Racism and Antiracism in the Transatlantic Space: Historical Trends, Political Transformations, and Emerging Grammars

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This contribution starts from the hypothesis that antiracism is a phenomenon as old as racism itself, and that, along with racism, it transforms over time following broader changes in our societies and in the forms of contestation. Racism and antiracism are inseparable phenomena in both analytical and historical-structural terms, since power and resistance coexist in different space-time dimensions. This argument is somehow contrary to a widespread view in the specialized literature, according to which racism is a secular phenomenon fundamentally associated with the advent of modernity (Quijano 2000; Wieviorka 1993), while antiracism is a more recent conception and form of action usually associated with the emergence of the abolitionist movement (Blackett 1983; Ferrel 2006; Matthews 2006) and scientific antiracism (Rutherford 2021) in the 19th century.

This narrative has two main problems. First, when thinking about the ›antecedents‹ of antiracist struggles, little attention is given to the individuals and groups who rebelled against racism from the beginning of colonization and slavery. Obviously, this did not take place in the format of a »modern social movement,« which in academic discussion is often associated with the creation of a world of nation-states (Tarrow 2012: Part I), but on the basis of different modalities of territorial and subjective resistances. Strictly speaking, struggles, riots, seditions, insurgencies, uprisings, or locally oriented revolts are not usually considered as modern social movements (Tilly/Wood 2009; Bringel 2019), but we cannot deny their importance as key elements of antiracist historicity and its imaginary.

Secondly, the hegemonic narrative on antiracism is often very Euro- or US-centric and focused on the experiences of struggles and on the discourses created from the West. For example, the early 16th-century Spanish friar Antonio de Montesinos is often considered the first to have opposed and denounced the authorities of his native country for their cruel treatment of Native American peoples (Pagden 1992). Similarly, the Spaniard Bartolomé de las Casas appears in a vast bibliography as a pioneering figure in the defence of the original inhabitants of the American territories

(Mignolo 2005). This is not to diminish the importance of these and other singular figures that navigated against the tide of their origins and social groups but to flag that we should also study the role of the autochthonous population in the seeds of the antiracist struggle.

Figures such as Montesino and de las Casas, even when they sought to open dissidence gaps, had a certain degree of influence on the politicoreligious elites. They also had their words immortalized in their writings. Of the Indigenous people, however, the only thing that remained, almost always, was oral culture and the struggle for their lives. The scarcity of historical sources is undoubtedly a limiting factor for the »vanquished of the war of conquest,« as the Argentinian anthropologist Rita Segato (2010) calls them, to be able to speak for themselves. But there are many indications and growing empirical evidence starting to show how these resistances were strongly linked to embodied resistance.

Much blood and sweat have flowed since then. Both racism and antiracism have changed over time, with different modulations and forms of expressions that need to be identified. The literature usually characterizes three main forms of racism (Almeida 2019; Ture/Hamilton 1967; inter alia): an *individual* conception which locates the problem in a psychological key, individual behaviour, and interpersonal relationships; an *institutional* one which understands that institutions are privileged spaces in which racism is propagated through racially discriminatory dynamics and logics that are socially legitimized; and a *structural* one which understands that racism derives from the social structure and the construction of an order that normalizes it in social, political, economic, legal, and family relations.

This categorization could also be applied to antiracism, although not automatically. In analogous terms, however, we can think of three types of antiracism. These can represent different strands of antiracist thought and action (obviously with their tensions and irreconcilable points of view) but are also often understood as distinct but complementary levels of political action: antiracism at the *individual* perspective, for instance, consists of not remaining silent in the presence of racist acts, prioritizing everyday practices, and seeking to change one's worldview and way of being in the world so as not to reproduce structural racism. *Institutional* antiracism, in turn, consists of altering the rules and dynamics of institutional dynamics to try to mitigate the effects of racism. Affirmative action is the best-known example, but there are other measures in the realm of political representation and judicial litigation. Finally, *structural* antiracism fights for the radical transformation of societies in tune with diverse agendas and actors seeking emancipation and racial/social justice. The fundamental question is to what extent we might emphasize one of these types over the others and how these three perspectives are (or are not) articulated.

Taking these elements into account, the main objective of this contribution is to analyze the historical and contemporary transformations and modulations of antiracism. The temporal delimitation suggested for the analysis is very broad, rang-

ing from the beginning of the conquest of the Americas (1492) to the present day. This choice has disadvantages and advantages. The main disadvantage is that such a long timeline prevents us from delving deeper into each historical moment and specific case, which can make the analysis seem superficial. However, since I am not aiming to make any empirical contribution to the debate, I will restrict myself to drawing inferences from empirical studies, which can be consulted for in-depth analyses of different cases and experiences. Instead, I have opted for a bird's eye perspective to conduct a broader overflight and long-term reading of the dynamics of antiracism. This advantage is clear: it allows us to identify continuities, ruptures, critical junctures, innovations, and features of the struggles that try to contest and overcome racism. This is, I believe, a central task at a time when »presentism« and immediate interpretations prevail.

The importance of reconstructing the *longue durée*, according to Braudel (1949) – as well as much influenced by him, historical sociology and world-systems analysis– is that examining long periods creates better conditions to distinguish historical and socio-political patterns that are otherwise mostly invisible. This is, in my view, fundamental to challenge both anti-theoretical casuistic empiricism and the constant seduction of newness in social sciences (»new social movements,« the »new wave of antiracist protests,« etc.), which often makes us hostages of the present and the short term. I, therefore, prioritize a processual approach to the construction of antiracism, seeking to highlight the historical and contemporary trends that I have been able to identify by reviewing a broad literature that includes different disciplines (mainly anthropology, history, literary and cultural studies, sociology, and political science) and diverse fields of debate (such as race relations, social theory, social movements, and political ecology). The review of articles, chapters, papers, and books – both classic and contemporary – was carried out in four languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French) to acknowledge that there might be different intellectual traditions when it comes to examining racism and antiracism. They are seldom addressed together, as I have tried to do here.

Likewise, in terms of spatial delimitation, it should be noted that the focus of this contribution is the transatlantic space, including both the dominant dynamics and the subaltern perspectives closer to the »history from below« (Thompson 1966) within what Gilroy (1993) called the »Black Atlantic.« That is, a geographical space transnationally connects essential parts of three continents (Europe, America, and Africa). Still, mainly a geocultural area of affinities, dynamics, flows, and practices of resistance of those people usually seen as »disposable,« as well as their cultures and places (Cairo/Bringel 2019). This focus, therefore, excludes other relevant dynamics and profiles of antiracism that could be studied more globally, such as, for example, trans-Indian and Middle Eastern connections.

The historical genesis of antiracism and its transformations over time will be discussed in three parts. First, the emergence of racism and the antecedents and

seeds of antiracist resistance are analyzed. I argue that antiracism in the transatlantic space began in a decentralized way, with more individualized resistance and small collectivities in the 16th and 17th centuries, and progressively came to include mutinies, rebellions, and insurgencies of communities and territories. During the 18th and 19th centuries, antiracism experienced an incipient societal extension to other classes and social sectors that were not necessarily directly affected by racism (liberal and white sectors, for example). Independence wars and struggles for national liberation are important examples of this diffusion dynamic. The 19th century marks the moment when antiracism became a social movement in the strictly modern sense, especially since the abolitionist movement and its wide deployment in the Americas (North and Latin America), with strong ties, solidarity, and transnational pressures on the African and European continents too.

In the second part, I discuss what I will define as »post-abolitionist antiracism,« which emerged in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century. A succession of protest cycles took place in different parts of the transatlantic space, with dynamics of diffusion and resonance gaining strength. The period between the two world wars (1918–1939) was exceptionally turbulent. The debate on internal colonialism from the 1920s onwards provided both a diagnosis of racism and a platform for internationalist struggles that were more sensitive to the Global South and ethnic and racial questions. Anticolonial movements grew stronger, often intertwined with nationalist and workers' movements at a time of global revolution, but so did »counter-movements« such as fascism. Amid these disputes, the United States experienced an intense black insurgency between the 1930s and 1970s, while in Latin America and the Caribbean, inter-ethnic conflict intensified in the face of modernizing attempts at assimilation and integration, and in West Africa, a broad process of decolonization was underway. Despite the specificities of these activist cultures, the variations in social and national formations, and the dynamics of each place, antiracism in the 20th century became increasingly connected to a »Black internationalism« (Featherstone 2013) that updated the idea of diasporic activism and imaginary (Laó-Montes 2005).

After this »golden period« of antiracism, the end of the Cold War and the early 1990s marked a turning point in many ways. From this moment onwards, mass mobilizations, guided primarily by combative antiracism, began to flourish, and the success of previous protests also forced institutions to respond to racism. This meant that international conferences and organizations, as well as many governments, began to incorporate the agenda of combating racism and generate policies to confront it. This led to a certain »institutionalization of antiracism« in the 1980s and 1990s that was positive but ambivalent, since mitigating the effects of racism by no means means that the problem has been eliminated.

In parallel, the forms activism takes have also progressively been changing since the 1990s (Melucci 1992) following broader transformations in our societies (Bringel/

Pleyers 2015) such as neoliberal globalization, militarization, digitalization, individualization, and acceleration. All of these directly affect the forms which antiracism has come to assume in recent decades. The last part of this contribution therefore seeks to discuss these contemporary reconfigurations and identify the main trends and grammars of antiracism today. Just as antiracism converged strongly with the labor movement and nationalist liberation movements in much of the 20th century, the growing convergence of antiracism with migrant struggles, feminism, and environmentalism in the 21st century centers agendas such as racial justice, environmental racism, and intersectionality, redefining the dynamics of articulation, and the horizons of social change and racial justice. I will discuss this revival of antiracist activism in the last decade by seeking to contrast its distinctiveness with previous moments and waves.

The Longue *Durée* of Racism and Antiracist Resistance

The relationship between racism and modernity is a widely discussed topic in the social sciences and humanities. Although the debate is old and controversial, one (now hegemonic) interpretation, which holds that racism is founded on colonial violence and the emergence of modernity, has been consolidated in recent decades thanks to the growing strength of critical race theory, feminist and black epistemologies, and postcolonial and decolonial thought. This implies that we have come to believe it is important to understand racism not only as a »social construction« (moving away from biologistic and naturalistic perspectives), but also as a geopolitical and power device that marks a long history of racialized inequalities.

Within this perspective, the intellectual and activist W. E. B. Du Bois was a pioneer in analyzing the socio-economic roots of racism and its effects, locating the emergence of racism within the development of capitalism in modernity[1]. In turn, the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, one of Latin America's leading intellectuals, states that in the Americas, slavery led to both the trafficking of people from sub-Saharan Africa, as well as a racialization, which established the idea of ›race‹ in its modern meaning by reference to the phenotypic differences between conqueror and conquered (Quijano 2000). Similarly, although with a different focus, Peter Wade

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1   Du Bois dealt with this topic in several writings, both academic and non-academic. Recently, the University of Massachusetts Amherst made available an impressive digital collection of Du Bois' writings, including correspondence, speeches, articles, newspaper columns, nonfiction books, research materials, pamphlets, book reviews, petitions, essays, novels, fables, and poetry, among others. The collection can be accessed online here: https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312

(1997) suggests that it is with European colonial expansion that racial categories and ideologies began to be elaborated in order to differentiate (and inferiorize) the other.

For Michel Wieviorka (1991), however, it is not only a matter of differentiation. The relationship between modernity and racism is also globally embodied in a dynamic of inequality. In the first case, this happens through mechanisms of exclusion and segregation. In the second, the extreme subordination of the racialized individual or group articulates a logic of stratification. Wieviorka's work in the 1990s is interesting because it attempts to show that, although there are solid arguments among those who consider that racism could even predate modernity (authors such as Guz Rozat or Lothar Knauth, who seek its traces in pre-modern Western configurations), its central elements are fundamentally modern. It should be noted, by the way, that racism in modernity is structured in an ambiguous and complex way that, according to Wieviorka (1994: 38), could oscillate between an affirmation and a critique of modernity. An affirmative could include, for example, different ways people might participate in the same modernity that excludes them (citizenship often plays this role). Whereas a critique could take the form of asserting a particular identity against either modernity or other identities that are seen as a threat.

Readings such as Wieviorka's acknowledge colonial violence as a founding element of modernity and racism, but they also ponder other elements of the modern imaginary which serve as promises of emancipation and equality (Domingues 2012; Wagner 2012). It could be argued, however, that modernity itself, in its various historical inflexions, has sought to attenuate or mask the structural character of racism. Fundamentally individualistic, modern societies long sought to locate racism at the individual level too, claiming that it is the individual who is racist. Racism would, therefore, often end up associated with »irrationality« and be seen as more of a personal than a political problem, separating in a way these two spheres, as feminists would later denounce.

Although racism also operates through individuals, since the 1950s a wide sociological literature has found that this is a limited, partial view of the phenomenon, and thus shifted the debate towards a more relational perspective, focusing on its cultural, political, and economical bases (see, for instance, the important work by Blumer 1958, and Ramos 1954) and its intersections with colonialism, class conflict, and gender. If the problem were individual, the way to overcome racism would primarily be located in the moral and legal order, and in the neutralization of a particular conflict. Throughout modernity, however, individualization also had other effects, as we shall see. And though the germs of the antiracist struggle did start from strong individual leaderships and were highly decentered, they were not individualistic. They resulted from a resistance that put the struggle for life, culture, and territory at the center of the disputes.

The Seeds of Antiracist Struggles: Indigenous Colonial Resistance and Black Insurgencies

Along with racism, antiracism emerged. Initially, however, it was not a structured collective effort to confront the oppression imposed on racialized groups. Instead, the seed of antiracism lies in the resistance of the native population after the European invasion of the American territories in 1492. American and Latin American anthropologists, historians, and sociologists have sought to demonstrate how what many define as the »genocide of the original peoples« (Grosfoguel 2013) was effected not so much by diseases that the colonizers carried, but by an exacerbated use of unpaid labor (Quijano 2014). To this we can add territorial displacement, destruction of communities, and loss of ancestral lands, among other elements of economic, population, social, and political control and cultural appropriation.

Steinman (2015) formidably synthesizes how the main forms of colonial domination in the United States relate to concrete forms of destruction of life and generate different kinds of resistance. The germ of antiracism then is resistance as a form of (individual and cultural) survival. In other words, it is a struggle for life. There are several Spanish chroniclers, friars, or governors appointed by the Crown who emphasize the feisty, disobedient, and resistant character of the native population in the face of the Spanish conquest and domination (Paez 1960). Historiography tends to consider the warrior Diriangén – who belonged to the Chorotega ethnic group from what we know today as Nicaragua – as the main organizer of the first public and collective act of indigenous rebellion. In April 1523, he and approximately four thousand other indigenous people, attacked Gil González de Ávila, the head of the Spanish conquest expedition in the current territories of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and forced him to step back and withdraw southwards (Gould 1997).

At the end of the 16th century and mainly during the first half of the 17th century, some indigenous chroniclers have also bequeathed us rich records with images, pictographic codices, and testimonies (Romero Galván 2002). In some cases, these were indigenous nobles, such as Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, Domingo Francisco Chmalpain, or Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl. Further south, we find, among others, the Inca Garcilaso or the Indian Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, recovered later and studied exhaustively in recent years (Adorno 2000).

Theirs and other historical evidence allow us to learn about indigenous struggles and, a little later, about the resistance strategies of enslaved Black people who fought for their freedom under the colonial yoke. In a beautiful, award-winning book, Vergara Figueroa and Cosme Puntiel (2018) reconstruct the resistance by enslaved Black women from Cuba, Venezuela, and New Granada, who, between 1700–1860, independently filed lawsuits to obtain their freedom. The authors worked with very rich archival material: accounts of women who rebelled and who could be considered pioneers of an antiracist Afrodiasporic feminism.

According to specialists on the subject, organized slave insurrections were very rare before the 18th century, with individual resistance, flight, and more localized protests prevailing (Schwartz 1996). During the 18th and 19th centuries, many black and indigenous rebellions and insurgencies existed in the Americas. One of the most emblematic was led by Túpac Amaru II and took place between 1780 and 1783 in the Viceroyalty of Peru. In this pioneering struggle, the claims of native people coexisted with those of the enslaved, who were already seeking abolition. Simultaneous and coeval with the American War of Independence, this rebellion is understood as a forerunner of the wars of independence that would take place in Latin America and the Caribbean from the beginning of the 19th century onwards.

Beyond the insurgencies and uprisings, there were also territorial resistances. In Brazil, historians understand that the *quilombos* were typically constructed by a »movement of enslaved people« who fled individually or collectively (through previous revolts) and began to organize a common life in these spaces of resistance and autonomy. These settlements were varied, large and small, near or far from population centers, exclusively made up of formerly enslaved people or mixed with other »defectors« such as deserting soldiers, adventurers, travellers, people persecuted by the justice system, or indigenous people (Reis 1995). In any case, they spread throughout Latin America, called differently in the Andean region and the Caribbean.

Wars of Independence and the Formation of Antiracism as a Modern Social Movement

The specialized literature usually locates the transition from the antiracist resistance of individuals and small collectives to a more consistent social movement in the wars of independence and especially the abolitionist mo(ve)ment. Alonso (2015) considers abolitionism the first modern social movement. Anglo-Saxon literature also often locates the abolitionist movement in the United Kingdom and the United States as a milestone in the historical momentum of antiracism. The abolitionist experience, however, is very broad in space and time and thus also very diverse.

The inescapable starting point for any discussion on this topic is the Haitian revolution, the first revolutionary process that succeeded in ending slavery *avant la lettre* and with absolute Black protagonism. As the Haitian intellectual Jean Casimir (2012) suggests, this revolution was as much a war of independence against the colonial metropolis as it was a struggle for national liberation. This slave revolution challenged the imaginary of the French Revolution by declaring a Black republic and threatened the colonial system, which responded with a strong boycott, non-recognition of independence, and greater repression of attempts to spread the anticolonial and revolutionary spirit in the transatlantic space.

These historical insurgencies, despite their often fragmented character, can be understood as part of a historical transnationalism of struggles which, however localized they were, fed back into a common spirit: the struggle against invasion and slavery. Any anachronism must be avoided here because in their beginnings, they did not define themselves as »antiracist.« This does not prevent us from placing them within the framework of resistances that build a repertoire of experiences and collective memory for the emergence of antiracism as a political-ideological matrix.

Antiracism as a Political-Ideological Matrix

I define political-ideological matrices as relatively stable political and discursive affiliations that normatively guide collective action and social movements' contentious politics over time (see also Bringel 2019). Two such matrices created after the invasion of America and the modern construction of racism contribute to the historicity of antiracism and generate a collective and historical memory of antiracism: the indigenous-community matrix and the black-resistance matrix. Although they may converge at some points, they are distinct and transcend the Black and Indigenous movement, radiating an antiracist imaginary for different social and political actors.

The *indigenous-community matrix* is forged as the founding axis of the struggle against colonialism and colonial relations. Resistance to the extermination and genocide of colonization is a milestone of this matrix, sustained by part of the native population and marked by a strong relationship between culture, nature, and territory. There are many origin narratives about this matrix, ranging from pre-Columbian collective records to the descriptions of evangelization in letters and chronicles of Spaniards such as those mentioned above. It also includes the oral accounts, commentaries, and research of mestizos, and the descriptions and drawings of indigenous »translators« and chroniclers. Beyond the dispersion of the records and the struggles themselves, there are many references that claim this matrix as the basis for what Reinaga (1970) defined as »indigenism« (understood as both the official policies of nation states towards indigenous populations, or as those who speak and write about the indigenous reality without being indigenous) and »Indianism« (the Indian perspective which does not wish to assimilate or integrate itself, but rather fights for liberation).

Let us return to the Tupamarist movement of the 18th century. Because of its character of insurrection and anticolonial resistance, it was subsequently recovered by many past and present struggles that seek to articulate, as Cusicanqui (1984) suggests, different temporalities of collective memory: long-, medium-, and short-term memory. Although the epicenter of this matrix is the Andean region, with an important presence in parts of Central America and Mexico, it has influenced the entire American continent, including the United States and Canada. Creative

cultural and intellectual movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave shape to an activist indigenist field that expressed themselves through direct action and subversive writing, joining the secular resistance. In Peru, it was inaugurated by Manuel González Prada's »libertarian indigenism.« This, in turn, influenced Mariátegui (1979) [1928] and his Indo-American socialism, which not only enhanced the role of the indigenous person as a revolutionary subject but also contributed significantly to rejecting the ideology of progress and a linear perspective of universal history. These and other traces of this matrix are very much present in the public emergence of indigenous movements as prominent political subjects in recent decades, as we will see below.

The *Black-resistance matrix* is the second political-ideological matrix that orients the collective action of social movements in an antiracist sense. In the Americas, slavery not only led to the trafficking of people from sub-Saharan Africa but also to racialization, as I discussed before. However, the construction of a social classification that demarcates positions and power structures in society through the inferiorization of the Other was not passively accepted. As we have seen, there were many Black insurgencies and uprisings, initially linked to liberation and later to antiracism, that to this day have had a profound impact on the debate on the decolonization of power and of the self (Fanon 1952; wa Thiong'o 1986). The revolution of enslaved people and freed blacks became a reference for several movements of this matrix that reconstruct a transnational history through diaspora and reterritorialisatioization.

Unlike the indigenous-community matrix, which tries to articulate worldviews with a strong sense of original territory, this matrix is characterized by the reconstruction of ties and worldviews in broad territories that were not these people's places of origin, but which served as spaces of liberation and resistance, such as the *palenques* in Colombia and Cuba, the *cimarrones* in Venezuela, or the *maroons* in Jamaica and Haiti. Finally, it can be said that the deepening of the ever-present historical relations between race/class/gender has in recent decades led to a renewed presence of Black and Afro-descendant movements in public space and societal discussion, their agendas including issues such as land ownership, intercultural education, and ancestral memory.

Antiracist Struggles in the Post-abolitionist Era

Abolitionism and the end of formal colonialism in the Americas did not end colonial relations. Racism and the relations of domination and power progressively generated new social identities to define the »others« of modernity: Blacks, Indians, Creoles, and Mestizos. All this led Black intellectuals and Marxists to begin a new debate on colonialism in the early 20th century. Colonialism, as a social, political, and eco-

nomic system by which a foreign state dominates and exploits a colony, is one of the most analyzed phenomena in modern politics due to its profound consequences for the formation of global capitalism and nation-states. Typically, colonization implies the appropriation of land, the expropriation of resources, the exploitation of labor, the submission of the population, and the establishment of domination over a geographically *external political unit*, often inhabited by people of a different race and culture. According to this logic, colonialism is always seen as something built from the outside in. Yet this view ignores what was defined as internal colonialism more than half a century ago, a pivotal notion to understanding both global patterns of racism and antiracist movements.

Internal Colonialism, Black Internationalism, and Inter-ethnic Conflict

After the sociological and historical study of colonialism showed the importance of the »external factor« when looking at how colonized societies were affected, it confronted colonialism as an »internal fact« related to social and civilizational structures (Balandier 1970). The roots of the internal colonialism debate can be found within Marxist discussions in the early 20th century. In his classic text »Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,« Lenin [1916] (1952) argues that an imperialist country exports the exploitation of the proletariat to its colonies or to other undeveloped countries whose terms of trade it could control. At the same time, Lenin believed there would be a need to denounce violations of national equality to guarantee the rights of »national minorities« within all the states.

Some years later, after the Russian Revolution of 1917, the newly created Communist International made efforts to learn about the anticolonial struggle of non-Western peoples and called a meeting on it: the Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in September 1920 in Baku, Azerbaijan. According to the French historian Pierre Broué (1977), the first broad and diverse discussions on Marxism and the colonial question were held there. Since then, the motto »Proletarians of all countries, unite!« has become insufficient, since the oppressed nations of the world have gained greater centrality. To some extent, this generated a new geopolitical narrative of emancipation according to which, in the capitalist »First World,« the proletariat would be the revolutionary subject par excellence; while in the »Third World,« in the colonial or semicolonial world, the main revolutionary subject would be the oppressed.

At this same political moment, in a context that went beyond a division between empires and colonized countries, Gramsci tried to explain how Italy's *Mezzogiorno*'s misery could only be understood from the domination and wealth of its Northern Italian counterpart. In the words of the Italian author, the North was a kind of leech feeding off the South (Gramsci [1926] 1977). Its economic enrichment was directly related to the impoverishment of the Southern economy and agriculture.

Despite these intellectual and political contributions that allow us to understand center–periphery relationships within a country, society, or region, it was only in the early 1960s that the concept of internal colonialism became popular in both intellectual debates and social and political struggles. However, although the concept of internal colonialism has different connotations and genealogies, this has not been sufficiently addressed or made explicit by the specialized literature. In this review, I cannot delve into all of these genealogies, but two of them are central to our topic.

The first one is associated with the Latin American debate (Bringel/Leone 2021), mainly to the seminal work of the Mexican Pablo González Casanova – and his debates with Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira –, for whom the notion of colonialism cannot be read as an external relationship, but rather as part of a *colonial structure*. Colonialism would thus not only be an international but also an intra-national phenomenon, a conceptualization that has explanatory potential for understanding the ways in which human beings exploit others (González Casanova 1963). According to González Casanova, internal colonialism corresponds to »a structure of social relations based on domination and exploitation between distinct, culturally heterogeneous groups.« (1969: 130). As for that cultural heterogeneity, internal colonialism would be somewhat distinct from class structure, as it would not only imply the exploitation of workers by those who control labor or production, but also the domination and exploitation of a whole population by another population, each with their own distinct classes.

At the same time as these notions were debated in Latin America, the debate on internal colonialism spread in Africa and the United States.

Black Liberation and Decolonization

Although a key moment in the political debate around internal colonialism was its articulation in relation to communism and antiracism in the Third International and the South African Communist Party in the 1920s (Amin 2009), its later proliferation was mainly associated with the creation of a common grammar of global »Third Worldism« and »liberationism« in their struggle against all forms of exploitation, oppression, and dependency in the 1960s (Bringel/Maldonado 2016: 402–408).

In Africa, the notion of internal colonialism was useful for interpreting the logics of domination exercised by internal elites in the aftermath of the independence struggles. Before that, it was useful in the struggles for black liberation against racism and racial segregation, with South Africa as the emblematic case, initially in the resistance of black workers in the quest for a »Native Republic« and then in the face of apartheid (Adam 1972; Carter/Karis/Stultz 1967).

Echoing these inspirations, Black activists and intellectuals hypothesized that the racialized population in the United States would form an »internal colony« within the borders of the »imperial homeland« (Haywood 1948). Over time, ghettos

became the main example, and the thesis of internal colonialism would appear in the speeches of Malcolm X and even in the political programme of the Black Panther Party (Allen 2015).

Cruse (1968) suggested that the »Black American« was subject to »domestic colonialism.« And Blauner (1969) explicitly theorized internal colonialism seeking to frame racial relations beyond assimilationist assumptions. The key question, according to him, is historical: »People of colour have never been an integral part of the Anglo-American political community and culture because they did not enter the dominant society in the same way as did the I ethnics« (Blauner 1972: 52).

Consequently, he proposed distinguishing between *immigration* and *colonization* (which would also strongly affect the Native Americans and Chicanos in the US) as the two major processes through which new population groups are incorporated into a nation. While the Latin American tradition focuses on uneven development and interethnic conflict, race is at the core of internal colonialism in the US, and racism is the ordering principle (the »master frame,« one could say) through which to examine the colonial question.

In both cases, they are challenged by state modernizing attempts at assimilation and integration, which sought to include the excluded in the dynamics of citizenship without addressing the problems of racial inequalities, as denounced by social movements. A strong critique of structural racism emerges here, but also of the transmutation of racism into various legal devices, which, as Rufer (2018) suggests, also result in particular syntaxes of miscegenation, creolization, indigenism, and whitening that do not call into question the specific pattern of racialization that hierarchizes and distributes. In a different way, more culturalist perspectives begin to speak of »veiled« or »covert« racism, and, as McAdam (1982) shows, the Black and antiracist mobilization that emerges in these decades is precisely about denouncing this and seeking broader horizons of transformation.

The 1960s were particularly fertile in this regard, due to Black insurgencies, resistances, and articulations. The seminal work of Ture and Hamilton (1967) was key to shifting the theoretical and political debate towards a more systemic dimension. Diasporic activism was strengthened by a new repertoire of struggles that was mainly oriented towards civil rights. The circulation of revolutionary ideas across the Atlantic world was enhanced (Dubois 2004; Fischer 2004), and alongside were also concrete transnational articulations, decentering internationalism from the national to construct different forms of »subaltern cosmopolitanism,« as Featherstone (2013) suggests.

Contemporary Antiracist Struggles

After the international boom of antiracism in the 1960s and 70s, the decades immediately after were marked by the reduction of mass mobilizations primarily driven by antiracism. Institutional responses appeared to the demands of the »Black« or »Afro-descendant« movements – as they came to be known depending on the places and profiles – and had an ambiguous effect: on the one hand, they institutionally incorporated the topic of racism and policies to address it; on the other hand, they did so in a timid and less radical manner. This led to the inauguration of a new moment in antiracist struggles that serves as a contrast to the previous one. New mobilization formats and renewed grammars have arisen in recent years, also out of a critique of the limitations of institutional responses, and they have once again put structural antiracism at the top of the agenda, although in a different way than between the 1920s and 70s.

»The End of Antiracism«? Institutionalization and New Dilemmas

In 1990, Paul Gilroy published a provocative article entitled »The End of Antiracism,« which calls for a new radical critique of the moralistic excesses practised in the name of antiracism. He argues that many antiracist iniciatives became almost irrelevant with the rise of ideologies of self-help and independence, separating antiracism (once again) from the wider political process. Obviously, antiracism was not over (perhaps only antiracism as we knew it), instead it was undergoing changes in a world undergoing profound transformation.

The communist and socialist struggles were defeated and made serious mistakes, as the self-criticism of the left recognizes. The struggle against racism was not always a proper priority in the face of other revolutionary urgencies, but we must recognize that for a good part of the 20th century, it became part of the agenda of social movements based on a comprehensive, broad, and internationalist vision. The fall of the Berlin Wall, however, implied a return to the local struggle against racism, as neoliberalism proliferated not only as an economic policy, but also as a subjectivity. Neoliberal globalization arrived in tandem with a radicalization of societal individualization and a »self-driven culture« (Beck/Beck-Gernsheim 2001). This is not just a utilitarian and selfish individualism but a process of individualization in a new era of intense flux and complexity. As the authors cited above suggested, »paradoxically, it is the individualization and fragmentation of growing inequalities into separate biographies which is a collective experience« (ibid.: XXIV).

The experience of racism is thus once again a central topic, albeit repositioned. This happens within a moment of intense changes to the role of the state, of social identities, and of the very ways we conceive emancipation and social change. Unsurprisingly, since the 1990s there has been an intense debate in social theory about

a new era of modernity (reflexive, decentered, liquid, and reticular, among others). Therefore, we should ask ourselves: what do racism and antiracism mean in the face of the new features of contemporary societies?

The victory and expansion of Western liberal democracies brought into the political debate principles of racial equality that did not confront racism. In this sense, several authors have defined »racial color-blindness« as a racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. In his landmark book on the topic, *Racism without Racists*, Bonilla-Silva (2006) very accurately examines how a series of argumentative devices have been generated to explain the racial debate without sounding racist. For this reason, Clair and Denis (2015) suggest that in the face of today's greater rejection of racism in society, much of the »new racism« has to do with an attempt to diminish racist public attitudes, combined with a more nuanced discourse that nevertheless coexists with everyday racist practices and a still very racist worldview.

In the midst of this, from the beginning of the 1990s, international organizations began to create guidelines to promote studies and defend racialized groups. In a way, this was an effort to deepen the tasks initially carried out by UNESCO after the Second World War and the Holocaust. But now it was necessary to not only discourage any kind of pseudo-scientific rationalization of racism, but also promote policies to combat it.

Transnational advocacy networks, international institutions, and NGOs worked intensively on this agenda. Antiracism thus seemed to enter a stage at which cultural contestation through international campaigns, awareness-raising projects, and various attempts at education about ethno-racial diversity took precedence. At the same time, the discourse of multiculturalism seemed to emerge as a kind of re-edition of the modernizing dictates of decades earlier. One no longer spoke in terms of »assimilation« and »integration,« but in terms of »inclusion,« »diversity,« »recognition,« and »tolerance.« Language changes and a closer look at the UN-sponsored World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance is a good illustration of this. The 2001 Durban Conference is a result of this process, but that same year the World Social Forum emerged in Porto Alegre, which showed that society was once again mobilizing globally, but trying to do so autonomously and generating its own spaces for convergence. This brings us back to the important changes underway at the turn of the century in society and activism.

Societal Change and Transformations of Contemporary Antiracist Activism

The last two decades have seen a reconfiguration of both antiracist activism and social movements in general, challenging traditional political actors and the form

of social movements and the conceptualization of social change. Two general arguments support this reflection. Firstly, there is a dialectic relationship between contemporary societal changes and the transformations of social movements. Secondly, in the long transition to this 21st century, we are experiencing a trend towards a new and progressive decentering of political actors, with far-reaching consequences for understanding actions, actors, and the emergence of new political grammars. Below, I will discuss the main implications of this based on five complementary elements, relating the emergence of new antiracist activism to broader trends.

Decentering the Social Movement Form

For decades, the idea and practice of an ideal social movement strongly centered on conflict, ideology, a highly cohesive identity, and a well-marked space-time dimension for social conflict. This has now been called into question. Following the old logic, antiracism is fundamentally an issue of, and for, Black movements. But, at least since the 1960s, the global left has been trying to reinvent itself, progressively decentering the »social movement form« and making it more diverse and elastic. Consequently, there is now an inclination towards more tenuous boundaries in collectivities and forms of organization. This has implications for the modalities of activist engagement, for joining and leaving a movement, and also for defining who is (or is not) part of a collective/movement. More open and horizontal organizational forms and the formation of smaller organizations (instead of prioritizing large national movements) are challenging previous formats of the antiracist struggle.

The collective meanings are increasingly heterogeneous and usually oscillate between a situational and momentary aggregation and a search for integrality and interdependence. Previous antiracist struggles based primarily on »Black organizations« (anti-apartheid movements, civil rights movements, spirituality movements, and so on) that explicitly experience and confront racism are changing. By their gradual decentering, new political-organizational configurations are emerging, creating spaces for plural articulation, discourses, decision-making, and the distribution of responsibilities. Leadership is still important, but it tends to be more informal and shared.

Understanding why social movements are decentering requires understanding a process that is still constantly changing. From identifying a trend, socio-political configurations are sought and not an ideal type. This is key at a time of various actors' transitions and redefinitions, sometimes generating confluences, sometimes fragmentations and blockages. In the specific case of those who are usually defined as »unorganized« and are part of this mass of individuals and small collectives that mobilize in protests against racism, it is essential to examine the variety of cases and situations, from new collectives to individuals who join protests without previous activist experience or links to social and political organizations. This is the case for those without previous activist experience, who usually join »self-convened«

protests in the recent era of antiracist mobilizations. Rather than quickly labelling them as individualists, we should attempt to better understand who they are, what they want, and why they mobilize.

Diversity of Social and Political Actors

Until the 1990s, almost any organization and self-definition was linked to five main associative and organizational forms: party, union, movement, community, and network. These five covered almost the entire spectrum of antiracism. If we try to reconstruct the social composition of the outbursts, variety, and plasticity of contemporary social and associative ties, today's map is much more plural, but also more fragmented.

I have seen this in my own work as a researcher and activist. A few years ago, together with the popular education organization FASE and supported by the São Paulo office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, we held a series of workshops in Rio de Janeiro which brought together dozens of activists and »movements,« mostly racialized and existing in the urban peripheries (Bringel 2018). One of the main axes of debate in these participatory workshops was precisely the diversity of actors, and many, many self-definitions emerged: committee, collective, assembly, front, articulation, house, council, march, school, space, group, brigade, project, commune, village etc.

This caught our attention because practically none of these actors defined their organization as a »movement,« although they could easily be identified with what we usually understand as such. Out of the actors' readings of themselves and the context surrounding them, we can better interpret contemporary actors and their dynamics of articulation. Although uprisings are always exceptional moments, their massive size allows us to perceive how different axes of social conflict coexist, as do almost all those voices that feel excluded from the system and suffer the injustices and consequences of the elites' decisions. Collectives, decentralized networks, or platforms that are formed to temporarily aggregate social demands and energies almost always constitute the delicate thread that allows such diversity to be minimally articulated.

Multi-referential Identities and Cross-Activism

The changes to political identities and identity politics are another key element of the transformations of contemporary antiracism. It has become extremely difficult to construct stable identities with strong adherence. Almost all activists participate in many spaces, and this »cross-activism« also forges multiple identities.

This trend is closely related to other contemporary societal changes that create structural challenges: on the one hand, the digitalization of society forges not only more active use of social networks and digital media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Signal, TikTok etc.), but also other forms of relating to each other and to politics. On

the other hand, the growing individualization of societies, although partially counterbalanced by the persistent communitarian strength that still exists in several antiracist practices, has also led to the activist's increasing autonomy within collective processes.

Many voices of participants in recent antiracist protests around the world emphasize the singularity and dimension of emotions as key to understanding *their* embeddedness in protests (Gatto 2021). In the case of antiracist protests after assassinations or other types of police and structural violence, activists experience a contradictory mix of initial anger, fear, and anxiety, with the subsequent incorporation of hope, solidarity, and pride as protests spread and the movement grows.

This is important when reflecting on what unites antiracist activisms in terms of identity. During the uprisings or protest cycles, there seems to be more identification between heterogeneous actors than collective identities (»I'm Black too,« »We suffer the same police violence in Rio de Janeiro and New York City«). At the same time, the diversity of actors experiencing the same spaces without necessarily sharing the same visions (opposition to racism in broad terms, but following diverse practices and ideologies) points to another dimension of the tense coexistence between different types of collective actors. After the uprisings, if it is possible to continue politicizing society, generating associationism, and creating deliberation and meeting spaces, as well as forms of political advocacy at different levels, collective identities can be created more easily.

Activists' Anchorages

The changes in the social actors mentioned so far are closely related to how their positional, socio-educational, and subjective »anchors« are produced. When it comes to this positional structure, three elements are particularly important: social stratification and its impact on the social composition of the actors who participate in antiracist initiatives (class, race, ethnicity, gender etc.); the territorial basis of collective organization; and also the possible dynamics of intersectionality and cross-fertilization.

In this sense, the literature on contemporary antiracist protests and movements shows us some interesting elements. First, in places where recent mobilizations had greater territorial basis, it was easier for the process to survive beyond the protests, achieving other publics and results. Second, although young people are usually protagonists, antiracism is a field of action and thought that is more open than others to inter-generational, inter-cultural, and inter-faith dialogues.

In terms of socio-educational basis, it is especially important to examine how political socialization and activist sociability are produced nowadays. This is an absolutely critical to contemporary antiracist struggles. Many of the subjects and spaces/institutions that until recently were almost exclusively responsible for political training and socialization have been displaced and overwhelmed as central

instances of antiracist political formation. This is due to several overlapping factors: changes to family composition and structure, changes to forms of territorial mediation and community work, and the delegitimization of traditional parties and hierarchical and vertical organizations with very restricted training perspectives. Antiracism and anti-violence training increasingly happens in small affinity networks and popular education practices. Valuing »place of speech,« or the social and structural position from which one speaks (Ribeiro 2017), and cultural and political identity are increasingly important in this process.

Finally, subjective anchorages are associated with the existential bases of antiracism and the tension between what Koselleck defines as the »horizon of expectations« and the »horizon of possibilities.« At this point, instability, uncertainty, rage, grief, and suffering evidently enhance indignation. The destabilization of institutions, practices, informality, precariousness, and the growing militarization of life and territories, mainly in the Global South, (once again) reinforce the construction of a necropolitics that creates »disposable bodies,« in the words of Achile Mbembe. Dealing with this is an imperative of much contemporary antiracist activism.

The Multi-Scalar Dimension of Antiracist Struggles

The articulation between different scales is one of the most relevant recent topics for contemporary political action. Localized struggles that are not limited to a local scale but open up to broader articulations tend to be stronger than those that are too isolated in their own territories. In the case of contemporary antiracism, there is an interesting intersection between five scales: the body, the neighborhood/community, the locality, the nation-state, and the supranational.

Antiracist activism helps challenge the politics of scale beyond a traditional geographical perspective. The »local« has become saturated with spatialities and meanings that redefine the frontiers of conflict and the geopolitics of power and resistance. In fact, several collective exercises of critical cartography show how territorialized actors represent places with an enormous detail of artefacts, references, relations, and sensibilities that transcend the more formalist and official conceptions of the »municipal.« This multi-local density is usually also combined with a strong interpellation of the state and national governments, although in many cases the meanings of being multi-ethnic and plurinational were also expanded.

The New Grammars of Contemporary Antiracist Movements

Antiracism, along with feminism and environmentalism, became a central vector of contemporary social movements. The most interesting element is the transversality that these struggles (feminist, ecological, and antiracist) have achieved. Today, the discussion of gender inequalities and the role of feminism and care is present in all transformative social movements. Something similar also occurs with environmen-

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talism, which has transcended previous environmental movements to become part of contemporary struggles promoting the defense of nature and territory alongside agroecology, food sovereignty, ecofeminism, and the solidarity economy, as a way to confront the profound socio-ecological crisis we are experiencing.

Although still more incipient than in the latter two cases, the emergence of a new antiracist transversal consciousness is remarkable. This trend takes shape in different, albeit complementary ways. First, antiracism is also increasingly present in other social movements, not only those centrally concerned with race. This has to do with a historical battle of racialized groups: antiracism should be a struggle of the whole society, and not only of racialized groups or those who suffer from racism. Achieving this requires intense awareness training and educational work about oppression, white privilege, and solidarity. Artistic, cultural, and religious forms of advocacy, such as interfaith dialogues, are also more and more relevant. Second, new praxes and concepts arise as a result of this process. Lennon (2021), for instance, describes how solar energy campaigns in low-income Black communities in the US during the pandemic could illuminate environmental injustice through an antiracist lens. This is related to the concept of »environmental racism,« a notion coined in the 1980s but increasingly used to describe a specific form of environmental injustice which disproportionately affects ethnic minorities and racialized groups and communities. In the current global context of disputes over corporative and hegemonic ecological transitions, environmental racism becomes even more relevant as an agenda that connects the local and global dimensions of antiracist struggles.

Another significant development in recent years is the intersectional approach to antiracist struggles. This differs from the transversal consciousness in the previous point. The most important thing here is to think about antiracism through its overlaps with other social markers, such as gender, sexuality, class, and religion, among others. Intersectionality has also been used to show that, through these multiple layers of domination and oppression, particular interpretations of the world are forged where subalternized knowledge intersect, enriching antiracist perspectives, as demonstrated by prominent Black Latin American activists and intellectuals such as Sueli Carneiro or Ochy Curiel (Ortuño 2018). Understood this way, an intersectional perspective on antiracism can derive from the fragmentation of struggles and enable a new confluence of critical views on modern racist and patriarchal capitalism. Not all of them are anticapitalists, but they currently provide the primary anti-capitalist impulses.

Finally, we have seen entangled memories and complex temporalities of antiracism emerge, although these can still be deepened. Many Black American activists today define themselves as »new abolitionists.« This is an essential step towards recognizing the role of those who came before and the need to continue the struggles of the past. In this spirit, Stewart (2015) criticizes ignorance about the history of slavery and racism. Knowing more about the struggles that preceded

us is also fundamental to recovering their memories in all their complexity. This is what some antiracist activists and organizations have done, seeking to articulate different temporalities of antiracism in non-linear and dynamic ways. Memories of situated resistance, such as those of the Migrantes Transgresorxs collective in Spain, have claimed that »It's not 50 years; it's 500 years of resistance.« Just like them, we could state that it is 5, 50, and 500 years; that is to say: short-, medium-, and long-term memories often overlap. With this panoramic contribution, I hope to have shown that these multiple memories of antiracism, and its different historical practices, can have a broad reference point for further contemporary articulation and cross-fertilization.

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