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RACIALIZING HUMANKIND

Interdisciplinary Perspectives
on Practices of 'Race' and Racism



Beiträge zur Geschichtskultur

begründet von
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Interdisciplinary Perspectives on
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Bielefeld, October 2021

Malin S. Wilckens, Julian T. D. Gärtner

Wilckens, Malin S./Gärtner, Julian T. D.

Introduction – Conceptualizations and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Practices of ‘Race’ & Racism

racism remains
the pale face of sickness
that privately and publicly eats away at us
May Ayim, blues in schwarz weiss¹

The latest political events, racially motivated attacks, and strengthened right-wing movements worldwide were the reason for us to bring racism to the agenda again.² Structural racism is ingrained in everyday life. What we need is a discussion that brings together its social, cultural and institutional manifestations. One of the consequences in an anti-racist struggle has been the worldwide *Black Lives Matter* protests. As interdisciplinary working researchers, we consider racism to be one of the most pressing issues of our time that can best be tackled from a multi-, trans- or interdisciplinary angle, then we are in the position to contribute critical and nuanced research on this topic. As White³ European editors (male/female), we are

1 The original version reads: “rassismus bleibt/bleiches gesicht einer krankheit/die uns heimlich und öffentlich auffrißt,” May Ayim: soul sister. In: Id.: blues in schwarz weiss. Berlin 1995, translated by Tina Camp: In: *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work* 23 (2008) No. 1, pp. 92–94. May Ayim (1960–1996) was a German poet of color and activist.

2 This volume has been written within the framework of the *Collaborative Research Center SFB 1288* “Practices of Comparing. Changing and Ordering the World,” Bielefeld University, Germany, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

3 We capitalize White to mark White as a powerful, historically constructed ‘racial’ identity to counter the ‘racial’ invisibility of White people. We also follow the widespread practice of capitalizing the ‘B’ in Black to mark it as a socially and historically constructed category. In doing so, we follow the arguments of Nell Irvin Painter, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ): Nell Irvin Painter: Why ‘White’ should be capitalized, too. In: *The Washington Post* (July 22, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/07/22/why-white-should-be-capitalized/> (last accessed September 9, 2021); Kwame Anthony Appiah:

aware of our privileged position from which we write. We don't face racial discrimination and are able to position ourselves – but we also see the responsibility that this privileged position puts on our shoulders as a new generation of scholars. The historical and contemporary examination of this highly sensitive topic ultimately aims to identify and counteract racist structures. We want to emphasize right at the beginning that 'race' is a socially constructed idea and lacks any biological basis.

This volume emerged from an international and interdisciplinary conference that was organized in the context of the 11th Annual Seminar of *Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology* (BGHS) at Bielefeld University in Germany in July 2019. The Annual Seminar is a renowned conference format that invites researchers from all over the world. This format aims at reaching out for fresh, innovative ideas, perspectives and approaches that have not yet been included into well-established fields of research. During the process of this volume other appalling racist events occurred. The murder of George Floyd by a police officer who pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for more than 9 minutes, shocked the world and brought the issue of systemic racism back to the agenda once again. The Covid-19 pandemic also demonstrates aspects of structural racism and racial injustices as a disproportionately high number of People of Color (PoC) or Indigenous People are affected by the virus and its consequences.⁴

Rather than just focusing on the history of ideas and its discursive development, this volume will focus on what actors *do* when they construct 'race' and practice racism. By practices of 'race,' we specifically mean how so-called 'races' are produced through processes of categorization and stereotyping, combined with the production of symbolic boundaries and processes of devaluation. It is thus aligned with cultural theoretical and sociological perspectives that have long made explicit the relationality of meaning and the significance of power.⁵ Practices hold a key position in negotiating and consolidating racism. The *Collaborative Research Center 1288* at Bielefeld University, which focuses on comparing as a constructive

The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black. In: *The Atlantic* (June 18, 2020), <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/> (last accessed September 9, 2021); *NABJ Style Guide* (June 2020), <https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide> (last accessed September 9, 2021). Contributors to the chapters may have chosen a different spelling.

4 Rohland points out the connection between the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, the Anthropocene and systemic racism, see Eleonora Rohland: Covid-19, Climate, and White Supremacy. Multiple Crisis or One? In: *Journal for the History of Environment and Society* 5 (2020), pp. 23–32.

5 Cf. Stuart Hall: The Spectacle of the "Other." In: Id. (ed.): *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London 1997, pp. 223–290.

force for social and historical change, has highlighted the importance of practices of comparing for establishing categories, hierarchies, and inequalities⁶ – these terms are also closely linked to the phenomena of racism. This volume’s goal is to show how and which practices, especially practices of comparing, are constitutive in the construction of ‘race’ and manifestations of racism. Comparing is an omnipresent operation and yet – until recently – it has hardly been discussed in the humanities. Comparisons are a basic form of relationing: it takes at least two entities or objects of comparison (*comparata*) that are being related to each other in certain respects (*tertia*) in order to highlight commonalities, similarities, incomparabilities or differences. Usually, the premises of comparisons are hardly ever made explicit. This is the reason why it is important to ask what actors *do* when they compare. Rather than comparison as a method or approach, this section will make practices of comparing the object of study in its own right. As a power-sensitive approach the emphasis lies on the verb in its progressive form in order to observe practices of comparing more closely.⁷ The ways in which actors compare are highly depended on the circumstances and contexts in which they occur.⁸

The concept of ‘race’ has recently been the subject of increasing, critical public discussions, often accompanied by debates on historical and contemporary racism, for example in connection with museums, exhibitions, cultural institutions and places of remembrance.⁹ Thus, racism poses important questions for the discourse about “historical culture”

6 Angelika Epple/Walter Erhart/Johannes Grave (eds.): Practices of Comparing. Towards a New Understanding of a Fundamental Human Practice. Bielefeld 2020; Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan: Why Compare? In: *New Literary History* 40 (2009) No. 3, pp. 453–471; Walter D. Mignolo: On Comparison: Who Is Comparing What and Why? In: Rita Felski/Susan Stanford Friedman (eds.): *Comparison. Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Baltimore 2013, pp. 99–119.

7 Here we follow the assumptions and terminologies developed by the SFB 1288; cf. Epple/Erhart/Grave (fn. 6); Angelika Epple/Walter Erhart (eds.): *Die Welt beobachten: Praktiken des Vergleichens*. Frankfurt a. M. 2015; Willibald Steinmetz (ed.): *The Force of Comparison. A New Perspective on Modern European History and the Contemporary World*. New York/Oxford 2019.

8 See also Mary Louise Pratt: *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York/London 1992 Second Ed. 2008.

9 The recently published volume in this series addresses the restitution debate and its connection to the concept of “historical culture” from various perspectives, see: Thomas Sandkühler/Angelika Epple/Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.): *Geschichtskultur durch Restitution? Ein Kunst-Historikerstreit* (Beiträge zur Geschichtskultur, Vol. 40). Wien/Köln/Weimar 2021. Further, French president Emmanuel Macron sparked a debate about the restitution of African cultural heritage also concerning the inventory of *Musée de l’homme* in Paris. This resulted in a critically acclaimed report by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, several publications and international reactions by many African states. Similar controversies and concerns surrounded the opening of the Humboldt Forum on Berlin’s museum island in 2021 and the exhibition *Ras-*

(Geschichtskultur)¹⁰ in a globalized world. In the process, demands long raised by PoC activists in many contexts, including Germany, finally entered the public discourse on a broader basis.¹¹ Following the term coined by German historian Jörn Rüsen, the volume foregrounds historical and contemporary practices of racism in their own right and discusses manifestations of racism in different epochs and locations. Aspects of institutional and structural racism as well as racist practices in literature, science, media and performances offer an important extension of the study of “historical culture” (Geschichtskultur) with new perspectives on racism. The chapters presented in this volume are less about dealing with history itself, in the narrow sense of dealing with the past in social life, than about representations, mediations and constructions of ‘race’ and racism in their respective contemporary contexts of knowledge. *Critical Whiteness Studies* or *Critical Race Theory*, e.g. as critical engagements with racism in public discourse, have pointed out the racist foundations of various disciplines and urged for new ways and methods to understand the social world.¹² The legacy of White supremacy in its historical past up to the present is addressed in order to counteract recent color-blindness that fosters racial inequalities.¹³

sismus. Die Erfindung von Menschenrassen in German Hygiene Museum in Dresden. One question was: how to present artifacts and materials from contexts of colonialism and slavery without reproducing the inherent racism? *Berlin Postkolonial* is one initiative from civil society that raised attention to colonial histories and backgrounds in the city.

- 10 Jörn Rüsen: Was ist Geschichtskultur? Überlegungen zu einer neuen Art, über Geschichte nachzudenken. In: Klaus Füßmann/Theo Grütter/Jörn Rüsen (eds.): *Historische Faszination. Geschichtskultur heute*. Köln 1994, pp. 3–26.
- 11 Cf. May Ayim/Katharina Oguntoye/Dagmar Schultz (eds.): *Showing our Colors. Afro-German Women Speak Out*. Amherst 1992; Fatima El-Tayeb: *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis 2011; Theodor Michael: *An Afro-German Life in the Twentieth Century*. Translated by Eva Rosenhaft. Liverpool 2017; see also the campaigns of Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland e. V. (Initiative of Black Germans) or the trans-disciplinary artistic-activist symposia BE.BOP (Black Europe Body Politics) by Alanna Lockward. For further discussions of artistic and activist theorizations of Afropeanness see Julia Roth: *Re-Performing Germanness from an Afropean Lens*. In: Michaeline A. Crichlow/Pat Northover (eds.): *Decoloniality in the Break of Global Blackness*. Durham, forthcoming.
- 12 Cf. Kimberlé Crenshaw/Luke Charles Harris Williams/Daniel Martinez HoSang/George Lipsitz (eds.): *Seeing Race Again. Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines*. Berkeley 2019; Ibram X. Kendi: *How to be an Antiracist*. New York 2019; Sara Salem/Vanessa Eileen Thompson: *Old Racisms, New Masks: On the Continuing Discontinuities of Racism and the Erasure of Race in European Contexts*. In: *Ninety Sixty Nine: an Ethnic Studies Journal, Special Edition: Across Difference* 3, (2016) No. 1, pp. 1–23; Karen Shimakawa: *National Abjection. The Asian American Body Onstage*. Durham 2002; Kim F. Hall: *Things of Darkness. Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. New York 1996.
- 13 For the German context see: Maureen Maisha Eggers/Grada Kilomba/Peggy Piesche/Susan Arndt (eds.): *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in*

In line with this critical approach, our aim is to uncover epistemic as well as practical racial power structures.

Practice theory in general and practices of comparing, in particular, allow us to gain new insights into how racism(s) and 'race' are being done. We ask how exactly do the idea of 'race' and its practical application relate to each other. How are both being made? *Racializing Humankind: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Practices of 'Race' & Racism* will approach this topic from a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary research from the social, literary, and historical sciences. It inquires into practices related to the (re)production of power relations, the idea of alleged innate biological properties of different groups of people, processes of social differentiation, and material inscriptions, e.g., in institutions, state formation, sciences or the literary canon. The interdisciplinary approach of the volume, ranging from the Middle Ages to modern times, from Brazil, through the United States, the Congo to Europe, precisely reflects the complexity of the phenomenon of racism, which has shaped humanity in the most diverse contexts over centuries – right up to the present day. The volume is interested in the asymmetries racializations have constructed and the persistent inequalities and violence they produce.

Premises

We assume three premises on which we elaborate later in the text: firstly, this volume will present empirical case studies that examine the social production of so-called 'races' and racism from a praxeological perspective.¹⁴ Practice theory, as a specific form of cultural theory, locates the social in the practices of subjects. It is concerned with reconstructing the routine attribution of meanings to objects, persons, or abstract entities. These forms of knowledge are not universal, but are historically, context-specifically, and contingently situated. In contrast to other theories of culture, the locus of the social is neither in the mind nor exclusively in texts or discourses. Instead, practice theory understands collective knowledge orders as practical knowledge. Social practices are thus understood as routines of behavior held together by a practical understanding that is

Deutschland. Münster Third Ed. 2017; Martina Tißberger/Gabriele Dietze/Daniela Hrzán/Jana Husmann-Kastein (eds.): *Weiß – Weißsein – Whiteness. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus. Critical Studies on Gender and Racism*. Bern 2009.

14 Cf. Angelika Epple: Comparing Europe and the Americas. The Dispute of the New World between the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. In: Steinmetz (fn. 7), pp. 137–163, esp. pp. 140–143.

incorporated.¹⁵ Thus, empirical studies lend themselves well to naming concrete practices that make up the social world. Also, this allows us not to stop at individual actors but to trace the structural manifestations of racism. We assume that actors are involved in practices and structures in their respective time and context, without these structures determining the actors' agency. Structures consist of practices; both are inter-related. It is a kind of circular model that is subject to constant change.

Secondly, racism consists of a set of practices. We argue that a special emphasis should be paid to practices of comparing as an immanent productive force in doing 'race' and racism. Practices of comparing can initiate or trigger racist practices, but they can also stabilize already existing racist ideologies and actions; therefore, practices of comparing can also be considered racist themselves. Why do certain actors make particular comparisons in specific contexts and how do they choose the different *comparata*? Comparing is constitutive in relating assumptions of difference and similarity.¹⁶ In many studies racisms and especially classifications always seem to point towards differences, whereas it is important to note that comparisons can also perpetuate ethnic prejudices through claims of similarities. The *Collaborative Research Center* is exploring a new research paradigm by shifting attention from comparison as a seemingly invariant operation to the history and culture of a practice: doing comparisons. Taking up the idea of the project, the aim of this volume is to uncover the dynamic forces of practices of comparing regarding the construction of 'race' and racism.

Thirdly, in our assumption of the connection between ideology and practice, we assume that 'race' functions as a constructed idea that can be created in various ways. We see the idea of 'race' as an important premise of racism, without denying the breath of this notion. The idea of 'race' can include a strong bodily, cultural or religious focus, or a combination of these. Even a strong physical connotation always includes cultural assumptions. The assumption of the strong link between 'race' and racism, is not meant to obscure the notion that racism also encompasses color blindness and

15 See esp. Andreas Reckwitz: Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing. In: *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2002) No. 2, pp. 243–263; Marian Füssel/Tim Neu: Doing Discourse. Diskursiver Wandel aus praxistheoretischer Perspektive. In: Achim Landwehr (ed.): *Diskursiver Wandel*. Wiesbaden 2010; Anthony Giddens: *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley/Los Angeles 1984.

16 On the connection on 'race' and comparing, see Angelika Epple: *Inventing White Beauty and Fighting Black Slavery*. In: Epple/Erhart/Grave (fn. 6), pp. 295–328; on the connection between 'race,' comparing and the environment, see Eleonora Rohland: *Entangled Histories and the Environment? Socio-Environmental Transformations in the Caribbean, 1492–1800* (*Inter-American Studies*, Vol. 33). Trier/New Orleans 2021.

other practices that claim not to rely on culturally constructed concepts of 'race.'¹⁷ The category of so-called 'races' also emerged out of different social practices.¹⁸ But these classifications of 'races' did not precede racist action. In all contributions, whether they focus on the negotiation of 'race' as an invented category or that deal primarily with racist practices, the idea or assumption of a subject constructed as unalterably inferior, or threatening is predominant.

Furthermore, we want to emphasize the limits of this volume: both the period of National Socialism in Germany, antisemitism, and many world regions, such as China or India and the connection to caste, are not considered here. In addition, an intersectional perspective is only occasionally included in the contributions, but it does not run consistently through the volume.¹⁹ We also do not claim to present a comprehensive account of racist practices. Rather, our goal is to identify certain practices that are central to the concept of 'race' and the system of racism based on our empirical material. To this end, we have identified four distinct sets of thematic issues that cover different social spheres, which will be outlined in more depth below.

The Interplay of 'Race' and Racism

Racism becomes manifest in a variety of human practices in different societies at different historical times. Without going into too much detail in the discussion of the beginning of modern racism here, historical and conceptual perspectives will nevertheless be outlined to clarify our empirical and analytical starting points.²⁰ Depending on the academic background or re-

17 Cf. Étienne Balibar/Immanuel Wallerstein: *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities*. London/New York 1991; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva: *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham Fifth Edition 2017. On the connection of 'race' and caste, see cf. Sureshi M. Jayawardene: *Racialized Casteism. Exposing the Relationship between Race, Caste, and Colorism Through the Experiences of African People in India and Sri Lanka*. In: *African American Studies* 20 (2016), pp. 323–345.

18 In our contributions concerning the term 'race,' we focus primarily on the construction of the all-encompassing category of 'race' that emerged with the natural sciences, which provided the basis for essentialist biological attributions and often served to legitimize racist practices in the wake of colonial conquest and slavery.

19 For an intersectional perspective see cf. Julia Roth: *Feminism Otherwise. Intersectionality beyond Occidentalism*. In: *InterDisciplines* 2 (2017), pp. 97–122; Heidemarie Winkel/Angelika Pöferl (eds.): *Multiple Gender Cultures, Sociology and Plural Modernities. Re-Reading Social Constructions of Gender across the Globe in a Decolonial Perspective*. Abingdon/New York 2021.

20 For the discussion about the origin of racism see cf. Miriam Eliav-Feldon/Benjamin Isaac/Joseph Ziegler (eds.): *The Origins of Racism in the West*. Cambridge 2009;

search focus, definitions of racism and its connection to ‘race’ vary widely. While several studies focus on the history of ideas, we want to shift the focus and analyze the practices of what actors do and how this creates a social reality of racialization, in claiming that a practical application/exclusion must take place in order to speak of racism. While Ibram X. Kendi claims that racism “is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequalities”²¹, George M. Fredrickson states that “racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates, excludes, or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it believes are hereditary and unalterable.”²² Francisco Bethencourt also highlights the interplay between practice and idea. According to him the notion of racism consists of “prejudice concerning ethnic descent coupled with discriminatory action” and is “motivated by political projects.”²³ Further, Tanya Golash-Boza emphasizes the connection of racist ideologies and practices on a micro- and macro-level, which she calls “structures.”²⁴ Although many concepts and different terms are used, these works share one common denominator: the interplay between idea/ideology and practice. Our volume follows this assumption with a focus on the practices of actors (individuals, groups, organizations, narrations, etc.). Therefore, we take this connection both to argue for a praxeological approach and to link the concepts of ‘race’ and racism. However, the social reality emerging from these practices, e.g. in the form of knowledge production, is also taken into account in individual contributions.

Research Perspectives

Tanya Golash-Boza’s *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*²⁵ comes close to our interest in concrete practices. It presents an in-depth analysis of the history of the idea of ‘race,’ racial ideologies as well as policies and institutions. The United States serve as the paradigmatic object of compar-

Geraldine Heng: *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge 2018; Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning. The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. New York 2016; Francisco Bethencourt: *Racisms. From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century*. Princeton 2013; Christian Geulen: *Geschichte des Rassismus*. München 2007.

21 Kendi (fn. 12), p. 17f.

22 George M. Fredrickson: *Racism. A Short History*. Princeton 2015.

23 Bethencourt (fn. 20), p. 1.

24 Tanya Golash-Boza: *A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism*. In: *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2 (2016) No. 2, pp. 129–141, here pp. 6, 9.

25 Tanya Golash-Boza: *Race and Racisms. A Critical Approach*. New York/Oxford Second Ed. 2018.

ison or set *comparatum*. Other societies as diverse as South Africa, France or Brazil are compared to the US in regard to the *tertium* of racial injustices – but practices of comparing are hardly addressed on a meta-level. Comparing is rather used as a heuristic tool or method than discussed as a practice. Our volume claims that comparing itself is crucially involved in racist ideologies and practices. Although we are bound to a European perspective, the approach of practices of comparing (“doing comparison”) takes a reflexive stance towards comparisons and is informed by post-colonial studies. A further most noteworthy contribution is Francisco Bethencourt’s *Racisms. From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century*²⁶ from 2013. Bethencourt makes an important contribution to our discussion of the nexus between ‘race’ and racism. Similar to Golash-Boza’s approach Bethencourt also addresses racism in the plural form of *racisms* as a set of practices. These culturalist, homogenizing and pejorative practices result in a reality of so-called ‘races’ or ethnicities, which, however, lack any biological basis. Additionally, daily updates of racist practices underline the very variability and constructedness of racism and its high adaptability. In contrast to many insightful studies on racism, this volume does not narrow its scope to a specific region or time. Rather than overarching explanations of development, it provides individual empirical examples, emphasizing the concrete production of racist practices by specific actors at specific points in time.

Thus, the latest sociological and historical research as well as cultural studies point to the high flexibility of racism: depending on the political, cultural and social context as well as time and space, racism as well as the concept of ‘race’ can take on different forms.²⁷ The category of ‘race’ is also constantly evoked and practically applied through racism and subject to constant change. If one traces the term ‘race’ and the history of the concept in a genealogical perspective, it shows that the meaning varies widely over time and refers to local or regional populations, families, cultures, religions, classes, sexes, or elites. But instead of focusing on the history of the word itself, in the following we rather want to emphasize the different ways, in which the term ‘race’ is understood and used in research. Understandings diverge widely whether to use ‘race’ analytically as a social relation or as a concept. Firstly, ‘race’ is understood as a structural relationship, social relation, political system, technology, or organizing principle. It can be based on moving signifiers at different times and contexts.²⁸

²⁶ Bethencourt (fn. 20).

²⁷ See also Fredrickson (fn. 22); Geulen (fn. 20).

²⁸ Geraldine Heng understands ‘race’ as a sorting mechanism, a structural relationship, and assumes that racial practices or phenomena occurred before the word as such

Secondly, 'race' is grasped in the narrower sense of a concept or idea.²⁹ Thirdly, 'race' is seen as both, a political system and a political category.³⁰ The respective understandings strongly frame the notion of the relationship of 'race'/racism.³¹ The idea of 'race' as a political system or social relation comes very close to the understanding of racism in its practical application. In research it is common sense that 'race' is a social construct and has no biological foundation. For some researchers a physical marker is a requirement in order to speak of racism (biological racism).³² For other researchers the physical attribution is only one among many markers, like religion, culture, class, that can become racialized or carry a racialized

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- existed. Yet she uses the word in the sense of "race-making" to describe certain phenomena, see Heng (fn. 20); Demetrius Eudell stresses the symbolic and material dimension of 'race' as an organizing principle, see Id.: *The Monocultural Origins of Multiculturalism*. In: Olaf Kaltmeier/Sebastian Thies/Josef Raab (eds.): *The New Dynamics of Identity Politics in the Americas. Multiculturalism and Beyond*. London 2014, pp. 13–37; also Omi and Winant understand 'race' as an organizing principle, see Michael Omi/Howard Winant: *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York/London Third Edition 2015; Wulf D. Hund emphasizes the combination of natural and cultural aspects of racism and sees racism, not 'race,' as a social relation. He differentiates between different forms of racism (gender-racism, class-racism, national-racism, cultural-racism and races-racism) and identifies different stereotypes of dehumanization (barbarians, impurity, devils, savages, races, inferiority), see Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus*. Bielefeld 2007; on Muslim experience see Saher Selod/David G. Embrick: *Racialization and Muslims: Situating the Muslim Experience in Race Scholarship*. In: *Sociological Compass* 7 (2013) No. 8, pp. 644–655.
- 29 Kowner and Demel for example argue that 'race' and racism need not necessarily be thought of together. They have a very narrow understanding of 'race' as a category based on physical genetic characteristics; see their discussions: Rotem Kowner/Walter Demel: *Modern East Asia and the Rise of Racial Thought: Possible Links, Unique Features and Unsettled Issues*. In: Id. (eds.): *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia. Western and Eastern Constructions*. Leiden 2013, pp. 1–37. Wulf D. Hund also uses a narrow understanding of 'race' as a category and argues for the detachment of the concept of 'race' from research on racism, emphasizing that there was racism before the concept and also after the construct of 'race' was discredited, see Hund (fn. 28), p. 120. (We have to acknowledge here, that 'race' and 'Rasse' as a German term have different connotations.) But even scholars who understand 'race' as a socially constructed biological/physical concept (without denying other aspects like culture) argue for thinking 'race' and racism together, as a modern phenomenon, cf. Golash-Boza (fn. 24). Others do not explicitly explain their understanding of 'race.'
- 30 Cf. Dorothy Roberts: *Fatal Invention. How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in Twenty-First Century*. New York 2012, pp. 2. She further states that "[...] creating race, dividing human beings into these categories, is a political practice.", *ibid.*
- 31 Researchers who see 'race' as a social relationship often trace it back to antiquity, while those who use it as a category see it as a modern phenomenon. Depending on the definition, however, it can be the other way around. This strict division is usually not that explicit, but this simplification helps in this context to show the different uses.
- 32 Cf. Suman Seth: *Difference and Disease. Medicine, Race, and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire*. Cambridge 2018, esp. pp. 165–276; Kowner/Demel (fn. 29).

meaning (cultural racism).³³ This edited volume is not intended to present a conclusive definition on ‘race’ and racism, nor to provide a complete account of these phenomena, but rather to make an empirical contribution to ongoing discussions by showing specific practices in their respective contexts.

The relationship between racist ideologies and racist practices are two sides of the same coin and will be made visible through empirical case studies in an interdisciplinary way. Also, this allows for an innovative perspectivization of the genealogy of Eurocentrism and a more detailed analysis of power-relations in concrete situations and case studies. The chapters focus on different parts of the world as well as on different communities of practice that were *doing* ‘race’ and racism in specific settings. Further, practices will be analyzed that counteract, undermine and subvert racist structures and hegemonic power relations.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on ‘Race’ & Racism

The following introductory chapters explore ‘race’ and racism in various disciplines. **Heidemarie Winkel** claims that sociological theories of racism and racialization do not belong to the main theoretical structure of sociology. By identifying different practices of exclusion and “Othering” Winkel shows to what extent the social reality of racism was marginalized in sociological theory since its inception. By sketching the racist and imperialist knowledge matrix in sociological thinking around 1900 using the examples of Max Weber and William E. B. Du Bois, Winkel argues that sociological knowledge production was – and still is – inherently marked by a colonial episteme. In order to decolonize sociological thinking Winkel proposes different practices of unveiling and reconstructing power asymmetries.

Racialized social hierarchies are crucial parameters of social and cultural organization in the Americas. ‘Race’ as a category of social stratification is therefore an integral part of American studies. However, the systemic dimensions of racist practices are often neglected. **Julia Roth** therefore takes a critical look at the history of academic disciplines – particularly area studies and American studies. Thereby Roth examines hegemonic academic knowledge implementation through practices of disciplining and producing specific knowledge for their respective geohistorical settings and interests. Thus, Roth argues for research practices inspired by *Critical Race Theory*, *Critical Whiteness*, and intersectionality – as pro-

33 Cf. Balibar/Wallerstein (fn. 17), esp. pp. 17–28.

posed by Black feminists in the U.S. and other parts of the Americas – as essential to critical and relational analyses of racist structures. Drawing on perspectives from anti-colonial thinkers as well as decolonial approaches the article argues to consider more historical, relational, and structural approaches. Roth also emphasizes the need to consider both how theories and concepts ‘travel’ and to focus on locally context-specific dimensions as well as entanglements and commonalities of processes and phenomena between different spaces. In doing so, she calls for always including one’s own speaking position and for always revisiting the shifting dynamics of racism along other categories and axes of stratification (e.g., also transnationality, migration, citizenship status).

Practices of Comparing as Immanent Constructive Forces in the Thematic Complex of ‘Race’ & Racism

Debates about the validity of the method surrounded comparing since the emergence of ‘comparative sciences’ at around 1800.³⁴ In the 19th century ‘the comparative method’ became prevalent in many disciplines.³⁵ However, the ‘age of comparison’³⁶ should not deceive us that comparing is a historical, social, and quotidian operation in different centuries and (world)regions. Therefore, it is necessary to ask for the “cultural functions and effects of comparisons at different points in time and among specific groups of historical actors.”³⁷

34 Peter V. Zima (ed.): *Vergleichende Wissenschaften. Interdisziplinarität und Interkulturalität in den Komparatistiken*. Tübingen 2000; Gilbert Casaus/Sabine Haupt (eds.): *Vergleichen? Komparatistische Wissenschaften im Vergleich. Comparer? La comparaison dans les sciences* (Freiburger Sozialanthropologische Studien, Vol. 31). Münster 2011; Vittorio Hösle: *Über den Vergleich von Texten. Philosophische Reflexionen zu der grundlegenden Operation der literaturwissenschaftlichen Komparatistik*. In: *Orbis Litterarum* 63 (2008), pp. 381–402; Michael Eggers: *Vergleichen des Erkennen: Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Epistemologie des Vergleichs und zur Genealogie der Komparatistik* (Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, Vol. 68). Heidelberg 2016; Haun Saussy: *Axes of Comparison*. In: *Felski/Friedman* (fn. 6), pp. 64–76.

35 Matei Candea: *Comparison in Anthropology: The Impossible Method* (New Departures in Anthropology). Cambridge 2019.

36 Friedrich Nietzsche: *Human, All Too Human. A Book For Free Spirits* (1878), transl. by A. Harvey. Chicago 1908, pp. 49–50.

37 Eleonora Rohland/Kirsten Kramer: Introduction on ‘Doing Comparison’ – Practices of Comparing. In: Eleonora Rohland/Angelika Epple/Antje Flüchter/Kirsten Kramer (eds.): *Contact, Conquest and Colonization. How Practices of Comparing Shaped Empires and Colonialism Around the World*. New York 2021, pp. 1–16, p. 2.

Notably post-colonial scholars have, in the more recent past, asked for the actors and ‘politics of comparison.’³⁸ It became clear that comparisons are a constructive force. They shape their objects and highlight specific features. Also, comparisons are hardly neutral but often manifest power relations. Therefore scholars such as Indian literary critic Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan but also feminist literary theorists Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman have theorized the political and ethical dimensions of comparing.³⁹ (Post)colonial historian Ann Laura Stoler stated: “I call for more reflection on the history and politics of comparison, on the doing of comparison, on the doing of a certain kind of comparative cultural history, and urge attention to practices of colonial comparison.”⁴⁰ The essential point of this line of argument is not only about Eurocentrism or Western conceptual imperialism. It is rather the challenge that any actor of comparison is inevitably bound to produce in a certain way the compared units and categories, that are needed to make the units comparable by drawing on the conceptual repertoire of a particular language, perspective, standpoint, etc. By inquiring into the connection of colonialism and comparisons environmental historian Eleonora Rohland and comparative literature scholar Kirsten Kramer state that: “comparison has been an instrument of power and dominance throughout European expansion” but they also consider, “when such practices were subverted or appropriated by the colonized or marginalized groups.”⁴¹ Consequently, colonial entanglements of comparisons have already been addressed. The context of slavery and colonial policies regarding the local populations are deeply intertwined with the development of racist doctrines.⁴² But the connection between comparative practices and ‘race’/racism has hardly been interro-

38 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Rethinking Comparativism. In: *New Literary History* 40 (2009) No. 3, pp. 609–626; Homi K. Bhabha: The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse. In: K. M. Newton (ed.): *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory. A Reader*. London 1997, pp. 293–302; Pheng Cheah: Grounds of Comparison. In: *Diacritics* 29 (1999) No. 4, pp. 1–18; Natalie Melas: Merely Comparative. In: *PMLA* 128 (2013) No. 3, pp. 652–9.

39 Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan: “Why Compare?” In: *New Literary History* 40 (2009) No. 3, pp. 453–71; Felski/Friedman (fn. 6).

40 Ann Laura Stoler: “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies.” In: *The Journal of American History* 88 (2001) No. 3, p. 831.

41 Rohland/Kramer (fn. 37), p. 4.

42 Alina Helg: *Slave but Not Citizen: Free People of Color and Blood Purity in Colonial Spanish American Legislation*. In: *Millars: Espai I Història* 42 (2017), pp. 75–99. Jerome Branche: *Colonialism and Race in Luso-Hispanic Literature*. Columbia 2010; Nina Möllers: *Kreolische Identität. Eine amerikanische ‘Rassengeschichte’ zwischen Schwarz und Weiß. Die Free People of Color in New Orleans*. Bielefeld 2008.

gated and urges for further inquiry.⁴³ When it comes to ‘race’ in practice it is important to analyze precisely, in which way the term ‘race’ is used – as a *comparatum*, *tertium* or category. Our examples examine the connection of comparing and ‘race’/racism as well as how comparing produces a specific understanding of ‘race’: on the one hand, this understanding changes permanently, and, on the other hand, it must be produced time and time again through comparisons in order to be relatively stable.⁴⁴ In the following chapters we hope to learn more about the situations and conditions in which racial comparisons were made, to which end, which positions were able to compare or how they turned into (other) racist practices. Over the course of the book comparisons will be addressed. This section, however, will present highly contextualized case studies that explicitly explore political and colonial ties to racial comparisons. The papers deal with historical situations and contexts in which racial comparisons became prevalent.

Andreas Becker’s chapter focuses on practices of comparing in ethnographic writing on the Sami people in Scandinavia in the Early modern time. Based on works such as Jakob Ziegler’s *Schondia* (1532), Olaus Magnus’ *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555), Johannes Schefferus’ *Lapponia* (1673), or Carl Linné’s *Lachesis lapponica* (1732) Becker argues that comparing is a crucial force in the development of ethnic and racial categorizations. Over the course of said time-period external factors become internal qualities, traits formerly seen as alterable are regarded as essential and peoples living in supposedly remote places are subject to global ethnographic comparisons. *Tertia* and *comparata* initiate and change scientific schemes and methods of racialized descriptions. But more importantly comparisons order and stabilize the ways ‘races’ are perceived, imagined and hierarchized not only in ethnographical thought but also in the policies of hegemonic governments such as the Swedish.

The Sami are of importance also in **Malin S. Wilckens’** paper as they illustrate complex comparative ‘race’ constructions. Wilckens situates Johann Friedrich Blumenbach’s (1752–1840) and Anders Retzius’ (1796–1860) material practices of ‘collecting’ and comparing skulls in the context of colonial exploitation and epistemic violence. The social imaginary of (pseudo-)scientific theories of both naturalists were highly dependent

43 The connection has already been theorized, for example by Epple (fn. 16); Rohland (fn. 16).

44 Besides our own contributions, see theoretical elaborations in: Ulrike Davy/Johannes Grave/Marcus Hartner/Ralf Schneider/Willibald Steinmetz: Grundbegriffe für eine Theorie des Vergleichens. Ein Zwischenbericht (Working Paper des SFB 1288, No. 3). Bielefeld 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2939563> (last accessed September 9, 2021).

on their respective skull collections and a constant supply from violent colonial encounters, plundered graves and burial sights, etc. Blumenbach and Retzius performed comparative analyses on these skulls that became seminal for comparative anatomy and craniology and show that practices of comparing were crucial to the construction of ‘races.’ Different practices as well as the use of different *tertia* and *comparata* show the flexibility of the concept of ‘race.’ Wilckens makes the case, however, that these seemingly neutral practices and their visual representation rather served to perpetuate racial differences.

Julian T. D. Gärtner’s contribution examines ‘race’ in George Sand’s novel *Indiana* through comparisons to plants and slavery. French abolitionism of the time develops specific practices to observe, narrate and compare. Sand’s novel presents a comparative social analysis of French aristocratic society and plantation society on La Réunion, formerly known as Île Bourbon. Through a narrative of conjugal love, the narration examines the continuity of colonial power in gender relations. Comparisons to plants as well as to slavery are closely tied to colonialism: not only do they explore the erotic and exoticizing aspects, but rather they speak to the social and ethnic dimensions of colonial ties that culminate in a ‘race’ struggle. George Sand’s narration can be understood as a social experiment. Comparing is used as a counter-practice against hegemonic power. However, it is a practice that is hardly un-biased and can be re-appropriated by hegemonic forces and thus the abolition of power relation fails.

Practices of (Current) Institutional/Systemic Racism

Sociologists, political theorists, and education researchers have pointed out the perseverance and relevance of racism in current societies and its transforming character.⁴⁵ Most sociological theories conceptualize ‘race’ and racism together, as they argue that ‘race’ is a modern concept that emerged with colonization and slavery and that ‘race’ is brought into being by racism.⁴⁶ Recent research also points to the global and structural dimension of racism and argues that all of the “governing technologies,”

45 Cf. Maria Do Mar Castro Varela/Paul Mecheril (eds.): *Die Dämonisierung der Anderen. Rassismuskritik der Gegenwart*. Bielefeld 2016; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva: *White Supremacy & Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. Boulder 2001; Julian Go: *Postcolonial Possibilities for the Sociology of Race*. In: *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* (2018), pp. 1–13.

46 Cf. Golash-Boza (fn. 24); Karen E. Fields/Barbara J. Fields. *Racecraft. The Soul of Inequality in American Life*. London 2012.

e.g. western expansion, capitalist economy, knowledge production, nation states, citizenship, are hierarchically racialized.⁴⁷ In this perspective ‘race’ and racism “are central organizing tools of modern society.”⁴⁸ The research strongly focuses on the hierarchy between Whiteness and Blackness assuming that White supremacy is the basis of all racial order, but emphasizes that Whiteness should not be reduced to bodies.⁴⁹ Michelle Christian argues that we see White supremacy today through practices emblematic of deep and malleable Whiteness. Instead, Ramón Grosfoguel emphasizes the Fanonian divide into “zone of being” and “zone of non-being” and defines racism as a global hierarchy/structural domination of superiority and inferiority where it can encompass different markers, such as color, religion, ethnicity, culture and language. Nevertheless, he sees anti-black racism as one of the prevalent forms.⁵⁰ But which practices are crucial and how do these practices manifest institutional and structural racism?

In recent years, White identity politics has become a common topic of public discourse in the United States and is usually associated with right-wing White nationalism. **Mark B. Brown** focusses in his chapter on different forms and practices of White identity politics. The chapter examines White identity politics with regard to three ideal-types: 1) the conservative White identity politics of those who seek, either implicitly or explicitly, to maintain the political and cultural dominance of White people; 2) the color blind antiracism of White liberals; 3) the radical White identity politics of those who both identify as White and seek to repair and abolish systemic racial injustices. Thereby Brown examines different practices of White supremacy as a de facto system of institutionalized cultural, economic, and political power, and he further shows how antiracist practices, associated with radical White identity politics, seek to overcome this very system of White supremacy.

47 Michelle Christian: A Global Critical Race and Racism Framework: Racial Entanglements and Deep and Malleable Whiteness. In: *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5 (2019) No. 2, pp. 169–185; on the coloniality of citizenship, see: Manuela Boatcă/Julia Roth: Unequal and Gendered: Notes on the Coloniality of Citizenship. In: *Current Sociology* 4 (2015); for a cosmopolitan model and theorization of global citizenship see Chielozona Eze: *Race, Decolonization, and Global Citizenship in South Africa*. Rochester 2018; on the connection between ‘race,’ colonialism, and capitalism, see Anibal Quijano: Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. In: *Nepantla: Views from South* 1 (2000) No. 3, pp. 533–580.

48 Vilna Bashi Treitler/Manuela Boatcă: Dynamics of Inequalities in a Global Perspective. An Introduction. In: *Current Sociology Monograph* 64 (2016) No. 2, pp. 159–171, p. 163.

49 Cf. Christian (fn. 47).

50 Ramón Grosfoguel: What is Racism? In: *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22 (2016) No. 1, pp. 9–15.

Sheila Ragunathan discusses institutional racism in German higher education. She highlights from a feminist postcolonial perspective how historical mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion re-emerge into contemporary structures of higher education and shows how exactly racism operates through institutional, exclusionary practices. Based on interviews with student activists, Ragunathan examines what we can learn from the students' classroom experiences about how 'race' and racism shape academic classroom dynamics and how this informs pedagogical practices, if we take student learning experiences seriously. Ragunathan opens up ways in which an anti-racist teaching strategy can be developed.

The role of 'race' as a central mediator for citizenship is taken up by **João Fiocchi**. He analyzes how racial capitalism produces disparate outcomes among racialized human populations by focusing on the legal practices of slave societies (United States and Brazil). Rodrigues claims that constitutional practices of silencing on slavery have not led to a lack of regulation of it. Exclusion from citizenship rights and the regulation of territorial movement for Blacks reveal the racial stratification in the process of state formation in the US as well as Brazil. Thereby it was rather the process of racialization than solely the function of being enslaved that led to political marginalization.

The Momentum of 'Race' in the Production of Knowledge

Many historians locate the "invention of 'race'" in the context of rising discussions of natural scientists about the origin and differences of humankind in the 18th century.⁵¹ Without denying the specificity of this epoch in the history of 'race,' these approaches share a strong focus on the scientific invention of 'race' as a category. We would like to go into this aspect in more depth in this section, without locating knowledge production exclusively in academia or attributing it only to this period. With precursors in the Middle Ages within contact zones, the contributions here too focus primarily on the increasing production of knowledge in the natural sciences in the context of the European Enlightenment and colonial conquest.⁵² The construction of 'race' as an all-encompassing

51 Sara Eigen/Mark Joseph Larrimore (eds.): *The German Invention of Race*. Albany 2006; Susanne Lettow (ed.): *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*. Albany 2014; Nicolas Bancel/Thomas David/Dominic Thomas (eds.): *The Invention of Race. Scientific and Popular Representations*. New York/London 2014.

52 Andreas Becker's and Malin Wilckens' contributions in the section on comparison also connect thematically here.