

ABSTRACT

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Forced Displacement and Racialization compares the processes of racialization experienced by three groups of people in the global North and South within the Americas: IDPs who have been forced to move to the Coffee Region after leaving their homes in rural or urban spaces in Colombia; Colombian refugees in Toronto, Canada; and Venezuelan migrants who have arrived at the Coffee Region in Colombia in recent years. The main argument of this paper is that the process of forced displacement -whether for Colombian IDPs and Venezuelan migrants to the Coffee Region in Colombia, and Colombian refugees to Toronto- results in processes of racialization. Escaping violence and economic hardship, people are subjected to othering processes (Ahmed, 2000) that make them vulnerable to systemic racism and racial microaggressions. Despite different experiences of internal displacement and transnational migration, these processes of racialization present similar dynamics because they are a manifestation of white supremacy as the dominant racial ideology. This paper understands racism as a European invention instituted through the project of colonialism (Quijano, 1999; Escobar, 2003; Wynter, 2003; Dussel, 2004; Mignolo, 2005; Grosfoguel, 2012). It locates the origin of racism in the 15th century, as a result of Europe's exploration of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, the moment of encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in the Americas, the enslavement of Africans, the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from the South of Europe, and the emergence of the capitalist world system and modernity (Robinson, 1983; Quijano, 1999; De La Cadena, 2000 and 2005; Escobar, 2003; Wynter, 2003; Dussel, 2004; Mignolo, 2005; Grosfoguel, 2012; Restrepo, 2013).

An ideology of racism is the hegemonic "way in which society is organized and ruled" to "redistribute resources along particular racial lines" (Omi and Winant, 1994, 56), benefiting members of one or more privileged racial groups in detriment of members of one or more oppressed racial groups, which have been deemed racially inferior. An ideology of racism is reproduced in "both social structures and everyday experiences" (Ibid, 56), this reproduction is what guarantees its permanence. It requires cooperation as much as power to sustain the ideology of racism. It is challenging for a member of the society under the dominance of an ideology of racism to escape from it. This difficulty applies to those that benefit as well as those

that are oppressed by it because the ideology of racism is part of the way they understand the world and “make sense of the things they do and see -ritually, repetitively- on a daily basis” (Fields, 1990, 110). Racialization is “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (Omi and Winant, 1994, 55). Although processes of racialization include all bodies because all humans have been classified in racial categories, it is undeniable that some racial categories are more visible than others. Racialization processes are about constructing ideas to discriminate individuals and groups of people based on race and building and reproducing white superiority. Everyday discourse, law and policy, the ordering and organizing of space are crucial components of racialization processes. According to Brahinsky et al. (2014), racial projects “classify and assign social and political meaning to difference,” (1139) which is used to allocate goods, services, and resources. Thus, “[r]acial projects historically have focused on endowing or restricting access to property, social privileges, and access to social and geographic spaces” (Ibid, 1139). Racial formation is key in the creation of racial categories. It is based on the constant interaction between racial ideology structure and everyday experiences. This study focuses on the dynamic dimension of processes of racialization and how it determines which bodies are deemed racially inferior and consequently excluded and oppressed within the dominant ideology of racism. A key element is who has power and agency to determine their and others’ racial classification. The literature reviewed and research fieldwork indicates that whiteness is left untouched and invisible at the center (Smedly, 1999; Ahmed, 2000; Thobani, 2007, Dhamoon, 2009; Paschel, 2013; Benjamin, 2019). In contrast, non-white bodies are racialized constantly with the strategic use of physical characteristics, culture, language, traditions, religion, ancestry, marriage, relationships, manner of dress, diet, place of origin and residence, gender, class, among others (Backhouse, 1999; Castro-Gómez, 2005; Rappaport, 2014).

This study uses a qualitative methodology that includes interviews with Colombian IDPs and refugees and Venezuelan migrants, and participant observation and field diary. This paper focuses on some of the themes that have emerged from fieldwork, which include internalized racism, tropicality (geographic racism), structural racism (in the legal system, workplace, professional certification), and racism in everyday life (nationality and accent, public spaces, the housing market, academic and activist spaces).

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