White Europe: an alternative reading of the Southern EU border[*]

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ABSTRACT

The external border of the EU challenges many traditional assumptions in border studies research. As scholars struggle to make sense of it, they often forego discussions of the role of race in the history of border control in Europe. This article aims to contribute to this discussion by exploring how the Southern EU border and the Spanish border can be read in racial terms. The discussion begins with an exploration of the concepts of race, racialization and white privilege from a spatial perspective. In the second section, I briefly discuss how the origins of processes of exclusion of racially defined groups in contemporary Spain can be traced to early attempts to create a Spanish national identity in the 16th century. I then return to current forms of racialization and exclusion of the non-white immigrant population in Spain. I conclude that European and Spanish forms of race-based exclusion coalesce at this border. To understand how this happens, a historical study of collective identity construction that revolves around concepts such as "racialization" or "white privilege".

Key words: Border studies; European Union; Spain; "race"; white privilege.

"*White Europe*": una interpretación alternativa de la frontera sur

RESUMEN

La definición de la frontera exterior de la UE supone un reto para la geografía política. En este artículo mi objetivo es contribuir a esta discusión, centrándome en la importancia de cuestiones históricas y raciales en el estudio de esta frontera. El artículo comienza con una breve introducción de tres conceptos fundamentales tomados de la geografía política anglosajona: "*race*", "*racialization*" y "*white privilege*". En la segunda sección propongo que el proceso de construcción de la identidad nacional española, que se remonta al siglo XVI, es la fundación de los procesos de exclusión racializada en la España actual. La forma que estos procesos toman se discute en la siguiente sección, que se centra de manera particular en las leyes de inmigración actuales. En las conclusiones propongo que existe un solapamiento en las formas de exclusión racializadas españolas y europeas. Un estudio en profundidad de este fenómeno requiere de una aproxima-

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ción histórica a los procesos de construcción de la identidad nacional en la que los procesos de racialización y *white privilege* ocupen un lugar central.

Palabras clave: Frontera; Unión Europea; España; "raza"; *white privilege.*

"*White Europe*": uma interpretação alternativa da fronteira sul

RESUMO

A definição da fronteira exterior da UE supõe um desafio para a geografia política. Neste artigo meu objetivo é contribuir a essa discussão, focalizando a importância de questões históricas e raciais no estudo desta fronteira. O texto começa com uma breve introdução de três conceitos fundamentais utilizados na geografia política do mundo anglo-saxão: "*race*", "*racialization*" e "*white privilege*". Na segunda parte proponho que o processo de construção da identidade nacional espanhola, que se remonta ao século XVI, é a fundação dos processos de exclusão racializada na Espanha atual. A forma adquirida por esses processos são discutidas na seguinte seção, que analisa de forma específica as leis de imigração atuais. Nas conclusões, sugiro que existe uma sobreposição nas formas de exclusão racializadas espanholas e européias. Um estudo em profundidade deste fenômeno requer uma aproximação histórica aos processos de construção da identidade nacional na qual os processos de racialização e *white privilege* ocupem um lugar central.

Palavras-chave: Fronteira; União Européia; Espanha; "raça"; *white privilege.*

SUMMARY: Introduction. 1. Introducing race and "white privilege" into the political geography of Europe. 2. Spanish identities: digging up the roots. 3. Back to the present: a hierarchy of immigrant otherness in the context of the EU. Discussion. References.

> *We don't know (...) what will be the reaction of the white and Christian Europeans faced with this influx of starving and ignorant Africans. (...) We don't know if Europe will remain an advanced and united continent or if it will be destroyed, as happened with the barbarian invasions.*
> (Muammar al-Gaddafi, quoted in BBC 08/31/2010)

Introduction

Political geographers and scholars from related disciplines have shown a fascination with the external border of the European Union (EU). There is a heated debate on

its nature and implications: what kind of border is this? Is it proof that the supranational is winning over the national, or are we witnessing one more iteration of the ever-shifting institution of the nation-state? At the same time, there is a quest to find a metaphor to encapsulate the meaning of this emerging territorial entity: is it a "Fortress Europe" (Geddes, 2000, inter alia) or a "gated community" (van Houtum and Pijpers, 2007)? And its borders, are they a "digital firewall" (Walters, 2006) or the manifestation of a new form of global apartheid (van Houtum, 2010)?

Increasingly, scholarly interrogations of the EU border have pushed beyond these conceptual-theoretical perspectives. Its ethical foundations are also being scrutinized, particularly as this border functions to restrict and regulate human mobility. Here, researchers are concerned with the whys and hows of its workings. In other words, how can we justify the existence of a border that has claimed so many lives, that has required so many resources from already overstretched states, and that has resulted in so many abuses on the part of collaborating governments in countries of origin and transit?

When questioning the ethical foundations of the EU border, geographers have often mentioned (although often only in passing) that race is an integral part of the constitution of the EU border. Among them, Henk van Houtum (2010) has argued that the processes of bordering, ordering, and othering we are witnessing at the border of the EU is a form of "global apartheid." This border is yet another expression of the three global wars currently being fought at the international level against drugs, terror, and irregular migration —the last two problematically mixed in discourse and policy, and all of them steeped in intense racial connotations.

My goal in this paper is to contribute to these discussions. Focusing on the historical becoming of the Spanish border with Africa and its transformation into the Southern border of the EU, I explore its racial underpinnings. Contributing to the work begun by other critical scholars (see next section), I argue that political geography is particularly well equipped to tackle the task at hand.

1. Introducing race and "white privilege" into the political geography of Europe

According to Kobayashi (2003) and Goldberg (2002) the concept of race only acquired its current meaning in the context of the European Enlightenment, around the 18th century. It was then that Kant, among others, established the thesis that the different human body types were a result of humans' location on the surface of the Earth (more specifically, their distance from the Earth's equator) and linked phenotypic attributes to certain intellectual and moral characteristics. Enlightenment thought gave way to the concept of "environmental determinism" that would serve to legitimize colonialism and other forms of oppression by European whites over other racially marked bodies. Categorizations of other societies according to their

location relative to Central Europe emerged. Thus were born the "violent" Oriental, the "savage" African, and the "passionate" Southern European: all ideal types measured against the standard of white, "rational" Central Europeans (Goldberg, 2002). As Stoler has argued, colonialism was key in this process of European identity construction and dialectic differentiation from the non-European "others" which were, quite simply, not European enough (Stoler, 1995).

The emergence of the concept of race in this particular context highlights the fact that it is a social construction. Race is not a natural category, but something that one becomes through racialization: the "process by which somatic characteristics (which may be phenotypical or genotypical) have been made to go beyond themselves to designate the socially inscribed value and the attributes of racialized bodies" (Kobayashi, 2003: 549). Note the implications of this: on the one hand, all bodies are racialized —including the "unmarked" white ones—. On the other, racialization serves the interest of dominating groups in a specific context, such as Europeans in the era of colonial expansion, or, more recently, the native white population in countries of the EU.

It is important to emphasize that racialization is a process whereby bodies are categorized: without this process, phenotypical traits are of only minor relevance in most cases. This categorization often draws from history and is reinforced through everyday interactions with official institutions, other citizens, media coverage, and so on. For example, public institutions may consciously or otherwise reinforce racial categorizations. Segregation laws restricting the use of public and private spaces for blacks and whites until the 1960s had a clear racial objective. Visa requirements to enter the Schengen space do not (at least, not explicitly), although it has been argued that they discriminate arrivals of the base of their nationality, which for some scholars works in fact as a proxy of race (van Houtum, 2010).

More mundane events also contribute to the marking and positioning of bodies. For example, the terms used to refer to different groups in public fora; the selective emphasis of the news media on specific narratives to describe ethnic and racial groups and the exclusion of others; the sanctioned use of racial profiling by the police; or the strategic denial that race is a factor that drives the behavior of states, institutions, and individuals. All these things happen in contemporary Spain, where institutions, representations in public discourse, and every day interactions contribute to the emergence and maintenance of a "regime of truth" or "general politics of truth" (Foucault, quoted in Gordon, 1980: 131) in the realm of race relations, whereby some groups are constructed and treated as superior to others.

The socially dominant group (who produces the racial "regime of truth") has the privilege to define their own identity, classifying themselves as the racially unmarked Spanish/European "us." A second identity is also elaborated by this group, one that produces specific bodies as foreign, racialized "others." Spain's entry into the EU and the emergence of the country's southern border legitimize and fuel this distinction. This is, of course, an over simplification of a process that involves

different groups not always easily positioned in either of these two categories, as we will see below.

These processes of racialization stem from and reinforce the uneven distribution of power among the differently marked groups. Much research on race tends to focus on the consequences of such power imbalance: higher poverty rates, residential segregation, or inferior educational achievement of marked populations, among others. The groups that capture researchers' interest vary greatly from one context to the next. In North America, African Americans have attracted quite a bit of attention; in Great Britain, many pages have been written on the living conditions of the descendants of immigrants from Commonwealth countries; and so on. Obviously, history heavily influences which groups are marked and discriminated against in each context, as well as the consequences of such marking. In Spain, a historically rich account on how current patterns of racialization of the foreign population draws from a long history of colonization and the foundations of national collective identity is still missing.

Because of the little theoretical reflection on the meaning of race in the Spanish context from a geographical perspective, I want to highlight the importance of the questions being asked in studies done elsewhere, while at the same time acknowledging that their specific findings cannot be directly transferred to the Spanish context. I rely heavily on the work of Goldberg and Kobayashi when exploring the meaning of race. When discussing the mechanisms through which discrimination against racially marked groups is legitimized and taken for granted, I follow Pulido's suggestion and focus on the workings of "white privilege" (Pulido, 2000): a "powerful and pervasive" form of racialization of non-white people within those spaces defined as "white" in a way that results in material and psychological benefit for whites at the expenses of those marked as non-white.

Considering these contributions, the goal of this paper is two-fold. First, I discuss two historical moments that have been crucial to the construction of the Spanish national territory as a white and Christian space. Note that my argument is not that this imaginary corresponds to empirical evidence. To the contrary, despite efforts to homogenize the country's population in religious and racial terms, Spain has always been rich in its diversity. For example, the local Roma population (the quintessential racial "other" before the arrival of diverse foreign populations in the late 20th century) has always been numerous. A prolific history of racial mixing (both among differentiated groups living in today's Spanish territory and between Spaniards and inhabitants of its former colonies, particularly in Latin America) has guaranteed a powerful phenotypical cocktail. Moreover, Spaniards, like other Southern Europeans, have not been considered "white" until very recently: before the 1980s, they were "Mediterraneans" (a shade or two removed from their cousins north of the Pyrenees).

Similarly, Spain's (and even Europe's) religious identity is as unclear as its whiteness. Those who claim that Catholicism is a defining element of the country's

collective identity clash with long-lived (and not always successful) attempts to secularize public discourse and governance. There is in fact evidence of a rabid anti-clerical sentiment among sectors of the local population through different periods of Spanish history. In this sense, it could be argued that the Muslim immigrant is a main target of fear and rejection precisely because s/he unabashedly exhibits a public spirituality that has not been "tamed" by the institutions and discourses of Eurocentric modernity. Despite these and other challenges, for centuries the illusion that Spain was a space defined by "Christianity" and "whiteness" has been a cornerstone of certain social engineering efforts discussed below.

Second, my aim in this paper is to understand how those processes of racialization result in the positioning of new arrivals in specific categories within a racial hierarchy of power that is at once novel and deeply rooted in the past. While I do not pretend that race is the only, or even the most important, factor explaining hostile reactions towards immigrants, I strongly believe that it is a relevant element that is not receiving the attention it deserves.

For the remainder of my analysis I will work with a definition of race that contains four key characteristics. First, race is understood here as an ideological construction and not only a social construction, "because the idea of «race» has never existed outside of a framework of group interest" (Essed, 2002: 185). Second, race is conceived as historically contingent, and as such fluid and evolving (Hall, 2002; Kobayashi, 2003). Third, race is relational, built upon the direct and mediated interactions among bodies, groups and institutions at many scales at once (Pulido, 2000; Kobayashi, 2003). And finally, race and racialization are fundamentally spatial concepts (Saldanha, 2006). In the following pages I will explore how these four elements have played out in the Spanish context. To begin, let us turn to an analysis of two crucial moments that established the tenets of Spanish collective identity in racial and religious terms in the 15th century.

2. Spanish identities: digging up the roots

Spain, as we know it today, resulted from the 750-year-long effort to take the power back from the Arab Muslims on the part of Iberian Christians, an effort also known as the Reconquista. The Reconquista culminated in 1492 with two interrelated events that would set the foundations for Spanish identity: one, the ethno-religious cleansing of territories under Christian rule; two, the arrival of Spanish vessels to what became known as "America." Both where promoted by the Catholic Kings: Isabel of Castille and Ferdinand of Aragon.

During and immediately after the Reconquista, the Catholic Kings launched a process of religious cleansing that further advanced the construction of a community of faith. Three moments where key in this process: the establishment of the Sacred Inquisition (1478-1834), the edict expelling the Jews (1492), and the expul-

sion of the last Grenadine Muslims (1502). So strong was the cleansing, that several historians situate the origins of a proto-Spanish identity in this context of religious confrontation. According to this, the single defining characteristic of this early Spanish consciousness was the awareness of being neither Jewish nor Muslim, but Catholic (Norman, 2001; Perez, 2004). As late as the 1960s a number of positions of authority were still forbidden to those who had converted from Judaism or Islam.

The second event that took place in 1492 was the signing of the "Capitulations of Santa Fe," where Isabella and Ferdinand agreed to finance Columbus' sea adventure to the "West Indies" (which would turn out to be the Americas) and gave him large powers to appropriate whatever he found there. The Capitulations enabled the first racial encounter between white Spaniards and *Indios* (Native Americans or First Nations) to happen. Later, black slaves were also added to the racial mix of the so called "New World." While similar encounters had happened before, it was in the Americas that Spaniards first proceeded to diligently classify human bodies in distinct and mutually exclusive racial groups: in the late 18th century, Spanish colonial administrators had already codified no less than 50 races or *castas* (a term first coined in this context and later exported to other places). These castes, defined for colonial administration purposes, claimed to classify individuals by the percentage of European, Native American, and African blood they had. However, in practice it was physical appearance and an individual's ability to buy an upgrade to higher positions in the racial hierarchy that were the most important factors in allocating bodies to one group or another (Jackson, 1999). With time, as Spain became more and more isolated from the rest of Europe, some heads of state (particularly Franco, 1936/39-1975) turned towards Latin America for support, reworking this relationship of domination into one of dependency.

These two moments of Spanish history, the expulsion of the Jews and the Muslims and the racial encounter in the Americas, laid the foundations for an emerging social hierarchy based on race and ethnicity. In this hierarchy (an example of Foucault's "regime of truth") Spaniards held the highest moral and intellectual value, a value reflected in the distribution of rights and duties among the population of the colonies and the metropolis. Taxation regimes varied for each group (Catholic white Spaniards always paid the least taxes), as did the locations open for each in the larger social structure. Only in 1537 were *indios* officially given human status, after Pope Pablo III declared they had a soul[1], thus clarifying the issue. But even then, this status served more to legitimize missionary enterprise in the Americas than to give indigenous populations greater freedom or citizenship rights. An elabo-

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[1] In the papal bull *Sublimus Dei* of 1537 Pope Pablo III declared that: "*Indios* are true men … [who] believe in one God the Creator in Heaven, and seem sufficiently disposed to embrace the Catholic faith and be trained in good morals." (My translation).

rate framework of racial beliefs and juridical-legislative institutions thus resulted in a complex articulation of power in Spanish societies at the time.

Both religious cleansing and colonialism played key roles in the creation of a Spanish identity that was both white and Christian (Goody, 2001; Norman, 2001; Perez, 2004). The encounter with racial others through colonization triggered the imagination of Spain as a white society. As Stoler notes:

> Imperial discourses that divided colonizer from colonized, metropolitan observers from colonial agents, and bourgeois colonizers from their subaltern compatriots (…) defined the fault lines —both fixed and fluid— along which gendered assessments of class and racial membership were drawn (Stoler, 1995: 8).

It would be impossible to engage here in a complex historical discussion of the many challenges to this collective self-representation in the last six centuries. The construction of Spanish collective identify in these religious and racial terms, summarily discussed above, has often been challenged and re-created since its origins in the late 15th century. For example, the loss of some of the last Spanish colonies overseas in 1898 triggered a crisis of the collective imaginary: without the colonized "other" the (white, Christian, dominating) "Spanish" self got lost. Similarly, affinity with the idea, not to mention the identity, of Europe has seen its peaks and valleys. Even the construction of a politically unified Spain among linguistically and culturally diverse populations was a project fraught with many tensions.

Therefore, my argument here is not that one single definition of Spain in racial and religious terms has consistently (or successfully) yielded a monolithic Spanish collective imaginary throughout the last six centuries. Instead, it is my contention that, despite the ebb and flows of such ideology, we can trace the foundations of contemporary racial politics to the early moments of Spanish identity construction. Spain's dialectic relationship with its racialized others expelled from its territory and with its colonized subjects fed the illusion of a unified nation that could (and should) become a nation-state. The specific meanings and implications of racial categories then varied depending on the socio-historical context, but that foundational moment was never lost. The social memories of these historical encounters form the basis for racial formations which persist to this day.

3. Back to the present: a hierarchy of immigrant otherness in the context of the EU

The previous section discussed the historical processes that constructed Spain as a white and Catholic space. In this section I want to build upon those foundations and explore the mechanisms through which this construction is re-produced in contemporary Spain. Focusing on the control of non-EU immigration, I argue that two

interrelated processes are key: the integration of Spain into the EU and the strengthening of control around its borders.

Several scholars have highlighted the importance of the EU project for Southern European States. For example, Laffan has noted that:

> For the peripheral states (…) Europe became the project for their future. Although the emphasis may have been on materialistic considerations, the European project also provided important symbolic assurance for these states by affirming their place in the European Order. (…) For Spain in particular, EU membership meant a reversal of a process which had led to a de-Europeanization of Spain from the time of Philip II to the last quarter of the twentieth century (Laffan, 1996: 87).

In other words, Spain's integration into the EU meant not only a drastic improvement of the material conditions for its inhabitants, but also the country's symbolic re-location at the core of the European Order. In political, economic and, I suggest, racial terms, the "Mediterranean Man" has finally been washed out white again. However, the EU is as central to the identities of bordering Southern European states as they are for the definition of the EU itself. After all, the "act of bordering is critical to understanding the building or transformation of a specific socio-spatial identity" (van Houtum, 2010: 959). And, as Morey has suggested, the sealing of the Southern European border is "about suturing the cultural identity of Europe. This desire for clarity, the need to know precisely where Europe ends, is about the construction of a symbolic geography that will separate the insiders from the outsiders" (Morley, quoted in Pickles, 2005).

Nation-states' integration into the Union and Europe's differentiation from "others" (other spaces, other peoples) are thus part of a single Janus-faced process: the constitution of a European space of free movement and the raising of the external borders of Schengen go hand in hand. Spain has participated in both processes, being a key player in the latter.

It is worth noting that Spain, like other Southern European countries with a short history of immigration, did not have a comprehensive immigration law until the mid-1980s. In 1985 the Spanish Parliament passed the first immigration law in the country's history, aimed more at meeting the requirements to join the EU than to control immigration (Calavitta, 1998; Agrela Romero and Gil Araujo, 2004)[2]. Since the first elaboration of the legal category "immigrant" in this piece of legislation (LOE 7/1985), the evolution of the term in popular discourse has been deeply intertwined with the Europeanization of Spanish immigration law. Currently, white Westerners are often referred to as "foreigners," while racially marked individuals

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[2] In 1996 only 1.4 percent of the population registered in Spain was foreign-born (Ministerio del Interior, 1996).

assumed to come from countries in the Global South are called "immigrants" (Peña Obiol, 2005). The label "foreigner" is applied to white tourists, international students, qualified workers, diplomats, wealthy pensioners, and CEOs of multinational companies from the EU and elsewhere around the world. In contrast, the term "immigrant" is used to describe the darker side of otherness: the poorer, less educated, economically motivated, and presumably undocumented "other" (Moreno, 1998; Santamaría, 2002).

Strictly speaking this distinction is wrong: many "foreigners" are immigrants (i.e. they are settled in the country). This white foreign born group is, of course, an immensely heterogeneous population. However, when confronting the common argument that "immigrants" do not integrate while "foreigners" do, one should bear in mind the many examples of white expat groups that continue to function within their own, imported cultural registries and languages in small communities in Southern Spain. These groups maintain schools for their children, shop in stores run by other co-nationals, and go on their daily lives with little or no knowledge of even the local language; but nobody finds this matters troubling.

On the other hand, non-white "immigrants" are becoming Spanish citizens (thus leaving the category in legal terms) and the non-white population is increasing thanks to the contributions of first- and second-generation immigrants. But despite these trends (the settlement of white foreigners who become immigrants and the naturalization of non-white foreigners) foreign-born and citizens are assigned either label depending on their national origins and perceived ethno-racial background. The use of the term "immigrant" is therefore in and of itself a form of racialization, something which has also been observed in other Southern EU countries such as Italy (Merrill, 2006; Pojmann, 2006).

This racializing effect of the term "immigrant" is promoted and justified by the classification that immigration law makes of people depending on their national origins. Current immigration law classifies immigrants in three groups: Europeans, free to enter and settle in the country with little or no limitations; those from nations imagined as "white" (New Zealand, the US, Canada) or with particularly strong ties to Spain (mainly, "white" Latin American countries); and the rest. The conditions to enter and settle for different national groups are summarized in Table 1.

The status of Latin American citizens in Spanish immigration law has shifted in the last two decades, a development particularly telling of how contemporary re-creations of Spanish national identity have turned towards Europe. Traditionally, Latin Americans have enjoyed privileges to enter and settle in Spanish territory, privileges justified on the bases of historical ties and an "assumed cultural identity or affinity, which renders them worthy of such treatment" (Spain, 1985).

Table 1. Requirements for entry and stay for citizens of different world regions

Origin	Entry	Stay
European (EU and non-EU).	Free, no visa.	Free, no permits required; automatically granted permanent residency.
Latin America, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand.	Free, except for nationals of Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic.	Visa required for stays longer than three months.
Rest of countries	Visa required for most cases.	Visa required for stays longer than three months.

Sources: Spain Ley Orgánica 14/2003; bilateral treaties.

At first blush, this may seem to call into question the argument that immigration law and border control are key mechanisms through which Spain and the EU legitimize and enforce discrimination against racially marked groups. However, since the turn of the 21st century these privileges have been removed from the legislation or ignored by Spanish authorities[3]. The group of Latin American countries whose citizens do not need a visa to enter or settle in Spanish territory is dwindling. Even for those still in that group, there is evidence that Spanish border authorities are disregarding bilateral migration agreements and asking Latin American immigrants for documents they are exempt from according to international laws (Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones Argentinas en España, 2005; Belgrano *et al*., 2005; Gutiérrez, 2008). This moving away from the Hispanic Community (a "family" of nations linked together by their shared history of colonialism, culture, language, and relig-

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[3] Since the first Spanish immigration law in 1985, this area of legislation has evolved very rapidly: a new law was passed in Parliament in 2000 (LOE 4/2000) and modified only a few months after (LOE 8/2000); in 2003 another law appeared (LOE 11/2003) and also modified shortly thereafter (LOE 13/2003). Bilateral agreements regarding visa waiver policies and dual citizenship have undergone equally rapid changes. For a more detailed discussion on how these changes have impacted Latin American migration to Spain, see Vives González (2007).

ion) and towards the EU marks a historical turning point in the articulation of Spanish national identity[4].

The increasing restrictions imposed on certain non-EU national groups (Latin American or not) respond both to domestic and supranational circumstances. Among the former, I would highlight hostile popular reactions that result from the size and rapid growth of the non-EU population, the increasing visibility of the immigrant community, high rates of undocumentation among newcomers, and perceived unsurmountable "cultural differences" between Spaniards and certain immigrant groups, particularly those identified as Muslim. Immigration is seen as a threat to the nation in economic, political, and cultural terms.

One of the most heated topics of debate in this regard has been the (supposed) disproportionate burden that non-EU immigrants pose on Spanish public services like education or health —a topic mainly raised by the conservative opposition party in the context of the current economic crisis (García, 2011; Güemes, 2008)—. There is little evidence to support this argument. For example, in 2008, 41 percent of the over 5 million foreigners living in Spain were EU citizens (INE, 2008). That year African immigrants, who bore the blunt of the blame in this debate, comprised a much more modest 15.6 percent. Moreover, 70 percent of them were between the ages of 20 and 50, thus statistically unlikely, as a group, to require much in the way of public education or health services. If anything, this group could be made responsible for contributing young laborers in a country where the aging of the domestic population is an acute problem —in 2001, the average age among nationals was close to 41 (INE, 2008)—.

Despite the lack of evidence, the perception that racialized foreigners are too much an imposition for the Spanish economy has led some city mayors to forbid their inscription in the municipal registry; this only affects non-EU citizens and makes them de facto ineligible to access most public services. Parties of the center-right (e.g., Partido Popular), nationalist parties (e.g., Convergencia i Unió), and parties in the far right (e.g., Plataforma per Catalunya) supported this initiative. In the end, the State Legal Service obliged municipalities to register all residents regardless of their legal status (EFE, 2010).

Greater restriction to migration has also been advocated from the international level (i.e., the EU). For example, Spain's regularization campaign drew criticisms from the EU and other member countries such as Germany or France, who considered that the measure would only attract more undocumented migrants from poorer countries. For Wolfgang Schaeuble, German Minister of Interior (among others), it

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[4] Latin American citizens have maintained and even reinforced their stronghold in Spanish citizenship legislation. The reasons behind the diverging evolution of both bodies of legislation have been discussed in depth in Vives González (2007) and Vives (2011).

was unacceptable that Spain had requested EU funds to protect the Union's external borders with Africa, but did not feel the need to consult its European partners regarding the 2005 regularization process (Pinyol, 2008). Here it becomes evident that the construction of a European space for the free movement of EU nationals goes hand in hand with the creation of an integrated border management system. It is in this sense that van Houtum (2010) talks about the EU as a gated community that is, first, invested in the re-creation of a common past and a sense of common identity; and second, involved in the erection of militarized borders along its outer territorial limit. The racial politics of the Spanish-European border thus respond to both domestic and international pressures.

Considering Spain's colonial history and its geopolitical location (it is a country with strong ties to its former colonies in Latin America that also shares both water and land borders with Africa) Spanish immigration policies fit very well with Schengen policies for the entry of non-EU nationals. For example, the "white list" (recently renamed "positive list") of countries whose citizens are exempted from visa requirements to enter the Schengen space, and the ones who are exempted from that same requirement to enter Spanish territory are the same (excluding a handful "white" South American countries such as Argentina)[5]. This may seem obvious: after all, if the borders of Spain are the borders of the EU, why would entry policies be different? But the shifting immigration rules has meant a major re-negotiation of Spain's relationship with other states, other nations, other spaces, and, most importantly, with itself and its own history.

This renegotiation has happened fast and with no public discussion, resulting, for example in a myriad of contradictions among different bodies of legislation. Of particular importance for the purposes of this paper is that prior to Spain's entry in to the EU in 1986, by virtue of a shared history of colonialism and economic ties forged during the Franco years, Latin American citizens fell within Spain's definition of whiteness —and thus, within the symbolic borders of the imagined Spanish community—. Today, Spain has adopted the perception, more common among Northern European and American countries, which marginalizes and excludes these countries and their people as "developing," Southern, and "non-white:" in other words, as outsiders their claims to enter the national territory are considered illegitimate. This is a telling example of the values which underlie the project of Europeanization.

I have argued that race is a historically contingent ideological construction, one that is relational and intimately related to the territory. The processes leading to the realignment of Spain's construction of otherness in racial terms support this argument. Racially charged perceptions of "self" and "other" in racial terms from the

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[5] For a discussion on how these national communities imagine themselves as white, see Dodds (2000).

15th century onwards have varied according to the place that Spain saw itself occupy in the world: as a colonizer and master of racialized groups; as a country with deep identity, political, and economic conflicts that, ostracized by other European states, sought support from its former colonial subjects; or as a full-right member to a novel supra-national entity, the EU. The new definition of the Spanish self as belonging to the (nominally white and Christian) space of the EU fosters the ideology that dominates in the country today, which imposes a new hierarchy of otherness built (largely but not exclusively) upon race, religion, and national origins.

This hierarchy is built upon the tenets of white privilege (Pulido, 2000). And, although the meaning of race and the mechanisms through which processes of racialization work have changed in the last few centuries, what remains is the rejection of Africa, and in particular blackness and Islam, as the main basis for the construction of a collective identity. The EU works in this context as a source of legitimacy for this racial project, and legislation in the field of immigration is one of the key areas of policy where this can be seen.

In summary, Spanish immigration laws and the use of the term "immigrant" (both heavily drawing on Spain's relation with the EU) are promoting the galvanization of new, yet familiar, racial formations in Spain. These racial formations are legitimized and produced, to a great extent, in national and EU immigration laws and border control practices; they are then echoed and re-produced in everyday discourses and practices, making non-EU, visible migrants an illegitimate presence in white Spanish territory. In other words, the legal structures imposed by the Spanish nation-state and the EU onto the foreign population do trickle down to inter-group and inter-personal relations, serving as a framework that legitimizes racist practices and reinforces the status of the Spanish nation as a white nation. Europe becomes white at its very borders. The result is the positioning of non-EU, racially marked immigrants in a relationship of antagonism to white Spaniards (and by extension, Europeans). This is not just a discursive curiosity for academic reflection: the construction of inside-white-EU versus outside-non-white-non-EU spaces impacts racially marked populations in very significant ways, both symbolically and materially.

Symbolically, the discursive construction of non-EU immigrants from the "Global South" situates racialized newcomers in a relation of antagonism towards white Spaniards. For example, surveys on attitudes towards immigrants in Spain show that the greatest hostility is against North Africans and Sub-Saharan Africans (CIS, 2001 and 2002), the two groups also with the least benefits in Spanish immigration law. On the other hand, the material consequences of immigrants' lack of

citizenship rights (in some cases, any kind of right) have been widely studied[6]; researchers' conclusion is that we are witnessing the creation of an immigrant underclass. It seems that the discursive construction of non-EU migrants, especially those from the Global South, is instrumental in creating their material conditions of existence. Discourse, legislation, and inter-personal and inter-group interactions are mutually constitutive.

The implications are clear: in 2008, about two million documented foreigners living in Spain belonged to groups susceptible to be racially marked (i.e., they come from non-EU countries where the vast majority of the population is visibly different from white Spaniards; MTAS, 2009). That same year, roughly one million foreigners (mostly from those same countries) lived in Spain without the proper documents to do so in 2008 (INE, 2008), and as such were relegated by law to situations of marginality and vulnerability. These numbers both stem from and justify the broader context of racialized identity formation and prejudice within Spanish society and laws.

In conclusion, Spanish immigration law is a powerful instrument through which Spain is being constructed as a white space within Europe, both directly (through the fortification of the external borders) and indirectly (through the legitimization of racist practices against non-whites). While I do not wish to overplay the role that race has in Spanish immigration law, I strongly believe that more attention needs to be paid to the relationship between this body of legislation and the protection / production of Spain as a European white space.

Discussion

In this paper I have argued that race is a social construction and that it "becomes" through a process of racialization, wherein certain somatic characteristics are used to attribute value to individuals and the groups to which they are assigned. The process of racialization results from and re-produces inter-group conflicts, and it is thus not only a social construction, but also an ideological one. Racialization builds on history to gain its meaning; in the case of Europe, colonial history remains central to understanding contemporary meanings of race. Race also depends on relational practices (between individuals, groups, institutions, scales, etc.) to emerge. And finally, both race and racialization are, at their very core, spatial concepts. As we have seen in the EU, there is a reciprocal relationship between the constitution

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[6] Some studies have focused on non-EU immigrants' participation in the Spanish labour market, residential segregation, and migrants' lack of protection against physical abuse. See, among many others: Colectivo Ioé (2003); FOREM (2007); Riol Carvajal (2003); Amnistía Internacional (2005).

of territorial borders and the constitution of racial systems of belonging and otherness.

With Spain being part of the EU, the historical roots of the country's racialized national identity have found an echo in institutional efforts to curb non-white immigration flows from the South. The seeds of contemporary Spanish identity were sowed during the Reconquista and the colonization of the Americas, and later on were strengthened under Franco's ideology of National Catholicism. These foundational moments were key to the construction of Spain as a space that was fundamentally white and Catholic. However, the historical roots of contemporary national identity have been re-negotiated in several occasions. During much of the 20th century, at a time when Spain was isolated from the rest of Europe, Franco turned to Latin America for support, promoting the inclusion of Spain into a larger community of Hispanic nations. Currently, Spain seeks to move away from the margins and into the core of the EU, and thus, Spanish national identity is being reformulated. By looking at immigration control, we can see how the concepts of "Spanish," "European," and "immigrant" have been re-worked since the mid-1980s. In other words, the conditions under which people from other places and ethnoracial backgrounds are (not) allowed to enter and settle in Spain help us trace the boundaries of the national imagined community. According to the official discourse, the location and enforcement of the border responds to external factors (e.g., EU requirements), the greater cultural proximity of some groups over others (an argument often referred to as "cultural fundamentalism"), or the threat posed by "waves" of undocumented immigration from Africa.

Does the border of Spain / the EU constitute a form of apartheid, as van Houtum (2010) has suggested? In my reading of the Spanish-EU border, I have highlighted its role in re-creating racialized assumptions about Spain in relation to other people and places. The Spanish-EU border has among its purposes the protection of a white space, or, better, of a space imagined as white. Spain is key in securing the purity of white Europe: its borders (the borders of Europe) are the closest to Africa in geographical terms and to Latin America in historical and cultural ones. To suture white European identities, that border needs to be sealed: immigration laws and border patrolling practices serve this purpose. Their (unachieved) goal seems to be to keep certain people, classified according to their place of birth and assumed phenotype, "in (their) place," thus contributing to the merging of space and race.

It is important to note that race is not all that matters in the creation of the Spanish-EU border; neither is race the most important factor explaining the political efforts and material resources put into its construction. But race is one of the factors involved, and my concern is that we do not talk enough about race. We (Europeans) limit migration, regulate integration, try to identify the essence of European identities, and we mask race under the language of "culture" when we talk about migration (Stolke, 1995; Doty, 1999).

Talking about culture when we mean race has a major advantage: it allows conversation, for mentioning "race" triggers defensive reactions among many Europeans. The word "race" brings back memories, still too fresh, of extermination and ethnic cleansing. But substituting culture for race is inappropriate: it deflects attention from the real issues that are on the table, and prevents an honest discussion of the obstacles that racialized groups in Spain face. If we decide to ignore the role that race has in both national and European projects, we do so at our own peril: immigration is already a defining characteristic of European societies, and it is bound to keep growing. But the increasing politicization of immigration in Spain (and in the rest of the EU for that matter) goes hand in hand with a deeply racialized concept of the immigrant. These are issues that need to be discussed and addressed for what they are. By hiding them under the veneer of "culture" we are sanitizing a deeply prejudiced discourse of exclusion and racism and allowing it to continue developing unchecked. This can only set the stage for a future of escalating prejudice and racist violence.

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