European History Quarterly Roundtable:
Histories of Race in Europe and Questions of Knowledge Production

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Introduction

When it was originally commissioned in 2020, this roundtable was envisaged as a companion piece to the special issue 'Centring Blackness in European History' guest edited by Jesús Sanjurjo and published in 2023.[1] In thinking about how to complement that excellent scholarly intervention while also differentiating our own contribution, we felt a roundtable format offered the best way to bring together a broad range of perspectives and insights, to foster dialogue and connection (especially at a moment when global mobility was still constrained), and to enable comparison and reflection across multiple national case studies so as to facilitate a truly European conversation. Our choice was inspired by several recently published examples of rigorous yet engaging roundtables and forums on related topics that we hoped to emulate.[2] At the same time, with the pandemic and its aftereffects still playing out very concretely, we deliberately wanted a format that would not place undue burdens on colleagues already juggling multiple commitments and demands on their time. In common with many academic projects over the last five years, this roundtable has taken longer to bring to fruition than anticipated; the intervening years bringing changes in both the forum's focus and its contributors.[3] Yet throughout this extended germination period, a stream of local, national, and international events have kept questions of race and racial (in)justice firmly in the public and academic spotlight, repeatedly underlining the ongoing salience of race not just as a historical category of analysis, but as a fundamental component of the societies we study and of the environments we live and work in.

The central themes of the roundtable, which revolve around thinking about the place of race and racialized identities within European history and how this relates to broader questions about knowledge production, therefore remain important and urgent to address. In exploring these themes, we started by taking stock of where we are now. As our responses to the first roundtable question demonstrate, our respective areas of study are at quite different stages of development when it comes to histories of race. While there have been many positive developments in recent years and much exciting new work published, overall the picture within European history is uneven. We equally

[1] Jesús Sanjurjo, Nicholas R. Jones, Alani Hicks-Bartlett, Chloe L. Ireton, Montaz Marché, and Onyeka Nubia, 'Centring Blackness in European History: A European History Quarterly Forum', *European History Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2023): 5-44.

[2] Amanda Behm, Christienna Fryar, Emma Hunter, Elisabeth Leak, Su Lin Lewis and Sarah Miller-davenport, 'Decolonizing History: Enquiry and Practice', *History Workshop Journal* 89, (spring 2020): 169-191; Monique Bedasse, Kim D. Butler, Carlos Fernandes, Denis Laumann, Tejasvi Nagaraja, Benjamin Talton, and Kira Thurman, '*AHR* Conversation: Black Internationalism', *American Historical Review* 125, no. 5 (2020): 1699-1793; Tiffany N. Florvil, Kaima L. Glover, Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, Katherine M. Marino, Robin Mitchell, Jacqueline-Bethel Mogoué, Samantha Pinto, 'New Directions in Feminism and Global Race Studies: A Book Conversation', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 47, no. 4 (2022): 1013-1040.

[3] We'd particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of Tiffany Florvil, one of the original guest editors, to the initial development of the roundtable.

acknowledge that this landscape includes ongoing resistance in certain quarters to this kind of work and to scholars who pursue it. While the tendency for questions of race to be positioned as 'outside of and irrelevant to Europe, rather than integral to Europe' is diminishing, it has not disappeared.[4] From there, our discussion moves into reflections on the approaches and/or bodies of knowledge we find the most fruitful in our research. Keen that the roundtable has a strong practical as well as intellectual dimension we talk about how we research and write histories of race in Europe, including the archives, sources, and mediums we use and why, before addressing how we would like to see scholarship develop in the future. Interwoven throughout our contributions is a tension between the optimism we feel and the opportunities we can see with respect to histories of race in Europe and the ongoing challenges and restrictions we face as researchers, particularly at an institutional and structural level.

As contributors, we approach the roundtable questions from a number of different vantage points. Most obviously, we are each expert in a different European country: Bolaji Balogun (SOAS, University of London) brings a political science perspective to histories of Central and Eastern Europe, especially Poland; Sarah Demart (Université Libre de Bruxelles) is a sociologist specializing in colonial and postcolonial Belgium; Claire Eldridge (University of Leeds) focuses on colonial and postcolonial French history; Chandra Frank (University of Cincinnati) combines women, gender and sexuality studies with public humanities scholarship in her work on the Netherlands; Camilla Hawthorne (UC Santa Cruz) is a social scientist whose work covers the Black Mediterranean, especially Italy; Stefanie Michels (University of Düsseldorf) is a historian with a particular interest in African and German colonial history; Erin Rowe's (Johns Hopkins University) expertise lies in the history of early modern Spain; and Kimberly St. Julian-Varnon (University of Pennsylvania) studies the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic in a comparative historical context. Although all our research is historically informed, we are an interdisciplinary group of scholars who operate at the intersections of multiple fields, draw on a diverse array of methodologies, and engage with a broad range of non-academic partners and organizations. This interdisciplinarity is a conscious acknowledgement that much innovative and ground-breaking work on histories of race in Europe does, and indeed always has, taken place across and outside of conventional disciplinary boundaries. It also speaks to our collective commitment to disseminating our research beyond the academy and, as per the final roundtable question, finding ways to move beyond words and to actions.

We have included scholars at different career stages and who are working in different places and types of academic environments to highlight how these factors shape the research that can, and sometimes cannot, be produced. It is striking, for example, how many academics examining questions of race in Europe, and who are themselves European, end up working outside of that geographical space. Of course, there are limits to our coverage and representativeness; we cannot speak for all Europeanists, and we do not claim to. Nor do we have all the answers to what are complex and difficult questions; far from it. Nonetheless, we are grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of an ongoing and important conversation. We have deliberately made our footnotes extensive as we hope this piece will serve as a jumping off point for readers, including students, who might want to explore

[4] Jean Beaman and Jennifer Fredette, 'The U.S./France Contrast Frame and Black Lives matter in France', *Perspectives on Politics* 20, no. 4 (2022): 1347.

further the issues and case studies featured in the roundtable. Indeed, we would be very pleased to see *EHQ* readers and the journal take this conversation forward and in new directions.

The long gestation of this project is testament to some of the challenges that come with collaborative work, especially given how difficult the past few years have been for many of us professionally and personally. But those challenges are vastly outweighed by the benefits of doing this kind of collective work. The richness of the dialogue that follows is a direct product of the chance to come together as a group of scholars who might otherwise not have encountered each other, to share and respond to each other's insights, to think with and in relation to a broad spectrum of different case studies and disciplinary approaches in a single space, and to the inspiration we have all drawn from that process. We thank *EHQ* for commissioning and supporting this piece, and for giving us the opportunity to engage with these questions and with each other.

Q1) Thinking about the production of knowledge and histories of race in Europe, where are we now and what has changed in recent years?

Camilla Hawthorne

I should start with the caveat that I am not an historian, and so my comments are shaped by my position as a social scientist who engages in historical research and who draws heavily on the work of historians of Europe, colonialism, and Black radicalism. I was compelled to turn to the field of history because I was in search of tools that would help me challenge the 'common sense' that racism is exogenous to Italy—specifically, that it is an historical aberration caused either by the influence of Hitler and Nazi Germany during World War II, or the reaction to an influx of African migrants beginning in the 1970s by white Italians who had never before been confronted with racial difference. I needed history to argue that the very concept of Italianness has been suffused with racial thinking since the unification of the Italian nation-state; that this was also a Liberal, and not just a Fascist, story; and that Italy was actively involved in the transnational circuits of racism and racial science tied to European colonialism and imperialism. I am deeply indebted to the work of multiple generations of scholars whose research has helped to chart a new path forward in the field of Italian history that centrally addresses colonialism and racial ideologies, rather than merely rehearsing state-sponsored narratives of Italian innocence.

I see three key challenges at this juncture. First: over the past decade, there has been a burgeoning literature primarily rooted in history, literature, and cultural studies that addresses race, colonialism, and colonial legacies in Italy. There are, however, opportunities for more robust dialogue and exchange across the humanities and the social sciences–particularly in Italian studies. Second, while there have now been multiple generations of scholars doing important work to excavate histories of Italian colonialism and racism, these insights have not gained broader traction outside of academia. The *italiano medio*, or 'average Italian', still knows very little about Italian colonialism and would probably struggle to identify Eritrea on a map. There is an urgent need to ensure that this important research is disseminated beyond the academy, shaping school curricula and media discourse at all levels. Third, and finally, there needs to be greater institutional support for both Black studies and Black scholars within Italy. With regard to the former, while many historians draw on literature from Black studies, the

historical work on Italian colonialism and racism would benefit from a much closer intellectual and political dialogue with transnational Black and African diaspora studies—particularly Black European studies. Yet Black studies as an institutionalized discipline does not yet exist in Italy. And while there is a brilliant new generation of Black Italian scholars who are pursuing PhDs in Italy, I can speak from personal experience when I say that the Italian academy is a site of micro and macro racial (and gendered) aggression for young Black scholars; as such, many are forced to leave Italy to pursue graduate work in the United States and the UK.

Stefanie Michels

My perspective is that of a historian of Africa with a focus on German colonial history. In line with the important interventions of the first generation of African historians after independence, like Ade Ajayi and the idea behind the UNESCO General History of Africa project, my focus has always been on the processuality of history beyond the meta-narratives of slavery and colonialism (a subjectless abstraction so aptly criticized as an analytical category by the historian Frederick Cooper).[5] Both meta-narratives produce simplified dichotomies that tend to depoliticize historical situations and the actions of historical persons. I find my approach best supported in Chimamanda Adichie's TED-Talk on the 'Danger of a single story', where she points out that 'the single story' is not wrong, but incomplete and thereby cannot move beyond stereotypes—both in the present but also in the past.[6] Some inspiration can also be drawn from Achille Mbembe's book *Politics of enmity* where he develops the 'ethics of the passenger' as opposed to a dichotomous fixity along racial lines.[7]

That said, I find the recent political discussions on 'decolonization' in the public sphere moving in an opposing direction. In the German context this debate has intensified since 2017 sparked by the debate on the reconstruction of the Hohenzollern Palace in the center of Berlin and the creation of a so-called 'Humboldt-Forum' in which the holdings of the German Ethnological Museum were to be displayed (it was indeed opened, despite the criticism, in 2021).[8] The greater part of these holdings entered the museum during the German colonial period, most of them via German colonial officials and militaries. It is undeniable that the so-called ethnological museums and their holdings are inseparable from their colonial origins. Currently both museum staff and academic researchers scrutinize these histories, while the methodologically innovative the value of objects in the writing of history has been proven. However, there is a tendency to re-create the colonial imaginary in the process. The debate on restitution—especially in the political realm—creates dichotomies: the present cultural material in Western museums

[5] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[6] Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, 'The danger of a single story', TEDGlobal Conference, July 2009 https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?subtitle=en

[7] Achille Mbembe, *Politiques de l'inimitié* (Paris: La Découverte, 2016).

[8] Viola König, 'Das Humboldt Forum als Katalysator? Ein Blick in die Geschichte von Sammlungen und Disziplinen, Zuständigkeiten und Haltungen, Kolonialismusdebatte und Restitutionspolitik', in *Geschichtskultur durch Restitution? Ein Kunst-Historikerstreit,* eds. Thomas Sandkühler, Angelika Epple and Jürgen Zimmerer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2021), 301–320; Friedrich von Bose, *Das Humboldt-Forum: Eine Ethnografie seiner Planung* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2019); 'Alliance "No-Humboldt 21": Resolution. Moratorium for the Humboldt-Forum in the Berlin Palace', *Berlin* (3 June 2013), online: https://www.no-humboldt21.de/resolution/ (accessed on 28 January 2022).

and the absence of the same material somewhere else. Neologisms are used which reinforce the idea of a dichotomous space—'communities of origin' is one such term—and the idea draws on the colonial idea of 'tribes' or 'ethnic groups' (different word, same concept). We therefore have a renewed process of 'othering' and the place of these 'othered' people and societies remains opaque. Three Cameroonian scholars, commenting on an exhibition that took place in France in 2022, acutely observed that the 'chiefs' who came to the Musée du quai Branly for the exhibition 'Route des Chefferies' fulfilled the same role as they did during the colonial exhibition in France in 1931—reliving a fetishized Africa.[9] These developments do not overtly address the question of 'race' but provide the backdrop to scholarly discussions, especially amongst researchers with no background on African History. Finally, as I explain further below, African History is taught in very few German Universities and generally not integrated into the 'classical' history departments but located separately.

Claire Eldridge

Histories of race and of communities of colour in France have an established lineage.[10] But momentum has definitely accelerated in the last decade as academics such as Danielle Beaujon, Jennifer Boittin, Ian Coller, Abdellali Hajjat, Itay Lotem, Emily Marker, Robin Mitchell, and Christy Pichichero, to name just a few, have brought their rigorous scholarship and sophisticated insights to bear across the full chronological gamut of French history from the early modern period to the present day.[11] Equally

[9] Simona-Lévi Betzogo Etongo, Champolion Miaché Evina, Narcisse Santores Tchandeu, 'Restituer le patrimoine ou le déporter de nouveau: quand "La route des chefferies du Cameroun" mène au Musée du Quai Branly- Jacques Chirac en 2022', *Vestiges: Traces of Record* 2022 8, no. 1 (2022): 44-58.

[10] Foundational to these histories is the scholarship of Tyler Stovall, including 'Color-blind France? Colonial Workers during the First World War', *Race and Class* 35, no.2 (1993): 33-55; *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996); 'National Identity and Shifting Imperial Frontiers: Whiteness and the Exclusion of Colonial Labor after World War I', *Representations* 84, no.1 (2003): 52-72; with Georges Van Den Abbeele, eds., *French Civilization and its Discontents*, (Lanham MD: Lexington, 2003); with Sue Peabody, eds., *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); *White freedom: The Racial History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

[11] Danielle Beaujon, 'The *Chaouch* of Marseille: Metropolitan Intermediaries and Colonial Control, 1928-1945', *French Politics, Culture & Society* 41, no.1 (2023): 1–21; Danielle Beaujon, 'Policing Colonial Migrants: The Brigade Nord-Africaine in Paris, 1923-1944', *French Historical Studies* 42, no.4 (2019): 655-680; Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Undesirable. Passionate Mobility and Women's Defiance of French Colonial Policing, 1919-1952* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022); Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010); Ian Coller, *Muslims and Citizens: Islam, Politics and the French Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020); Abedllali Hajjat, *La Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme* (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2013); Abdellali Hajjat, *Islamophobie. Comment les élites françaises fabriquent le 'problème musulman'*, with M. Mohammed (Paris: La Découverte, 2013); Itay Lotem, *The Memory of Colonialism in Britain and France: The Sins of Silence* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Itay Lotem, 'Beyond memory wars: The indigènes de la république's grass-roots anti-racism between the memory of colonialism and antisemitism', *French History* 32, no.4 (2018): 573-593; Emily Marker, *Black France, White Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022); Robin Mitchell, *Venus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2020); Robin Mitchell, 'Shaking the Racial and Gender Foundations of France: The Influences of "Sarah Baartmann" in the Cultural Production of Frenchness', in *Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality*, *1848-2015,* eds. Félix Germain and Silyane Larcher (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 185-198; Christy Pichichero,

striking has been the contributions made by those employing interdisciplinary approaches as exemplified by the excellent work of Jean Beaman, Félix Germain, Annette Joseph-Gabriel, Tricia Danielle Keaton, Silyane Larcher, Mame-Fatou Niang, Julien Suaudeau, and Françoise Vergès, among others.[12] This vibrancy has been further enhanced via complimentary work being done by learned societies to extend equity and inclusivity beyond subjects studied and into the discipline more broadly, as evidenced by initiatives like the Western Society for French History's engagé.e.s mission. Although it is notable that it is overwhelmingly women, and women of colour in particular, who are doing this labour, especially within societies.

While historians have been working on these topics for decades, there nonetheless seems to be something specific about this particular moment. The significant, and thoroughly deserved, attention garnered by Robin Mitchell's book, *Vénus Noire,* for example, which has extended beyond traditional academic spheres, and her fascinating multi-media follow-up biographical project on Suzanne Simone Baptiste also known as Madame Toussaint Louverture, speaks to an appetite for these histories and voices across multiple readerships.[13] There is therefore much to feel positive about in the current moment. At the same time, and at the risk of being clichéd, much remains to be done in the French context. Coverage has certainly broadened, as indicated by the shift in focus from communities with North African heritage that dominated the 1990s and early 2000s, itself a function of what some deemed an unhealthy obsession with the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62) and its legacies in France, to work centering histories of Black people, and Black women specifically. But it is also uneven. Much recent work has gravitated around representations of race and communities of colour, particularly literary and visual depictions, while deep-dive, archivally driven studies are rarer, certainly for the modern period. Obviously one kind of history is not 'better' than the other, and the field has benefited immensely from the interdisciplinarity mentioned above. But since the sources we use have implications

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'Afrofeminists Microhistories and the Making of Modern Black French Identities', *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 26, (2022): 517-530; Christy Pichichero, '"Is God Still French?": Racecraft, States of Exception, and the Creation of l'*Exception Française*', *PMLA* 137, (2022): 125-135; Christy Pichichero, 'Critical Race Theory and the Multicultural French Enlightenment', *Studies in Eighteenth Century French Culture* 49, (2020): 137-143.

[12] Jean Beaman and Aurelien Mondon, 'The Moral Panic of Islamo-gauchisme in service of a colourblind approach to racism', *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies/SITES* 27, no.2 (2023): 261- 270; Jean Beaman, 'Are French People White? Towards an Understanding of Whiteness in Republican France', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 26, no.5 (2019): 546-562; Jean Beaman, *Citizen Outsider: Children of North African Immigrants in France* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017); Félix Germain and Silyane Larcher, eds., *Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality, 1848-2016* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2018); Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020); Tricia Danielle Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Tyler Stovall, *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Mame-Fatou Niang and Julien Suaudeau, '21st Century universalism will be anti-racist, or it won't be at all', *Rosa Luxemburg,* 26 October 2020, accessed 2 August 2024, https://rosalux.eu/en/2020/import-1812/; Mame-Fatou Niang, 'Des particularités françaises de la négrophobie', in *Racismes de France,* ed. Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison and Omar Slaouti (Paris: La Découverte, 2020), 151-169; Françoise Vergès, *The Wombs of Women: Race, Capital, Feminism*, trans. and with introduction by Kaiama L. Glover (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020); Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

[13] Mitchell, *Vénus Noire;* for the Suzanne Simone Baptiste research see: https://www.robinmitchellhistorian.com/suzannelouverture

for the histories we can(not) write and for who is rendered (in)visible, this imbalance has consequences for the overall shape of the field and merits further reflection.

Interconnectedness is another dimension that could be developed further. As the responses to this question make clear, there are many exciting nation-based historical developments underway. But connected, comparative, transnational European histories of race, empire and their legacies, along the lines of Olivette Otele's *African Europeans*, are less common.[14] There are very real challenges to doing this kind of work, foremost among them the familiar problems of languages, money, and time. Another issue is the comparatively less developed infrastructure—in the form of learned societies, discussion lists and dedicated journals—to help facilitate conversations and support collaborative projects at a European level, although bodies like H-Black Europe are working hard to try and change this. Above and beyond their intrinsic intellectual value, establishing such structures seems particularly crucial given the ongoing, deeply political aggressions against scholarship and individual scholars studying race. While some of the vocabulary—such as '*le wokisme*'—might be specific to France, the ideas and constituencies animating these attacks are not confined to any one country; and nor should our response be.

Erin Kathleen Rowe

In the past five years, the historiography of early modern Europe has seen rapid advances in the study of the history of race in scholarship and pedagogy. Like modernists, early modern scholarship tends to be divided along the lines of modern nation-states, despite the geographic and cultural fluidity of political entities. Perhaps more significantly, there is unevenness in the attention received by specific regions: while some (predominantly Britain and France) are studied capaciously, others (Italy, Spain, and Portugal, not to mention Central and Eastern European regions) are largely unincorporated into European studies writ large. There are also disciplinary divides, as literary scholarship began the conversation on early modern race theory before those trained in history and history of art. One of the first scholarly organizations to focus on premodern race was the RaceB4Race network; most founding members came from literary theory and cultural studies, which has meant that some of the most innovative theorization of race in premodern Europe arose out of literary theory rather than history or art history.[15] Without methodological crossover, historians were slow to participate in the larger scholarly conversation about theorizing premodern race and race-making.[16] As a result, we have several divisions: the focus of studies on specific nations, as opposed to transnational approaches;

[14] Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: An Untold History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2020).

[15] Their website, which includes pedagogical innovations as well as scholarly, can be found at: https://acmrs.asu.edu/RaceB4Race; see also their important special issue: Dorothy Kim, ed., 'Race Before Race: Premodern Critical Race Studies', in *Literature Compass*, Vol. 18, Issue 10 (2021). For other important interventions originating from scholars of literature and cultural studies, see: Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Noémie Ndiaye, *Scripts of Blackness: Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024); Nicholas R. Jones, *Staging* Habla de Negros*: Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019); and Patricia Akhimie, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World* (Routledge, 2018).

[16] This is a generalization—historians of Southern Europe had been discussing racism before the more visible explosion of scholarship that we have seen from 2015 and on.

methodologies that are not always read across disciplines; and the dominance of scholarship in certain geographic areas over others, which limits our ability to understand the heterogeneity of race theory and the lives of Black Europeans.

One of the issues of the geographic divide in early modern European Black Studies is that it fails to consider deeply the long history of scholarship on race and slavery in early modern Spain, which has occupied itself with race for over a century as a primary focus of scholarly inquiry, albeit with more traditional lenses than postcolonial theory.[17] Yet historians of Spain and Portugal have produced significant contributions to understanding European conceptualizations of race, though their research is often grounded in the histories of Jews, *conversos* (Jews converted to Christianity and their descendants), Muslims, and *moriscos* (Muslims converted to Christianity and their descendants), which played a central role in late medieval and sixteenth century racialization.[18] Concepts of human difference as intrinsic and inheritable were key to systemic discrimination against non-Christians; when Muslims and Jews converted—or were forcible converted—to Christianity, medieval Iberians began increasingly to view their descendants as bearing the same stains of sinfulness and unfaithfulness as their ancestors, laying the groundwork for the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and *moriscos* beginning in 1609, as well as violent persecutions of both conversos and *moriscos* by the Inquisition. Systemic legal discriminations were put into place through early modern Spain that restricted offices and roles to those of "pure blood" – the so-called *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) statutes. Those lacking purity, as Nirenberg and others have argued, were of tainted blood, and it is precisely this quality of unchanging, dangerous, embodied difference that helped to lay the groundwork for anti-Black racism in subsequent centuries. Moreover, because of the prevalence of slavery throughout the middle ages and early modern period, Spanish historians have written extensively about the topic and their studies of enslaved Black Africans was established more firmly and earlier than most of its European counterparts, where sustained study of this topic is relatively recent for the early modern period.[19] The neglect of Spanish historiography on transnational European examinations of race/racism in the premodern period is puzzling, particularly given that the transatlantic slave trade was originated by the Portuguese and saw

[17] I have written about these trends in more detail in the context of early modern Iberia: Erin Rowe, 'Race in Early Modern Iberia', *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* Vol. 47, Iss. 1, Article 8 (2022), Special Issue on 'New Currents in Iberian History'. There continues to be controversy around the framework of race vs "lineage" or "nation" in the early modern world, grounded in the fact that instability and mutability overlaid racist ideologies during this period.

[18] One of the most important medievalists who worked on anti-Semitism, *limpieza de sangre*, and race is David Nirenberg. See *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013). For further reading, see María Elena Martínez, David Nirenberg, and Max-Sebastián Hering Torres, eds., *Race and Blood in the Iberian World* (Berlin: LIT, 2012); María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); and Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[19] For a few examples, see: Martínez*, Genealogical Fictions*; José Luis Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España* (Madrid: Mundo Negro, 1986); Aurelia Martín Casares and Margarita García Barranco, eds., *La esclavitud negroafricana en la historia de España, siglos XVI y* XVII (Granada: Comares, 2010); Esteban Mira Caballos, 'Cofradía étnics en la España moderna: una aproximación al estado de la cuestión', *Hispania Sacra*, Extra II (July-Sept. 2014): 57-88; and William Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

its first massive expansion in Spanish colonies in the Americas. Research on these moments help scholars understand the larger arc of the transatlantic slave trade into the eighteenth century.[20]

At the same time, there has been strong opposition to Black Studies as applied to early modern Spain by scholars in Spain and Portugal. For such scholars, Black Studies can be viewed as an 'Americanization' of Spanish history. There is truth to this concern, as scholarship of race that derives from the British Atlantic and the Caribbean do not capture the different trajectories and meanings of race and Blackness that emerged in the Spanish and Portuguese empires. At the same time, rejecting Black Studies as a crucial method for decolonizing Spanish and Portuguese historiography (by scholars embedded in universities in the peninsula) is deeply problematic and limiting, especially as traditional Iberian scholarship tends to be conservative (methodologically as well as occasionally politically). There is the potential for rich archival evidence for Black lives—enslaved and free—in early modern Spain and Portugal, since the Iberian monarchies made extensive use of lawsuits and bureaucracy. We see the same across the Spanish and Portuguese Americas, where there are far fewer silences than in other regions.

For me, one of the major goals for early modern European scholarship on Black history is to bring together a fuller complexity of the region during this period more tightly, including centering Spain and Portugal as a way of providing a fresh perspective on historical context, demonstrating the relevance of Black Studies to the early modern period, and, as several colleagues have mentioned, working more assiduously across disciplinary lines.

Chandra Frank

One of the ways I've been thinking with European Histories is through diasporic feminist and queer movement work in the Netherlands. I come to this conversation as an interdisciplinary scholar with a keen interest in transnational movement work from a European feminist queer of colour perspective. I am not a historian, but I've benefited from using history as a vehicle to better pull apart and understand ideas of progress, liberalism, and tolerance, which are so ingrained in the white Dutch self-image. Within the Dutch context, the work of Gloria Wekker, Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving, Egbert Alejandro Martina and Patricia Schor, Guno Jones, Halleh Ghorashi, and Nancy Jouwe illustrate how Dutch colonial legacies continue to inform ideas of about order, control, and race relations.[21] *Caleidoscopische Visies,* edited by

[20] Herman L. Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: UPenn Pres, 2019); Toby Green, *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the Rise of the Slave Trade to the Age of Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019); and David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[21] See Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving, eds., *Dutch Racism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014); Egbert Alejandro Martina and Patricia Schor, 'White Order, Corporate Capital, and Control of Mobility in the Netherlands', in *Smash the Pillars: Decoloniality and the Imaginary of Color in the Dutch Kingdom,* eds Melissa F. Weiner and Antonio Carmona Báez (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2018), 149-161; Guno Jones, 'What Is New about Dutch Populism? Dutch Colonialism, Hierarchical Citizenship and Contemporary Populist Debates and Policies in the Netherlands', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 6 (2016): 605–20; Halleh Ghorashi, 'Racism and "the Ungrateful Other" in the Netherlands', in *Dutch racism*, 101-116.

Maaike Botman, Nancy Jouwe, and Gloria Wekker is the first and only book that charts the Black, Migrant, and Refugee (BMR) feminist movement and hones into the importance of exploring the intersections between race, gender, and sexuality.[22] Further, cultural critics and initiatives such as the Black Heritage Amsterdam Tour, led by Jennifer Tosch, interrupted the silence and willful ignorance surrounding Dutch colonialism within public discourse and in Dutch cultural institutions.

In recent years, several cultural institutions have addressed the Dutch colonial past, including its ongoing afterlives. The Rijksmuseum hosted an exhibition entitled Slavery; the Amsterdam Museum included debate and criticism surrounding the Gouden Koets (The Golden Carriage). During the last iteration of Keti Koti (Breaking of the Chains), commemorating the abolition of slavery in the former Dutch colonies of Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema apologized to Suriname for the Dutch involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. However problematic many of these culturally significant moments might be, they would not have been possible without the scholarship and political mobilization of Black and POC activists and cultural critics. The BLM movement in the Netherlands and the various collectives working on anti-racism and black pete have pushed different kinds of public interventions in public discourse, institutions, and the media landscape. Nevertheless, we must always remain critical and vigilant about these kinds of symbolic gestures. Public debates and publications on race and racism, memory, and ongoing legacies of slavery and colonialism show a growing public awareness and recognition of Dutch racism. Gloria Wekker's concept of 'white innocence' provides critical insight into why Dutch exceptionalism and racist progress narratives have long remained unchallenged.[23] Prominent white Dutch scholars still minimize the impact and the role of the Dutch in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and downplay the financial gain with discourses of innocence. Thus, scholars must remain critical of how Dutch colonial archives have been employed and will have to address racial exceptionalism continuously.

As a feminist queer scholar, I want to emphasize the importance of bringing questions of gender and sexuality to the forefront of European history. Movements such as the BMR movement, active between the late 1970s and early 2000s, played a pivotal role in the Dutch landscape. Yet, BMR women are frequently not engaged as knowledge producers who have significantly shaped Dutch Black and POC histories. The contributions of groups such as Flamboyant, Sister Outsider, Strange Fruit, Ashanti, HKTB tell important stories about the role of womxn in forging political solidarity, refusing state-enforced integration policies, and the creation of transnational diasporic networks.[24] Many BMR women are still active today. Tiffany N. Florvil's book *Mobilizing Black Germany* is such an important example of why we

[22] Maayke Botman, Nancy Jouwe, and Gloria Wekker, *Caleidoscopische visies. De zwarte, migranten- en vluchtelingenvrouwenbegweging in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2001). For the most recent updated edition see: *Caleidoscopische visies. De zwarte, migranten- en vluchtelingenvrouwenbegweging in Nederland* (Zuthpen: Walburg Pers, 2024).
[23] See Wekker, *White innocence*.
[24] See Gianmaria Colpani and Julian Isenia Wigbertson, 'Strange Fruits: Queer of Color Intellectual Labor in the Netherlands in the 1980s and 1990s', in *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe: Critics, Artists, Movements, and their Publics*, eds. Sandra. Ponzanesi and Adriano José Habed (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 213-230; Chandra Frank, 'Sister Outsider and Audre Lorde in the Netherlands: On Transnational Queer Feminisms and Archival Methodological Practices', *Feminist Review* 121, no. 1 (2019): 9–23; Chandra Frank, 'Flamboyant: Wildness, Loss, and Possibility in Feminist Organizing in the Netherlands', *Meridians* 22, no. 1 (2023): 34-57.

need intergenerational and transnational frameworks to situate long legacies of change, resistance, pleasure, and kinship within studies of movement work.[25] Relatedly, while there is a growing field of scholarship on queer of colour in Europe, the stories of queer diasporas in Europe remain invisible. Scholars such as Fatima El-Tayeb and Jin Haritaworn paved the way in theorizing gender and sexuality from a different vantage point.[26] Continued research into queer of colour mobilization is due to give us other kinds of perspectives on the region. Moving away from the nation as a starting point for queer analysis and LGBTQ+ politics allows for a deeper interrogation of queer networks, flows of migration, and the workings of queer necropolitics.

Sarah Demart

I'm grateful to Claire for creating the space for this European dialogue on race and to be in conversation with such a wonderful panel of authors! For me, talking about the production of knowledge and narratives on race in Europe from a Belgian perspective, is first and foremost to talk from a peripheral position vis-à-vis French, British and Dutch imperialism. This location is reflected in the field of knowledge production through the theories available for thinking about race, which are most often developed not only in the US but also in other European contexts. Belgium's situation, however, is quite specific regarding colonial history (one colony and two trusteeships under the UN mandate), racial policies (extraction, de facto apartheid, no assimilation policies in terms of high education), colonial and postcolonial immigration (no labour migration from the colonies) and national identity (fragmented around religious, political, linguistic and community divides).

The past ten years have seen the gradual articulation of a language of race which is a major turning point in terms of antiracism and research.[27] Yet, at the dawn of the 2020s, we witnessed a form of activist exhaustion in the aftermath of the BLM mobilizations that can be attributed to both the inertia of whiteness and the recuperative power of capitalism.[28] The question, then, might be how can the academic world engage with producing new knowledge and histories on race and develop structural and sustainable transformations.

Political time does not allow us to consider the deconstruction of race as a linear, progressive process. However, I do believe that certain advances in the understanding of race are achievements to be highlighted. Firstly, the mobilization of race as a category of analysis allows us to contest and deconstruct European post-racial fiction which stubbornly characterizes racism as something aberrant. Secondly, the circulation of the plurality of critical approaches to race, in theory and in the practice of knowledge

[25] Tiffany N. Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020)

[26] See Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Jin Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places* (London: Pluto Press, 2015).

[27] For more information see Emma-Lee Amponsah, Sarah Demart and Sibo Kanobana, 'A Language of Blackness. Black Subjectivity and Black Activist Politics in Belgium', in *A New Wave of Anti-Racism in Europe. Racialized Minorities at the Centre,* eds Ilke Adam, Jean Beaman and Mariska Jung (Springer: IMISCOE Series, forthcoming 2025).

[28] Emma-Lee Amponsah, *Black Connectivity: A Qualitative Exploration of Black Cultural Media Practices and Collective Identities in Belgium* (PhD diss., Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Ghent University, 2022).

production, and their inscription into a rich genealogy, particularly the Black Radical Tradition. Finally, the feminist and queer movements, which have played a central role in highlighting the logics of fragmentation produced by race, and the question of ethics, and even care, in the development of possible non-extractive extractive knowledge and methodologies.

Kimberly St Julian Varnon

Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet Russia have often been cultural, social, and political outliers to 'Europe'. Historically and contemporarily, Soviet and Russian history has operated within a vacuum. I come to and act within European history as a historian of its easternmost regions, Ukraine and Russia, and a country that no longer exists—the German Democratic Republic. Often, work on Russia, the Soviet Union, and the former Soviet Union is marked as distinct from the study of Europe. Even in job postings for Europeanists, it is often clear that Russianists need not apply. As a Russianist, I had to learn about and am expected to be able to teach about the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, and Germany's initial unification in 1881, but 1917—the shatter point for Russian history—does not hold the same stature. Comparative analysis between the Soviet Union and other states is often overlooked. Usually, the political and social differences between the USSR and the democracies of Western Europe are an insurmountable obstacle to comparison. Even comparisons with other socialist countries in the Eastern Bloc, like the German Democratic Republic or Yugoslavia, are understudied.

What has changed for the better in my field is the expansion of studies on race and racism in the Soviet Union. For decades, the Soviet Union's ideology of anti-racism has been taken as evidence of a lack of racism toward non-Slavic others, particularly Africans who studied and worked in the USSR during the Cold War. The earliest study of Blackness in Russia and the USSR, a work I am forever indebted to, is Alison Blakely's *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought*.[29] The monograph, published in 1986, has served as the basis for more recent studies on the relationships between Russia and the Soviet Union with Africans and African Americans.

The early 2010s marked a watershed in peer-reviewed articles and edited volumes on race and Black experiences in the USSR. Major journals in Russian history— *The Russian Review* and *Slavic Review*—have published special issues on race and internationalism in Soviet history.[30] Yet, as Camilla notes in her comments on Italy, a focus on the 'immigration-integration-assimilation' nexus undergirds studies of Black others in Russia and the Soviet Union. Explanations of foreignness, xenophobia, and a lack of contact with Black people remain the explanatory crux of why Soviet citizens targeted African students for harassment or why Soviet children's cartoons and books replicated racist stereotypes about Africans. My research examines these elements as features rather than aberrations of the Soviet approach to race and Blackness.

[29] Alison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1986)

[30] See *Slavic Review* 61. no.1 (Spring 2002):1-65; *Slavic Review* 80 no.2 (Summer 2021):203-340; *The Russian Review* 75 no.3 (July 2016): 354-456.

Unfortunately, Soviet history remains epistemologically dependent on the state archive. Archival research remains the benchmark for historical knowledge production, especially in the former Soviet state archives. Even studies on race and Black experiences in the Soviet Union often rely uncritically on the Soviet state archive. As European and American historians have done, the field must critique the archive and examine its contents as constructs, specifically regarding Black experiences and anti-Black racism in the Soviet archive. For example, there are issues of reading Soviet intelligence reports and social opinion reports as reflective of day-to-day interactions and relations between Soviet citizens and Black residents rather than a reflection of the epistemes of Soviet state functionaries who also had little-to-no experience with Black people in daily life. The influential methodologies of scholars such as Michel Trouillot, Robin Mitchell, and Marissa J. Fuentes have yet to make a mark on my field as scholars continue to read Blackness along the grain of the Soviet functionary.[31]

Moreover, historians of the Soviet Union and Russia need to partake in the analytical frameworks of our colleagues in Slavic languages and literature, sociology, and art history. Nikolay Zakharov, Christina Kaier, and Rossen Djagalov are examples of the horizons that are possible in methodology in these fields. These scholars have been at the forefront of developing approaches from other fields and regions.[32] However, Russian and Soviet history remains conservative in its methodologies compared to these disciplines.

Russia's war in Ukraine and the examples of anti-Black racism toward African students attempting to flee the invasion forced racism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union into the international limelight. The shocking images of African university students sitting in snow drifts waiting for permission to enter Poland or Hungary were the first time many members of the diaspora saw Black people in Eastern Europe. Brittney Griner's detainment in Russia also compounded international attention on the region. However, these instances have highlighted the shortcomings of American-centric public and academic understandings of Blackness, race, and anti-Black racism.

The black-white binary that defines race relations in the United States is not adequate for Eastern Europe, particularly for countries such as Russia and Ukraine, which have no history of involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade nor colonization on the continent. However, the methodological approaches used to examine American racial binaries could be helpful starting points for work on race in the region. Including Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Black studies and critical race theory will help both expand their analytical frameworks and transcend the conceptualization of Blackness as rooted in enslavement and ontological destruction.

Bolaji Balogun

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[31] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015); Mitchell, *Vénus noire*; Marissa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[32] See Nikolay Zakharov, *Race and racism in Russia* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Christina Kiaer, 'African Americans in Soviet Socialist Realism: The Case of Aleksandr Deineka', *Russian Review* 75, no.3 (2016): 402-433; and Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and Third Worlds* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

Many thanks to Claire for her efforts in bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines to engage with debates about knowledge production and the roles of histories of race in Europe. Also, many thanks to *European History Quarterly* for facilitating this much-needed dialogue. As a political sociologist with a keen interest in global context of race, my academic journey has heavily leaned on the insights provided by historical sociology. However, such understanding and, to a large extent, accounts of race, has predominantly focused on Western Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Despite several calls for such accounts to develop into a more global field, however symbolic that progress has been, as Kimberly has already pointed out, critical examination of histories of race in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) remains siloed, even though there have been symbolic strides to make this more global.

I guess this is where my expertise finds relevance in this conversation. As a sociologist who is interested in the genealogy of race in CEE, with a particular focus on Poland, I owe a debt of gratitude to both Polish and non-Polish historians. Similar to Camilla's observation on the Italian state narrative, working on the topic of race in Poland presents a fascinating challenge due to the prevailing state narrative of Poland as a homogeneously white nation. This particular representation of Poland seemingly precludes any acknowledgment of racial differentiation. As some of you may have noticed, the language of homogeneity, historically, appears to be a common feature of European state mechanisms, prevalent since at least 1492, primarily utilized for the exclusion of Muslims and Jews. To break free from this dominant narrative, I had to turn to the histories of Poland before and after the eighteenth century, uncovering its entanglements with the broader European colonialism, pseudoscience, and importantly the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The exploration of race as a significant avenue of investigation is gaining momentum in Poland, thanks to numerous insightful studies in Sociology and History that are now beginning to challenge the state narratives. These studies underscore the central role of race in shaping social hierarchies and social interactions within the country. Many of these scholarly works explore Poland's broader connection to colonial histories, examine the linguistic manifestations of racism, and scrutinize public discourses concerning Black people, particularly focusing on the contested term 'Murzyn' (Black/Negro) in Poland. This has been further propelled beyond academic circles, firstly by the global influence of the Black Lives Matter movement and secondly, by Russia's invasion of Ukraine that compelled many people of colour to seek refuge in Poland. These two global events have been embraced as part of the ongoing efforts to address race relations, shedding light on the intricate and ambiguous nature of race as both an ideology and an identity that requires critical intervention in Poland and broadly in Central and Eastern Europe.

Q2) What are the main approaches and/or bodies of knowledge that you find the most fruitful in your research?

Stefanie

Having come to the field of history as an Africanist, for a long time I was not accepted as being a 'true' historian. Debates about 'African history' were ongoing, but only in specialist journals like the *Journal of African History* or *History in Africa,* and often African historians were not part of history departments in German Universities but rather located in special institutes of Area Studies, for example the Institute of African and Asian Studies at the Humboldt-University in Berlin. With the new paradigm of 'Global History'

some of this has changed, although the first groundbreaking global histories, like Christopher Bayly's *Birth of the Modern World* largely ignored the African continent.[33] However, with recent books like Howard French's *Born in Blackness: Africa, Africans, and the Making of the Modern World* and François-Xavier Fauvelle's *Le rhinoceros d'or*, this has started to change.[34] Global history has been defined in different ways and at times there is the danger of it simply being a colonial history from a European perspective, especially with regard to historical material and archives accessed. However, I find it useful as a way of critiquing Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism within the discipline of historical studies. In my teaching and writing a refer to it as a perspective that engulfs the coeval-ness of all regions and people in the world.

Sarah

My initial research focused on Congolese migration and politico-religious diasporic dynamics (2004-11). Then, I explored the conditions of possibility of anti-racism carried out by Black people and people of African descent in Belgium (2011-19). Currently, my research explores the production of race at a global level in relation to migration, biomedicalization and HIV (2019-present). When I began my research journey twenty years ago, it was against the backdrop of French and then Belgian 'colour-blindness' in terms of both policy and academic research. Like the generation of researchers trained in ethnic and migration studies at the time in France, where I come from, my sociological approach was interactionist and comprehensive. While I think this approach provides important tools to engage in micro-sociological research, it's important to acknowledge that interactionism relates to a white disciplinary field that has rendered invisible the historical contribution of figures such as W.E.B. Dubois to sociology and race studies.

I'm deeply indebted to Black studies, Decolonial Indigenous studies, Postcolonial Feminist studies, particular standpoint epistemologies and Ignorance studies. Postcolonial and decolonial critiques have enabled me to articulate the intrinsic imbrication between colony and metropole, and to critically address the resulting major divides in the analytical categories of social theory like Edward Saïd, Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Raewyn Connell, or Gurminder K. Bhambra.[35] It was crucial to account for the phenomena of absence, invisibility, and silence that I could observe inside and outside the university regarding the Congolese and more broadly Black population and people of African descent, and also to reflect upon the methodological implications, in particular Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.[36]

[33] C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World* (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003)

[34] Howard French, *Born in Blackness: Africa, Africans, and the Making of the Modern World, 1471 to the Second World War* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021); François-Xavier Fauvelle, *Le rhinoceros d'or: Histoires du Moyen Age africain* (Paris: Alma Editeur, 2013).

[35] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Aníbal Quijano, 'Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad', *Perú indígena* 13, no. 29 (1992): 11-20; Walter Mignolo, 'Géopolitique de la sensibilité et du savoir. (Dé) colonialité, pensée frontalière et désobéissance épistémologique', *Mouvements* 73, no.1 (2013): 181-190; Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (London: Routledge, 2020); Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007).

[36] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2005m repr. London: Bloomsbury, 2021); Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, 'Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (2012): 95-109.

Subsequently, I also found resources in Ignorance Studies to develop a critical approach of the obliteration of Black populations and ani-Black racism in academia like Charles W. Mills or Nancy Tuana. Furthermore, although the question of division emerged right from the very beginning of my research in 2004 ('we Congolese / we African / we Black, we are divided'), I was quite uncomfortable with it. For a long-time I kept at bay what appeared to me as an essentializing self-criticism, if not a self-flagellation. It's only when I came to read authors from Black Studies and the Black radical tradition like Franz Fanon, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy or Kehinde Andrews, that I was able to understand this fragmentation as an effect of anti-Black racism and racial capitalism and consider this imperative of political unity.[37] Feminist epistemologies have been equally crucial to document this antiracist activism and the political subjectivation in relation to Blackness, intersectionality, coalitions and solidarity like Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Elsa Dorlin, Gloria Wekker, or Sara Ahmed.

Camilla

I am deeply indebted to Black European studies for all that it has taught us about the inextricable entanglements of colony and metropole, thoroughly challenging racialized binaries of pre/post, inside/outside, Europe/Other. My scholarship is also deeply informed by the Black Radical Tradition, Black and transnational feminisms, postcolonial theory, and Black geographies. I have especially found powerful inspiration in the work of radical Black thought routed through the Caribbean—including thinkers like Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Jamaica Kincaid, Sylvia Wynter, Stuart Hall, and C.L.R. James—for the ways this scholarship underscores a concern with the materiality of racial capitalist violence, dispossession, and expropriation as the structural foundations of modernity.[38] This work has shaped my political commitments as they flow through my research and teaching, and particularly my concern with intellectual work as necessarily tied to material redistribution.

Erin

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have been most fruitful for me have largely centered on scholars of the eighteenth-century Caribbean.[39] The major epistemological revelations of such

[37] See for instance Paul Gilroy, 'The end of anti-racism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 17, no. 1 (1990): 71-83; Andrews, Kehinde. *Back to Black: Retelling Black Radicalism for the 21st Century* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018); Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961, repr. Paris: La Découverte, 2002).

[38] See, for instance Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950; repr., New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; repr., New York: Grove Press, 2008); Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1988); Sylvia Wynter, '1492: A New World View', in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, eds. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.), 5-57; Stuart Hall, 'When Was "the Post-Colonial"? Thinking at the Limit', in *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 242–260; C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938; repr., New York: Penguin Books Limited, 2001).

[39] Some of the main figures whose ideas – past and present – are foundational include, among others: Michel-Rolphe Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021); Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the*

scholarship for me have been reckoning with choices I make as a historian— perspective, subjectivity, theoretical apparati — which are usually refracted through a critical read of the archive and how I approach it. The aspects of Black Studies that can be most challenging to historians new to this field are those that reimagine what constitutes 'legitimate' evidence or modes of analysis. Greater recognition of the need to embark on 'critical fabulation,' as an essential tool for moving beyond the limits of the archive, for example, have produced particularly rich results.[40] In addition, my ideas have been greatly sharpened through the historiography in colonial Latin America that has engaged with questions of ethnoreligious communities and conflict, genocide, racialization, slavery, and Indigenous sovereignty.[41]

I am also struck by critique of scholars of early modern Black Europe articulated by Nicholas Jones. Jones addresses the issue of post-2020 trendification of Black studies in early modern Europe scholarship as constituting a form of 'elite capture', which 'concretizes a scramble for Blackness that aims to conquer and extract.'[42] He points out the tendency of work that is framed as 'new' but neglects the scholarship of Black scholars. This is a challenging but crucial intervention into the growing scholarship on race, Blackness, and early modern Black communities. In one small example, one can see articles by white scholars that cite recent scholarship by Black women in footnotes without grappling with their ideas in the work itself; as a result, such citations can feel gestural, or empty. While bringing awareness to citation practices has had significant benefits, Black Studies should be a body of work that is *worked with* not just looked at. Working on the premodern period, scholars have often hewed to close archival/historical analysis without broad engagement with theoretical frameworks outside its field; while being firmly grounded in the archive is paramount, approaching such sources without questioning one's own assumptions, methods, re-enactment of various types of silences fails to advance the scholarly conversation in a significant way. We also see a centering of European ideas about race and racism rather than centering the lived experience of Black Europeans.

Claire

My current research explores the histories and experiences of Muslim North Africans who were mobilized and sent to fight on the European fronts as part of France's multi-ethnic army during the First World War. I am particularly interested in interactions and relationships between colonized soldiers and other communities of combatants—both on and off the battlefield—as a way to think about how relations of

Atlantic World (Philadelphia, U Penn Press, 2020); Katherine McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human As Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); and Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2019).

[40] The conceptual framework of 'critical fabulation' was developed by Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.

[41] Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves*; idem, *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico* (Bloomington: Indiana university Press, 2009); Allison Bigelow, *Mining Language: Racial Thinking, Indigenous Knowing, and Colonial Metallurgy in the Early Modern Iberia World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Matthew Restall, ed., *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); and Miguel A. Valerio, *Sovereign Joy: Afro-Mexican Kings and Queens, 1539-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[42] Nicholas R. Jones, *Cervantine Blackness* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2024), 6.

power and categories of difference were constructed, applied, and maintained in everyday contexts. As an empirically grounded historian working at the intersection of some quite traditional sub-fields, I have found it most helpful to look for models of the kind of scholarship I want to practice; adopting what might be termed a 'magpie approach'. In this regard the most obvious reference point for my work is the 'imperial turn' in First World War studies which, although building on an older body of scholarship, has gathered considerable momentum and visibility over the last decade propelled by the work of Michelle Moyd, Richard Fogarty, Gregory Mann, Belkacem Recham, and Dónal Hassett among others.[43] Methodologically, I have taken much inspiration from Subaltern Studies and that tradition's sophisticated demonstrations of how judicial sources created from above can be used to offer insight into experiences and lives 'from below', exemplified by figures such as Ranajit Guha and Shahid Amin.[44] In thinking about how to apply such tenets to French military justice archives, which constitute the bulk of my source materials, I have also benefitted from engaging with the research of colleagues working on legal histories of the French empire, often in earlier time periods, such as Sue Peabody, Dana Agmon, Jennifer Palmer and Sarah Ghabrial.[45] While judicial archives are often very rich, they are not straightforward to use, especially when looking for historically marginalized actors. Thinking about testimony and voices, but also silences and how to read these has thus been integral to my work, bringing me into contact the original and imaginative work of scholars such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Marisa J. Fuentes, and Sophie White.[46]

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[43] Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty, 'An Imperial Turn in First World War Studies', in *Empires in World War 1: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Context*, eds. Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 1-20; Michelle Moyd, 'Color Lines, Front Lines. The First World War from the South', *Radical History Review* 131, (May 2018): 13-35; Michelle Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (Athena, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014); Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Richard S. Fogarty, 'Out of North Africa: Contested Visions of French Muslim Soldiers during World War I', in *Empires in World War I,* 136-158; Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Belkacem Recham, *Les musulmans algériens dans l'armée française (1919-1945)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996); Dónal Hassett, *Mobilizing Memory: The Great War and the Language of Politics in Colonial Algeria, 1918-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[44] Shahid Amin, *Event, Memory, Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Shahid Amin, 'Approver's Testimony, Judicial Discourse: The Case of Chauri Chaura', in *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society,* ed. Ranajit Guha (Oxford and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 166-202; Ranajit Guha, 'Chandra's Death', in *Subaltern Studies V*, 135-165; Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', in *Selected Subaltern Studies,* ed. by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45-84.

[45] Sue Peabody, *Madeleine's Children: Family, Freedom, Secrets, and Lies in France's Indian Ocean Colonies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Danna Agmon, *A Colonial Affair: Commerce, Conversion and Scandal in French India* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017); Jennifer Palmer, *Intimate Bonds: Family and Slavery in the French Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Sarah Ghabrial, '"Muslims have no Borders, only Horizons": A Genealogy of Border Criminality in Algeria and France, 1848-Present', in *Decolonizing the Criminal Question: Colonial Legacies, Contemporary Problems*, eds A. Aliverti, H. Carvalho, A. Chamberlen, and M. Sozzo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 145-161; Sarah Ghabrial, 'Illegible Allegations: Navigating the Meanings of Rape in Colonial Algeria', *French Politics, Culture & Society* 39, no.1 (2021): 59-82.

[46] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Sophie White, *Voices of the Enslaved: Love, Labor, and Longing in French Louisiana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

Finally, both this current project and my previous research on legacies of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62) in France have emphasized, the zones of contact and spaces of interaction between different ethnoreligious communities that have existed in different colonial and postcolonial moments. Although scholars have been doing this kind of work for a long time, I have really appreciated recent efforts by Santanu Das, Anna Maguire and Daniel Steinbach to provide a theoretical scaffolding with respect to the First World War, particularly their attentiveness to the significant power imbalances that shaped these spaces and the interactions that were and were not possible within them.[47] Focusing on spaces of encounter equally allows for critical reflection on the construction and operation of whiteness which sometimes can get side-lined when considering histories of multi-ethnic entities like the French military. I see all of the above as situated within wider efforts to underline the centrality of empire and people from formerly colonized territories to European history, to push back against a diminishing but nonetheless still present idea that colonial history is something that happened 'back then' and 'over there', something that stands apart from constructions and iterations of contemporary European nation-states.

Kimberly

My current work explores understandings of race and Blackness in the Soviet Union and East Germany. In terms of my approach, I, like Claire, am rooted in empirical research. Yet, since I began my doctoral studies, the methodological and epistemological innovation in Black and Africana studies have heavily influenced me. Critical race theory, Black Nihilism, and Black feminist thought have become the foundations for evaluating my primary sources, particularly those from Russian, Ukrainian, and East German state archives. They have also led me to reevaluate the historiography to which I contribute. These theoretical approaches shape how I understand the positioning of Black people in the Soviet Union and East Germany, despite their respective ideological claims of anti-racism and anti-imperialism.

Black thought from outside the United States, including Frantz Fanon, Aimé Cesairé, Paul Gilroy, Peggy Piesche, and Fatima El-Tayeb, has reshaped how I understand Black experiences and perceptions of Blackness in Eastern Europe.[48] It is important to me to draw from these non-American contexts as I frequently encounter the accusation of 'Americanizing' or 'imposing American' views on race onto a perceived racial *tabula rasa* that is Eastern Europe. I examine modes of Blackness and whiteness to grapple with the paradoxes of racism within anti-racist societies and to highlight the limits of 'Europe' and

[47] Anna Maguire, *Contact Zones of the First World War: Cultural Encounters across the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Santanu Das, Anna Maguire and Daniel Steinbach (eds.), *Colonial Encounters in a Time of Global Conflict, 1914-1918* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022).

[48] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004); Aimé Cesairé ed. Richard, Claudine, *Le Cahier, Discours sur le colonialisme : Aimé Césaire, (*Paris: Editions Nathan, 1995); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Peggy Piesche, 'Making African Diasporic Pasts Possible: A Retrospective View of the GDR and Its Black (Step-)Children', in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture,* ed. Sara Lennox (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016); Fatima El-Tayeb, *Undeutsch: die Konstruktion des Anderen in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016).

how those limits are applied to mark East Germany and the Soviet Union as fundamentally outside of these parameters. These elements contributed to the internal mythos of race-blindness in the Eastern Bloc, 'racism does not happen in socialist societies, only capitalist societies'. In this way, my work diversifies how Soviet and Russian historians can understand race and race relations, and it can expose historians rooted in Western European epistemic traditions to new, critical approaches to analysis and historical knowledge production. We must break open the silo that has held Soviet and Eastern Bloc history since the Cold War if we want to understand how these countries were still engaged with and contributed to international and transnational dialogues on race, racial difference, and Blackness.

Chandra

In my current research, I explore the intersections between race, gender, sexuality, and water within the context of the Dutch Kingdom. I am interested in teasing out theories of racialization and migration that emerge from different histories of empire and displacement. My work examines the transnational connections of the Dutch, Black, Migrant and Refugee (BMR) feminist movement, active during the late 1970s and early 2000s, and their diasporic counterparts. I situate these feminist queer models of activism and kinship within the literal and figurative sinking environment of the Netherlands. In so doing, I have found scholarship exploring the notion of queer diaspora to be fruitful in deepening my understanding of empire, colonialism, race, and sexuality. I pull from bodies of knowledge that consider how belonging, migration, and coloniality continue to shape the experiences of Black and migrant communities in Europe. I am really interested in how we can mobilize the concept of feminist queer diaspora in Europe to find other ways of thinking through kinship, resistance, and political movement work. I take inspiration of the work of aforementioned scholars such as Fatima El-Tayeb, Jin Haritaworn, Gloria Wekker, and scholars such as Gayatri Gopinath, Martin Manalansan IV, Kale Bantigue Fajardo, and Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, who all offer other ways of thinking queerness, sexuality, and diaspora, whether it pertains to archives, aesthetics or oceans.[49]

Bolaji

There are two key elements that I found particularly useful in grappling with the concept of race in CEE. Firstly, there's the empirical evidence structured around a biographical understanding of migration and settlement, for example, in Poland. This particular strand explores the experiences of being different and what it means to be both Black and Polish. For this, I am deeply grateful to those who agreed to interviews with me—largely Black/Mixed-race Poles and people of colour whose lived experiences I have attempted to rearticulate in my work. Initially, I struggled to fully comprehend the range of actions and emotions expressed within the lived experiences shared by my respondents in Poland. To better grasp these

[49] Martin. F. Manalansan IV, 'Queer Worldings: The Messy Art of Being Global in Manila and New York', *Antipode* 47, no. 3 (2015): 566-579; Kale Bantigue Fajardo, 'Transportation: Translating Filipino and Filipino American Tomboy Masculinities Through Global Migration and Seafaring', *GLQ: A Journal of lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 403-424; Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, 'Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 191-215.

emotions, I had turned to Critical Race Theory (CRT). Admittedly, there's a concern about potentially imposing North American race ideologies onto the CEE context. However, I believe it's important to recognize that CRT isn't strictly American,[50] and critiquing racial differentiation doesn't necessarily equate to solely drawing from North American sources. There are other amazing works that have emerged within Western Europe and Latin America, they play tremendous roles that shaped my perspectives on global histories and understanding of race.[51] Secondly, the existing studies on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Romani prejudice have been invaluable. I won't list specific authors or texts here due to the abundance of relevant material. However, this vibrant body of knowledge has greatly aided me in articulating an understanding of race and racism, particularly in Poland.

Q3) How do you research and write histories of race in Europe? What archives, sources and mediums do you use and why?

Kimberly

Sources and access to those sources has long been an issue in Russian history, particularly Soviet history. For decades, American historians of Russia had limited access to state archives, though there was a watershed in archival access following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Unfortunately, as Putin's regime became increasingly authoritarian, and now due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in-person access to Russian archives is nearly impossible. If there is a bright side, it is that the field is coming to terms with our fetishization of the archive. Primary sources located in Russian (formerly Soviet) state archives have been the zenith of empirical research. State-produced intelligence reports, committee meeting minutes, personal documents from Soviet leaders, factory data, etc. are the gold standard. The past decade, particularly since Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine, has led researchers to expand their territorial horizons as they visit archives in Central Asia, the Baltic Republics, and the Caucasus to fill gaps left by the inability to travel to Russia or Ukraine for research.

Interesting and fruitful work has been done outside of state institution archives such as Jochen Hellbeck's *Revolution on my Mind* which draws on the personal diaries of Soviet subjects he located in a 'people's archive'.[52] But when it comes to work on race or African experiences in the USSR, the state archive remains the investigative center. Thus, we are at risk of reproducing the gaze of the Soviet state in our work. The way the field has approached race in the past exemplifies this issue. In forum on the topic in the early 2000s, historians debated whether the Soviet Union engaged in racial politics regarding mass

[50] See David Gillborn, 'Racism as Policy: A Critical Race Analysis of Education Reforms in the United States and England', *The Educational Forum* 78, no. 1 (2014): 26-41

[51] I have been greatly influenced by the important works of Gurminder K. Bhambra, including the articles 'A Decolonial Project for Europe', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 60, no. 2 (2022): 229-244; and 'Relations of Extraction, Relations of Redistribution: Empire, Nation, and the Construction of the British Welfare State', *The British Journal of Sociology* 73, no.1 (2022): 4-15. Additionally, Aníbal Quijano's article 'Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America', has also contributed to the way I think about race and coloniality in Central and Eastern Europe, see *Nepantla* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.

[52] Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

deportations against specific nationalities in the USSR during World War II.[53] However, the debates hinged on understandings of racial politics defined by Soviet ideology. Comparisons were made to the Nazi racial state rather than a wider understanding of race and racial politics offered by scholars outside of 'traditional' Western European history/the history of totalitarian regimes. Though, starting in the 2010s, more historical research has been done to incorporate more multifaceted approaches to race and Blackness in the Soviet Union, particularly the work of Maxim Matusevich.[54]

Researching and writing on race and Blackness in Soviet history has been difficult because of a lack of access to archives, as well as the issue of reading Blackness in documents created by Soviet functionaries for the state. How can we understand the experiences of African students in Moscow in 1963 if the only way we can view their words is in Soviet informant reports or Western media coverage of African student protests?[55] This is where I turn to the work of scholars such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Marisa J. Fuentes who have offered strategies for recovering the stories of those who have been marginalized in the archive.[56] Fuentes's work critiques the construct that is the 'archive' as she examines the fleeting appearances of enslaved women within it. In my work, I turn to cultural products and media to reconstruct popular attitudes toward Africans and Black people to expand on the glimpses of Blackness within the archival record of the 'race-blind' state. In addition to marginality, records and personal documents from African students and residents in the Soviet Union are difficult to locate because most of them returned to their respective home countries across the continent and their whereabouts are unknown.

Furthermore, as a Black woman who works on Russia and Ukraine, archival research in these countries means confronting possible physical and emotional peril due to anti-Black racism. Generally, doctoral candidates in Russian and Soviet history spend months to years living in Russia or Ukraine working in archives. This is not possible for me and was not possible for me before the war. The psychological strain of being a visible minority in a country that has been rife with state-sanctioned violence against ethnic minorities is a heavy burden that I decided not to bear.[57] Moreover, as Claire has mentioned, the financial costs of pursuing archival research, especially in areas like Russia, Ukraine, or Central Asia, is often cost-prohibitive. Many of the dissertation research fellowships that used to be primary avenues for dissertation research in Russian or Soviet history such as the IREX are unable to fund trips to Russia due to US sanctions or to Ukraine because of its status as a do-not-travel country according to the US State Department. Additionally, key dissertation research funding for underrepresented scholars

[53] See Eric D. Weitz, 'Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges', *Slavic Review* 61, no.1 (2002): 1-29; and Francine Hirsch, 'Race without the Practice of Racial Politics', *Slavic Review* 61, no.1 (2002): 30-43.

[54] See Maxim Matusevich, 'Blackness the Color Red: Negotiating Race at the US Legation in Riga, Latvia, 1922-33', *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no.4 (2017): 832-852; and Maxim Matusevich, 'An Exotic Subversive: Africa, Africans and the Soviet Everyday', *Race & Class* 49, no.4 (2008): 57-81.

[55] For a great example of how we can use competing state archival sources to uncover Black experiences, see Julie Hessler, 'Death of an African Student in Moscow: Race, Politics, and the Cold War', *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 41, no.1/2 (2006): 33-63.

[56] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* and Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*.

[57] See Kimberley St. Julian-Varnon, 'A Voice from the Soviet Studies Edge: On Being a Black Woman in the Field', *ASEEES NewsNet,* 60 no.4 (August 2020), 1-4. https://www.aseees.pitt.edu/news-events/aseees-blog-feed/voice-slavic-studies-edge-being-black-woman-field

such as the Ford Foundation and Mellon Mays dissertation fellowships are winding down, leaving marginalized scholars who do not work on local histories in increasing precarity.

Sarah

My research on race is deeply rooted in a qualitative sociology that seeks to understand from the inside what makes sense to people, while at the same time trying to see how to account for the structural and macrosocial character of race. If ethnography is indeed linked to a way of doing research that rests on a divide between the West and the rest, between the subject and the object of knowledge, I think it remains a powerful tool for overcoming this colonial epistemological legacy and experimenting with more collective forms of knowledge production. For me, this has meant academic-activist collaborations and a great deal of methodological experimentation answering activist needs.

When I started my research among activists, neither the researcher nor the activist had a language to articulate race. My research was focused on postcolonial claims that were inaudible in the public debate. Progressively this ethnography on activist resistances to race and coloniality and to infra-politics has shifted. It's only when I was able to understand on a daily basis what it means to try to elaborate an antiracist narrative and praxis from a Black and Afrodescendant positionality in a white society that I went to interview mainstream antiracism activists using a very classical medium (semi-directive interviews and documentary review). The aim was to understand how, as representative of mainstream antiracism, they were addressing claims related to the epistemic and material marginalization of people of African descent and the 'analytical bifurcation', as Julian Go would say, from colonization in their understanding of racism.[58]

Chandra

As mentioned above, I work on histories of transnational feminist and queer movement work between the late 1970s and early 2000s, and frequently undertake archival research. My engagement with the archive really began because I was critically thinking about questions of care, power, and the racial taxonomies that underlie archival praxis. Working in predominantly white feminist and queer archives, such as Atria and IHLIA, further made me attentive to how we navigate the politics of access. I do not envision the archive as an end goal or site for repair for feminist queer diasporic stories, but rather I am invested in exploring the messiness, aliveness, and sensuous nature of archives. In order to tell stories about the complexities of solidarity, radical resistance, and kinship, I recognize the importance to move away from the idea of the archive 'proper'. For instance, the materials of the BMR movement are scattered across institutional archives and do not form one easily accessible collection. These conversations are very much so a part of an intergenerational feminism. The BMR organization Flamboyant, the first and only BMR archive and documentation center, was well aware of the ways in which BMR women were deemed illegible within white feminist archives in the 1980s and 1990s. These forms of institutional neglect and erasure are still paramount within the very institutional archive housing

[58] Julian Go, 'Decolonizing Sociology: Epistemic Inequality and Sociological Thought', *Social Problems* 64, no.2 (2017): 194-199.

Flamboyant's materials.[59] We thus need to shift the ways in which we orientate towards archival research and rethink archival research methodologies. This allows for a closer reading of the workings of race, gender, and sexuality within the archive. Black and women of colour feminist histories are often theorized through a US dominant transnational feminist framework, which tends to erase and silence the specificity of migrant and post-colonial trajectories. It's valuable to pay close attention to how, say, Moroccan and Turkish women articulated their experiences and how Afro-Surinamese and Caribbean women negotiated their relationship to the nation-state. Charting how anti-Blackness and anti-migrant sentiments within and outside the movement impacted ideas of solidarity and coalition work requires a critical archival reading and listening practice. I take inspiration from scholars such as Anjali Arondekar, Tina Campt, Saidiya Hartman, Julietta Singh, and Diana Taylor when it comes to shaping my archival inquiries.[60] I think here of how important it is to consider other sites of knowing. Julietta Singh writes in *No Archive Will Restore You*:

> Why this desire for a body archive, for an assembly of history's traces deposited in me? (I worry over how to describe it, how to frame it without sounding banal or bafflingly idiosyncratic.) The body archive is an attunement, a hopeful gathering, an act of love against the foreclosures of reason. It is a way of knowing the body-self as a becoming and unbecoming thing, of scrambling time and matter, of turning toward rather than against oneself. And vitally, it is a way of thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies.[61]

When my students and I read this paragraph in my Archival Interventions graduate seminar, it offered us a re-orientation of where conversations on the archive might take us. Finally, and similar to what others have noted above, it is crucial to consider art, curatorial practice, and other sites of knowledge production. I have always been moved by queer and feminist of colour engagements with living rooms, kitchen tables, and alleyways. As an independent curator, I also feel that it is imperative to consider how artistic and cultural practices point us to other uses of the archive. Queer feminist diasporic aesthetic practices offer us poignant ideas of time, desire, and place. We need these sites that model other forms of worldmaking.

Bolaji

Doing historical sociology has been a game-changer. For example, the examination of Poland's nation-building process, often confined to the period between 1918 and 1989, predominantly focusing on the events and repercussions of the Second World War. Whilst undeniably pivotal in understanding Poland's political challenges, these periods tend to obscure other significant events that connect Poland to broader European colonial ventures. My research on the decolonial approach to Poland has delved into the debates surrounding political inclusion, and the importance of empire in CEE. To apply this research, we

[59] Chandra Frank, 'Flamboyant: Wildness, Loss, and Possibility in Feminist Organizing in the Netherlands', *Meridians* 22, no. 1 (2023): 34-57.

[60] Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Hartman, *Wayward Lives*; Julietta Singh, *No Archive Will Restore You* (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2018); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

[61] Singh, *No Archive Will Restore You,* 55.

can examine the genealogies of nation formation across the region. Here, I am thinking about the sixteenth-century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the involvement of its citizens in the Dutch colonial empire. This aspect of Polish history, often overlooked, is exceptionally captivating. The strong tie between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Dutch chartered companies in the early sixteenth century, for example, facilitated the enlistment of many Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth residents into the Dutch fleet and several colonial projects. There are now emerging documentations of individuals, from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, such as August Dunin van Warschouw (Warsaw) and Teodor Anzelm Dzwonkowski, who played various roles within the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC), which managed the Dutch colonies in South America and the Cape of Good Hope between 1581 and 1795. Indeed, many of these individuals of Polish descent were on the VOC's payroll, identified by their Polish first names and Dutch-Polish surnames. As highlighted by Mariusz Kowalski and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, the wealth acquired by some of these individuals through their services in the Dutch Colonial Empire enabled them to establish a better life upon their return to Europe.[62]

Here's an interesting point to consider in terms of writing histories of race in Europe. If we look at England/Britain, France, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands, these are small countries and yet they were able to go everywhere in the world, especially outside Europe for their colonial enterprise. How did they do it? To accomplish such global exploration, a colossal amount of resources such as wood and ropes would have been needed to build ships. For example, we know that the Spanish Colonial Empire had a bit of wood but not a lot within Spain. The Dutch colonial enterprise could not produce the wood that was needed for the colonial enslavement of people in the Caribbean. Interestingly, there are now emerging archival sources showing that the British, French, Spanish and, most importantly, the Dutch colonial endeavours may not have been as successful without operational collaboration with wood, iron, and rope supplied by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century. This cardinal point helps me to situate Poland, in particular, within the broader European colonialism and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.[63]

I am also thinking broadly about the Polish Maritime and Colonial League's (Liga Morska i Kolonialna) involvement in what might seem like settler colonialism in Latin America and Africa in the 1930s. In doing so, some Poles positioned themselves within the broader European colonial endeavours, aiming to acquire lands beyond Europe and render them profitable for European settlers. As suggested by Marta Grzechnik, many Polish explorers and members of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League, in particular, often embraced Western European stereotypes and perspectives regarding non-Europeans.[64]

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[62] Full details of some of these explorations are available in Mariusz Kowalski, 'Poles in the Dutch Cape Colony 1652-1814', *Werkwinkel* 10, no.1 (2015): 65-96. Also, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, 'The Dutch East Indies in the Eyes of a Pole', in *Escaping Kakania: Eastern European Travels in Colonial Southeast Asia*, ed. Jan Mrázek (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, Central European University, 2024), 37-57 (52).

[63] I discussed this aspect of Polish history extensively in my new book: Bolaji Balogun, *Race and the Colour-Line: The Boundaries of Europeanness in Poland* (London and New York: Routledge, 2024).

[64] See, Marta Grzechnik, 'Indochina's Deadly Sun: The Polish Maritime and Colonial League's Depictions of Southeast Asia', in *Escaping Kakania,* 263-287. Also see Marta Grzechnik, 'The Missing Second World: On Poland and Postcolonial Studies', Interventions 21, no.7 (2019): 998–1014. Also, see Lenny A. Ureña Valerio, *Colonial*

Critiquing European colonialism would have endangered the overarching colonial project pursued by the Polish Colonial League which aimed to align itself with European colonial power and operating on equal terms. Many archives and sources within and outside Poland have pointed to this. Anyone interested in such archival work might want to look at institutions such as the Muzeum Gdańska, Emigration Museum in Gdynia, Muzea Wielkopolska, National Digital Archive (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe), and Archiwum Fotografii Ośrodka KARTA within Poland. Additionally, archives outside Poland, including the Thüringer Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek in Germany, as well as collections such as the Dutch West India Company (WIC) and the Dutch East India Company (VOC) at the Rotterdam Stadsarchief, and the National Archives in the Netherlands, offer valuable insights.

Camilla

As a geographer whose primary method is ethnography, I recognize that the practice of ethnographic research is freighted with the baggage of colonial anthropology. Yet I also believe that ethnography is a tool that can be wielded transgressively to foreground the voices, lived experiences, and theorizations of those who are actively remaking the meanings of 'Europe' and 'European' today, in the spirit of what Savannah Shange describe as abolitionist anthropology'.[65] My ethnographic work is informed by a Black feminist praxis of reflexivity, along with an attentiveness to the power relations across diasporic sites and communities (especially those that uncritically center North America in global systems of knowledge production about the Black diaspora). I remain deeply inspired by what Tina Campt described in *Other Germans* as dynamics of 'intercultural address', referring to those moments when her interlocutors directly made reference to her African-Americanness when attempting to describe their experiences as Black Germans:

> These unexpected exchanges were moments when I became aware of gaps of translation and moments of interpellation between us, as well as how we actively produced Black identity in our dialogues. [...] In this way, intercultural address illuminates important tensions of diasporic relation through the ways in which it simultaneously contests and affirms the assumptions of similarity between Black communities that were negotiated discursively in our interviews.[66]

I also believe that it is important for researchers to foreground archives of struggle that do not always rise to the level of formal institutions such as the labour union, the political party, or the voluntary association. Instead, it is necessary to think about the ways that Black Europe emerges from the interstices of everyday life and from the gaps in formal archives. This means taking seriously literature, film, music, and curatorial practices; informal reading groups and anarchist squats; basketball courts and nightclubs—all as instructive sites of Black European politics.

Fantasies, Imperial Realities: Race Science and the Making of Polishness on the Fringes of the German Empire, 1840–1920 (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2019).

[65] Savannah Shange, *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, and Schooling in San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 7.

[66] Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 183.

Stefanie

With regard to historical material, I find it important to understand that the archive, often referred to as the 'colonial archive', has been co-produced by many authors.[67] This means that in the colonial archives (state, mission, enterprises, etc.) we can find interventions, quotes, and actions of people who were deemed 'the colonized'. The methods of reading along and against the grain in these archives have been theorized by Ann Laura Stoler and the body of work in this direction is impressive. I point this out in order not to fall into the trap of thinking that everybody who uses only 'European' or 'Western' archives is doomed to follow the Eurocentric perspective and that 'the other' to this perspective can only be found outside the official archives.

I did use oral material for my first book on German colonial history in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and was able to show that it is possible to work within this material archaeologically.[68] Indeed, there is a long line of scholarship on this starting from the 1960s, for example Jan Vansina and the Dar es Salaam School.[69] There is also the re-reading of the oral history project of the Maji Maji War in former German East Africa (today southern Tanzania) done by Jamie Monson and others who combined the original interviews with new oral interviews leading to a paradigm shift in the judgment of this war in 2005. Instead of centering the 'magical' aspect of *maji* (Swahili for 'water'), they understood 'maji' more as a message. The effect was a rationalization of the participants on the African side and a working out of the diverging interests and positions and thus decisions taken by them.[70]

I also consider historical photographs approached via an indexical reading as a valuable methodological tool, especially when researching people who did not leave behind written material. Portraitures can be treated as ego-documents since those who were photographed can be regarded as the (co-)author of a photograph, as Christraud Geary and others have pointed out.[71] Finally, I have become interested in researching the cosmopolitan family history of the Manga Bell family from Cameroon through a descendant who lives in Munich (not an academic). Manga Bell was a leading family in Douala (Cameroon) since the Atlantic Trade and one of the signatories of the 1884 treaty that laid the basis for German colonial claims on the area. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell lived in Germany for a couple of years where he went to school. In 1908 he became the head of the Manga Bell family and was recognized by the German colonial institutions as paramount chief. A fierce dispute over expropriation of lands and houses between the Douala and the German colonial state broke out and Rudolf Duala Manga Bell started a political campaign in Germany and a peaceful resistance movement in Douala. He was detained by the

[67] Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[68] Stefanie Michels, *Imagined Power Contested. Germans and Africans in the Upper Cross River Area of Cameroon 1888-1914* (Münster: LIT, 2004).
[69] Jan Vansina, *De la tradition orale. Essai de méthode historique* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1961) Annales Sciences Humaines no. 16 (1961); Maji Maji Research Project. Collected Papers. University of Dar es Salaam 1968; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London: James Curry 1985).
[70] James Giblin and Jamie Monson (eds.), *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
[71] Christraud Geary, 'Portraiture, Authorship, and the Inscription of History – Photographic Practice in the Bamum Kingdom, Cameroon (1902–1980)', in *Getting Pictures Right: Context and Interpretation*, eds. Michael Albrecht et al. (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2004), 141-164.

German colonial state on fraudulent accusations and executed unlawfully in 1914. Over a period of year and through his descendent, currently living in Germany, I was able to access private archives of families both in Germany and Cameroon. By sharing research materials, such as archival records and photographs, and working together with Manga Bell's descendant in non-academic circumstances—on exhibitions or political campaigns, for example—, the results feel like being co-produced.

Claire

As many of us have highlighted in our answers, how we research and write histories of race in Europe cannot be divorced from the conditions of production within academia. Since the sources we are able to engage with directly correlate to the kinds of voices, perspectives, and experiences that we can find and use, this raises important questions about who is afforded access to the conditions that would enable the emergence of the kind of research we would like to see. The painstaking, immersive, lengthy, multi-sited fieldwork often required to research marginalized histories and historical actors is becoming increasingly difficult in a context where university budgets are squeezed, external funding opportunities are not only diminishing but are, as Addy Adelaine and others have highlighted, exacerbating existing inequalities, where people are under significant pressure to publish, and publish quickly, yet workloads have spiralled cutting into available time for research. The pandemic furthermore prompted many to radically rethink their relationship to work and to the institutions that employ them, and to become increasingly conscious about the environmental costs of research-related travel. And that is just for colleagues lucky enough to have stable employment. Precarity is endemic in higher education in the UK. As the Royal Historical Society has demonstrated, those most likely to be affected are scholars from historically excluded groups. At the same time, more and more institutions are facing redundancies, even the closure of entire departments, which are disproportionately hitting the Arts and Humanities. If you cannot obtain and maintain stable employment then that very fundamentally limits the kinds of research you can do or, indeed, if you can research at all. The intersecting privileges that shape who does and does not 'make it' in our profession have tangible consequences for the shape and future directions of our fields. We've all cited multiple examples of the ground-breaking decolonial scholarship that is and will continue to be produced despite these challenges. Nonetheless we have to acknowledge that there are significant material and practical constraints which mean not all kinds of decolonial academic enquiry are equally possible.

Erin

My work has generally focused on printed texts, because questions of readership and circulation are core to the questions I ask, complemented with archival research. I examine treatises, hagiographies, sermons, letters, royal and ecclesiastical decrees, and sacred histories inter alia. Access to texts that are printed in modern edition or available in a digitized, printed edition can greatly improve accessibility, but there is much fragmentary evidence that remains locked away in small archives that can only be accessed in person. As a scholar of religious culture, many of my sources are produced by white clergy. While working on my project about Black saints, I realized the significant limitations of over-reliance on normative Catholic views about human difference, slavery, and salvation. While such thinkers had a

complex story to tell, my go-to sources provided only glimmerings of the lived experience of Catholicism for Black Iberia. There are many responses to archival challenges, but my work bore fruit in turning to visual culture and the manuscripts that were generated by Black confraternities (lay brotherhoods). Visual culture in particular core piece of evidence, filling omissions in the historical record and the sculptures of Black saints constituting their own kind of archive that provided key evidence to the devotional lives of Black Catholics. Moving to spaces of Black devotion helped overcome the preponderance of white voices and reframe the way the monograph positioned itself.

The visual can sometimes communicate greater power than in the written word, particularly when presenting to the public on topics where there is an insistence on non-existence (i.e., the idea that there were few or no Black people living in Europe in the premodern era).

Q4) In what ways would you like to see histories of race in Europe develop in the future? What is the end goal we are working towards?

Camilla

I think that the goal of this work should be to produce radically relational histories that challenge the idea of the European metropole as a bounded entity entirely separate from its colonies and colonial histories. A European history informed by decolonial, postcolonial, anticolonial, and Black radical praxes can denaturalize the category of 'European' itself, allowing us to see how the shifting and contested boundaries of Europeanness have been formed in relation to processes of colonial appropriation, racist violence, and economic dispossession. Much like Stuart Hall famously argued about the 'West', Europe itself is as much 'an idea as a fact of geography', 'a historical, not a geographical construct'.[72] This in turn shifts the way we think about key moments in European history—from the French Revolution (which unfolded in relation to the Haitian Revolution) to the Holocaust (which was not an historical exception but whose technologies of power were first enacted in German South West Africa) and beyond.

In forging these relational and geographically interconnected histories, we in turn challenge the idea that Black people and other communities of colour are perpetually foreign to European nation-states, regardless of how long or for how many generations they have lived in Europe, and regardless of the way their expropriated land and labour helped to build 'Europe' itself. This is, of course, the core of the aphorism and British protest slogan made famous by A. Sivanandan, 'We are HERE because you were THERE!' I have found that Italy is an especially powerful place to do this work, because, as Mia Fuller notes in her work, the process of Italian national unification was unfolding alongside its scramble for African colonies.[73] In other words, there is no way to think about Italian history, or even the idea of Italianness itself, without considering its colonial history.

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[72] Stuart Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', in *Formations of Modernity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 276-277.

[73] See, for instance, Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities, and Italian Colonialism* (London: Routledge 2007); Claudio Fogu, *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web: Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Additionally, relational histories of Europe provide a way to overcome the charge that the study of racism and race in Europe entails imposing 'American' ideological frameworks onto the European context. While racism takes different forms in different historical and geographical contexts (Stuart Hall reminded us that there is no singular racism, only racisms in the plural),[74] racism also emerged in an interconnected world-system wrought by capitalism, colonialism, and slavery–connections that were continually re-articulated at various historical moments (i.e., the transnational circulation of eugenics through scientific networks). Europe is, of course, central to this global history of racism—and this latter point is something I have taken to heart given my position as a scholar of Black Europe based in the United States, who teaches classes about the politics of migration and racism in Europe. While many of my students are deeply engaged in antiracist and migrants' rights struggles in the United States, they do not always walk into my classroom with a clear sense of why Europe matters to their intellectual and political lives. That changes when I explain that if they really want to understand the historical roots of racism, they need to go back to where it all started—and that means engaging in a radical re-reading of European history.

Finally, studying the history of race and colonialism in Europe is not just a matter of previously-marginalized subjects within the standard historiography of Europe. The field of Black European studies has shown, countless times, that citizenship and inclusion do not automatically beget liberation for Black and other people of colour in Europe. So, this is not about a liberal politics of multicultural inclusion, but rather a project of questioning the very foundations upon which European history, European nation-states, and the idea of 'Europe' itself rest. As scholars doing this work, I think that we need to be careful about the appropriation of our work as part of a redemptionist narrative that 'saves' the project of European history, absolving the field of its racist past and making it more 'relevant' for the neoliberal university. We do this work not for our disciplines, but to understand our present differently and craft new tools for struggle.

Kimberly

In my field, I would like to see historians diversify our narratives about and understandings of Soviet history. Intellectual siloes and stale methodologies create stagnation, and the fascinating history of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe deserves more than that. In my research, I engage in comparative and transnational histories of socialist countries alongside studies on race. I aim to expand our imaginings of the African diaspora beyond the 'Middle Passage' epistemes that have long dominated how scholars approach Black experiences and commonality.[75] The scholarship in Black German studies inspires me, particularly that of Tiffany M. Florvil, Kira Thurman, and Priscila Layne, that has shown how we can draw on an assortment of approaches and theoretical constructs within Black Studies to showcase the

[74] Stuart Hall, 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 5-27.
[75] See Michelle M. Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

experiences of Black people in Eastern Europe.[76] Their research highlights the constraints of an Atlantic focus on Blackness in Black and Africana studies. I hope to see European historians expand their intellectual borders, critique the construct of Eastern Europe, and include the former republics of the Soviet Union within that. Russia's war in Ukraine and the Western response to it has sparked discussion about the limits to European belonging and what that means, including who is welcomed as a refugee. Additionally, a critical analysis of the construction of Europe, particularly along the axes of race and ethnicity, opens up new avenues to understanding and explaining the forms and functions of whiteness and Europeanness, which are often implied but rarely interrogated within the broader political projects of the European Union.

Beyond expanding the inclusion of Russia into 'European' history, I also hope that Russian and Soviet historians can contribute to Black European studies. Unlike Germany and France (scholars working on these countries represent a horizon for my work), Russia did not participate in the Transatlantic Slave trade nor the colonization of Africa. Blackness in Russia and the former Soviet Union presents an interesting point of departure for our approach to studying Blackness, anti-Black racism, connections between race and labour, and imperialism. Including Russia in an analysis of the methods of imperialism and racialization moves us to consider internal colonization and hierarchies within the construction of Europe and Europeanness. Furthermore, research on the Black presence in the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, alongside more work on African-Russian relations during and after the Cold War, can upend our conceptions of agency and power on the individual and state levels. Africans seeking education in the Soviet Union following independence and African Americans traveling to the Soviet Union to investigate Communism, seek economic opportunities, or escape racism—all these examples speak to nodes of individual agency that are often overlooked in aggregated studies on the Cold War.

Erin

I would like to see greater engagement in Spanish and Portuguese historiographies by scholars of premodern race. Antisemitic and anti-Muslim discourses could play profound roles to the articulation of embodied difference long before the slave trade, and the over half-century of research conducted by Spanish and Portuguese historians into the histories of enslaved communities in their kingdoms should be engaged. More broadly, I do think the historiography is moving toward centering Black subjectivity in larger narratives about race, rather than focusing primarily on the development of racist ideologies. It is also no longer controversial to assert that race, racism, and white supremacy existed in the pre-Enlightenment, and those who work on the earlier periods have much to say about complex, painful history of Europe. The end goal that I would like to participate in achieving is a reckoning, a dismantling of harmful, romanticized views of national and colonial histories.

[76] Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany*; Kira Thurman, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021); Priscilla Layne, *White Rebels in Black: German Appropriation of Black Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

Chandra

I am invested in unsettling and challenging dominant ways of thinking about race in Europe. My research is transnational and intergenerational in scope, and I've benefited from attuning to other forms of knowledge production. For instance, in my work, I pay close attention to solidarity practices, modes of care, and feminist queer diasporic cultural production. I am particularly interested in everyday forms of worldmaking that shift static notions of belonging, home, and space. Using heteronormative frameworks to understand processes of colonialism and migration often reproduces narrow understandings of the experiences of racialized others. In charting histories of race in Europe, I thus turn to other histories of race and racialization, such as feminist and queer movement work, which is often marginalized. Yet, cultural expression, magazines, literature, as well as political activism within feminist and queer movements of colour offer crucial insights and alternative ways of thinking about what we mean by Europe or European history. These histories help us better understand the continuous rise of right-wing politics, homonationalism, as well as the future of queer feminist politics in Europe.

Claire

I don't think there is an end point or product since we are not aiming to tick an item off our to-do list but rather engage in an iterative and ongoing process and intellectual project. I am also wary of a linear progress narrative. As our collective responses to the first question highlight, many things have changed for the better across our various geographical and disciplinary contexts. But there has also been push back and active regression in some areas, which has left many colleagues operating in difficult if not actively hostile political and intellectual environments.

Having said that, one positive evolution that I would like to see would be a further broadening the scope of historical enquiry so that alongside the extraordinary protagonists, the positive change makers, inspirational thinkers and leaders, we open up more space to consider those who did not support emancipatory projects, those who allied with conservative, reactionary, even racist forces, those who were actively 'unlikable', who did 'bad' things, or who 'failed'. People like the North African soldiers I study, for example, who were prosecuted by the military for crimes ranging from the very petty all the way up to rape and murder. We are studying complex, multi-faceted individuals and communities and it would be good to get to a stage where, as is the case with histories of white Europeans, all those dimensions can be fully explored without undue significance being attached to any one (negative) characteristic, behaviour, or individual, and without that negative attribute being taken as indicative or representative of the larger cohort. For me this would contribute to ongoing work to unpack and analyze diversity of experiences and perspectives within groups as well as between groups, allowing us to think in more textured ways about historical agency. It would also help re-affirm that while race is a really vital category that needs to be taken seriously, it is also the first step in a series of steps we need to take and we need to be wary of accepting these categories as units.

Bolaji

For me, it is no longer enough to only pursue sociological enquires as the only normative commitment to antiracism. Such enquires need to be memorable and relatable. The study of race remains a crucial field. It offers insights that make racialized experiences and events understandable. However, history serves as a major tool for uncovering those racialized experiences and making them relatable. By integrating insights from these histories, we can broaden our understanding of race, colonialism, and whiteness within and beyond Europe. I am particularly interested in the way such histories could be utilized to shed light on the global dynamics of race and migration in CEE and contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of race beyond the dominant Western contexts. By accentuating the importance of histories in this way, perhaps we will be well-positioned to further theorize the complexities of race, colonialism, and whiteness globally. A notable example of work that is already addressing this is the newly published collected volume, *Off White Central and Eastern Europe and the Global History of Race*.[77]

Sarah

The possibility for histories of race and Europe from geographical locations outside of Europe, is one of the main challenges for me. In the academic discussion on race in Europe or Black Europe, there is little room for theories forged from Africa. The link between Blackness and Africanness is most often approached in terms of identification (whether in terms of assignments to otherness or claimed heritages). This is a far cry from the questions posed by George J. Sefa Déi about the possibility of a decolonial approach to Blackness informed by African epistemologies and cosmologies.[78] The possibility of a Black life in Europe is so central that it seems complicated to think about race and Europe from Africa. Yet questions related to representation, decolonization, racial capitalism or dehumanization of Black lives are raised in a different way.

Furthermore, European immigration policies tend increasingly to develop outside the European continent and beyond the borders of the Schengen area. We are already familiar with the logic of subcontracting aimed at 'retaining' migrants, particularly sub-Saharan migrants, in North Africa such as Libya and Morocco. With Britain's (now abandoned) decision to delegate the administrative processing of asylum seekers to an African country (Rwanda), we are entering a new era that should transform the link between European migration policies and a global politics of race into a sort of multipolar colonial management.

As Camilla rightly points out, connectivity is fundamental to understanding race and the concept of Europe, not only from the lens of histories (Sanjay Subrahmanyam) but also disciplinary fields (Gurminder K. Bhambra) and resistance movements (Robbie Shilliam, Emma-Lee Amponsah). This is why

[77] Catherine Baker, Bogdan C. Iacob, Anikó Imre, and James Mark (eds.), *Off White Central and Eastern Europe and the Global History of Race* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024).
[78] George J. Sefa Déi, '[Re]framing Blackness and Black Solidarities through Anti-Colonial and Decolonial Prisms: An Introduction', in *Reframing Blackness and Black Solidarities through Anti-colonial and Decolonial Prisms,* ed. George J. Sefa Déi (Cham: Springer, 2017), 1-30.

it seems so important to me to seek to deconstruct the centrality of Europe even in the production of knowledge and histories about race and Europe today.

Stefanie

I so agree with Camilla's point about questioning the concept of Europe altogether—and see it as part of an ideology ('white Europe'). Creolizing Europe or, in fact, the world, would be a way forward out of container-thinking and ultimately just fighting strawmen.[79] A deconstructive unpacking of perceived concepts, such as 'Europe/Rest' or 'white/Black', would not be to downplay the real felt hierarchies and boundaries erected, but to question the ideological foundations. With regard to slavery in the early modern period, for example, it would be important not to write race back in, when at the time the concepts of free/unfree labour did not primarily and especially not throughout history rely on 'race' as a legitimization. Thinking about this, and in fact teaching about it, is a huge challenge, especially because racism is a very real experience in Europe, and stories about the past that do not align to a clear dichotomy (perpetrator/victim) are often felt by students to be apologetic towards slavery/colonialism.

Q5) How do we move beyond words and to action? How can we translate and communicate our findings beyond the academy? What can journals like *EHQ* do to support and facilitate this work?

Chandra

I take inspiration from artists, activists, and thinkers who long worked and imagined outside of the confines of the academy. As others have noted, it is crucial not to uphold an insider/outsider framework when it comes to other forms of knowledge production. I've worked across academia and the arts for a long time, and I recognize the urgency to allow for new and established forms of critical and collaborative processes. The question of how we move beyond the academy without situating the academy as the center is key.

In reflecting on the Dutch context, I want to note that Black and POC artists, activists, and queer feminist collectives absolutely pushed the conversations that academic and cultural institutions now pick up. Scholars such as Philomena Essed and Gloria Wekker really paved the way for many of us interested in critically interrogating race in the Netherlands. Notwithstanding, their scholarship was met with extreme hostility. The editors of *Dutch Racism*, Philomena Essed and Isabelle Hoving, argue that the very denial and dismissal of racism is bound up with cultural superiority and moral righteousness. Various collectives and activists tirelessly addressed these pervasive underpinnings of Dutch racism and truly did not receive enough recognition for it. In other words, I feel like critics outside of the confines of the academy do most of the work of translation and communication. I think of cultural critics such as Egbert Alejandro Martina, who long offered some of the sharpest insights into the Dutch colonial condition that I've encountered. In a similar way, artists such as Patricia Kaersenhout, Raquel van Haver, Iris Kensmil,

[79] Anca Parvulescu and Manuela Boatcă, *Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania across Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022).

Remy Jungerman, Charl Landvreugd, and Quinsy Gario pushed conversations about coloniality, race, gender, and aesthetics. Like others have noted, publishing work and showcasing other ways in which the readdressing of exclusionary histories takes place would be one way to facilitate this work. Critically considering the conditions for peer-review and imagining other forms of collaboration would also be a generative conversation to have.

Camilla

I think the task ahead of us entails not only communicating our scholarly research beyond the academy, but also valorizing the work being done by Black activists and cultural workers outside of academia. To be clear, I am not suggesting that there is a sharp divide between the 'inside' and 'outside' of the university; rather, as historian Robin D. G. Kelley reminds us in *Freedom Dreams*:

> Revolutionary dreams erupt out of political engagement; collective social movements are incubators of new knowledge. While this may seem obvious, I am increasingly surrounded by well-meaning students who want to be activists but exhibit anxiety about doing intellectual work. They often differentiate the two, positioning activism and intellectual work as inherently incompatible. They speak of the 'real' world as some concrete wilderness overrun with violence and despair, and the university as if it were some sanitized sanctuary distant from actual people's lives and struggles. [...] I am convinced that the opposite is true: Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression.[80]

In Italy, the country with which I am most familiar, there is still very little institutional support within academia for the project of Black European studies. While there are some departments, programs, and individual faculty doing this work, I think that some of the most exciting thinking about Blackness, racism, and the legacies of Italian colonialism is actually happening through literature, film, material culture, curatorial work, and other forms of cultural politics. Indeed, I often remind my colleagues that we are, at best, playing 'catch up' to the work of organic Black European intellectuals, whose work has made space for creative and capacious re-imaginings of Blackness in Europe in part because they are unbound by many of the disciplining demands of the academy. It would be truly groundbreaking to see journals like *EHQ* publish this kind of work—not only as it is filtered through the interpretive lenses of scholars, but as theory in its own right: works of short fiction, interviews with activists, political manifestos, and art.

Additionally, there is an urgent need for material resources to support translation across European contexts in the service of what VèVè Clark calls diaspora literacy—a 'skill for both narrator and reader which demands a knowledge of historical, social, cultural, and political development generated by lived and textual experience'.[81] In practice, this could entail funding to translate scholarly and other resources between European languages, as well as journal editorial support for the publication of these

[80] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 8.
[81] VèVè A. Clark, 'Developing Diaspora Literacy and Marasa Consciousness', *Theatre Survey* 50, no. 1 (2009): 11.

translations. In my work with Black activists in Italy, a common concern I have heard over the past decade is that political and intellectual resources from across the global Black diaspora are not always readily available in Italian. Support for translation as a linguistic practice has important implications for the politics of translation in a broader sense (i.e., the translation of concepts, theoretical frameworks, and political strategies), and as such is necessary for transnational learning and collaboration, the identification of differences and commonalities in struggles, and the practice of solidarity across borders.

Claire

Bringing about structural change is the hardest thing to do, but it is also essential if we are to move from words to actions. As Michelle Moyd powerfully articulated when she stepped down as Associate Editor of the *American Historical Review*:

> To decolonize, we will have to press harder on all the institutions and practices that perpetuate the work of inequality and injustice. That includes universities, professional associations, their memberships, and their journals, all of which embody all the wonder of scholarly enquiry even as they also perpetuate structures of racism, misogyny, ableism and cis-heteronormativity.[82]

Given the wording of this question, which asks specifically about *EHQ*, and my own role as a journal editor, I'm going to focus my comments on that particular academic institution. Diversifying is not decolonizing; nonetheless, representation matters and, as important academic gatekeepers, journals have a responsibility to consciously create intellectual spaces that not only facilitate but legitimate the presence of historically excluded subjects and scholars. How this is done is key. As Hannah Robbins pointed out, such efforts generally concentrate on support for authors, often through mentoring, suggesting the 'problem' lies outside the journal. Whereas the focus should be on the work journals need to do to acknowledge and reform their existing hierarchies of knowledge and power by changing their own policies and practices. To return to Michelle Moyd again, journals are powerful arbiters of 'what counts and what doesn't count as history, what counts as capacious enough to serve the journal's readership, what counts as valid methodology, sources, or interpretation'.[83] Thinking critically about who is making decisions about 'what counts and what doesn't count', on editorial boards and in peer-review, and how this might be shaping both submissions and eventual content is a useful starting point. Such reflections can be further extended by writing peer-review guidelines that are explicit about the criteria on which journals do and do not expect work to be evaluated, which are clear about the challenges certain subjects/approaches/methodologies face in being seen as legitimate, and which flag practices like inclusive citation as something reviewers should be paying attention to. In a similar vein, journals can design submission guidelines and style guides that are attentive to accessibility and useability in the broadest possible terms, including for scholars and practitioners from non-traditional academic backgrounds and/or situated outside of the Global North. This includes prioritizing transparency and de-mystifying processes to ensure criteria and practices are not resting on unwritten rules or unspoken

[82] Michelle Moyd, 'From the Editor's Desk', *The American Historical Review* 125, no.4 (2020): xviii.
[83] Moyd, 'From the Editor's Desk', xix.

assumptions. None of these are magic bullets, nor are they sufficient, but they represent a start and are usually within the control of journals themselves making them eminently actionable.

Resources are needed to underpin this kind of work. Resources to fund data collection encompassing the entire publishing pipeline to build knowledge about what is being lost or green-lit at different stages and who is making those decisions; resources, as others have noted, to facilitate translation to broaden access for both authors and readers; resources to support open access publication. On this last point, Open Access has the potential to help address disparities in access to resources and texts often faced by scholars located in the Global South, while broadening the reach of their own publications, which will be to everyone's benefit. In that respect, initiatives such as the Knowledge Equity Network are welcome developments. However, we also know that Open Access is not equally accessible to all, especially not given the costs associated with publishing in that format. How to dismantle barriers to knowledge circulation without erecting new ones is something that journal and publishers have started to grapple but those discussions have further to go. On a related note, it would also be good to see greater collaboration between journals to foster collective action and maximize impact, especially since humanities journals are often considerably smaller, poorer and thus less powerful than their STEM cousins.

Stefanie

From my point of view, we need much more knowledge about global histories. The way history (and, in fact, philosophy and geography) is presented in schools and also in many universities in Germany follows the pattern of the nineteenth century—from Greece to modern Germany. Concepts such as 'high cultures' (written) and 'civilization' are used in schoolbooks, in the media, and in everyday interactions. The ideologies behind these concepts are ever present but are never overtly addressed as such—'ideologies' and not 'facts'. The same is true for 'Africa' which is a very problematic concept, as Mudimbe, Mbembe and others have shown.[84] No need for me to dwell on all the stereotypes this concept comes with, the important question is how to overcome it? For me the way forward is, once again, with Chimamanda Adichie: we need other stories. Why not teach the Komenda Wars in German High Schools instead of the Peace of Westphalia? Why not an exhibition in a German ethnological museum about the ongoing conflict in Cameroon, and its colonial and non-colonial roots and causes instead of another celebration of aesthetic otherness? And - why not such topics in journals like *EHQ*?

Erin

There is significant work—grassroots and academic—around exhibits, museums, monuments, and contemporary political issues that provide opportunities for scholars to connect the past with the present, something that is sometimes a struggle for those of us who work on the pre-1700 world. The extensive historiography on Islam and Spain and about who and what is European has primed scholars

[84] Valentin Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988); Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

into engaging in such conversations—though, to be honest, there has not been much space for public reckoning about slavery or colonialization in contemporary Spain and Portugal, although activists and scholars have been working together in Portugal on the creation of a memorial to the Portuguese slave trade. In the United States, the Met Museum in New York City created an exhibition on Juan de Pareja. Pareja was a respected seventeenth-century Black artist, enslaved by Diego Velázquez and later manumitted by him. Velázquez painted Pareja's portrait, which is housed at the Met. The exhibit brought Pareja's own art to the United States for the first time, putting it in conversation with Velazquez's work and portrait. Beyond this, however, the exhibit framed Pareja in the context of the research of Arturo Schomburg, an early twentieth century Afro-Puerto Rican intellectual who traveled to Spain and learned about Pareja there. The exhibit framed Velazquez's portrait of Pareja with Schomburg's words: 'History must restore what slavery took away'. Connecting a seventeenth-century Iberian artist to twentieth-century Caribbean-US freedom struggles recast the analytic frame we use to think with Pareja's art and life, and provides one model for bridging past and present.[85]

Bolaji

This is a significant question that carries a major responsibility, and requires a consideration of multiple actions. I fully support the ideas proposed by everyone. However, *EHQ* has a greater responsibility to ensure that these ideas and suggestions do not focus solely on the manifestations of race or knowledge production about race in Western Europe and North America. To make these suggestions truly global, it is essential to address knowledge gaps in many regions, including Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, *EHQ* should consider more than just publications and incorporate online or in-person discussions that extend beyond manuscripts.

I think this conversation initiated by Claire, bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines, sets a brilliant precedent for moving beyond manuscripts to action. One way to support and facilitate this call to action is to establish working groups selected from within the *EHQ* editorial board. These working groups can focus on different regions whilst collaborating to bridge, if not completely close, the regional gaps in knowledge production about race.

Sarah

At the end of my research with and about activist movements, I began to wonder about our capacity as researchers to define a research agenda on race on our own. Although I recognize the importance of 'epistemic insurgency' as developed by José Medina in co-producing counter-narratives,[86] I do feel that

[85] David Pullins and Vanessa K. Valdés, eds., *Juan de Pareja: Afro-Hispanic Painter in the Age of Velázquez* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2023). On recent efforts of memorialization of slavery in Iberia, see: Martin Rodrigo and Ulrike Sciimieder, "Politics of Memory of Slavery in Spain: Barcelona in Comparative Perspective," *Historia Social* 105 (2023): 87-105; Ana Lucia Araujo, *Museums and Atlantic Slavery* (New York: Routledge and Taylor, 2021); and Paula Mota Santo, "Bringing Slavery in the Light in Postcolonial Portugal: The Rhetoric and Poetics of a Slavery Exhibition," *Museum Worlds: Advances in* Research Vol. 8, Issue 1 (2020): 464-67.
[86] José Medina, 'Toward a Foucaultian epistemology of resistance: Counter-memory, epistemic friction, and guerrilla pluralism', *Foucault studies* 12 (2011): 9-35.

we tend, at least in Belgium, to follow the pathway of activists or artists or to co-open space with activists and artists to engage in a conversation about race. This can be related to the methodological difficulties of macro-sociological research on race, especially given the state refusal to collect and/or make available data on race, but that doesn't explain the fact that there is so little qualitative research on whiteness for instance, despite important contributions.[87]

As you all mention, the divide between academics and non- academics is not always relevant in terms of knowledge production or even political transformations. However, the neoliberal requirement of academia makes it extremely difficult if not impossible to resist careless or extractive research practices. Academic politics of citation and compensation of activist contributions appeared to me as important interventions to challenge this divide between object and subject of knowledge, in particular when political struggle is intrinsically linked to epistemic justice. Yet that doesn't solve the wider and structural questions of what knowledge counts and for who?

In this respect, Claire's propositions to focus on journals for a more transparent process of publication and a better open access policy are crucial and I endorse them fully. I also join Camilla regarding the need for a strong politics of translation of/for the diaspora literature but also for more pluri-linguistic academic discussions on race that are often English-dominated.

As for communication towards non-academic and wider audiences, which should be as valued as publication within peer-reviewed high ranked international journals. Alongside the public interventions and scientific support for different kinds of work aiming at reflecting on the subjects we're specialized in, I'm thinking of cultural productions for the general public. We don't have the impact of Netflix series or even comics, children books, TV programs and I would love to see such a development in the future. I'm thinking that comics about antiracist activists showing the challenges and struggles Black people and people of African descent are confronted with in their daily life would be a gorgeous way to show the entanglement of identity, material and political issues.

Kimberly

For me, I work to achieve an active praxis by expanding my public presence beyond academia. As most academic research and its resulting articles and monographs have remained out of reach for general audiences due to cost, limited access, or indecipherable language, I have focused on presenting and writing for public audiences. The war in Ukraine has galvanized more scholars in my field to reach the public because the costs of widespread ignorance have been made frighteningly clear. Still, it should not take armed conflict for us to facilitate discussion and engagement with the public. By public, I mean beyond the reading communities of college-educated, middle- and higher-class people, reaching out to our colleagues in K-12 education, community college and technical programs, and adult education can facilitate this process. In the United States, anti-intellectual forces have galvanized to corporatize the university and to denigrate the work of scholars whose work is not 'useful' to the perceived market. Academic terms such as diversity and inclusion, critical race theory, and intersectionality have been anathematized to signal 'wokeness.' They are thus undermined and excised from higher education, from

[87] Sibo Kanobana, 'Serving the White Order: Making Bilingual Security Workers in Brussels', (PhD diss. Ghent University,2022).

Ivy League institutions to state-level flagship universities. It is essential to the survival of academics, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences, to reach the public and demystify what we do as academics.

As others have pointed out, we face increasing pressures on faculty (those able to have full-time employment as faculty) to produce peer-reviewed publications with declining research budgets and limited time. On top of that, as former AHA President James H. Sweet's controversial comments have shown, maintaining 'historical objectivity' through the monograph and journal article remains the standard criteria for earning tenure.[88] Public engagement is often seen as the proverbial cherry on top of a sundae of research output. Thus, blog posts, podcast interviews, media interviews, editorials, and other mediums that reach far greater audiences than our paid academic journals are considered secondary to academic success. Unfortunately, that also means that those who could benefit from and often are the subjects of our work are relegated to the background. *EHQ* and other journals cannot shift the attitude of research-based institutions to value public engagement and teaching. However, providing alternative pathways to publication (such as collections of short articles, promoting collaborative publications, etc.) is an avenue to break through this impasse.

We must radically rethink what we value as scholars and the purpose of our scholarship. From there, we must struggle against the encroachment of profit-margin-focused management and oversight in the academy. At the same time, we have to fight against the perversion and censorship of our research by state legislatures and interest groups who aim to continue the oppression and marginalization of the most vulnerable in our communities. These are daunting tasks, but we have no choice but to fight.

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[88] James H. Sweet, 'Is History History? Identity Politics and Teleologies of the Present', *Perspectives on History*, 17 August 2022, https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/is-history-history-identity-politics-and-teleologies-of-the-present-september-2022/

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