them. To achieve full inclusion of Roma in the abovementioned areas of quality (and non-segregated) housing or decent job, or even in the arena of politics (Rostas 2019), we need to build a new shared schema of perception and appreciation towards the Roma. In the realistic utopia of a Europe united in its diversity, the Roma must be seen as an asset by the majority, not as a burden or a threat.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: MDPI Research Data Policies (links provided in references).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

ACFC	Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
AMUGE	Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas de Euskadi
CD	Congreso de los Diputados
CEPS	Centre for European Policy Studies
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CoE	Council of Europe
EC	European Commission
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic & Social Council
ENAR	European Network against Racism
ERGO	European Roma Grassroots Organizations
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
EUC	Council of the European Union
FAGIC	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
FSG	Fundación Secretariado Gitano
Kh	Khetane
IRU	International Romani Union
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSF	Open Society Foundations
RIO	Roma Initiatives Office
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

Notes

- ¹ The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression from government interference. It prohibits any laws that establish a national religion, impede the free exercise of religion, abridge the freedom of speech, infringe upon the freedom of the press, interfere with the right to peaceably assemble, or prohibit citizens from petitioning for a governmental redress of grievances. It was adopted into the Bill of Rights in 1791. The Supreme Court interprets the extent of the protection afforded to these rights. The First Amendment has been interpreted by the Court as applying to the entire federal government even though it is only expressly applicable to Congress. Furthermore, the Court has interpreted the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as protecting the rights in the First Amendment from interference by state governments (Vile et al. 2009).
- ² In today's Europe, the question is no longer whether hate speech should be banned but the following: How to define hate speech? What sorts of protected groups are its paradigmatic targets? (Laurenzo 2021).

References

- ABC. 2020. Aislar a las Tres Mil, March 23. Available online: https://sevilla.abc.es/opinion/sevi-alberto-garcia-reyes-aislar-tres-202003230753_noticia.html (accessed on 24 March 2020).
- Agarin, Timofey, ed. 2014. *When Stereotype Meets Prejudice: Antiziganism in European Societies*. Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag.
- Alliance against Antigypsyism. 2017. *Antigypsyism—A Reference Paper*. Brussels: European Roma Grassroots Network. Available online: https://www.antigypsyism.eu/?page_id=17 (accessed on 20 May 2020).
- Amuge and SOS Racismo Bizkaia. 2020. Vecino de Karrantza Amenaza con Linchar y “dar Fuego” a Familia Gitana Acusada Falsamente de ser Foco de COVID-19, 16 Abril de 2020. Available online: <https://www.ecuadoretxea.org/vecino-de-karrantza-amenaza-con-linchar-y-dar-fuego-a-familia-gitana-acusada-de-foco-de-covid19/> (accessed on 17 April 2020).
- Bhabha, Homi K. 2011. *Our Neighbours, Ourselves: Contemporary Reflections on Survival*. Hegel Lectures Series; Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Bilgrami, Akeel. 2015. The Ambitions of Classical Liberalism: Mill on Truth and Liberty. *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 272: 175–82. [CrossRef]
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relations to Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc Wacquant. 2013. Symbolic capital and social classes. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13: 292–302. [CrossRef]
- Burawoy, Michael. 2019. *Symbolic Violence: Conversations with Bourdieu*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Carrera, Sergio, Iulius Rostas, and Lina Vosyliute. 2017. *Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism: Responses and Promising Practices in the EU and Selected Member States*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies. Available online: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/combating-institutional-anti-gypsyism-responses-and-promising-practices-eu-and-selected/> (accessed on 15 June 2020).
- Carrera, Sergio, Iulius Rostas, and Lina Vosyliute. 2019. *Study on Scaling up Roma Integration Strategies: Truth, Reconciliation, and Justice for Addressing Antigypsyism*. Brussels: European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. Available online: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/scaling-roma-inclusion-strategies-truth-reconciliation-and-justice-addressing/> (accessed on 30 May 2020).
- Carty, Linda, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds. 2018. *Feminist Freedom Warriors: Genealogies, Justice, Politics, and Hope*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Código Penal. 2015. Ley Orgánica 1/2015, de 30 de Marzo, por la que se Modifica la Ley Orgánica 10/1995, de 23 de Noviembre, del Código Penal. Available online: <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2015/03/30/1> (accessed on 30 May 2020).
- Congreso de los Diputados (CD). 2020a. Proposición no de Ley Sobre la Prevención de la Propagación de Discursos de Odio en el Espacio Digital. Madrid, October 26. Available online: https://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L14/CONG/BOCG/D/BOCG-14-D-168.PDF#page=37 (accessed on 13 November 2020).
- Congreso de los Diputados (CD). 2020b. Proposición no de Ley Sobre la Inclusión del Pueblo Gitano y la Lucha Contra el Antigitanismo. Madrid, December 14. Available online: https://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L14/CONG/BOCG/D/BOCG-14-D-223.PDF (accessed on 20 December 2020).
- Congreso de los Diputados (CD). 2021. Propuesta de la Comisión de Derechos Sociales y Políticas Integrales de la Discapacidad, de Creación de una Subcomisión Para el Estudio de un Pacto de Estado Contra el Antigitanismo y la Inclusión del Pueblo Gitano. Madrid, May 10. Available online: https://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L14/CONG/DS/CO/DSCD-14-CO-379.PDF (accessed on 15 May 2021).
- Cortés, Ismael. 2018. Escaping the Labyrinth of Roma Political Representation. Reflections on Common Citizenship. *Slovenský Národopis/Slovak Ethnology* 66: 436–51. [CrossRef]
- Cortés, Ismael. 2020a. Unveiling anti-Roma sentiments in Spain. What's next after COVID-19? *ENAR Blog*. April 5. Available online: <https://enar-eu.org/Unveiling-anti-Roma-sentiments-in-Spain-What-s-next-after-Covid-19> (accessed on 6 April 2020).
- Cortés, Ismael. 2020b. Antigypsyism as Symbolic and Epistemic Violence in Informative Journalism in Spain, 2010–2018. *Critical Romani Studies* 3: 4–25. [CrossRef]
- Cortés, Ismael. 2021. *Sueños y Sombras Sobre los Gitanos. La Actualidad de un Racismo Histórico*. Barcelona: Bellaterra.

- Cortés, Ismael, and Markus End, eds. 2019. *Dimensions of Antigypsyism in Europe*. Brussels: ENAR. Available online: <https://www.enar-eu.org/Book-Dimensions-of-Antigypsyism-in-Europe> (accessed on 10 July 2020).
- Council of Europe (CoE). 2012. Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma Issues. Strasbourg, May 18. Available online: <https://rm.coe.int/1680088eab> (accessed on 23 May 2020).
- Council of Europe (CoE). 2020a. Statement by Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Governments Must Ensure Equal Protection and Care for Roma and Travellers during the COVID-19 Crisis. Strasbourg, April 7. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/news-2020/-/asset_publisher/Arb4fRK3o8Cf/content/governments-must-ensure-equal-protection-and-care-for-roma-and-travellers-during-the-covid-19-crisis (accessed on 8 April 2020).
- Council of Europe (CoE). 2020b. Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC). Fifth Opinion on Spain. Strasbourg, 15 October 2020. Available online: <https://rm.coe.int/5th-com-spain-en/16809ff1a8> (accessed on 20 October 2020).
- Dauis, Alberto, and Patricia Lorenzo, eds. 2021. *Odio, Prejuicios y Derechos Humanos*. Granada: Comares.
- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). 2011. General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on Combating Anti-Gypsyism and Discrimination and Roma. Strasbourg, 24 June 2011. Available online: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/recommendation-no.13> (accessed on 7 June 2020).
- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). 2015. General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on Combating Hate Speech. Strasbourg, 8 December 2015. Available online: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-15-on-combating-hate-speech/16808b5b01> (accessed on 29 May 2020).
- Eldiario.es. 2020a. Una Veintena Familias de Santoña Afectadas Están en Confinamiento Forzoso, 30 March 2020. Available online: https://www.eldiario.es/cantabria/ultimas-noticias/veintena-familias-santona-afectadas-confinamiento_1_1225785.html (accessed on 30 March 2020).
- Eldiario.es. 2020b. Los Gitanos, Nuevo Foco de Mensajes Racistas que les Acusan de Extender el Coronavirus en España. 22 April 2020. Available online: https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/gitanos-bulos-racistas_1_5894352.html (accessed on 22 April 2020).
- End, Markus. 2019. Subtle Images of Antigypsyism: An Analysis of the Visual Perception of 'Roma'. In *Dimensions of Contemporary Antigypsyism in Europe*. Edited by Ismael Cortés and Markus End. Brussels: ENAR, pp. 67–88. Available online: <https://www.enar-eu.org/Book-Dimensions-of-Antigypsyism-in-Europe> (accessed on 22 May 2020).
- End, Markus, and Jan Selling, eds. 2015. *Antiziganism: What's in a Word?* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- European Commission (EC). 2011. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. COM(2011) 173 Final. Brussels, April 5. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/social_determinants/docs/com2011_173_en.pdf (accessed on 16 May 2020).
- European Commission (EC). 2016. Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online. Brussels, June 22. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_19_806 (accessed on 20 May 2020).
- European Commission (EC). 2020a. Letter Signed by Commissioners Kyriakides, Dalli and Schmit. Brussels, April 8. Available online: <https://www.eurodiaconia.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Letter-signed-by-Commissioners-Kyriakides-Dalli-and-Schmit-002.pdf> (accessed on 12 June 2020).
- European Commission (EC). 2020b. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the council. A Union of Equality: EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. COM(2020) 620 final. Brussels, October 7. Available online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9a007e7e-08ad-11eb-a511-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (accessed on 13 June 2021).
- European Parliament (EP). 2015. Resolution of 15 April 2015 on the Occasion of International Roma Day Anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU Recognition of the Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide During World War II. Brussels. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0095_EN.pdf (accessed on 9 July 2020).
- European Parliament (EP). 2017. 2017 Resolution of 25 October 2017 on Fundamental Rights Aspects in Roma Integration in the European Union: Fighting Anti-Gypsyism. Brussels. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0413_EN.pdf (accessed on 21 June 2020).
- European Parliament (EP). 2020. Resolution of 17 September on the Implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: Combating Negative Attitudes towards People with Romani Background in Europe. Brussels. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0229_EN.pdf (accessed on 18 September 2020).
- European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). 2020. *Roma Rights in the Time of COVID*. Brussels: ERRC. Available online: <http://www.errc.org/reports--submissions/roma-rights-in-the-time-of-covid> (accessed on 25 February 2021).
- European Union (EU). 2000. Race Equality Directive, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin. Brussels. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000L0043&from=EN> (accessed on 10 October 2020).
- European Union (EU). 2007. Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community. Portugal, December 13. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:FULL&from=EN> (accessed on 10 November 2020).

- European Union (EU). 2008. Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by Means of Criminal Law. Brussels, November 28. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008F0913&from=EN> (accessed on 25 April 2021).
- European Union (EU). 2021. Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation. Brussels, March 12. Available online: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021H0319\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021H0319(01)&from=EN) (accessed on 25 April 2021).
- European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EUFRA). 2016. *EU MIDIS II: Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma—Selected Findings*. Vienna: FRA. Available online: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf (accessed on 5 January 2021).
- European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EUFRA). 2018. *A Persisting Concern: Anti-Gypsyism as a Barrier to Roma Inclusion*. Vienna: FRA. Available online: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/persisting-concern-anti-gypsyism-barrier-roma-inclusion> (accessed on 25 April 2021).
- Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). 2021. *Discurso de Odio Antigitano y Crisis de la COVID-19*. Madrid: FSG. Available online: https://www.gitanos.org/centro_documentacion/publicaciones/fichas/133448.html.es (accessed on 11 August 2021).
- Godwin, Mike. 2003. *Cyber Rights: Defending Free Speech in the Digital Age*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Grenfell, Michael. 2012. *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishing.
- Howard, Jeffrey W. 2019. Free Speech and Hate Speech. In *Annual Review of Political Science*. Palo Alto, California: Annual Reviews Inc. [CrossRef]
- Jovanovic, Zeljko, and Neda Korunovska. 2020. *Roma in the COVID-19 Crisis. An Early Warning from Six EU Member States*. Berlin: Open Society Foundations, Roma Initiatives Office. Available online: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/2f2efd8a-8ba5-4ac4-8aee-ae0dcd2933ca/roma-in-the-covid-19-crisis-20200428.pdf> (accessed on 9 March 2021).
- Kóczé, Angela, and Marton Rövid. 2019. The Europeanisation of Racial Neoliberalism: The Case of “Roma” and “Refugees”. In *Dimensions of Contemporary Antigypsyism in Europe*. Edited by Ismael Cortés and Markus End. Brussels: ENAR, pp. 107–23. Available online: <https://www.enar-eu.org/Book-Dimensions-of-Antigypsyism-in-Europe> (accessed on 26 February 2021).
- Laurenzo, Patricia. 2021. No es odio, es discriminación. A propósito del fundamento de los llamados delitos de odio. In *Odio, Prejuicios y Derechos Humanos*. Edited by Alberto Daunis and Patricia Laurenzo. Granada: Comares, pp. 257–84.
- Matache, Margareta, and Jacqueline Bhabha. 2020. Anti-Roma Racism is Spiraling during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Health & Human Rights Journal* 22: 379–82. Available online: <https://europepmc.org/article/PMC/PMC7348427> (accessed on 27 March 2021).
- Mbembe, Achille. 2017. *Critique of Black Reason*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- McCleery, Amanda. 2014. Social Cognition during the Early Phase of Schizophrenia. In *Social Cognition and Metacognition in Schizophrenia*. Edited by Paul H. Lysaker, Giancarlo Dimaggio and Martin Brüne. London and New York: Academic Press, pp. 49–67. [CrossRef]
- Mill, John Stuart. 1859. *On Liberty*. London: John W. Parker & Son.
- Mladenova, Radmila. 2019. *Patterns of Symbolic Violence: The Motif of ‘Gypsy’ Child-Theft across Visual Media*. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing. [CrossRef]
- Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). 2020. Persistent Roma inequality increases COVID-19 risk. Warsaw and Vienna, April 7. Available online: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/449668> (accessed on 23 January 2021).
- Pejchal, Viera. 2020. *Hate Speech and Human Rights in Eastern Europe: Legislating for Divergent Values*. London: Routledge.
- Picker, Giovanni. 2017. *Racial Cities. Governance and the Segregation of Romani People in Urban Europe*. London: Routledge.
- Riley, Jonathan. 1998. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Liberty*. London: Routledge.
- Rostas, Iulius. 2019. *A Task for Sisyphus: Why Europe’s Roma Policies Fail*. Budapest: Central European University. Available online: <https://openresearchlibrary.org/content/4f24bf0c-eb36-4da2-96ba-15f3f55d7a62> (accessed on 15 March 2021).
- Rowlands, Julie. 2015. Turning collegial governance on its head: Symbolic violence, hegemony and the academic board. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 36: 1017–35. [CrossRef]
- Ryder, Andrew, and Marius Taba. 2018. Roma and a Social Europe: The Role of Redistribution, Intervention and Emancipatory Politics. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* 26: 59–75. [CrossRef]
- Stewart, Michael, ed. 2012. *The Gypsy ‘Menace’: Populism and the New Anti-Gypsy Politics*. London: Hurst & Co.
- United Nations—Economic & Social Council (UN/ECOSOC). 2018. *Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection*. Report on the World Social Situation. New York: United Nations. Available online: <https://socialprotection.org/promoting-inclusion-through-social-protection-results-un-report-world-social-situation-2018> (accessed on 22 April 2021).
- United Nations—Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN/OHCHR). 2021. *Report: Agenda towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality*; New York, July 12. Available online: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/Pages/Call-Implementation-HRC-Resolution-43-1.aspx> (accessed on 13 July 2021).
- United Nations (UN) and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). 1965. Adopted and Opened for Signature and Ratification by General Assembly Resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965. New York. Available online: <https://ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx> (accessed on 20 April 2021).
- Vile, John, David L. Hudson, and David Schultz, eds. 2009. *Encyclopedia of the First Amendment*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Available online: <https://sk.sagepub.com/cqpress/encyclopedia-of-the-first-amendment> (accessed on 28 January 2021).

- Wacquant, Loïc. 2013. Symbolic power and group-making: On Pierre Bourdieu's reframing of class. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13: 274–91. [CrossRef]
- Waldron, Jeremy. 2012. *The Harm in Hate Speech*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- World Bank (WB). 2010. *Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion*; Washington, DC: World Ban. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2010/04/14/world-bank-alerts-european-governments-steep-economic-costs-roma-exclusion> (accessed on 21 January 2021).
- World Health Organization (WHO). 2020. *Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19*. Geneva: World Health Organization, March 11. Available online: <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> (accessed on 20 April 2021).

MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel
Switzerland
Tel. +41 61 683 77 34
Fax +41 61 302 89 18
www.mdpi.com

Social Sciences Editorial Office
E-mail: socsci@mdpi.com
www.mdpi.com/journal/socsci



MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel
Switzerland

Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
Fax: +41 61 302 89 18

www.mdpi.com



ISBN 978-3-0365-3149-6