

Queering Migration Discourse

Differentiating Racism and Migratism in Postcolonial Europe

SAMMANFATTNING

I artikeln presenterar jag ett huvudargument: jag hävdar att det är nödvändigt att differentiera mellan rasism och migratism i kritisk (queerfeministisk) kunskapsproduktion kring rasism och migration i det postkoloniala Europa. I min analys visar jag att utan detta differentierande kommer queerfeministisk teori och aktivism återskapa Europa som en sfär fri från ras (och därigenom förneka rasism och rasifierandets effektivitet), reducera transnationalism till en samexistens mellan homogena nationella grupper och göra icke-vita européer till migrationsdiskursernas abjekt – och paradoxalt rasism.

I det stora hela är detta ett epistemologiskt projekt och jag efterlyser förändringar i paradigmet för aktivism och forskning om migration i det postkoloniala Europa. Jag förordar en postkolonial förståelse av migration och visar det nödvändiga i att migratism (det diskriminerande tillskrivandet av migration) alltid analyseras i relation till rasism. Jag är angelägen att frilägga maktdimensioner som är på ett sådant vittomfattande sätt grundläggande för begripliggörande av världen och kunskapsproduktion(er), att de till och med blir oåtkomliga för kritiska och reflekterande analyser, då deras premisser naturaliseras och normaliseras på sätt som gör dem osynliga och omöjliga att ifrågasätta.

Min avsikt är inte att skilja kampen mot rasism från den mot migratism, och jag förnekar inte heller att rasism och migratism är sammankopplade på ett särskilt vis. Tvärtom menar jag att antirasistisk och antimigratistisk kamp har en lång, gemensam historia och min forskning bekräftar nödvändigheten av att noggrant analysera konstruktionen av genuskodad rasifiering i Europa och dess förhållande till migration.

Keywords: racism, migratism, transnational feminist epistemologies, queer studies, critical migration studies, postcolonial theory

When did “feminism” become a word that spoke not just to you, but spoke you, that spoke of your existence or even spoke you into existence? The sound of it, your sound? How do we gather by gathering around this word, sticking to each other by sticking to it? (Ahmed 2010)

Europeans of color are produced as “queer,” “impossible” subjects in heteronormative discourses of nation as well as migration. (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxv)

IN THIS ARTICLE, I make one main argument and discuss its implications, potential, challenges and contradictions on various levels: I claim that a differentiation of racism and migratism is needed in critical (queer and trans) feminist knowledge production concerned with racism and migration in postcolonial Europe. I show that without this differentiation, theory and activism concerned with migration reproduce Europe as a space free of race (and thereby deny racism and the efficiency of racialisation), reduce transnationalism to a coexistence of homogenised national entities and render Europeans of colour as the abjects of discourses on migration – and paradoxically racism.

Overall, this is an epistemological project: I participate in the epistemological focus of transnational feminism (Grewal and Kaplan 2006) in not only making sense of the world, but also making sense of making sense of the world (see Ahmed 2010) beyond national presumptions. Taking this to the field of queer, trans, and feminist studies, this means to consequently rethink what is at stake in critical knowledge production and to reexamine assumptions, terminologies, and genealogies. My approach questions automatized and oversimplified linkages between migration and racism. I aim to show that a postcolonial framing of migration is needed and, therefore, I call for a change of paradigms in (queer and trans feminist) activism and scholarship on migration in postcolonial Europe (see also Tudor 2014).

The two quotes that introduce this article lay down tracks to indicate what is important for me in this project. Sara Ahmed (2010) touches on a dimension that I find very important for critical knowledge pro-

duction: the dimension of dis-abjectification. Following Judith Butler's (1993, 312) thoughts on abjects, dis-abjectification is the political act of making thinkable – making intelligible – “unviable (un)subjects.” This process of dis-abjectification is not a single voluntary act, but a fragile effect of collective politics, empowering positionings and transient political alliances. It is about coming into existence, about collective processes of turning oppression into resistance. Ahmed (2010) brings feminism together with the process of making thinkable unthinkable and unnameable positionings; it is about the processes of making accounts of oppositional subjectivity possible and liveable.

In a similar move, Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) problematises processes of abjectification in certain understandings of migration. She states that in “heteronormative discourses of nation as well as migration” “Europeans of color” become the abjects, the impossible, “queer” un-subjects (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxv). “Queering” means disrupting normative orders (Haritaworn 2008; Tinsley 2008; El-Tayeb 2011) and is used in this anti-normative way by El-Tayeb. This means, on the one hand, that discourses that define nation and migration as binary gendered and heteronormative – and conceptualise racism only in terms of migration – abjectify Europeans of colour (see El-Tayeb 2011; see also Wright 2004). But on the other hand, it also means that in the idea of “impossible subjects” could lie a promise of queerness. Therefore, El-Tayeb's (2011) approach opens up the possibility of anti-normative strategies of resistance against the erasure that takes place in normative discourses. It is an idea that not only criticises dominant discourses, but also promises anti-normative potential for community building and resistance against racism and migratism in Europe.

Taking up these perspectives on one set of problems, it becomes clear that critical queer and trans feminist scholarship on gendering, sexuality, migration, racism, nation and Europeanness needs nuanced conceptualisations to make sense of complex postcolonial geopolitics and subjectivities. We need to critically examine gendered racisms and nationalisms and their connection to migration in postcolonial Europe. I argue that one way of pursuing this is defining migratism (the discrimi-

nation based on the ascription of migration) and analysing it always in relation to racism.

In the first two subsections of this article, I will give illustrative examples of gender studies knowledge production on migration and critical migration studies approaches situated in a Western European context in order to make a case for a critical differentiation of racism and migratism. As I have shown elsewhere, the examples discussed here are in line with a general tendency in critical knowledge production on migration in Western Europe which collapses racism and migration to the expense of ignoring or denying postcolonial power relations and racialisations.¹ For the argument I aim to make, it is necessary to define what racism in postcolonial Europe is and what the term “postcolonial Europe” can mean. Therefore, I dedicate the third subsection to discussing the implications, problems, potentials, and contradictions of the current usage of “postcolonial Europe” in academic knowledge production.

Before I expand on what migratism is and what a conceptualisation of migratism might help us to think and do, I will carve out the need for such a conceptualisation with my analysis of the interconnection of nationalising, racialising and migratising ascriptions.

Postcolonising Critical Migration Studies

Critical migration studies approaches understand themselves to be in opposition to the integration paradigm of traditional scholarship on migration. With this, they already invest in a critical and power sensitive perspective. What many critical migration studies approaches have in common is that they often rely on a “migration-racism” assumption that defines migration as a central category of difference in the analysis of racism (see e.g. Miles and Brown 2003; Balibar 2007; Kerner 2007; Bojadžijev 2008).

My argument is that the concepts of so-called “neo- or cultural racism,” which place “migration” as the sole focus of theories of racism, paradoxically reproduce racist presumptions. Equating racism and migratism renders Europeans of colour – who may or may not have a migration history – the objects of racism theories and thus confirms

them as abject to the hegemonic idea of Europeaness. In other words, Europeans of colour are not only abjects in hegemonic discourses on Europeaness in (continental) Europe (Wright 2004; El-Tayeb 2011), they are also the unintelligible, unthinkable un-subjects of many racism approaches – even those with critical intensions – in Western European contexts. Further, I argue that racism constructs nationalised Europeaness as racialisation in Western Europe (see El-Tayeb 2001; 2011) and migratism regulates internal hierarchisations of whiteness in a migration context and furthermore can also be a strategy of racism. With the help of a conceptualisation of migratism, it becomes clear that not every border crossing is a migration and that there are supra-national (Hall 1991, 18) forms of Western-Europeaness that define intelligible European belonging in relation to certain nationalised contexts.

I start my argument here with a quote by Etienne Balibar (in Balibar and Wallerstein 1991) because it vividly makes clear the pitfalls of equating racism with what I would call “migratism.” Balibar’s work is seen as foundational for thinking neo-racism and political belonging in Europe in many migration studies approaches and in leftist anti-globalisation activism. Balibar reflects on who counts as an “immigrant” in France:

More generally, the word “immigrant” is a catch-all category, combining ethnic and class criteria, into which foreigners are dumped indiscriminately, though not *all* foreigners and *not only* foreigners. [...] A Portuguese, for example, will be more of an “immigrant” than a Spaniard (in Paris), though less than an Arab or a Black; a Briton or a German certainly will not be an “immigrant,” though a Greek may perhaps be [...]. (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 221; emphasis in the original)

In my reading, Balibar notes that there are differences in quality and extension of the discrimination of migrants. Some people, in this case in France, are seen as migrants and some are not. Balibar tries to get hold of these differences and uses nationalising appellations in his listing: “Portuguese”, “Spaniard”, “Briton”, “German”, “Greek” and so on. The

intention here is to discuss that not all border crossings are migrations and that “immigrant” is not a neutral category, which simply names a border crosser, but is a hierarchical ascription. In Balibar’s analysis, to be constructed as a migrant in Western Europe relies on nationality or assumed nation of origin and, sometimes, on class. While I agree with his analysis that not all border crossers are ascribed with migration (we can think of the differentiation of migrants vs. expats in recent media representations) and that we need to understand migration as a category that produces hierarchies and is produced by hierarchies, I want to problematise his equation of nationalising categories with racialising ones. In his list, alongside with the “Spaniard,” the “German,” and the “Greek,” Balibar names the categories “Arab” and “Black” and states that these two are much more likely to be seen as migrants. However, in equating racialising/ethnicising categories with nationalising ones, Balibar makes it impossible to think of the nationalising categories as something else than “white.” It is a racialised homogenisation of nationality. In line with the nationalising appellations like “Spaniard” and “German,” the mentioning of “Arab” and “Black” as different categories makes it impossible to think of Germans and Spaniards *as* Black or *as* Arab. Or, to put it the other way around, his formulation suggests that Arabs and Blacks cannot be French but are migrants in all events. Arabs and Blacks are constructed as the eternal migrants who never can be at home in Paris. Balibar’s formulation suggests that all the nationalised groups are not-racialised, and the racialised groups are automatically migrants in Europe. This idea produces whiteness as the non-racialised neutral category.

What his statement helps us to do is think about how the ascription of migration is not neutral but hierarchical and dependent on geopolitical and classist power relations. It becomes clear that not every border crossing is a migration and that white, Christian (I would add) Germans or Britons in France are not migrants. What it prevents us from doing is having a nuanced understanding of what racism in postcolonial Europe is and of how it is connected not only to migration, but rather to the ascription of migration to certain bodies that are constructed as “never

at home” in Europe. Racism functions in many Western European contexts through the strategy of ascribing migration – the externalisation of Black and Brown bodies from Europe. The problem with Balibar’s approach is the un-reflexive and uncritical equation of racialising categories with nationalising ones, which reproduces, rather than deconstructs, the hegemonic understandings of Europeanness as Whiteness.

According to the idea of a so-called neo-racism approach, racism is the power relation that discriminates migrants. This suggests a concept of racism that is beyond racialisation. Let us think this through with the help of Balibar’s example. I want to do this by having a closer look at the category of the “Briton” who, as Balibar (in Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 221) underlines, “*certainly* will not be an ‘immigrant’” (my emphasis) in Paris. If “Briton” were a category here that is above race, in consequence this would mean that Black Britons by virtue of being British would not be discriminated against in a racist way in France because Britons are not seen as migrants in France. Their privileged nationality would overrule being constructed as non-white. We can ask ourselves, is this really the case?

In another reading of this formulation, one could argue that the existence of Black Britons is not even thinkable within Balibar’s framework. In my analysis of the text passage, the underlying logics render Black Britons as abject, as “‘queer’, ‘impossible’ subjects in heteronormative discourses of nation as well as migration” (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxv). Moreover, within the possibilities of thinking that are offered in Balibar’s approach, the category of “Briton” is constructed solely as white.

Even if I am invested here in carving out inaccuracies in Balibar’s terminology, I want to mention that Balibar’s approach is not ignorant to complexities and contradictions in a general way. His article, “Is There a ‘Neo-Racism?’” (Balibar 2007), is very often used as legitimisation of a “migration-racism” or “cultural racism” conceptualisation as opposed to a “race-racism” conceptualisation, mostly in the German context (see e.g. Kerner 2007; Bojadžijev 2008, 29). In opposition to these approaches, I consider conceptualisations of a so-called neo-racism that claim that a “new” cultural racism has replaced the “old” race-racism to

be simplistic. Moreover, I argue that Balibar's approach, which is often used as legitimisation for stating that the race-racism is over, is more than ambivalent on this account.

Many scholars have argued convincingly that culturalising argumentations have always been part of racialising ones (Gilman 1994, 367; Ahmed 2012, 17) and "race" is as much a cultural construct as it is a biological one.² For example, taking into account the functioning of anti-Semitism it could be argued that cultural racism is not "new" at all. Balibar (2007) elaborates on this thought when addressing the question of if there is a neo-racism:

Modern anti-Semitism – the form which begins to crystallize in the Europe of the Enlightenment, if not indeed from the period which the Spain of the *Reconquista* and the Inquisition gave a statist, nationalistic inflexion to theological anti-Judaism – is *already* a "culturalist" racism. Admittedly, bodily stigmata play a great role in its phantasmaties, but they do so more as signs of a deep psychology, as signs of a spiritual inheritance rather than a biological heredity. (Balibar 2007, 23–4; emphasis in the original)

With this, in my opinion, Balibar suggests that his question "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?" is a rhetorical one, to which he himself would rather reply to at most with a "yes and no," and he shows that culturalist and biologist argumentations overlap. However, this reading of Balibar is not widely recognised, as scholarship on migration – at least in the German-language reception – heavily relies on the idea of the emergence of a neo-racism as oppositional to a race-racism, which is legitimised with a specific reading of Balibar's question.

I argue instead that post-race-racism approaches are highly questionable. In the quote analysed above, Balibar (in Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 221) tries to define a power relation that constructs migration as a hierarchical category and touches on the idea that people who are constructed as non-white in Western contexts are ascribed with migration – even if they are not migrants at all. What is problematic, though,

about Balibar's approach is that he neither questions nor investigates the entanglement of migratisation and racialisation. What kind of power relations and geopolitics lie behind the ascription of migration? What role does colonialism play? What role does the construction of intelligible Europeanness play? How can hierarchies within Europe and the construction of European nations as racially homogenous be criticised? In which ways is racialisation a construction that is entangled with migratisation but not the same?

Differentiations of Racism and Migratism

Through my analysis in the first subsection, I hope to have shown that a conceptualisation of racism that understands migration as the only line of differentiation is insufficient to grasp contemporary power relations in postcolonial Europe (see Ha et al. 2007, 11; El-Tayeb 2011, xxxv). In light of the recent public discussion of the so-called "refugee crisis" in Europe, the term "migrant" becomes an ever more racialised category and the vocabulary is twisted in a specific way. My conceptualisation is a critique of understandings of contemporary racism in Europe as disconnected from (post)colonial racialisation as well as understandings of migration as disconnected from postcolonial geopolitics. This critique displaces the assumption in theorising on migration that "race-racism" is over or not applicable to Europe and opposes the idea that the (only) relevant racism is an "anti-migration-racism." This is in line with Ha et al. (2007) who underline:

As within these new hegemonic configurations the line is drawn first and foremost between Europe and its so-called "others," the brittle category "migrant" by now does not reach far enough and is insufficient. [...] It is therefore overdue to look for new analytical categories that can grasp these postcolonial power relations. (Ha et al. 2007, 11)³

My approach is not about giving a better account of reality. It is about asking what certain conceptualisations allow us to think and do and what their limitations are – what they even prevent us from doing and

thinking. I am in line with Avtar Brah (1996, 14–5) here, who asks: “How do we construct politics which do not reduce everything to the economy of the same and which do not essentialise differences?”

Rather than focusing primarily on migration and migrants, I concentrate on power relations that construct the ascription of migration, thereby also constructing both the privileged and discriminated positionings in relation to migration. I call this process of construction *migratisation* and the power relation *migratism*. On the one hand, migratism ascribes migratisation to people in a generalized and discriminatory way. On the other, it normalizes non-migratisation. Similarly to how racialisation and gendering are constructions which are not neutral but which always function hierarchically, migration (like migration background, migration experience, etc.) is not a neutral term; it is not an *a priori* category. The construction of migratised and non-migratised positionings through migratism does not only occur once – it is performative in a Butlerian sense and occurs continuously and takes place in many different dimensions. The fixation of people and groups of people to an “elsewhere” is the precondition and the driving force of the idea of migratisation. An “elsewhere” has to be imagined in order to mark the boundaries of the “here” and to regulate all border crossings (both on the level of national borders and on the level of the boundaries of privileged self-constructions).

The migratism conceptualisation is not to foreground the discrimination of white migrants. It is to sharpen the understanding of (post) colonial racism in Europe. It is about grasping the ascription of migration as one possible strategy of racism and about understanding recent discursive racialisations of migration. That, for example, the ascription of Eastern European migration to certain bodies (in my case, the ascription of Romanian migration) and its discriminatory effects becomes theorisable through the concept is rather a by-product than the main focus. Furthermore, the conceptualisation is not about privileged forms of border crossing in a supranational Western context. It is not about white Swedes in Norway and white Germans in the United Kingdom, and white Canadians in Australia, and white Danes in Poland, and so

on. It is not about inventing discriminations: it is about conceptualising migration and non-belonging as relying in complex ways on postcolonial geopolitics, North/South and West/East divisions, and – very often – racialisation.

Ha et al. (2007, 11) underline that racism is about the construction of non/Europe and non/Europeanness as binaries and that the “brittle category ‘migrant’” is insufficient for critical analyses as it is based on and reproduces the exclusion of Black Europeans and, in consequence, constructs Europe as white. In accordance with these thoughts, I argue that the equation of racism and migratism renders Europeans of colour into the objects of theories on racism and reproduces them as objects of the hegemonic idea of Europeanness (see also Wright 2004; El-Tayeb 2011). A central argument for my conceptualisation of the relation of racism and migration is that racism is not confined to ascriptions of migration, but is both a more far reaching and an underlying power relation that constitutes societies and that constructs intelligible Europeanisation as privileged racialisation. Ascriptions of migration are interconnected with (post)colonial conditions, though this does not mean that every ascription of migration is therefore racist.

But, of course, racism and migratism are entangled. Racism can work through migratising strategies, for example, when Black Europeans are asked where they “actually” come from. However, there are also forms of migratisation that are not racist; for instance, when a white person is told that they have an “Eastern European” accent. That kind of statement does not automatically construct the person as non-white (for a complication of my own claim, see Tudor forthcoming a).

To give an example from feminist migration studies, I turn to a passage by Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010). She reflects on the interview process in her own work and the interaction with her interviewees that is defined by their different positionings towards postcolonial racialisation. Gutiérrez Rodríguez positions herself as a white privileged feminist who has grown up in Germany and has a family history of work migration from Spain (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010, 18). Her interviewees are white and non-white migrant women from Latin

America working in Germany or in the United Kingdom. Gutiérrez Rodríguez discloses discriminations and stereotyping ascriptions and discusses her own experiences in Germany in the 1970s:

Oh, you're the child of a foreigner, you reek of garlic and they always insult you, you encountered teachers who rejected you because you couldn't speak German, then there was this *form of racism* ... and this leaves a mark on you even as an adult. Because you are in a different country and you don't want to be here, because you are with your parents, and it is different, because you are not part of the society and before (in Spain) you were. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2008; my emphasis)

The quote provides an argumentation that I use for a sharpened distinction between racism and migratism. The relation of discrimination and violence that I have named “migratism” as part of the new approach detailed here is called in Gutierrez Rodríguez’s (2008) approach a “form of racism.”

As a white-privileged migratised person in Germany, I myself have experienced discriminations that followed very similar patterns. Broadly speaking, these issues are the ascription and degradation of the smell of garlic; being constructed as not knowing, speaking and understanding German; the question, “When is your family going back?” and “Are you glad that you can move back home now, as Ceaușescu is dead?”; experiences of (physical and verbal) violence by teachers; hindrances to the pursuit of higher education; and so on.

Why is my situation comparable to the experience described by Gutiérrez Rodríguez, although our positionings differ in terms of class, nationality, citizenship, etcetera, and are situated in different parts of Germany, at different points in time in a changing Europe? My answer to that question is that German structural migratism is at the foundation of this pattern of othering.

Even if I agree with Gutiérrez Rodríguez’ analysis for the most part, I call for a differentiation between migratism and racism. As Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2006; 2008) herself writes in her articles, her Ecuadorian in-

interview partner, Carla, brought to her attention white privilege and “the incompatibility of our different positionalities.” Gutiérrez Rodríguez makes the following remarks about the interview with Carla:

Carla started to talk about the racism she experienced during her childhood as an “indigena.” Her childhood was marked by the experience of forced assimilation under Spanish rules. As her mother tongue, Quechua, was forbidden at school, she could only speak it at home. [...] Carla subtly focused on the differences between my story and hers, situated in post-colonial conjunctures and disjunctures. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2006)

In this interview, Carla, Gutiérrez Rodríguez’ interviewee, demonstrates one of the differences between migratism and racism that I would like to elaborate on here: “So, it does not just happen because one is from a different country, it also happens in the same country.” (Carla as represented in Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2006; see also Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2008). Here, colonialism is clearly the framework within which a form of discrimination becomes a form of racism. The social positionings of both actors – interviewer and interviewee – are hierarchised and codified as “indigena” and “*white*” through colonial racism. This racialisation takes place beyond migration experiences and the ascription of migration. I claim that the account of the interview with Carla assertively demonstrates that racialisation has powerful effects beyond migratisation. Both interviewer and interviewee are migrants in a Western European context, but Carla emphasizes the privileging that is linked to whiteness – to migratised whiteness, as the case may be. For that reason, I argue that it makes sense to analytically separate racism and migratism from one another in order to examine them in a differentiated way as mutually constitutive and entangled with each other.

Why “Postcolonial Europe”?

In order to talk about racism, colonial legacies, and anti-racist queer-feminist resistance in Europe, it is crucial to define what the term “post-colonial” can actually mean in relation to Europe. “Postcolonial Europe”

has come into existence as a more established expression rather recently (see, for example, Chakrabarty 2000; Ponzanesi and Merolla 2005; Bhabra 2009; Ponzanesi and Colpani 2015).

“Postcolonial” has complex spacio-temporal meanings. First, the prefix “post” can mean continuities and ruptures in relation to the term it specifies, and not a simple “after” (Appiah 1991; Shohat 1992; Bhabra 2009), but a queer temporality. Second, it can be used as a critique of a spatial understanding of European colonialism as only affecting the colonised spaces and peripheries and not the colonialist centre (Shohat 1992). Bringing these aspects together, it makes sense, indeed, to apply postcolonial theory to analysing European geopolitics and power relations. It helps to carve out the continuities and ruptures of European colonialism and their impact on Europe. Europe is a “diasporic space” (Brah 1996) that is “placed in a frame of interconnections, of networks of peoples and places” (Bhabra 2009, 15) constituted by its (post)colonial history and presence. Moreover, racism in Europe is not comprehensively and responsibly graspable without contextualisation within colonial continuities and legacies.

However, Ella Shohat (1992, 99) warns against assuming a fixed meaning of “postcolonial” and calls for a careful examination of the “theoretical and political ambiguities” of the term. There are certain perspectives prioritised in the usage of “postcolonial” and the nexus of spatiality and temporality that is often assumed has to be critically reflected (Shohat 1992, 99). Gurinder Bhabra (2009, 2) makes clear that focusing on Europe through a postcolonial lens does not necessarily mean reproducing Eurocentrism but, instead, to analyse Europe as having come into existence through transnational and global processes.

Building on these thoughts, I argue that it is necessary to question automatized usages of “postcolonial” and call for a more specific and contextualised definition. Chandra Mohanty (2003), rather, advocates “transnational” as a term for feminist approaches, which intervenes in globalised power relations. Shohat (1992) and Stuart Hall (1991), for example, argue that processes that define the borders of Europe and intelligible Europeanisation cannot solely be traced back to the 19th cen-

tury, but can be connected to the conquest of the Americas and to the so-called *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula – the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain (Hall 1991; Shohat 1992). This is a perspective that tends to be neglected in many postcolonial approaches but needs to be considered for analysing contemporary conjunctures of postcolonial Europe (see also Boatcă 2006; 2013; Tlostanova 2010).

Following Bhabra (2009) and non-Anglophone publications like *re/visionen – Postkoloniale Perspektiven von People of Color auf Rassismus, Kulturpolitik und Widerstand in Deutschland* [*re/visions – Postcolonial Perspectives of People of Colour on Racism, Cultural Politics and Resistance in Germany*] (Ha et al. 2007), I stick to “postcolonial” as a critical lens for analyses of European racism and geopolitics and as a critical perspective for oppositional movements. Even if I agree with some strands of transnational feminism and decolonial approaches (see, for example, Tlostanova and Mignolo 2009; Tlostanova 2010; Boatcă 2013;) that complicate the usage of “postcolonial,” I affirm it for analysing Western European power relations. Precisely because there is a continental European form of “memory and amnesia” (El-Tayeb 2011, xxv) in relation to colonialism, interventions that use the label “postcolonial” have an important impact, as, for example, in the initiative to rename colonialist street names in Berlin.⁴

Colonialism is not a closed epoch of the past, but is a powerful, ongoing ideology and social order that defines, in the first place, what can be understood as “Europe.” Grada Kilomba (2008, 13) defines colonial racism “as not only the restaging of a colonial past, but also as a traumatic reality” and underlines: “[R]acism is *white supremacy*.” (42; emphasis in the original). Central definitions of racism, on which my analyses are built, are therefore postcolonial ones. This means they grasp racism as always in relation to postcolonial social conditions which are historically and geopolitically contextualised. Following Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo (2009, 133) one can argue that coloniality is the “underlying structure” of contemporary global power relations (see also Quijano 2000).

“All parts of Europe” are invested in the reproduction of European-

ness as whiteness, argues El-Tayeb (2011, xiv), and also reminds us of the complex processes of hierarchisation that take place between Western Europe and its Southern and Eastern peripheries. Manuela Boatcă (2013) speaks in this context of “multiple Europes” – the hierarchical construction of a “heroic” Western core Europe and its South-Western and South-Eastern counterparts. The conceptualisation of racism I am suggesting here is rooted in these postcolonial and decolonial perspectives. Therefore, I call for a critical framing of geopolitical contextualisation of any analysis of racism, sexism, queer-/transphobia, and migratism.

In postcolonial approaches on Europe, it is necessary to specify what (post)colonial racism is and how it is entangled with power relations like sexism, classism, queer- and transphobia and migratism. What role does racialisation play for constructing intelligible Europeaness? How can geopolitical hierarchisations within Europe be theorised responsibly?

Conclusion

Let me conclude with citing David Eng, Jack Halberstam, and José Muñoz’ (2005) concise question, “What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?” and apply it to “Queer Postcolonial Europe.” One answer is that it is a consequent engagement with racism, migratism, border regimes and multiple entangled power relations (like sexism, queer- and transphobia and classism) and a turning away from single-issue-politics that makes queer studies queer. It is the epistemological re-examination of its own focus and its limits that make queer studies queer.

My conceptualisation of migratism and its relation to racism is, therefore, an intervention in and critical engagement with scholarship on “postcolonial Europe” that appropriates the term “postcolonial,” in postcolonial approaches that do not analyse gender and sexuality and in approaches on migration that dismiss postcolonialism and racialisation as constitutive for any analysis of contemporary geopolitics. I am concerned with carving out dimensions (effects, ways of functioning, realisations, etc.) of power relations that are, in such an immense way, constitutive for collective possibilities of conceptualising the world and knowledge production(s), that they become even inaccessible to critical and reflective analysis.

What transnational feminist, decolonial and postcolonial approaches have in common is an epistemological project; the attempt to grasp the complexity of present geopolitics. Transferred to scholarship on “queer postcolonial Europe,” this means to reflect on the blurry spatial-temporality of Europe’s histories, borders and modes of becoming. A consequent thinking together of colonialism with contemporary power relations and geopolitics is indispensable for political movements and feminist knowledge productions. Postcolonial critique “means therefore most notably also a theoretical paradigm to deconstruct productions of knowledge and truth” (Steyerl and Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2003, 8).⁵

What becomes clear here is that power relations and their analyses are complex. With the suggested conceptualisations, I aim to contribute to transnational queer feminist scholarship and activism that are invested in analysing genderings, sexualities, postcolonial geopolitics, diasporas, and migrations in their entangled and contradictory complexities. My approach is not about separating struggles against racism from those against migratism, nor do I want to deny that racism and migratism have a specific interconnection. On the contrary, I argue that anti-racist and anti-migratist struggles have a long shared history. My intervention underlines the necessity to carefully analyse the construction of gendered racialisation in Europe, its relationship to migration and to the ascription of migration to certain bodies. I argue that not only the construction processes are complex, but also that the knowledge production in transnational queer feminist studies is blurry, ambivalent, contradictory, and uncomfortable. This is what we have to use as a constant challenge and potential in struggle for and knowledge production on radical social transformation.

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NOTES

1. For a detailed elaboration on the distinction of racism and migratism and an imbedding in theories of European racisms, see Tudor (2014). See also Tudor (forthcoming b).
2. One could argue as well that biology – the discipline that generates knowledge on "life" – is a cultural product.
3. My translation, original in German.
4. <http://www.berlin-postkolonial.de/cms/> (accessed February 27, 2016).
5. My translation, original in German.