

# Inequalities Unbound. Transregional Entanglements and the Creolization of Europe<sup>1</sup>

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“A casual traveler to the Caribbean region would notice [...] the variegated appearance of the people, and the rainbow spectrum of “nonwhiteness” among them. European and American cities have now taken on some of that once startling variety and color. But in the Caribbean, it is the way people have looked for a very long time.”

Sidney Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies*

## 1. The Transnationalization of Europe?

The widespread notion that processes of creolization have historically been characteristic of non-European regions more generally, and of the Caribbean in particular, has so far tended to rule out references to Europe as a creole or creolizing continent. On the contrary: the emergence of nation-states beginning in seventeenth century Europe with the Treaty of Westphalia was usually viewed as the gradual overcoming of multinational political organizations and multiethnic empires and thus as the starting

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<sup>1</sup> Research for this paper was made possible by funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) for my fellowship at the research network [desiguALdades.net](http://desiguALdades.net) (see Boatcă 2011). I am grateful for valuable exchanges with members of the network during that time. I also thank Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Shirley Ann Tate for detailed feedback and insightful comments on previous drafts of this chapter and the editors of the present volume for further helpful suggestions.

point of processes of ethnic homogenization in most parts of Europe (Therborn 1995). Recent approaches instead view transnationalization as a major way in which the larger process of globalization affects what is being conceived as a post-Westphalian Europe with increasingly porous national borders. From this point of view, transnational flows of people, goods, and capital appear as a relatively new trend, and the growing influx of migrants as an unprecedented effect of transnational processes on a formerly relatively homogeneous European context (Berger and Weiß 2008; Pries 2008). The result is described as “Europeanization”—of political institutions, social structures, or cultural patterns—and as the realization of old cosmopolitan aspirations toward overcoming nationalism, acknowledging difference, and achieving world citizenship (Delanty and Rumford 2005, 193).

In turn, the present chapter argues that Europe has to be understood as a creolized space by virtue of its very colonial entanglements with regions such as the Caribbean, in the creolization of which it itself played an essential role. Against this background, transborder processes can be shown to have shaped inequalities within Europe as well as between Europe and other world regions for more than five centuries. At least since the European expansion into the Americas, transregional migration, the Atlantic slave trade, and the unequal economic exchange between shifting metropolitan and peripheral areas have provided economic, cultural and political entanglements that decisively shaped the inequality structures of both the former colonizing and the former colonized regions.

In order to show the historical continuities between “creolization” as a term originally coined to describe processes specific to the Caribbean and what is being analyzed today under the label of the “transnationalization” of (Western) Europe, the example of the Caribbean as “Europe’s first colonial backyard” (Mintz 1998, 127) is used in the following as a paradigmatic case. It is argued that viewing the transnationalization of Europe as a new phenomenon today and creolization as its outcome requires erasing the transnational experiences of non-European, non-Western and non-White regions such as the Caribbean from social theory as well as disregarding the multiple entanglements between Europe and its colonies throughout the centuries. The project of creolizing Europe is therefore contingent upon creolizing social theory so as to account for the racial, ethnic, and cultural heterogeneity that these transregional entanglements produced both within and outside Europe.

In showing how the transregional flows of people, goods, and capital established early transborder links among inequality patterns between Europe and its colonies in the Caribbean as early as the sixteenth century, the paper thus claims that theorizing the continuum of structures of power linking colonialism to (post)coloniality is an essential element in the joint endeavor of creolizing Europe and creolizing theory. Examples from throughout the Americas are subsequently used to make this case.

## 2. The Caribbean as Creolized Transborder Space

Seldom taken into account in mainstream social theory, which generalized from the experience of Europe, the Caribbean, which instead counted as a historically particular case, was constructed as Europe's antithesis. As both scholars of and from the Caribbean have repeatedly pointed out, transborder connections, culture flows, and the transnational movement of people and capital have characterized the region from the moment of its conquest and up to the present day (Glick Schiller 2009; Grosfoguel et al. 2009; Mintz 1998).<sup>2</sup> As the first region to be colonized by Europe in the sixteenth century and the last one to be (incompletely) decolonized in the twentieth, the Caribbean was shaped by the worldwide demand and supply of colonial labor throughout the entire history of the capitalist world-economy: despite its modest geographical size, it received between one-third and a half of all the enslaved Africans shipped to the New World between 1492 and the end of the eighteenth century (see fig.1), significant numbers of indentured and contracted European laborers during much of the same period, as well as indentured Indian and Chinese workers after the formal abolition of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century (Rediker 2007; Grosfoguel et al. 2009; Mintz 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> The use of the term 'transnational' is of course anachronistic in the context of the sixteenth century. Therefore, when referring to any time period before the emergence of Western European nation-states, I use the term 'trans-border' instead, but employ 'transnational' in order to make visible the parallels with the discourse of transnationalization in sociology and anthropology today.

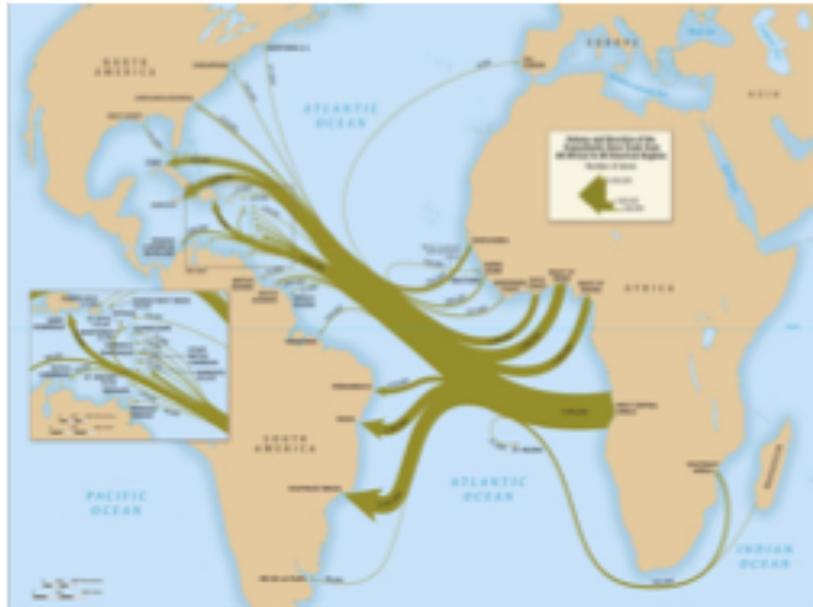


Fig. 1. Volume and Direction of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from all African to all American regions.

(Source: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, [www.slavevoyages.org](http://www.slavevoyages.org))

In turn, the first half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a circuit of intra-regional migration of cheap labor force to the larger Caribbean islands where U.S.-led corporations operated; after World War II, when cheap labor from the non-independent territories of the Caribbean was explicitly and massively recruited to work in Western Europe and the United States, the entire region turned into a source of transcontinental emigration (Grosfoguel et al. 2009). The Caribbean has therefore been repeatedly theorized in terms of transculturation, creolization, and hybridity, while concepts such as “remittance societies,” “circular migration,” or “diaspora,” now widely used within the growing field of transnational studies, have first been coined in relation with the Caribbean region (Mintz 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Glick Schiller 2009). As long as methodological nationalism reigned supreme in both area studies and the social sciences more generally, however, such trans-border phenomena were conceived as anomalies and the Caribbean

itself was treated as a deviant case, the reality of which was irrelevant for anthropological theory-building (Glick Schiller 2009, 22). For sociology and political economy, whose emphasis until very recently lay on *modern industrial societies*, the Caribbean instead served for a long time as a paradigmatic example of the contrast between slavery and free labor and the respective connotations of backwardness, inefficiency, underdevelopment, and non-white labor characterizing New World slavery as a particular form of agricultural organization. As such, they constituted the opposite of the freedom, the modern character, and the high productivity of the white European wage-workers—which supposedly lay at the root of the development of industrial capitalist ‘economies.’

Indeed, as a continent of mass emigration, which, alongside nation-building processes, expulsions, and waves of ethnic cleansing, had produced exceptionally high levels of ethnic homogenization, Europe appeared to be, until the mid-twentieth century, the opposite of the racially and ethnically diverse Caribbean. Especially, but not only during the nineteenth century, all Western European states but France were countries of transcontinental emigration—mainly to the Americas. Intracontinental migration, in turn, was negligible. In 1950, the non-White population in the UK was estimated at 0.4 percent, while the ‘foreign’ population amounted to less than 5 percent throughout Western Europe except Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> It was only with the post-war recruitment of migrant labor and the aftermath of the administrative decolonization in the early nineteen sixties that Europe as a continent became “more of an arrival hall than a departure lounge for intercontinental migration” (Therborn 1995, 41). All Western European states<sup>4</sup> became recipients of large migrant populations: first, from recently decolonized African states and from ever more dictatorial states in Latin America; subsequently, several waves of unskilled labor

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3 Therborn (1995, 49) rightly points out that the OECD data quoted here was not collected having the *foreign-born* population in mind (which would alter the estimate of ethnic heterogeneity in Europe), nor did the category ‘ethnic minorities’ for the UK explicitly differentiate between white and non-white populations. A conceptualization based solely on citizenship of course fails to account, among other things, for the presence of (non-White) colonial subjects possessing metropolitan citizenship on European soil. However, as detailed in the following, their numbers can reasonably be assumed to have been very low before the nineteen sixties.

4 Except Ireland. France experienced a first wave of immigration in the eighteen thirties, followed by an influx of colonial immigrants from North Africa, especially Algeria; Switzerland actively recruited foreign labor in the late nineteenth century, as did Belgium after World War I (see Therborn 1995, 41; 51).

migrants contracted by government policies of postwar economic reconstruction from adjacent or formerly colonized countries; and, after 1990, hundreds of thousands of Eastern European war refugees. If creolization—a geographically and historically *specific* process related to the mass movement of people and goods from Europe and Africa to the Americas and the creation of new cultures and peoples in the plantation contact zones—has acquired currency in the context of transnationalism and globalization studies, this is, according to Sidney Mintz, because “the world has now become a macrocosm of what the Caribbean region was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century” (Mintz 1998, 120). Far from being an instance of historical particularism concerning one specific world region and one unique socioeconomic context, the Caribbean merely encompassed many transborder processes and transregional entanglements at a “theoretically inconvenient time” (Mintz 1998, 124).

To this day, inequality patterns in both Western Europe and the Caribbean can be traced back to the historical entanglements between the two regions since colonial times, and thus have to be understood as relational—rather than diverging or contrasting—inequality structures. Their mainstream conceptualization throughout the twentieth century as “modern industrial society” in the case of Europe and “non-modern, pre-industrial society” in the case of the Caribbean and other non-European, non-White regions however results in their treatment as disconnected contexts of social inequality, to be explained and analyzed primarily in terms of class on the one hand and of ethnicity/race on the other (Boatcă 2010, 45). In turn, highlighting the severely undertheorized notion that European modernity was emigrant, i.e., extra-European emigrant (Therborn 1995, 50) and incorporating its colonial counterpart into an inequality concept at the level of the modern/colonial world-system reveals a different picture: As markers of the Others’ position in the division of labor—in which the term Other simultaneously or alternatively denotes the non-European, non-industrial and non-modern—ethnicity and race do not represent ‘new’ categories to be taken into account in the European context, but ones that have recently gained more sociological visibility on account of having become significant in the geopolitical core of the discipline—Western Europe.<sup>5</sup> Creolizing Europe therefore entails the

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5 For a detailed analysis of the divergent treatment of class vs. ethnicity/race and their relationship to mainstream conceptualizations of modernity and social inequality, see Boatcă (2010).

creolization of theory through incorporating the Caribbean experience of an extractive slave economy based on transatlantic trade and interregional migration as central to, and inseparable from, the history of modern industrial Europe. The same is true of further ex-metropolitan and ex-colonized regions in which colonial power structures have endured well into postcolonial times, as explored in the next section.

### 3. Relational Inequalities and Global Processes

Today, the Caribbean is, together with Latin America, the region with the highest inequality worldwide (UNDP 2011). For both policy-makers and mainstream inequality theory, the underlying causes are to be sought at the level of national policies or regional economic patterns, such that Latin America's and the Caribbean's persistent inequality is usually traced back to a lag in the implementation of efficient industrial production, economic liberalism, free labor, and democratic structures that are seen to promote economic redistribution. Thus, high inequality in poor countries that relied for a long time on agriculture and mining under coerced forms of labor (i.e., slavery, but also serfdom or debt peonage) and allowed access to political rights to only a small minority of the population is viewed either as a consequence of traditional structures or as the legacy of colonialism. The inequality patterns of today's wealthy European countries, featuring universal franchise, mass education, and a welfare state on the one hand, and of poor (Latin American) countries, historically characterized by limited access to public education, a long tradition of restricted franchise, and land policies favoring white elites on the other hand are therefore presented as having emerged independently of each other (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 42). At best, the differential impact of colonialism on Latin America and the Caribbean is interpreted as a "reversal of fortune" (Acemoglu et al. 2002)—of previously poor regions becoming rich after the Europeans introduced 'good institutions' encouraging investment, and of previously rich regions becoming poor and more unequal as a result of slavery and economic exploitation by the colonizers. These conceptualizations thus rely on an uncreolized notion of Europe: an autonomous, institutionally self-sustaining, and, at least since the age of industry, economically and politically self-contained region, always a step

ahead of its American colonies, but unrelated to, and essentially unlike them.

The progression from an agrarian to an industrial and finally to a service economy has, however, occurred in Europe alone and as such cannot be generalized to the rest of the world—or even to post-Communist Eastern Europe, for that matter, where processes of re-agrarianization took place on a considerable scale (Therborn 2000). At the same time, the persistent focus on slavery and coerced work as labor forms characteristic of ‘traditional,’ highly polarized, non-European—as opposed to modern European—democratic structures and inequality patterns disregards the essential role of the European slave trade and transatlantic labor migration in setting up slave economies in the Americas and downplays the importance of the ethnic and racial components of inequality in the relationship between Europe and its colonies:

On the one hand, European overseas settlement and conquest prompted massive emigration out of Europe from around 1500 until World War II, and thereby eased both the pressures on income distribution and social conflicts *within* the continent. At the same time, outbound migration reinforced the inner-European ethnic homogeneity that successive waves of ethnic leveling occurring throughout Europe until mid-twentieth century had succeeded to create (Therborn 1995, 39-42). Class organization and identification thus gained preponderance over ethnic allegiance. With the reversal of the migration trend in the latter half of the twentieth century toward large-scale immigration from Europe’s ex-colonies into the metropole, and—to a lesser extent—with the breakdown of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, ethnic conflict came to the fore as a largely extra-European problem that increasingly poses a threat to Europe.

On the other hand, the European-led construction of ethnic hierarchies accompanying the setting up of extractive export economies in the Americas went hand in hand with the colonial division of labor: Black Africans were incorporated into slavery, Native Americans into various forms of coerced cash-crop labor, White European working class members into indentured labor (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992). Changing labor patterns throughout history and regional variations of this distribution did not fundamentally alter the underlying racial logic according to which non-White labor was essentially unfree and poorly—or not at all—

remunerated.<sup>6</sup> The various migration processes enabling this racial/ethnic hierarchy were, however, very differently visible in the theorization of inequality patterns of the region. While the flows of people from the colonial metropole to the conquered periphery have been seen as part of European social history and have been theorizable in terms of overseas class formation (but not with respect to their impact on the Native American population), the slave trade responsible for the emergence of the Black African labor force remains absent from social theory more generally and the sociology of social inequality in particular. The contribution of a creolized theory of social inequality would in this case consist primarily in a shift of perspective:

Instead of seeing the impact of colonialism as a “reversal of fortune,” as proposed by economic historians today, the gradual impoverishment of previously rich colonies in the Americas has been alternatively analyzed as “the development of underdevelopment” of the periphery by the metropole (Frank 1972) or as „the paradox of American development“ (Bergquist 1996) in a global capitalist system: while the resource-richest American colonies initially thrived on the exports of primary commodities produced under slave or indentured labor, as did Upper Peru and Bolivia on silver mining until the end of the seventeenth century, Saint Domingue/Haiti on sugar and South Carolina on rice until the end of the eighteenth, all are currently among the poorest and/or least industrialized; at the same time, Britain’s New England colonies, which started out as the poorest in the Americas, had by the end of the colonial period become the richest and had set the standards against which the industrialization processes of other regions had subsequently been measured (Bergquist 1996, 15). Relational approaches such as those proposed within dependency and world-systems perspectives reject the culturalist logic behind the conventional explanation, which traces such divergent developments back to the character of British (or French) colonial

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6 After independence, too, the racial and ethnic inequality patterns of the former American colonies remained markedly different. In the United States and in most countries of the Southern Cone (except Brazil), Indian servants and Black slaves represented demographic minorities, while wage laborers and independent producers accounted for the bulk of the local economic production after decolonization; in turn, in most other Ibero-American societies, serfdom was the social condition of the majority of the indios, who made up the largest segment of the population in Mexico, Central America, and the Andes, whereas Blacks predominated in Brazil and the Caribbean (Quijano 2006, 201; 203).

institutions as against Spanish and Portuguese ones and the different cultural legacies they imprinted on their respective colonies: the Protestant work ethic favoring the emergence of modern capitalism in North America (except Mexico) on the one hand, the Catholic feudal institutions shaping the development of Latin America on the other. In particular, as Bergquist points out, the influence of British culture and institutions, as well as the ethnic composition of the colonizers had been the same in the case of both southern and northern British colonies in the New World; therefore, the reasons for the widely differing developments rather lie in the natural resources, labor supplies, as well as the labor systems developed according to these conditions in each particular location. The organization of labor around wage-work and production for the domestic market in the New England and the mid-Atlantic British colonies, as opposed to the slave-based economies of the U.S. South and the British Caribbean, geared toward export of raw materials to Europe, had consequently been a matter of strategic location in the existing trade system as well as of natural and human resources (Bergquist 1996, 24).

In contrast to the internal division of labor between the industrial U.S. North and its slaveholding South, Bergquist therefore points out that the different trajectory of the former British and Spanish American colonies in the post-independence era could best be grasped by remarking that, unlike the U.S. South, Latin America and the Caribbean had ‘no North,’ that is, no region where a free labor system dating back to the colonial era had produced a relatively egalitarian, rapidly industrializing society as a basis for liberal political ideas (Bergquist 1996, 36). Instead, they themselves became the ‘South’ providing luxury commodities and raw materials to Western Europe and, later, the U.S., which could thus develop into an increasingly industrial, egalitarian, and democratic ‘North’ within the international division of labor of global capitalism.

Unlike in the Western European case, the homogenization of Latin American and Caribbean societies had entailed the extermination or exclusion of the indigenous population and the political exclusion of Blacks and mestizos, and as such could not have led to nationalization or democracy. Instead, “the construction of the nation, and above all the central state, has been conceptualized and deployed against American Indians, blacks, and mestizos” (Quijano 2000a, 567). The highly polarized, undemocratic system based on the exploitation of unfree labor thus created was a response to this particular set of geographic and

socioeconomic factors, rather than of any cultural or institutional legacy. Or, in Bergquist's cogent formulation: "These societies failed to develop in the post-independence era in the way their once-poor, predominantly white, northern neighbors did not because they had too many blacks, but because they had too many slaves" (1996, 33), i.e., it was the impact of slavery, rather than any racial essence that accounted for the persistent inequality patterns. To this day, the gap between rich and poor is smaller in those Caribbean countries where no large indigenous population survived the European invasion and no slave plantation economy was set up, such as Costa Rica. The same holds true for other parts of Latin America in which both middle and lower classes were primarily of European origin, with lower inequality levels in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and the Brazilian South (Hein and Huhn 2009). Conversely, the overwhelmingly white population of Western European metropolises was not in itself a precondition for the emergence of modern nation-states or industrial economies. Instead, due to the very existence of overseas colonies to which many poor Europeans emigrated as indentured servants and to the region's inadequacy for large-scale export economies, it constituted a racially less stratified basis for free labor economies.

Incorporating the economic history of the Americas as a crucial factor enabling Western European and North American industrial development thus "creolizes" mainstream European and Eurocentric sociological theory by making transregional entanglements between Europe and its colonies an essential part of the explanation of "the rise of the West" itself.

#### 4. The Creolization of What? Inequalities and the Unit of Analysis

The conclusion Bergquist reaches pursuing an historical line of argument in turn constitutes the point of departure of a world-historical analysis of how the *economic* legacy of colonialism relates to the differences between today's inequality patterns. On the basis of the Gini coefficients of ninety-six countries, Korzeniewicz and Moran (2009) argue that national inequality patterns can be grouped into two distinct and relatively stable clusters, characterized by high or low levels of inequality, respectively. Not surprisingly, the high inequality cluster (above a Gini coefficient of 0.502)

contains the prominent examples of inequality research, South Africa and Brazil, but also the bulk of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, whereas Australia, Japan, Canada, the whole of Western Europe and parts of Eastern Europe fall into the low inequality cluster (below 0.329).

The high-inequality pattern has been characterized by *systematic exclusion* on the basis of ascriptive criteria such as race, ethnicity, and gender in order to limit access to economic, social and political opportunity. In turn, the low-inequality pattern has involved widespread *relative inclusion* through the extension of property and political rights increasingly derived from achieved (rather than ascribed) characteristics, such as one's education level, and the development of welfare states – which further buttressed patterns of democratic inclusion. Korzeniewicz and Moran find that membership in both clusters can be traced back in time to the eighteenth century, which prompts them to coin the term “inequality equilibria” for both cases (2009, 23). While there has been movement in and out of each cluster at several points in time, and countries such as Argentina, Venezuela, or Uruguay, but also the USA since about the year 2000 occupy an in-between position today, the most striking result is that virtually no country has been able to shift from the high to the low inequality cluster. At the same time, the origins of the institutional arrangements typical of the low inequality equilibrium (LIE) are less apparent than those characterizing the high inequality equilibrium (HIE), which clearly go back to colonial slavery (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 31).

Against the state-centered view of most inequality studies as well as the modernization paradigm, both of which focused on *national* policies for reducing inequality, the authors consequently advance a perspective considering *the world-system* in the long-term. This particular shift in the unit of analysis and in the temporal scope of prevailing inequality structures reveals that high-inequality equilibria historically constituted ‘innovations’ in the world-economy, while low-inequality equilibria represented relative comparative advantages over these as well as over earlier arrangements. Far from the archaic and backward forms of labor and market organization for which they are usually held, the various forms of coerced labor in general and slavery in particular had instead been highly profitable ones. Their implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean, i.e., the areas with the highest income inequality today, had rapidly turned the region into the world epicenter for the creation and accumulation of wealth from the period following European colonization until well into the eighteenth

century (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 44). During the same time, Europe and the North American colonies—today’s low inequality havens—although relying on manufacturing and a free-labor system, were marginal, unprofitable and largely dependent on imports for meeting their economic needs.

Rather than assuming a simple correlation between equity and economic growth, as postulated by modernization theory, the authors therefore suggest that the relationship between the two has changed over time. From high inequality generating more wealth under innovative extractive institutions such as plantation slavery in the New World, the relationship shifted to low inequality contexts gaining a comparative advantage over the former by means of different institutional or political practices such as tax or wage-setting policies, extended access to education, or the regulation of international migration.

What Bergquist had treated as the paradox of American development, Korzeniewicz and Moran thus analyze using Schumpeter’s notion of creative destruction of innovation practices, interpreted as a “constant drive toward inequality.” The emergence of extractive institutions of high-inequality contexts such as plantation slavery and coerced cash-crop labor are analyzed as significant innovations that provided competitive advantages to colonial and settler elites and allowed for an extraordinary accumulation of wealth and power in the area (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 55). In such contexts, it was social hierarchies based on *ascribed characteristics*—chiefly, race—which allowed for the high degree of polarization of the emerging labor structure along the lines of white supremacy vs. non-white subordination. Conversely, areas such as the New England colonies, in which the native labor force was scarce, but the amount of land available for cultivation abundant, encouraged the spread of private property across the adult male population. The latter areas thus maintained a pattern of relatively low inequality, which, in its turn, gained a comparative advantage over the high-inequality pattern after the onset of large-scale industrialization. Although the low levels of inequality in such regions gradually came to be perceived as structured around *achieved characteristics* such as one’s level of education or professional position, their long-term stability had nevertheless been safeguarded by restricting physical access to these regions on the basis of *ascribed categories*, especially national identity and citizenship, through the control of immigration flows.

What appears as a pattern of *relative inclusion* of the population through redistributive state policies, democratic participation, and widespread access to education in low inequality contexts when taking the nation-state as a unit of analysis is thus revealed to entail the *selective exclusion* from the same rights of large sectors of the population located *outside* national borders, once the analytical frame shifts to the world-economy (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 78). The maintenance of national low inequality patterns of relative inclusion consequently requires the enforcement of selective exclusion on the state border, and thus the (re-)production of high inequality patterns between nations. According to Korzeniewicz and Moran, this has especially been the case for the borders of *nation-states* since the nineteenth century, making the nation-state itself the main criterion for social stratification on a global scale ever since. Thus, late nineteenth-century mass migration across national borders led to significant convergence of wage rates between core and semiperipheral countries—mainly Europe and the so-called settler colonies of North America, Australia and New Zealand—but also tended to raise the competition for resources and employment opportunities within receiving countries, often located in the New World. The result was an increase in inequality in some national contexts, in which the large inflow of unskilled labor caused rising wage differentials relative to skilled labor, and a decrease of inequality in others—i.e., in the sending countries, where the income differential between skilled and unskilled workers declined and overall wages rose.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Europe, migration to the New World provided a poverty outlet to some fifty million Europeans or twelve percent of the continent's population between 1850 and 1930 (Therborn 1995, 40). While almost all European states during this period were primarily sending countries, some experienced out-migration flows as high as fifty percent of the national population (in the case of the British Isles) or one-third of it (in the case of Italy), to the point of causing debates as to the rights of states to restrict *emigration*. Large-scale emigration and the high level of ethnic homogeneity attained by the 1950s had ensured that processes of collective organization and social stratification within Europe occurred in terms of *class interests* and *class conflict* rather than ethnic or racial

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<sup>7</sup> Since the constitution of formal labor markets tended to exclude the participation of women, the overwhelming majority of the population accounting for the mass labor migration of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was male (Korzeniewicz et al. 2003, 24).

allegiance.<sup>8</sup> Labor unrest, the rise of scientific racism by the end of World War I, and social and economic protectionist measures in the wake of the Great Depression gradually made restrictions on *immigration* across metropolitan countries necessary, while strengthening notions of citizenship as a basis for entitlement to social and political rights (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 84). With the decisive reversal of the European migration trend in the 1960s, the ethnic and racial conflicts that accompanied the rise in immigration in the form of ex-colonial subjects, guest workers (turned permanent), and (allegedly) incessant flows of labor migrants and refugees appeared to be—and were often discussed as—forms of (ethnic and/or racial) stratification foreign to the *class* structure otherwise characterizing Western Europe.<sup>9</sup> The contribution of European colonial expansion and decolonization to the changed circumstances did not enter into the explanation except, at most, as an analogy with inner-European territorial conflicts over ethnicity and religion, i.e., as internal colonialism. When exogenous factors were taken into account, they were only supposed to explain the coexistence of class and ethnic stratification in colonial societies as a result of intervention by the metropole, not, however, the social structure of the metropole itself, paradoxically seen as having developed—and stratified—endogenously (e.g. Hechter 1971).

However, when approaching the issue of inequality patterns from a relational perspective encompassing both metropolises and peripheries, the *ascribed characteristics* of nationhood and citizenship are revealed to be as important for global stratification as class, usually considered to depend on levels of *achievement*. Yet, while *class membership* has regulated the differential access to resources at the level of national populations, citizenship—i.e.,

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8 Although ‘whiteness’ constituted the underlying common denominator of processes of collective identification within Europe, and low class positions correlated with non-whiteness, racial and ethnic belonging were far less useful indicators of an individual’s position in the social structure of European societies than in the rigid racial hierarchies Europeans had imposed in the colonies.

9 For the United States, Korzeniewicz and Moran (2008, 10) show a parallel first trend toward declining income inequality as restrictions on immigration increased in the beginning of the twentieth century. In turn, the 1965 reform of the U.S. immigration policy, itself tailored to the active recruitment of labor migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean in response to the rising demand for unskilled labor throughout the world-economy, resulted in a sharp rise in income inequality (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2008, 24). As in the case of Europe, the increase in inequality seemed to be a foreign-induced phenomenon directly linked to the inflow of (mostly uneducated) immigrants, thus prompting anti-immigrant sentiment and policies in response.

*nation-state membership*—has restricted or undercut both the mobility and the access to resources of the poorest segments of the world population for much of the twentieth century. Shifting the unit of analysis to the world-system thus shows that ascriptive criteria remain the fundamental basis of stratification and inequality and that national identity has been the most salient among them (Korzeniewicz and Moran 2009, 88). In other words, the long-term maintenance of low inequality havens in the world's well-off polities has been contingent upon the institutionalization of exclusive citizenship rights, most frequently barring the non-White, non-Western or non-European from entry or full inclusion. Initially characteristic of the Western European context alone, citizenship entitlements subsequently became an effective mechanism of state resistance to creolization throughout the Western world.

The issue of citizenship is thereby revealed to have been relevant not only for the relative social and political inclusion of the populations of Western European nation-states, but just as much for the selective exclusion of the colonized and/or non-European populations from the same social and political rights throughout recent history. As has been documented for the postcolonial migration flows between several Western European countries and their former colonies, as well as for the U.S. and its 'protectorates', the possession of the citizenship of the former metropole remains to this day a crucial factor deciding the timing and the destination of ex-colonial subjects' emigration as well as the struggle for independence in the remaining colonial possessions: While people in today's occupied territories are more likely to migrate to the metropole whose citizenship rights they hold as long as the colonial relationship allows it, relinquishing such rights by claiming statehood lowers the occupied territories' incentives for achieving independence. Thus, fear of losing Dutch citizenship and the privileges it incurs has led to a dramatic increase in Surinamese emigration to the Netherlands in the years preceding Surinam's independence from the 'motherland' (1974/75) and remains the main reason behind the lack of political pressure for independence in the Dutch Antilles and Aruba today (van Amersfoort and van Niekerk 2006). Analogously, the extension of United States citizenship rights to the populations of all Caribbean colonies after World War II triggered a massive transfer of labor migrants from the Caribbean to the U.S. Migrants from non-independent territories such as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands could thus enjoy both the welfare and the social

rights (though not the political rights) that went with U.S. citizenship, which constituted a strong incentive for migration across the lower social strata in their home countries. In turn, only the more educated, middle sectors of the working class from formally independent Caribbean states like Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Vincent, who did not possess metropolitan citizenship, chose to migrate to the U.S. (Cervantes-Rodríguez et al. 2009).

### Creolizing Europe as creolizing theory

The shift of perspective towards a relational concept of space, viewed as capable of accounting for transnational inequality structures, has featured prominently among the solutions for overcoming methodological nationalism that various authors have advanced in recent years. Quite often, the plea for replacing nation-state centered “container concepts” with transnational or cosmopolitan “relational concepts” of space entails the explicit shift in the unit of analysis from individual societies to the world-economy proposed within the world-systems approach (Weiß 2005; Beck 2007). However, its proponents view the shift from methodological nationalism to methodological cosmopolitanism as a necessary adjustment to the qualitative change that twentieth century globalization has operated in structures of inequality, but as irrelevant for the assessment of earlier or ‘classical’ inequality contexts – for which the nation-state framework is still considered appropriate.

Instead, this chapter has used the example of the transnational processes and transregional entanglements characterizing Latin America and the Caribbean since the sixteenth century in order to reveal the extent to which mainstream analyzes of social inequality rely on an overgeneralization of the Western European experience as well as on the erasure of non-Western, non-White experiences from sociological theory-building. The twin fallacies of overgeneralization and erasure were made possible by two interrelated tendencies of Eurocentric sociological production: first, the historical indebtedness of core categories of the sociology of social inequality, especially class, to the socioeconomic context of Western European industrial society and to the rise of the nation-state rendered class conflict, proletarianization, and social mobility within industrial nations more visible than colonialism, the slave trade, and European

emigration into the New World. Second, this differential visibility made for the disproportionate representation of the former processes in mainstream sociological theory as opposed to the latter. Disregarding the massive dislocation of people triggered by the European expansion into the Americas since the sixteenth century, as well as the impact which subsequent migration processes have had on the ethnic homogenization of core areas on the one hand and on processes of racialization and ethnicization in peripheral and semiperipheral ones on the other were essential in reproducing a Eurocentric/Occidentalist perspective. The establishment and maintaining of a sociology of migration devoid of colonizers as well as of colonial subjects and a sociology of inequality and stratification devoid of race and ethnicity until well into the twentieth century were the consequence (Boatcă 2010).

Instead of heralding transnationalization as a new phenomenon, it would therefore be both analytically and politically helpful to adopt creolization as a shift of perspective. In order to account for the *present* of Europe as not racially exclusively white, not ethnically or culturally homogeneous, and not socially stratified according to achieved characteristics in enclosed national containers, what is needed is an adequate un-erasure of the *history* of the non-White, non-European or non-Western regions from social scientific theory-building. It was with these regions that Europe was militarily, economically and culturally entangled for centuries and without which it would not have become hybrid, creole, or transcultural. The unerasure of the non-European from mainstream social theory would not only reveal a far more creolized history of Europe than the one we are accustomed to reading, but would also result in creolized theory – one that does not overgeneralize from the particular history of its own geopolitical location, but that accounts for the continuum of structures of power linking geopolitical locations to colonial through postcolonial times.

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