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# Racializing Affect

## A Theoretical Proposition

by Ulla D. Berg and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas

Despite the recent boom in scholarly works on affect from a range of disciplines, scant attention has been paid to the intersection of affect and racialization processes, either historically or in contemporary contexts. This paper situates the diachronic articulation of race and affect—particularly in terms of the historical everyday lives and the political, economic, and material contexts of populations from Latin American and Caribbean backgrounds—in anthropological studies of “racialization” and the “affective turn.” Drawing on a broad reading of both scientific and popular constructions of affect among Latin American and US Latino populations, we propose the concept of “racialized affect” to account for the contradictions embedded in the study of race and affect, both separately and at their intersections. We highlight what we see as the two cornerstones of our theoretical intervention: on the one hand, a conception of “liable affect” results in a simplified, undermined subjectivity of populations racialized as Other, and, on the other hand, a conception of “empowering affect” perpetuates the privileged and nuanced affective subjectivity frequently reserved for whites in the United States and for self-styled “whitened” elites in Latin America.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly used the concept of affect to critique the long-held assumption that capital accumulation and economic projects inherently conflict with the intimate, affective realm of human experience, an assumption that has sustained distinctions between private and public, between “inner-world” and social contexts, and between subjectivity and political economy in anthropology and the social sciences. While some effort has been made in anthropology to situate affect in structures and relations of power—including its entanglements with normativity, inequality, and violence—contemporary studies of affect have nevertheless developed rather independently of the scholarship on race and racialization and outside the purview of critical examinations of “whiteness.” Yet, as we demonstrate here, racialization processes have been integral to, and at times constitutive of, the very conceptions of “emotion,” “feeling,” or “sentiment” that have historically produced, highlighted, and explained racial difference and served to uphold dominant racial ideologies. Latin American migrants and US Latino populations have fig-

ured prominently in both scholarly discussions of “race” in the Americas and popular representations of affective expressions (“Latin people” as hot-blooded being the most salient example). In this paper, we propose the concept of “racialized affect” as an analytical tool to examine the contradictions embedded in the study of race and affect, both separately and at their intersection.

In this preliminary attempt to theorize affect as inseparable and in diachronic articulation with racialization processes, we acknowledge that an analytical focus on affect gives us a vocabulary to talk about intersubjectivity in a way that does not negate, but in fact necessarily evokes, a series of broader material conditions and historical trajectories of which populations of color are highly conscious. Viewing affect not as an expressed or observed emotional response or only as “a medium through which subjects act on others and are acted upon” (Richard and Rudnykyj 2009:62), we focus on the radically distinct, racializing, often public, and unequal ways in which affective practices, emotive manifestations, and evaluations of personhood are experienced and lived among Latin American migrants and US Latinos. A perspective on “racialized affect,” therefore, contributes not just to scholarship on affect and political economy within the discipline of anthropology but also to the scholarship on race, critical race theory, migration, and Latino and Latin American studies, by proposing a more nuanced examination of “racialization” that foregrounds political economy and historical context as inseparable from the subjective complexity of racialized populations and national and international projects.

While studies of affect have proliferated significantly in recent years—inspiring some scholars to refer to an “affect-

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tive turn” in the social sciences (Clough and Halley 2007; Leys 2011; McElhinny 2010)—we depart from dominant conceptions of affect as solely intensity, flow, and movement and attend specifically to the ways in which affect is embedded in larger politicoeconomic projects. We are inspired by Ruth Leys, who masterfully criticizes Massumi and other leading cultural theorists for assuming that affect functions as a layer of preconscious “priming to act,” such that embodied action is a matter of being attuned to and coping with the world without the input of rational content and intentionality (see Leys 2011:442, n. 22). We subscribe instead to an “economies-of-affect” perspective that considers affect as relational and intersubjective, in contradistinction to the psychologically individualistic conception of “emotion” and as a mediator of economic transformations in particular materialist and historical contexts (see Richard and Rudnyckyj 2009). Unlike other scholars who also embrace this perspective, however, we privilege how affect operates in the production of “race” and in processes of racialization that accompany global capitalist transformations and local neoliberal aspirations. We insist on qualifying “affect” as “racialized” to emphasize the centrality of racial projects that sustain US nationalism, imperialist and colonial interventions in Latin America, and the “emotional” (in)equalities entrenched in “Latino” and “Latin American” prototypes. By adopting this conceptual lens, we remain attentive to affect as a vital set of dynamic registers of everyday life, practices, and experiences. Neither affect nor race occupies a bigger concentric circle in our analysis, as both are shaped by the particular political-economic contexts, micro-manifestations of everyday life, and the historical ordinary.

Although we realize that race is produced at the intersections of other systems of power, we believe that, in the context of US imperial and colonial involvement in Latin America and the politics of tractable “illegality” among Latin American migrants and Latinos in the United States, race is arguably a dominant lens for understanding other forms of inequality. We see migration as a key social process and site for the production of racial affect, and thus we privilege the relation between race and migration, and that between global-South migrants and racialized minorities, to situate Latino and Latin American racialization in a political economy of transnational labor migration that has a direct relationship to US imperial, colonial, and financial interest in Latin America and the Caribbean. This framing aims to highlight how, once in the United States, recently arrived Latin American migrants and especially their US-born children become the “embodiment” of everything associated with the always-already criminalized US-born minority, most closely associated with the experience of African Americans (see Ramos-Zayas 2012). As fellow anthropologist Edgar Rivera-Colon notes, race continues to be central here, given white supremacy as a national and global strategy of constructing hegemony (personal communication, January 2014). Our proposition for an attention to “affect” and “race” as productive and reproductive of each other would thus require that anthropologists and social scientists

look at the dynamics within their own institutions to consider the nonpsychological, but emotive, manner in which “race” and practices of subordination and privilege are reproduced.

Even among our own academic peers in Latino and Latin American studies, there is a justified concern that an emergent interest in “affect” could lead to a return to the very cultural taxonomies that historically have served to racialize US Latino and Latin American migrant populations, justify their marginalization, and explain (or explain away) their poverty; these same taxonomies have also been the basis for the implementation of detrimental government and policy actions (e.g., Gutiérrez 2001). This legitimate concern makes it imperative that we clarify that, unlike early anthropological approaches that privileged static views of “culture” to explain variations in individual interiority and its social manifestations or consequences, our perspective on affect centers on a critical examination of the politics of race. We attempt to offer a productive lens to examine the ways in which racial systems are fundamentally designed to create unequal “structures of feeling” (Williams 1977) that complicitly reward a set of “feeling rules” and “emotional work” (Hochschild 1979) and alternative forms of capital (Bourdieu 1977) while disciplining and altogether stigmatizing others. Because we consider “racialization” to be a series of historical and politically informed nation-state projects (Omi and Winant 1994), we view “racialized affect” as endemic to social practices that are decidedly historical, rational, and, in some instances, intentional while also being sustained through embodied practices that are phenomenological, reflective (and self-reflexive), and visceral.

In contrast to some academic work in the humanities in which there has been a search for a foundational, nonrational, even “presocial” formulation of affect, in our work we do not want to dismiss the role of “intentionality” or explain every racial project or affective racial practice as “unconscious” or a product of “ignorance” or “lack of awareness.” We therefore challenge the idea that there is a gap between a subject’s affect and his/her cognition or appraisal of the affective situation or object, such that action and behavior are not held to be determined by “affective dispositions” independent of consciousness and the “mind’s control” (Leys 2011:443). By focusing on a racialized perspective on affect, we avoid separating affect from cognition or meaning in the way that the recent theorists do and privilege a historical perspective that retains intentionality as a central, if at times inadmissible, tenet.<sup>1</sup> In the case of marginalized and racialized populations, the main subjects of our own research, it is particularly critical to situate affect in a dynamic political and historical context, in order to avoid a tendency to sustain the very emotive stereotypes on which colonial and imperial projects have relied when it comes to Latin American and US-born Latino populations. At the same time, we advocate for closer attention to affect in the study of such populations in

1. We draw inspiration here from the works of Lauren Berlant (2011), Ann Stoler (2004), and William Reddy (2001), among others.

order not to negate the existence of rich emotional dynamics that are articulated particularly in reference and self-reference to these larger political and economic conditions and everyday ways in which populations of color “feel historical” (Berlant 2008).<sup>2</sup>

We begin this essay with a partial examination of how affect became a constitutive and foundational concept in racialization practices and the anthropological knowledge produced about Latin American, Caribbean, and US Latino populations during most of the twentieth century. Moreover, we show how the literature on “culture”—and even “race”—produced subjects whose emotive dispositions were either flat, because they were “underperforming” (like some indigenous people in Latin America), or excessive, because they were unable to successfully perform their emotions in ways commensurable to broader economic regimes—or simply chose not to (like US Blacks and Latinos, particularly Puerto Ricans). We highlight what we see as the two cornerstones of our theoretical intervention: on the one hand, a conception of “liable affect” results in a simplified, undermined subjectivity of populations racialized as Other, and, on the other hand, a conception of “empowering affect” perpetuates the privileged and nuanced affective subjectivity frequently reserved for whites in the United States and for self-styled “whitened” elites in Latin America. We conclude our essay by developing “racialized affect” as a possible theoretical lens to highlight racialization and affect as necessarily interconnected, even mutually constituted, political projects and academic fields. For Latin American migrant and US Latino populations to be viewed as successful neoliberal subjects, affect has to become an often-laborious task to master, rather than a “presocial” response, as others have argued (e.g., Massumi 2002*b*). We thus argue that the consequences of both affective manifestations (self-fashioning) and affective being (self-reflection) carry significantly different political-economic consequences for racialized populations than for “white” ones; in this sense, the affect of whites matters in a way that requires that racialized populations develop a sensitivity to it, even though this sensitivity oftentimes is developed unilaterally and not reciprocally.<sup>3</sup>

2. Although we could think, for instance, of September 11 as an explosion of whiteness-as-victimhood on a global scale, we also see ordinary quotidian practices—including decisions to frame one’s individual memories of that incident—as a form of personal insertion into a temporal registry akin to Berlant’s conception of “feeling historical.”

3. We are not prepared to completely collapse an interiority/exteriority distinction. Such a collapse, we believe, would be possible only for populations living in conditions of privilege. For people of color, there is a strategically guarded “interiority” that, although not biological or culturally intrinsic, is self-protective and not necessarily “externalized” under conditions of subordination and colonialism. Thus, throughout this paper, we do not let go of what does remain, in practice, an emotive strategy of creating a “protective interiority” common in populations and communities of color. Rather, we highlight the variation in the intensity of interior/exterior and state the difference between “interiority” as survival strategy and “interiority” as a presumed, innate biocultural “self.” For a broader discussion on strategies of self-

## Latinos, Latin Americans, and Affect in US Anthropology

While discussions of an “affective turn” suggest a new theoretical orientation toward affect in the social sciences, populations in/from Latin America and the Caribbean have been constituted in primarily emotive ways throughout most of the twentieth century. The racialized practices conditioning the social production of these populations have relied on how their affective dispositions have been manipulated, represented, and stereotyped since the colonial period. In this section, we discuss the ways in which affect has been an integral dimension of nation-building projects around “racial mixing” throughout Latin America, in US imperial practices in the region, and in contemporary conceptions of transnational Latin American migrant workers and US Latino communities more broadly.

Racial mixing in its various regional articulations was a dominant nation-building ideology across Latin American and the Caribbean during the nineteenth century and has also been a foundational theme in the region’s social-science research. At the turn of the century, when Latin American political leaders and intellectuals were intensely debating their national projects, the “Indian problem” came to occupy a central place in discussions about social and racial integration and the search for an “authentic” national identity (Mallon 1992; Marzal 1993). These discussions dialogically shaped the consolidation of academic disciplines in the region, including archeology, anthropology, and ethnology. Many of the voices that emerged as central in these larger national debates were anthropologists, who conducted research within national territories on “internal” others (i.e., indigenous peoples). The work of these anthropologists fed directly into attempts to formulate national cultural identities and forge national characters in cultural, racial, and affective terms.<sup>4</sup>

In Mexico, *indigenismo* became influential as an ideology after the revolution of 1910–1920 and greatly influenced anthropological thinking (e.g., Manuel Gamio, Alfonso Caso, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán). *Indigenista* anthropologists held, in often highly paternalistic ways, that indigenous peoples were important in the larger project of the mestizo nation because of their cultural past, but they had little regard for the contemporary indigenous subject (in contrast, black populations in these countries were seldom subject to elevation as national ancestors). Most *indigenista* writers and reformers, both in Mexico and in the Andean region, therefore saw the “citizen option” for the indigenous population as integration and cultural assimilation into the larger mestizo nation (Larson 2005;

protection in communities of color, see the work of Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (1981), bell hooks (1990), and other feminist scholars of color.

4. There is a parallel here with the development of anthropology through studies of Native Americans and the consolidation of US territories.

Wade 2008). These various constructions worked to reproduce reductionist stereotypes about the affective dispositions of indigenous peoples versus their mestizo and *cholo* counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Whereas the Andean provincial mestizo was often seen by whitened elites as violent and despotic and as incarnating a volatile mix of vulgarity, servility, and audacity, the urban *cholo*, in turn, was seen as socially and sexually transgressive, vice ridden, astute, and politically dangerous to self-styled white elites. Indians, in turn, were generally attributed affects that rendered them abject, passive, apathetic, and disengaged except when their “primitive character” pushed them to slip into brutality, savagery, and bestiality, as victims of wretched social conditions. The Aymara Indian, for example, as noted by Brooke Larson, was regarded by turn-of-the-century intellectuals and reformers in Bolivia as displaying “radical mood-swings between total passivity and spasmodic fury” (2005:233); this, in turn, allowed these elites to produce themselves as the custodians of white nationalism as modernity.

When the Indians, who were presumed to be “prepolitical” and to have a primordialist connection to the earth and to the mountains (Orlove 1998), became “mobile” through migration and abandoned their “natural habitat” in the highlands to migrate to the area’s cities, they were seen as becoming morally corrupted and sexually deviant. Only the Indians (or their children) who became “educated” were able to re-route their moral careers, discipline their affects, and redeem themselves through education as “*gente decente*” (de la Cadena 2000:8).

The racialization of mobile Andean populations and of urban *cholos* reflects not only a spatialization of race within the national territory, in which, for the case of Peru, the white/mestizo coasts with its corresponding affects ranked higher than the Andean/Indian highlands, but also a distribution of affect according to where in this hierarchy a subject was socially positioned: “The coast has represented innovation, swiftness, joy, and pleasure; the highlands, have symbolized an almost backward conservatism, a seriousness that approaches sadness, a discipline that approximates civility and an endurance leading virtually to torpidness” (Riva Agüero 1995 [1912]:225, quoted in de la Cadena 2000:21; see also Berg 2015). This and similar depictions of the coast and, by extension, its self-styled white inhabitants as fast, modern, and overflowing with social graces and positive emotions, such as “joy” and “pleasure,” stood in sharp contrast to the Indians in the highlands, who were depicted as “sad,” “servile,” and “torpid” and when migrating as “vice ridden” and transgressive: in other words and in any case, completely benumbed and deprived of a positive affective existence.

5. The term *cholo* is an ethnoracial category used in the Andean region to refer to a person of indigenous origins who has moved to the city and adopted urban clothing and manners (Larson 2005). The term carries a derogatory connotation because of its “in-betweenness” in ethnic and political terms.

Although *indigenismo* captures the racialization of Andean (and Mexican) populations since the early 1900s and provides particular affective tropes to reproduce such racialization into the present, “racial democracy” is arguably the most widely circulated scholarly concept and organic framing of various Latin American national subject-making projects in Brazil and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.<sup>6</sup> In conceptions of racial “harmony” in Brazil, for instance, the Portuguese colonizer becomes symbol of emotive maturity and superior morality. Gilberto Freyre’s (1956 [1933]) understanding of the form of *Luso-tropicalismo* on which the Brazilian nation is presumably built introduced the “benevolent” Portuguese colonial narrative. This foundational colonial narrative, activated under populism in the 1930s, regarded the Portuguese as responsible for the harmonious construction of a new tropical civilization in Brazil that was very different from the conditions of other European colonial empires, including the Spanish-speaking Latin America.

After World War II, Portuguese miscegenation in the colonial era was highlighted as evidence of a Brazilian “racial democracy” that signaled the special capacity of the Portuguese to relate intimately to populations in tropical regions; intimacy, rather than racial violence, became the dominant affective structure underscoring “racial democracy.” Sex between Portuguese men and native women was not only eroticized and idealized—the culprit of racial tolerance and genesis of Brazil’s “racial democracy”—but also saturated with emotive associations. What came out of the combination of three “bloodlines” was, indeed, an ideal, morally superior national subject that was the product of intimacy, benevolence, and tolerance (Freyre 1956 [1933]). In this context, the Portuguese were attributed a special capacity to relate, intimately and sentimentally, to their “subordinates” in their tropical colonies.<sup>7</sup>

While various iterations of equivalent racialized images became foundational nation-building projects throughout continental and Caribbean Latin America (Parker et al. 1991a), alternative productions of racialized affective dispositions were also circulated in enduring US imperialist images. These latter forms of racialization were, in fact, a cornerstone of US foreign policy toward the entire Latin American region for most of the twentieth century.

During the 1940s, after the United States entered World War II, many anthropologists affiliated with Washington and attempted to analyze the national character of the Japanese and the Germans. This continued through World War II and came to include some scholars who studied American modal personality (e.g., Ruth Benedict, David Riesman, Nathan Glazer,

6. Assumptions of “racial harmony” in Latin America have been widely debated. See, for instance, Hanchard (1999), Fry (2000), and de la Fuente (2001).

7. See Brazilian anthropologist’s Roberto DaMatta’s work (1984) for a more intricate sociolinguistic analysis of the Portuguese term *saudade*, as a particular form of longing for these emotive, intimate landscapes.

and even Margaret Mead). The “culture-and-personality” school in the United States resonated in important ways with growing and enduring Latin American emotive stereotypes, sustained in explicit ways through the US “Good Neighbor” policies of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>8</sup> During this period, US foreign policy (or at least propaganda) toward Latin America changed from explicit hostility and military intervention to pan-Americanism, support for local leaders, and the training of national guards, along with significant economic and cultural exchanges. The enduring emotive imagery and long-lasting national stereotypes such policy evoked included views of Latin American populations as culturally and emotionally “excessive,” with a cartoonish, childish, and invariably happy disposition, and always friendly toward their “good neighbor” to the north, who in turn could sustain a self-image as “good,” “tolerant,” and “fatherly” through these very images.

Perhaps two of the better-studied examples of the culturally and emotionally “excessive” stereotypes instigated under the Good Neighbor policy are embodied in the image of Carmen Miranda as the “Tutti Frutti Lady” (late 1930s and 1940s) and Walt Disney’s 1944 animated film *The Three Caballeros* (Parker et al. 1991b). A Portuguese-born Brazilian entertainer, Carmen Miranda arrived in the United States in 1939, encouraged by President Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy, to sign a movie contract in Hollywood. Her carefully stylized and flamboyant Hollywood image was one of a generic *Latinidad* that blurred the distinctions between Brazil, Portugal, Argentina, Mexico, and other countries where the United States had earned a reputation for being a military bully. Carmen Miranda’s appeal to the US public was precisely in her affective persona—a nonthreatening and cartoonish image of the compulsively happy and not particularly intellectual colorful woman who became one of the early globally circulated embodiments of the “Latin bombshell” (Beserra 2003). Although in Brazil figures like Carmen Miranda were rejected, especially by elites, for her performance of particular affective dispositions (Davis 2000), the US government’s insistence on generating stereotypes of “cheerful” Latin American nations remained largely uncriticized by American anthropologists and may have even been endorsed by those partial to studies of “national character.”

It is important to note that the Good Neighbor policy and its corresponding caricaturesque portraits of Latin American national identities emerged around the same time that psychological approaches to culture were gaining prominence in US anthropology. For instance, there was a sudden increase in studies of Puerto Ricans, both in the United States and in Puerto Rico, that seemed invested in producing very particular images of urban life among Puerto Rican migrants

8. The culture-and-personality paradigm has since been extensively scrutinized and criticized from both inside and outside the US academy for its lack of attention to economy and politics and for its tendency to reduce questions of political and economic inequality to questions of individual and group psyche (di Leonardo 1998).

and of a Puerto Rican “psyche” (Briggs 2002). Anthropologist Dan Wakefield, in his ethnography *Islands in the City*, observed

A photographer from a New York daily newspaper came to East 100<sup>th</sup> Street with an assignment to get a picture of “the children playing in the garbage.” It was Sunday morning, and the children were scrubbed and dressed in their finest clothes. . . . None were playing in the garbage. . . . The photographer, getting anxious now, said [to the local minister], “Look—there’s some kids—over there.” He ran to a garbage can, yanked off the lid, and motioned to the silent, staring children. “Hey kids—c’mere—over here. Let’s play.” (Wakefield 1959:213)

This is an example of how the expectations of an external “culture-of-poverty” view by the white photographer on life in El Barrio is disrupted by the silent stares of children, whose complex interiority does not “fit” into any characterization of a presumed Puerto Rican psyche typical of that era.

Politically decontextualized and impressionistic, images of Puerto Rican migrants in the United States were, however, radically different from the “cultural-ecology” ethnographic studies that had been conducted by anthropologists in Puerto Rico itself. In *The People of Puerto Rico* (1956) project, Julian Steward and his team of Columbia University anthropology students—Eric Wolf, Sidney Mintz, Elena Padilla, and Eduardo Seda Bonilla, among others—adopted a materialist approach to examine how changes in Puerto Rico’s economic base as a consequence of US imperialism on the island impacted regional subcultures in their transition from an agrarian to an industrial island economy. In interesting contrast to the view of the “happy-go-lucky” South American of the 1930s or the dysfunctional family and individual mental health of Puerto Rican migrants in the United States, Stewart and his students deployed Marxist materialist models—and ecological variation more broadly—to explain cultural changes in Puerto Rico. While the important academic and political projects behind these cultural-ecology perspectives have to be acknowledged, particularly given the dominance of psychologizing paradigms at the time, these Marxist-inspired models still produced representations of individuals who lacked self-awareness, inner insight, and personhood. The one work that evolved from *The People of Puerto Rico* project and did an interesting job of considering subjectivity in light of this Marxist approach was Sidney Mintz’s *Taso: Worker in the Cane* (1960), because Mintz produced a powerful emotive portrait of individual pain, the visceral and embodied consequences of imperialism and poverty, and feelings of abandonment in an ethnographic context (for a discussion, see U. Berg and A. Ramos-Zayas, unpublished manuscript).

In the 1960s and 1970s, a critique of anthropologists’ collaboration with colonial and other regimes of power emerged, as the idea of culture itself became suspicious and connected with regimes of power that discipline and construct, rather than study, their subjects (Fanon 1967 [1952]; Foucault 1977). It is in such critiques, prominently articulated by Black intel-

lectuals in the United States, that we find a powerful attempt at examining the affective subjectivity of racialized populations (e.g., Du Bois, Fanon, hooks, Hurston, Morrison). While their context was not specific to Latin America, their work still bears great resonance with the experience of colonized people in Latin American and the Caribbean, as well as around the world. The publication of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967 [1952]) marks an important interruption to historical and academic dyads that seemed to either "flatten" the affect and intersubjectivity of Latin American populations or render it over-the-top and excessive.

Fanon described his personal experience as a black Martinican schooled in France and the ways in which the colonizer-colonized relationship became normalized as psychology; being colonized by language, in this context, was to support the weight of a civilization that identified blackness with moral inadequacy. To escape this, colonized people wore a "white mask" in an effort to consider themselves universal subjects, equally participating in colonial and world societies, as the colonizers' values are internalized into consciousness. Importantly, Fanon notes, this process created a fundamental disjuncture between a black man's consciousness and his body. Fanon integrated Jung's psychoanalytic notion of "collective unconsciousness" with embodied experience of colonization and racism in Algeria, locating the historical point at which certain psychological formations become possible and begin to perpetuate themselves as psychology (Fanon 1967 [1952]).<sup>9</sup> A critical part of Fanon's study is that he emphasized what psychological anthropologists had altogether neglected: the centrality of history and colonization as inseparable from any examination of a "psyche" (Berlant 2011:688). Fanon's powerful critique and inclusion of the affective as political practice can be read in contradistinction to a growing interest in "emotions" in mainstream anthropology in the 1970s. Similarly, Du Bois developed the notion of "double consciousness" to address the challenges of psychologically reconciling an African heritage with a European upbringing so that there is a "sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (2005 [1903]:7).

Puerto Ricans—in both the United States and Puerto Rico—and Mexicans occupied a prominent role in the articulation of the connection between an anthropological perspective on "emotions" and racial projects, a connection that has to be viewed in light of the public-policy objectives of the 1960s and 1970s and the academic tendencies in the social sciences of that time. A highly impressionistic and influential psychologizing of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans provided the ethno-

9. Jung's collective unconscious is also a racial-memory idea, and, after his break with Freud, he explicitly talked about the superior Germanic racial unconscious. This gave credence to members of Freud's inner circle who thought that Jung, a Swiss Lutheran and a pastor's son, was anti-Semitic. See *Revolution in Mind* (Makari 2008). We are grateful to Edgar Rivera-Colón for pointing this out to us.

graphic background to Oscar Lewis's "culture of poverty," a concept that became a leading justification for US policy that aimed to explain enduring conditions of poverty among these populations. In 1961, Lewis published *The Children of Sanchez*, based on ethnography among Mexican families, in which he summarized the "culture of poverty" as a

design for living which is passed down from generation to generation . . . the fact that poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation, of disorganization, or the absence of something. It is also something positive in the sense that it has a structure, a rationale, and defense mechanisms without which the poor could hardly carry on. In short, it is a way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines. (Lewis 1961:xxiv, cited in Herzog 1963:391)

In 1966, Lewis published *La Vida* (1968), a highly controversial book about a Puerto Rican family living in poverty between San Juan and New York City. Laura Briggs (2002) masterfully locates *La Vida* as part of a turn toward a social-science "solution" to a public-policy problem: how to manage the mass migration of Puerto Ricans, particularly to New York, in the 1960s. By representing Puerto Ricans as hypersexual, bad mothers, and responsible for their own poverty—that is, as akin to the "welfare queen" stereotype imposed on African American women—Lewis's notion of the "culture of poverty" conveniently separated the problem of Puerto Rican families' poverty from labor, the housing market, and US colonialism more broadly and located it instead in sex, marriage, and, as we argue here, the Puerto Rican "psyche" (Briggs 2002:78).

The infamous Moynihan report, released in 1965, mobilized Lewis's concept of "culture of poverty" in the policy realm and argued that the rise in single-parent families in the United States was due not to a lack of jobs but rather to destructive aspects of the Black ghetto culture. The report instantly became very controversial: it appealed to conservatives and was criticized by the left for attributing an inherent pathology to African American populations. Later, the psychologist William Ryan coined the phrase "blaming the victim" (1971) specifically as a critique of the Moynihan report. Ryan held that the report was an attempt to divert responsibility for poverty from social structural factors to the behaviors and cultural patterns of the poor.<sup>10</sup> The tragedy here is that Oscar Lewis actually favored government policies to ameliorate the lot of the poor and challenge colonialism. David Harvey, and others, have argued at length that the introduction to *La Vida* locates the work in a leftist tradition; however, the text itself, as Briggs (2002:78) poignantly notes, told a sordid story of "endless sex, neglect of children, and failed love relationships." Despite frequent misrepresentations of Lewis's arguments, one unquestionable implication of his work overall is a view that what distinguished "the poor" was

10. Prominent scholars today now consider the report one of the more influential in the construction of the War on Poverty. See Cohen (2010).

not their relationship to labor or the means of production but their behaviors, the reproduction and socialization of their children, and their “defense mechanisms.” Ultimately, it is their emotional makeup and affective dispositions, largely independent of the colonial and political economic context, that provided “insight” into these individuals’ current lives and future outcomes. Parenting, sexuality, and the conditional visibility of the body—hypervisible when it came to sex, largely invisible in terms of labor—signal highly racialized affective dimensions that are largely neglected in most critiques of Lewis’s work.

Important to our discussion of affect and race is not only that this literature encapsulated the process through which the idiom of “race” shifted from biology to social science but also that it laid out the foundation for subsequent racialization and reracialization processes based on presumed emotive (pre)dispositions. For one, psychiatrist Carolina Lujón, one of the fifty-plus collaborators involved in the ethnographic project that led to *La Vida*, argued that most members of the Ríos family (the family showcased in *La Vida*) were mentally ill, so the outcome was a multigenerational study of mental illness, not of poverty (see Briggs 2002). This is important because it marks one of the earlier anthropological attempts to intertwine “mental illness” and poverty, while downplaying race and colonialism, in the case of Latinos.

US Latinos and Latin American populations’ conspicuous absence from contemporary literature on “affect” is in curious contrast to the prominence of these populations in earlier literatures of the 1960s and 1970s, including ethnopsychiatry and the mental-health field, through taxonomies such as *familismo*, *fatalismo*, and *ataque de nervios*, also known as the “Puerto Rican syndrome.” The Puerto Rican syndrome, for example, was first mentioned by US military psychiatrists working in Puerto Rico, who used it to describe “symptoms” of uncontrollable screaming or shouting, crying, trembling, and verbal or physical aggression in young women. They considered it a culture-specific syndrome, or “folk illness,” that combined psychiatric and somatic symptoms considered to be a recognizable disease only within a specific society or “culture” (Garrison 1977). Similarly, as Metzl (2009) shows in his historical study of the racialization of mental illnesses, it was exactly in the 1960s that societal attitudes toward schizophrenia shifted dramatically from being a “harmless” (white) disease to being a dangerous disease defined by rage and associated with the civil rights and Black Power movements. As protest movements, particularly in poor neighborhoods of color, became more radical, the field of psychiatry introduced new definitions of the disease and updated its definition in the *DSM*.<sup>11</sup>

US Black and Latino poverty was, quite literally, diagnosed in terms of mental-health pathologies attributed to these populations’ “defective” emotional makeup. These terms, while lo-

cated in a unique history of racial minority populations in the United States, are part of a wider US imperial aspiration in Latin America. In fact, they are not very different from national stereotypes of Latin American populations and governments, as suggested by caricaturesque images of machismo and *marianismo* to “explain” gender relations or depict narcissistic and egomaniac Latin American politicians (e.g., *el Jefe* images and, more recently, views on Fidel Castro or Hugo Chavez), which aimed to describe presumed chaotic politics and Latin American inability to self-govern “democratically” while covering up the US role in supporting US-friendly sanguine dictators (e.g., Trujillo, Somoza, and Pinochet; see Gonzalez 2000).

The medicalization, psychiatricization, criminalization, and pathologization of structural conditions, including poverty, malnutrition, alternative and fictive kin networks, and heavy-handed colonial enterprises and imperial and militaristic interventions, characterized these early intersections between the culture-and-personality school in anthropology and Latino studies. While Puerto Ricans tended to be underrepresented or altogether absent from most academic and even medical research, they were, as we have seen, hypervisible in the “ethnopsychiatry” of the 1970s, the golden age of the “Puerto Rican syndrome.” These culturalist perspectives on emotions and psychology have also been noted, albeit in perhaps more nuanced ways, in the prolific medical anthropology literature on “witchcraft” and other alternative healing, mental health, and spiritual practices among US Latinos (e.g., Viladrich 2007). These recent studies take greater notice of the economic and material contexts in which these alternative healing and spiritual practices unfold. Nevertheless, there is still a tendency both to situate examinations of “interiority”/emotions among Latinos squarely in mental-health fields, whether mainstream or alternative, and to endorse “culture-of-poverty” explanations that undermine enduring colonial and neocolonial conditions and the affective entanglements that result from such conditions.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a more nuanced iteration of the culture-and-personality paradigm, the anthropology of emotion, emerged out of an interest in emotion’s social-relational, communicative, and cultural aspects. This approach went beyond the previous era’s psychobiological framework, which saw emotions either as bodily, physical feeling and presumed a transcultural or universal emphasis (e.g., Levi-Strauss, Tyler), often suggestive of biological and evolutionary attributes (e.g., Edmund Leach), or as cultural meaning and a part of cognition variously disassociated from bodily “feeling”—the latter “psychocultural” perspective was much more predominant in American cultural anthropology and much less so in European social anthropology.<sup>12</sup> While both the early “culture-and-personality” (Benedict 1934) and the later “anthropology-of-emotion” (Lutz and White 1986) paradigms helped to nuance static images of “primitive” and “peasant” populations, they

11. The “syndrome” is included in Appendix I of the revised fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR)*.

12. For an in-depth discussion of these literatures, see Katz (2001).

generally viewed feelings and sentiments as part of an emotive inventory that undermined or altogether neglected the generative, dynamic, and productive forces that emotions in fact are.<sup>13</sup> This has remained a particularly salient flaw in studies of racialized, classed, or otherwise socially marginal populations whose affect has historically been viewed as either “flat,” because they were “underperforming,” or “excessive,” because they were unable to successfully perform their emotions in ways commensurable to broader economic regimes and transformations—or simply chose not to.

In recent times, there has been an increased anthropological effort toward a political economy of affect, which gradually has replaced narrower assumptions and definitions of emotions as cultural traits and “interior” landscapes. There is a growing body of work within anthropology tracking affects’ entanglements with normative power relations, inequalities, and violence. This is reflected, for example, in the growing subfield of “moral anthropology” (Fassin 2012; Feldman and Ticktin 2010) as well as in the works of anthropologists—some of them working in Latin America—who are analyzing affective relations or dispositions as inextricable from regimes of inequality, abandonment, control, and class processes (Auyero 2012; Biehl 2013; Das 2007; Nouvet 2014; Povinelli 2011; Scheper-Hughes 1993). The recent efflorescence of works on affect in feminist, queer, and postcolonial studies has also helped develop more fully historical approaches to the study of affect, but more race-sensitive scholarship on affect within anthropology—and across disciplines—is still sorely lacking.

Migration is a key social process and context for analyzing the dynamics of racial affect that we attempt to understand here. This is important because enduring culturalist perspectives on emotions have been carried on to dominant conceptions of the “immigrant”—and of migrant “illegality” (De Genova 2002), in particular—as reflected in construction of the undocumented migrant worker, especially Mexicans, who in the United States are stereotypically seen as docile, submissive, and nonthreatening (except from when they get drunk and out of control—also a common stereotype of Mexican male workers). These stereotypes are deployed in strategic contrast to the “delinquent citizenship” (Ramos-Zayas 2004) of Puerto Ricans who “can’t sustain regular jobs.” However, affective dispositions, especially of those migrants who perform affective labor (i.e., nannies, maids, nurses, and sex workers), are discussed to an extent in the migration and global-care-chain literature. This literature examines the affective dimension of global movement and displacement through the lens of paid and unpaid carework (Boris and Parreñas 2010;

Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Isaksen, Devi, and Hochschild 2008; Romero 2012). Hochschild (2000) defines such “global care chains” as “the personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring” (131). Hochschild’s definition, proceeding from a sociological analysis of the Filipino-US nanny trade, views the global care chain as originating in the demand of middle-class women in rich nations to free themselves from working “the second shift” (Hochschild and Machung 1989) and instead turn to low-paid migrant labor to fulfill this slot. In the global economy, this draws women of color from poorer countries, who themselves are looking to diversify their household income to migrate and take up paid affective labor abroad. To do so, these women must relegate their own domestic duties to other women, often relatives or women from households poorer than their own in the home country, who in turn are constructed as “one of the family” (Romero 2012), often in ways that highlight a familial and emotional relationship but disguise the exploitative nature of such labor and care arrangements.<sup>14</sup>

At the receiving ends of global care chains, employers frequently express a preference for migrant care workers, whom they perceive to embody certain affective qualities, often corresponding to national or racial stereotypes. Staab and Maher, for example, have shown how such images underpin the markets for domestic workers in California and Chile, where Mexican maids and Peruvian nannies are in high demand because they are seen to embody the qualities of a “submissive worker” and a “natural mother,” respectively (Maher 2003; Staab and Maher 2006). These images are similar to other racial stereotypes circulating in the global market place, such as “the nimble fingers” of female Asian electronics workers (Yeates 2012).

While the global-care-chain approach has made important contributions to the understanding of the political economy of migration flows and of (especially female) migrants’ economic motivations to leave, it has been less useful in acknowledging the potentially empowering aspects of migration for migrants and their families, because it does not grant much agency to migrants’ own attempts at shaping their own trajectories despite the multiple constraints that they face, reconfiguring intersubjective affective landscapes, and having to learn new forms of racial subjectification (Abrego 2014; McKay 2007). Most of these studies have overlooked the need for a finer-grained analysis of the intersection of race, affective labor, and racialized migrant women’s own visceral and affective existences within particular racial and political economic configurations. The focus on gendered and affective labor alone is therefore limited for our purposes, especially

13. The sociological literature, in turn, has dealt with “emotion” from diverse theoretical perspectives, including dramaturgical theories (Goffman, Hochschild, Thoits, Rosenberg), symbolic interactionist theories (Herbert Mead, Turner), interactional ritual theories (Durkheim), power and status theories (Kemper and Collins, Thamm; important for our project is Barbalet’s Marxist take), and exchange theory. For an overview of sociology of emotions, see Thoits (1989).

14. See Mary Romero (2012) for an excellent, life history-driven examination of the complicated relationship between a Mexican domestic worker, the white family for whom she works, and her daughter. Romero’s work is an important US-based variation of Latin American problematic claims of maids as “one of the family.”

when little account is made of how those carrying out the gendered labor of global care chains are racialized migrant women of color.

Racialized populations in Latin America and Latinos and Latin American migrants in the United States, as demonstrated in this paper, have occupied a prominent ethnographic and theoretical space in the academic unfolding of the study of “emotions” in US anthropology. This history, however, has often been ignored in the recent discussions of the “affective turn” in the social sciences. Like African Americans, US-born Puerto Ricans and, at times, Mexicans are particularly salient in ethnopsychiatry and culturalist perspectives in anthropology. Likewise, Latin American migrant populations have been studied as either “emotionless” workers assimilating to American ways of life and striving to live the “American Dream” (and not wanting to be perceived as ungrateful) or outcasts because of a presumed delinquent moral character that they “brought to this country” (or acquired here, because of their inability to “adapt,” in the case of US-born Latino generations). As highlighted in this brief historical genealogy of the presence of affect in a wide range of studies concerning Latin American and Latino populations, the deployment of a language of “emotion” existed in tandem with policy, academic, and popular discussions of “morality” that racialized Latino and Latin American populations and set the ground for enduring racial projects still active today. This is why “racializing affect” is imperative to the study of affect and political economy in anthropology.

### A Theoretical Framework for Racializing Affect

In his 1935 preface to Zora Neale Hurston’s *Mules and Men*, Franz Boas wrote,

It is the great merit of Miss Hurston’s work that she entered into the homely life of the southern Negro as one of them and was fully accepted as such by the companions of her childhood. Thus she has been able to *penetrate through that affected demeanor* by which the Negro excludes the White observer effectively from participating in *his true inner life*. (Boas 1935, emphasis added)<sup>15</sup>

Boas’s reading of Hurston’s work illustrates two critical aspects that have shaped the intersection between race and affect since the very early years of anthropological interest in human emotion: first, the methodological suggestion that there is an affective attunement, based on race, integral to knowledge production and, second, the epistemological prop-

osition that there is an “affected demeanor”—akin to an external expression of an “inner self”—that may or may not be “penetrable” by an outsider. Implied here is that there is an intimate and highly textured way of embodying race in a particular historical context and a self-conscious sense of collectivity that might be more accessible to some researchers (based on their own subjectivities) than to others. What can be inferred from Boas’s statement is a recognition of a presumed affective attunement between Hurston and her “southern Negro” informants and that this attunement, furthermore, highlighted an epistemological realm beyond semantic availability. The intersubjective quality of the encounter between Hurston and her informants becomes critical to how blackness, but also whiteness, is produced under a mutual cognitive, emotive, and affective awareness (and self-referencing) of legacies of slavery and internal colonial conditions. Elsewhere, we discuss such issues of intersubjective “attunement” in ethnographic methodology and the “knowability” of affect from an epistemological perspective (U. Berg and A. Ramos-Zayas, unpublished manuscript).<sup>16</sup> In this paper, we theorize the productive intersection of studies of “affect” and “racialization.” Boas’s comment above hints at some of the questions that serve as impetus for this section, including What do we gain from “racializing” affect or considering “affect” a constitutive aspect of racialization practices? How can we understand the implications of academic examinations of and empirical approaches to “affect,” and to what degree are anthropological perspectives of affect indicative of the different ways in which individuals and populations are racialized in the Americas? What are the consequences of affective experiences and expressions for individuals and groups along racial lines?

We highlight “racialized affect” as a historical and political dynamic in the Americas that requires multiple affective forms of sensorial, embodied, and visceral attunements. This conception of “racialized affect,” we propose, has two cornerstones. The first is “liable affect,” that is, the affective practices that serve to racialize, contain, and sustain conditions of vulnerability and a constitutive element of subject formation for poor, migrant, and socially marginalized populations (and structured by the whiteness project extant in the contemporary United States). The second cornerstone is “empowering affect,” that is, the affect associated with privilege and always-already perceived as complex, nuanced, and beyond essentialism. While a conception of “liable affect” results in a simplified and essentialized “inner world” that undermines the complexity and subjectivity of populations racialized as Other, a conception of “empowering affect” perpetuates the privileged and nuanced subjectivity frequently reserved for US whites and Latin American self-styled whitened elites. It is

15. The historical genealogy of psychocultural studies rests both on an attempt to reconcile perspectives on cultural relativism and human universality, while oftentimes undercutting or altogether neglecting a clear understanding of history and political economy (Casey and Edgerton 2007: 3). This tends to undermine the social realms of meaning and significance, along with the notions of power and inequality, on which self-formations are grounded.

16. We analyze methodological and epistemological approaches to affect in general, and racialized affect in particular, in an article in progress that we have provisionally titled “Racialized Affect” and the Ethnographic Process (U. Berg and A. Ramos-Zayas, unpublished manuscript).

important to emphasize that these two cornerstones—"liable affect" and "empowering affect"—operate in multiple, shifting, and complex configurations and are often evaluated on the basis of their potential to sustain the very imperialist and neoliberal projects on which they are contextualized. There is a relational and even mutually constitutive aspect to these affective modes.

These forms of affect operate in ways that, if we pay attention to them, help us understand the concrete yet complex practices of racializing affect. While "liable affect" serves to represent the disciplinary functions of racialization, it also creates a zone of potentially essentializing and even "self-protective" interiority that remains agential despite the disciplining project. Likewise, although "empowering affect" perpetuates privilege, such privilege has to be continuously reinvented and even developed in terms of "knowing" and recreating its racialized Other. This continuous attentiveness to changing racialization processes is, in fact, required for "empowering affect" to continue to effectively exert its disciplining power. An example of this would be the "racial paranoia" proposed by John Jackson (2008), which underscores forms of "political correctness" that require that privilege be maintained, not through overt forms of domination but by learning to manage white social anxiety. By becoming proficient in changing racial language and social expectations, fundamental power structures can still remain largely unaltered.

Despite the evident interdependent, constitutive, and relational aspects of "liable affect" and "empowering affect," their interrelationship is subjective, context specific, and fundamentally grounded on unequal power dynamics that are never perfectly equivalent or static and are (re)constituted on multiple scales. We are not suggesting that there is a discrete "liable" or "empowering" affect associated with a discrete "subordinate" versus "powerful" group; in fact, affect can have a self-conscious, learned quality, so that populations can become strategically devoted to learning the "appropriate" affective demeanor for particular interactions and situations. The very familiarity with and access to those self-conscious processes may vary historically and be inspired by different individual and community needs, aspirations, and social locations. For racialized populations, learning the dynamics of whiteness and empowering affect is often imperative for survival—literal and social—whereas for dominant populations, empowering affect is an arsenal of their cultural capital.

What remains central to these configurations that we are calling "liable" and "empowering" affect is that, regardless of the seeming possibility of a concerted affective cultivation by some, the social-hierarchical relationships are in accordance with a white-supremacist logic and the needs of capital. Privileged individuals and populations are able to engage affectively with the poor—and learn to navigate with "ease" racialized subordinate worlds—as a way to sustain (and even enhance) their very racial and social power (for ethnographic examples in contexts of elite educational settings, see Gaztambide-Fernández 2009 and Khan 2011). Likewise, while

subordinate populations can actively become "street therapists" (Ramos-Zayas 2012)—that is, observers and analysts of the worlds and forms of capital and privilege of the wealthy—expressing affect and internalizing or practicing affective personas carries only limited weight in the process of effectively subverting social hierarchies of class and race under neoliberalism. These forms of "self-fashioning" are prominent in Latin American contexts that require a mastering of multiple legal and institutional worlds (Berg 2015). The affective repertoire available to the powerful—"empowering affect"—exists, in this sense, in contradistinction to the forced containment of the affect of racialized populations, who are presumed to be, as we have argued above, either hyperaffective or affectively flat. By noting the ways in which affective practices and expressions act to sustain particular systems of power, our framework highlights how collective intersubjectivities are inherently historical and constituted in a crucible of a geopolitics of inequality built on colonial contexts and racializing practices that require a careful deconstruction of the instances in which affect discriminately serves as both vulnerability and embodied power.<sup>17</sup>

By considering "racializing" practices in examinations of affect and recognizing the "affective" ways in which racial hierarchies are sustained, we acknowledge that examinations of subjectivity and self-awareness not only are not incompatible with academic examinations of political economy and materiality but also, in fact, have to be considered as constitutive to such examinations. Such an approach recognizes that there are aspects and value in human life beyond what might be semantically available through conventional methodological tools (Cacho 2012) but nonetheless foundational to understanding particular histories and political economic contexts. New empirical modalities of inquiry are required to transcend the semantic limitations of classical ethnography (U. Berg and A. Ramos-Zayas, unpublished manuscript). This recognition allows us to begin to comprehend the deeply felt and visceral sociality of race and how racialized populations of color in the Americas situate their individual history in national and international histories of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism that not are only comprehended intellectually but also are profoundly felt, experiential, and actively embodied conceptions of a social reality and historical reference. Being a racial subject is thus a highly historically conscious way of existing at multiple scales—as an individual, as part of a community, as part of a nation, and transnationally—that are expressed, knowable, and manifested in ways that require intense, ongoing intellectual and emotional work.

17. Randall Collins's concept of "emotional energy," built on the work of Goffman and Durkheim (see Turner and Stets 2006:33) is particularly insightful on this point. As Collins argues, individuals are often trapped in interaction rituals in which they have little power and in which, as a result, they experience negative emotional energy, such as fear, anxiety, shame, and guilt (Summers-Effler 2002); more significantly, these emotions can be differentially distributed across segments of a population that possess varying levels of power and prestige (Barbalet 1998).

Our insistence on the centrality of history and historical self-consciousness in the affective worlds of racialized populations draws from Laurent Berlant's brilliant essay on "thinking about being historical" (2008). Berlant proposes a way of tracking affective intensities politically "without presuming their status as dramatic or, indeed, as events. . . . it rethinks the sensing of history, and of the historic" (2008:4). She uses the term "crisis ordinariness" to talk about traumas of the social that are "lived through collectively and that transform the sensorium to a heightened perceptiveness about the unfolding of the historical, and sometimes historic, moments" (Berlant 2008:5 n.8). Berlant's theorizing of the "ordinary" is particularly relevant to the racialized affect we propose here, in the sense that "to think emerges not just as cognitive response in general or the responsibility of special people but as a general opening for cultivating attentiveness and an ethics of mindfulness for a public intimate because they're experiencing together a shift in the atmosphere" (Berlant 2008:5; see also Das 2007). We would like to stretch Berlant's use of the "public intimate" even further to note the insinuation of collectivity in the context of racial, colonial, and imperialist geopolitics that characterized the "ordinary lives" of people of color in the Americas. In this sense, an ordinary event in the lives of racialized populations is produced as an emergent historical environment. Thus, if it is true that to be forced into thought in this way is to begin to formulate the event of feeling historical in the present, to be historical—in a cognitive and sensorial way—has always been integral to the affective repertoire and racial learning process of populations of color. This is precisely what we intend to highlight as we urge more empirically grounded examination of "racialized affect."

There are numerous merits to understanding "race" and "affect" as simultaneously intersectional and mutually constitutive (Crenshaw 1991); ultimately, however, we challenge the metaphor of a meeting place or fixed point suggested in these perspectives in favor of an understanding of "racialized affect" as a diachronic articulation of race and affect that remains attentive to multiple and energetic synergies at the basis of power dynamics. Race mediates and exists as a powerful mediator of social relations, institutional practices, and structural inequalities in the United States and Latin America. Since we view affect as necessarily intersubjective, race thus becomes a privileged critical space to examine levels not only of racial subordination but also of race as a site of power. Race also provides a multivector assessment that enables a view of affect that challenges academic tendencies toward essentialist practices and forms of neutralizing race. A "racialization" of affect has the potential to problematize the assumption that only populations of color have a "race" while also acknowledging the context-specific ways in which white supremacy is sustained, produced, and reproduced.

An important goal of the theoretical framework we have developed is to challenge stereotypical productions of racialized subjects, as we encourage a finer-grained exploration of an emotive self-fashioning, reflexive capacity and historical

directionality of racialized and colonial populations. We do not equate affect with subjectivity, however. While affect has some components of subjectivity, it is in constant formulation with structures and materiality, and thus it is necessarily intersubjective. In fact, in the case of Latinos and Latin American populations, the subjects of our respective ethnographic studies (Berg 2015; Ramos-Zayas 2012), we recognize a collective form of intersubjective practice that does not rely on static portraits of "culture" or "ethnicity" in the way that is still common today in some mainstream academic perspectives in anthropology. A collective intersubjectivity is necessarily grounded on a locus of enunciation that takes into account who does the labeling, as well as on socially constituted forms of implicit social knowledge (Taussig 1986), "cultural intimacy" (Herzfeld 1997), and "racial paranoia" (Jackson 2008).<sup>18</sup> Rather than striving for an across-the-board access to "inner worlds" that are, in fact, socially constituted and also strategically self-protective, collective intersubjectivity requires attention to everyday ways in which racialized ways of being are (re)produced, narrated, and embodied in tandem with political, economic, social, and moral structures.

The terrain of intimacy, affect, and attachment can enhance simplistic ways of thinking about large-scale political and economic transformations and practices; indeed, the framework we propose is an epistemological and empirical call to bring together intimate economies of affect, embodiment, and personhood in articulation with large-scale economies of empire and capital (see Dole 2012). The intersection of affect, race, and global movements sheds light on questions of "lateral agency" and "interpassivity" (Berlant 2011) as certain individuals become required, under neoliberal globalization, to produce affective practices intended to maintain worlds rather than make them. The framework of racializing affect in the case of Latin American and Latino populations forces us to consider new forms of abandonment that produce sites of flat or excessive affect always intended to highlight the "underperformativity" of certain subjects and the "deservingness" of others.

## Concluding Remarks

The regulation of movement, identities, and notions of personhood among Latino and Latin American populations is a key site in which to examine how racialized affect operates.

18. Jackson's (2008) emphasis on the internalized and interpersonal aspects of race is an important intellectual incursion into understanding the ways in which "talking the talk" has substituted for "walking the walk" in US racial relations. More than a focus on the affective or embodied qualities of everyday interracial sociabilities, Jackson's work offers a strong analysis of the ironic ways in which (verbal) language actually produces racial miscommunication among Blacks and whites in the United States. "Political correctness," as a linguistic strategy of interracial civility, for instance, has led to forms of self-censoring in frank racial talk that contribute to interracial suspicion, rumors, conspiracy theory, and mistrust in the United States.

Unlike previous works, which have either culturalized emotions, a tendency that has produced enduring and damaging stereotypes and racial profiling, or altogether avoided considering the affective worlds of the populations in question, this paper has proposed to view “affect” as a productive lens to examine race and migration. Doing so enables the everyday lives and struggles of racialized minority and migrant populations to acquire additional layers of complexity, which challenge conventional notions of agency and shed light on the quintessential structure-agency debate in the social sciences. By challenging a culturalist view of “emotion” in an effort to acknowledge the affective complexity that characterizes intersubjective connections, quotidian lives, and global attachments, we also signal how white supremacy and neocolonialism operate at the most intimate, visceral levels of social experience.

A focus on “racialized affect,” as we have argued here, adds dynamism to racialization theory while also identifying how cultural images, stereotypes, and projects circulate, along with bodies, in transnational flows. Neoliberalism itself also frames the “creativity” of racial and affective reinvention without requiring an eradication of inequality; rather, these neoliberal agencies are highly selective and circumscribed. In our iteration of the term “racialized affect,” we insist on moments that privilege forms of “emotional self-invention” and “embodied self-packaging,” as we also highlight the malleability, multiple belongings, and fragmented solidarities that oftentimes condition the experiences, everyday lives, and aspirations of US Latino and Latin American populations. Relationship to political-economic and historical contexts is never passive but is ensconced in affective practices and interactions, along with self-conscious relationships to “history” that are critical instances of self-referencing for marginalized populations.

By way of concluding this essay, a pertinent question remaining to be asked is If racial affect is produced intersubjectively and historically, could it be applicable everywhere? In principle, there is nothing about racialized migrants or minorities in the United States per se that gives them a privileged position vis-à-vis this reconfiguration of affect. Rather, it is the particular relationship that Latin American, Caribbean, and perhaps other migrant populations from the global South have to transnational processes of modern capitalism, neoliberal projects, and patterns of labor exploitation and racial differentiation in the United States that creates this “savage affective slot.”<sup>19</sup> Scholarship that examines historically grounded constitutive formulations of race and affect elsewhere in the world would provide invaluable comparative perspectives in

19. We are grateful for the anonymous reviewer who highlighted this point for us, as well as for all three reviewers for their close and enthusiastic reading of the manuscript and incisive, provocative questions. Although we do not know their names, we do hope that they will sense our deep appreciation when they read the finished essay. In addition, we are grateful to Carlos Vargas-Ramos, Edgar Rivera-Colon, Emily Martin, and Michaela di Leonardo for their incisive comments in the project’s earlier iterations.

the spirit of the theoretical framework we have developed here.

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## Comments

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#### The Problem of Racialized Affect, and Affect as a Racial Problem

*Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. (Du Bois 2007 [1903]:7)*

*The critical part of [anthropology’s] attribution of nativeness to groups in remote parts of the world is a sense that their incarceration [in space] has a moral and intellectual dimension. They are confined by what they know, feel, and believe. (Appadurai 1988:37)*

*In the colonial world, the emotional sensitivity of the native is kept on the surface of his skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent. (Fanon 1963 [1961]: 56)*

To be racially subordinated, as W. E. B. Du Bois famously articulated, is to be socially and politically produced as a problem. By enunciating the ever-unasked question—How does it feel to be a problem?—as an organizing framework for apprehending the disparities between himself, as a Black American, and “the other world” of whites, Du Bois also articulated the profound question concerning racialized affect that Ulla Berg and Ana Ramos-Zayas identify in their incisive theoretical proposition. “Being a racial subject,” the authors note, requires “intense, ongoing intellectual and emotional work.” Hence, being racialized entails knowledge, articulation, iteration, and performance: it is a continuous labor. And this intense work is necessarily affective. This is as true for those racialized as white as for those subordinated by white

supremacy, as Sara Ahmed (2004a, 2004b) demonstrates with regard to what she designates “affective economies.” Indeed, for Ahmed, this work that emotions do is crucial for understanding how racial and national identifications succeed to align persons and their bodies to larger collectivities. Likewise, Berg and Ramos-Zayas direct our critical scrutiny toward “the deeply felt and visceral sociality of race.”

Particularly for people of color in the Americas, ask the authors, how are histories of enslavement, genocide, colonialism, and empire not only intellectual and political problems but also “profoundly felt, experiential, and actively embodied conceptions” of social reality? “What,” they therefore demand, “do we gain from ‘racializing’ affect or considering ‘affect’ a constitutive aspect of racialization practices?” In light of Fanon’s vivid portrayal of the colonial condition as affectively experienced like an open wound, we might equally well demand instead How much do we lose—or rather, how much more can we afford to lose—by failing to see affect as a constitutive dimension of racialization? Indeed, in their quite instructive genealogical reflection on representations of Latin America and Latinos in the United States, the authors reveal how deeply racialization has, in fact, always been inflected with affect as a veritable electrical current coursing through the whole history of racial stereotyping and racialized rationalities for the debasement of various groups. This, importantly, is where and when anthropology necessarily must enter our critical field of vision. For, perhaps more often than not, the anthropological concept of “culture”—replete with its manifold essentialisms as well as the attribution of an isomorphic correspondence of people within the bounded confines of both their putatively discrete “cultures” and the “native” places where they have customarily been incarcerated, in Appadurai’s memorable phrase—has been profoundly complicit with the sociopolitical production of “racial” difference. After all, “race” was never truly reducible to any rigid notion of merely “biological” or phenotypic difference. “Race” has always been a proposition not only about what people are but also about how they are, what they do, and how they do it. In this respect, constructions such as “ethnicity” or “culture,” which ultimately have relied uncritically on the seemingly self-evident “group”-ness of groups—and are generally predicated on notions of common ancestry and shared kinship—tacitly restore “race” precisely when they are supposed to replace it.

Thus, the authors make a crucial intervention in positing racialized affect as “a collective form of intersubjective practice that does not rely on static portraits of ‘culture’ or ‘ethnicity.’” Insistent on affect as “a diachronic articulation,” the authors instead foreground the historicity of racialization struggles, in which “intimate economies of affect, embodiment, and personhood” are inevitably articulated with “large-scale economies of empire and capital.” By rejecting the essentialist constraints of a culturalist view of “emotion,” then, Berg and Ramos-Zayas rightly alert us to “how white supremacy and neocolonialism operate at the most intimate, visceral levels of social experience.”

### Alejandro Grimson

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I think that the main thesis of Berg and Ramos-Zayas is a very relevant contribution. It points to a relationship between the processes of the formation of alterity and cultural stereotypes (central foci of anthropological enquiry) and affect. This is an interesting, original, and productive connection. My comment is concerned with their final question: “If racial affect is produced intersubjectively and historically, could it be applicable everywhere?” The “racialized affect” of alterity could be a powerful tool in particular contexts and not in others. There is a production of alterities relying on affect that are related to religion, sexual orientation, social class, and so on. There are processes of producing races that refer not to affect but mainly to moral and intellectual features. I think that this paper’s capacity to demonstrate how less visible dimensions strongly influence othering discourse is fascinating.

After reading this paper, we can take as an example “ethnified affect.” Discourses, images, and practices produce ethnic marks: some indigenous or immigrant groups mark other groups with a similar power by appealing to features of affect. Racialized affect from imperial and colonial power is worrisome and serious because of its social, economical, and political effects. But it is not unique. Affect, if I understood correctly, is also a political resource that any human group can use to mark alterities.

This paper allows for the possibility of examining how phenomena similar to those analyzed here in reference to the United States and Latin American migrants have functioned as part of Latin American elites’ differing strategies of nation building. Which was the affective dimension of marking the “other” from the white or mestizo? These alterities were a lot of the time racialized but also were ethnified, feminized, or made to appear foreign/foreignized.

“Race” is extremely variable between different Latin American countries. Racism is everywhere, but in each place, it functions in the context of specific historical and cultural conditions. Any idea that there is not racism in Latin America contradicts the work of numerous Latin American anthropologists. Nevertheless, Latin American migrants do not racialize in exactly the same way in which they are racialized. They do racialize in different ways, related to their own cultural configurations. Race is a specific way of typifying inequalities between human groups. Not any unequal or unfair situation is a racial one.

The authors say that “the idiom of ‘race’ shifted from biology to social science.” Nevertheless, we know that the state, institutions, and people in daily life appeal to a “racialized language.” So I think that the idiom of race also shifted from society to social sciences, in the specific sense that sometimes social sciences naturalize, or take to be true, this seemingly

obvious and commonsense language. Societies have different languages and categories to talk about heterogeneity and inequality. Race is a language present in almost all contemporary societies, but “race” has different meanings and articulations, along with ethnicity, class, and gender, in different places. The consequence is very clear: if the expert discourse can become watered down with “commonsense” language, does this occur in the same ways in which US, Argentine, Mexican, or Brazilian anthropology talks about race?

Studies on race and on affect by Latin American anthropologists who do not live in the United States are less common and are developed in other ways. The evidence is their absence in the bibliography of this excellent paper that refers to a metropolitan discussion. This could be misunderstood. These central debates of anthropology are crucial to what Gustavo Lins Ribeiro called the cosmopolitanism of peripheries. We have learned to use them in relation to our own agendas. The authors clearly assert that “racialized populations in Latin America and Latinos and Latin American migrants in the United States” have occupied a prominent space in the “study of ‘emotions’ in US anthropology.” So, in this fascinating invitation to analyze and provide comparative perspectives, my hypothesis (which could very well be wrong) is that, in Latin America anthropology, you can find mechanisms and discourses linked to “racialized affect” in crucial authors up to the 1960s, but you do not find them in authors such as Cardoso de Oliveira, Carlos Iván Degregori, Stavenhagen, García Canclini, Pacheco de Oliveira, and Alcida Rita Ramos. My own generation, I think, is ready to take papers like this and to amplify their potential, researching with these tools race and other ways of making alterities, contributing to build a global conversation.

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### History and Debates in Studies of Affect and Racialization

In Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism*, first published in 1950, the Martinican intellectual wrote, “it is not the head of a civilization that begins to rot first. It is the heart” (2000 [1950]:48). Césaire and his devoted student and fellow Martinican Franz Fanon articulated a compelling anticolonial politics by analyzing the impact of colonialism on the affect of both colonized and colonizer and thus showed the necessity of political and economic decolonization, but also its insufficiency. One of the legacies of their work is a rich and vibrant body of work on affect by antiracist, feminist, and queer scholars

intent on elaborating the continuing and changing ways that affective impositions are central to capitalist and colonial projects and the ways that affective reconstitutions are critical to the work of wholesale decolonization and economic liberation.

Some of this scholarship is cited in this paper. Some is not. Berlant’s work is centered, and one article by Stoler is cited (but not her books; Stoler 1995, 2001, 2002, 2006). Missing entirely, however, are other influential and recent works in this tradition, by Ahmed (2004*b*), Brown (1995), Butler (2004), the aforementioned Césaire (2000 [1950]), Cheng (2001), Colen (1995), Cvetkovich (2003), Gilroy (2005), Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), Pratt (2012), Pratt et al. (2009), Rose (1999), and Sedgwick (2003). Colen’s, Hondagneu-Sotelo’s and Césaire’s work deal directly with the Caribbean and Latin America; Million (2013), Simpson (2009), and others focus on dilemmas for indigenous people elsewhere in the Americas. It seems curious, also, to frame Fanon’s contributions as primarily about Algeria: does this place contributions from Black scholars in Latin America and the Caribbean outside a discussion framed as largely between mestizos and indigenous peoples? The net effect is the erasure of the work of many key critical scholars—many of whom are indigenous scholars or other scholars of color, feminist or queer scholars, or all of these. Perhaps the authors disagree with the approaches in these works. We then need to see these disagreements. But the erasure of this work means that the primary claim of the introduction and the conclusion—that studies of affect have developed separately from research on race and racialization, and that this paper’s key contribution is the articulation of a framework for bringing together intimate economies with economies of empire and capital—is overstated.

This paper has an important and rich contribution to make to these ongoing discussions with its discussion of the ways that racialized notions of affect are developed and deployed in American and various Latin American accounts. It offers a rich overview of how anthropological and popular-cultural representations of affect are complicit with the development of political and economic hierarchies. This paper is attentive to political-economic moment and historical transformation. It reviews affect and mestizness/racial-mixing ideologies of affect and indigeneity in the context of nineteenth-century nation building; notions of racial democracy/harmony as a way of “whitewashing” colonialism’s impact in the early twentieth century; the construction of images of a happy, if not clownish, *latinidad* during the 1949s/Good Neighbor policy period alongside harsher portrayals of Puerto Ricans as lacking the emotional tools for capitalist success; the portrayals of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the 1960s and 1970s debates about the causes of poverty, which included a discussion of mental health, fatalism, and so on; and perduring negative images of immigrants. Not all of these studies have been conventionally understood as about affect, but the paper convincingly shows the central role that affect plays. It begins to explore some of the dangers of the recent rise in interest in affect for those groups most frequently and pejoratively asso-

ciated with affect. With this rich historical genealogy, this paper can sustain a different kind of claim, a more precise and positioned one, about the place Latin America and the Caribbean hold—or do not hold—in such theoretical discussions but also and critically about the ways that comparative politics of racialization work to sustain imperialism and capitalism. To make this claim, however, it remains crucial to acknowledge and analyze the work in the area that does exist—for what it might provide as a building block or for what needs to be remedied. The scholars cited above take on gendered and sexualized forms of racialized affect in the wake of 9/11, in the context of neoliberalism, postcolonialism, and migration; they look at hegemonic forms of white affect, the enforcement of it, and challenges to it. They look at the forms of affect presumptively associated with certain groups and the different kinds of racialized challenges this poses. While this paper does not initiate this conversation, its ingenious juxtapositions of academic, government, and popular-cultural stereotypes of affect have much to contribute to a nuanced, long, and ongoing conversation.

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### No Such Thing as an Anthropology of Affects outside Othering Processes

There are disagreements in cultural anthropology about why and how affect matters to the social. These connect to what can be fiery debates, at least among the anthropologists I frequent, about what ethnographers who take affect seriously can, might, or should do (or at least try).

Deleuzian-inspired scholars such as Ochoa (2007), Stewart (e.g., 2000, 2007), and Massumi (e.g., 2002a, 2010) theorize affect as assemblages of nervous energies. In this literature, affects are visceral, never cognitive, forces that move and connect “stuff,” including people. I appreciate the acknowledgment of the contagious potential of affects in this approach and its unsettling of a dominant expectation in the social sciences that life is transformed meaningfully only when such transformation is willfully authored. At the same time, without intention, belonging to no one, and shaping life but only outside conscious engagement, affects here are unaccountable. By that I do not mean that they cannot be captured, measured, or counted (although that is also true). Affects here are unaccountable in the sense that their impacts on specific individuals or groups can never be determined. Tracking affects in this approach seems primarily about describing what

sensations grab the ethnographer in a particular time/place/space and imagining what (as of yet undefinable) futures fleeting affective formations might generate.

This is not the scholarship of Berg and Ramos. Berg and Ramos firmly root themselves in an “economies-of-affect” approach. In contrast to the amorphous, open-ended Deleuzians, here affects are always about power. This is an approach centered on making visible and critically engaging, unpacking, and describing lived experiences of “feeling rules” formed through and formative of the status quo. Affects here are not precultural, and they certainly are never pre- or post-political. They enter anthropological analysis because they are enmeshed with and integral to normalized projects, possibles, and impossibles whose contours may or may not be openly acknowledged but whose impacts are observable, wide-reaching, and often violent. This “economies-of-affect” anthropology has brought into focus the construction and lived impacts of “moral,” feminized, humanitarian, heterosexualized, work-ready, neoliberal, and/or “bad” affects in specific contexts. What it has not done is attend to the intersection of affects with racialization processes. This is the blind spot on which Berg and Ramos focus in their article: “racializing affects.” Their proposal is that theories and experiences of affects are racialized and racializing and that moving the political theory of affect forward requires attending to this.

Berg and Ramos’s contribution to a political theory of affect becomes increasingly apparent and impressive throughout this article. First, the authors provide a clear yet detail-rich synthesis of twentieth-century ethnographic accounts of “feelings” and “emotions” among Latinos and Latin Americans. They trace the coemergence and coconstitution of this scholarship with twentieth-century political, nationalist, and imperialist discourses that encounter and cast nonwhites as emotionally exotic, occupying and thus reinforcing an affective “savage slot.” While some might argue that affect theory and the anthropology of emotions are not the same and do not therefore belong together in a genealogy, Berg and Ramos suggest rethinking that. Any anthropological representation of the affective lives of nonwhites or nondominant social groups, certainly in the context of the Americas, which is their focus, exists in a cultural landscape defined by legacies of Othering. Where historically and culturally nonwhite/non-elite bodies have been and continue to be defined as affectively Other, no ethnography of affects in the Americas avoids articulation to those politics.

Where things become even more provocative is in the authors’ suggestion that if we are to get beyond narratives of “natural” and “simplified” affects among racialized Others, we might also have to rethink a dominant conceptualization of affects as separate from cognitive processes and intentionality. Empirically, this separation of cognition and affect does not ring true to Berg and Ramos. Citing Fanon’s simultaneous intellectual and visceral awareness of white affective fear and disgust toward him as one example, Berg and Ramos propose that it is untenable to deny that being hypervisible

has no impact on one's sensitivity to the affective realms of experience. At least some of those who live negotiating a hypervisible social identity as racialized Others will be or become hypersensible to the affective dispositions expected of them and to white/elite affective responses to them.

In my understanding, what Berg and Ramos are saying is that affect theorized as separate from cognition is an affect theory based in whiteness/privilege. It is a theory that comes from a white/privileged researcher's perception that feeling rules and norms are taken for granted by the majority. But there is a minority—a political minority if not a minority in numbers—that may be, by Berg and Ramos's proposal, acutely aware and, yes, even conscious, of affective formation. They are acutely aware of these because their adherence to or deviance from expected and desired affective norms attributed the Other, for which their body stands in public, does not go unnoticed. Played right or wrong, their always affective generating presence has power effects, impacting access to jobs and resources and playing into or out of discourses of the Latin/o/a as good or bad citizen/human.

A relatively clear takeaway from this article is that if we as anthropologists are serious about surfacing the intersections between affects, power, and politics, we need to attend to the ways in which systems of power and inequality generate very different experiences of affect for differently positioned social actors and groups. What remains to be discussed in future work, perhaps by these authors, is the question of how this more nuanced understanding of affective cultural forms might demand rethinking methods of studying affects. Not that we have such a wide range of methodologies clearly outlined in the literature as it is, but how do racialized affects point to the need for further discussion on the challenges of the ethnographer relying on their own body as a principal instrument for studying affects of social actors or groups who are differently positioned than themselves? There is definitely enough in this article to put anthropologists of affects on edge.

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Ulla Berg and Ana Ramos-Zayas offer an eloquent critique of the ways in which US anthropology historically has contributed to constructing unequal structures of feeling that complicitly reward a set of feeling rules, emotional work, and alternative forms of capital while disciplining and stigmatizing others. A comprehensive review of contributions—spanning from Mexican and Peruvian *indigenismo*, Brazilian conceptions of racial harmony, and US Good Neighbor policies to dysfunctional family and mental-illness studies among Puerto Rican migrants and notions of a culture of poverty—

encapsulates “the process through which the idiom of ‘race’ shifted from biology to social science” during the twentieth century and moreover laid the foundation for subsequent (re) racialization processes “based on presumed emotive (pre) dispositions” of particular groups of people. Such processes, the authors argue, maintain hierarchical relationships.

The alternative “economies-of-affect” framework suggested by the authors highlights how affect discriminately serves as both vulnerability and embodied power through a theoretical intervention of, respectively, liable and empowering affect. Migration, the authors then suggest, constitutes a “key social process and context for analyzing the dynamics of racial affect” in areas such as migrant illegality and global-care-chain analysis.

In reflecting on the paper from Europe in the midst of one of the largest migration crises occurring in the Mediterranean—where thousands of security-seeking migrants are dying in attempts to escape different constellations of armed conflicts and economic crisis—the question at stake is not so much whether the suggested conception of racial affect is helpful but rather how it speaks to the ways in which the migration crisis becomes embedded in larger projects of exclusion. The intensification and diversification of migration and the concomitant production of illegality and criminalization of migrants are widely acknowledged by migration scholars, including anthropologists, forcing the rethinking of approaches not only to racialization but also to globalization, nationalism, religion, and the fundamental structural changes currently reconfiguring the conditions of migration, including its directionalities, actors, and systems of governance.

These days one does not have to look far to find powerful examples for analyzing the dynamics of racialized affect and the political deployment of a “language of ‘emotion.’” On April 16, 2015, Italian authorities arrested 15 Muslims accused by fellow boat migrants of killing 12 Christian migrants and throwing their corpses overboard out of “religious hatred.” Ten others “rescued” in another set of boats during the same day were arrested for “human trafficking.” Any killing of human beings cannot be excused. At the same time, the dynamics of racialized affect at play draw heavily on feelings reactivated by the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen. In the first incident, Muslim Africans from the Ivory Coast, Mali, and Senegal have been portrayed as quintessential “pure evil,” whereas representations of the killed Christian African migrants from Nigeria and Ghana highlight their deservingness as someone “worthy of rescue,” not because of being categorized as legal migrants (genuine asylum seekers) but rather because of their Christian religion. The irony is that more migrants and asylum seekers are perishing at sea since the Italian operation *Mare Nostrum*—which saved more than 140,000 boat migrants in the period October 2013–2014—was discontinued last year without any alternative European search-and-rescue operation to replace it.

The second incident, leading to the arrest of human traffickers, pretty much reflects the current European production

of migrant illegality in (often populist) debates over the relation between economic and political migrants, their illegitimate claims, and the need to stop “illegal” migrants currently setting out from Libya’s coast and heading for Europe. In this construction, illegality has a wide range of possible meanings, defined by specific political interpretations and practices that influence the means of escape for people fleeing from conflict and poverty. The confusion between asylum seekers and illegal migrants has recently been criticized by Scheel and Squire (2014) by means of three statements: (1) many refugees are actually economic migrants who abuse the system and therefore are illegal; (2) refugees are increasingly considered illegal because of restrictive migration policies; and (3) many genuine asylum seekers who would qualify for refugee status are forced to become “illegal” because of restrictive migration and asylum laws or border-control mechanisms that prevent them from seeking asylum.

The proposal to view affect as a lens to examine race and migration is evidently applicable beyond the US–Latin American–Caribbean regional sphere. Both incidents illuminates the ways in which affect operates in the production of migrant “others” and illegality beyond issues of racialization.

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#### **Analièse Richard**

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Affect is a matter of life and death in American cities, marked by the racialized legacies of US imperialism and the deepening inequalities nurtured by neoliberalism. News media are replete with reports of people of color brutalized and shot by white police officers, who justify murder as a reaction to feeling threatened. The quotidian burden of managing one’s affective performances in order to keep from making others uncomfortable, to avoid one’s very presence being perceived as a threat, is less often remarked. Berg and Ramos-Zayas present an urgent intervention into ongoing theoretical discussions around the relationship between structures and feelings, encouraging anthropologists to consider how affect is enlisted in processes of racialization. Their work centers on the experiences of US Latinos and Latin Americans, but its importance is much broader.

When Dar Rudnyckj and I undertook work on our “economies-of-affect” project (see Richard and Rudnyckj 2009), we saw affect as a productive field for thinking through the intersections of structuring processes, subjectification, and intersubjectivity. Rather than regarding it as an individual interior state, we focused on affect as transitive, a mediator of large-scale politicoeconomic change. It was clear to us that neoliberal reforms in both Indonesia and Mexico were eliciting new forms of subjectivity and moral conduct via econ-

omies of affect that circulated through both public and private places. We were interested in explaining, as we put it then, not so much what structures feeling, but rather what feeling structures.

We found the then-dominant conceptual focus on affect as a contained “interior world” rather than a relational medium to be very limiting. We did not, however, fully consider the political stakes of the anthropological projects through which these approaches had developed historically. Berg and Ramos-Zayas examine the intersections between the work of the culture-and-personality school, nationalist projects, and US imperial interests in Latin America, which served to generate official discourses around affect and moral character and link them to processes of racialization. They analyze the controversy around Lewis’s “culture of poverty” thesis to illustrate how these connections unfolded and their historical legacy, in terms of the way poverty and social inequality of racialized others came to be justified in terms of their supposed affective pathologies. While our study considered how affective economies become attuned to broader economic transformations, they point out that the inability or refusal to engage in “proper” affective performances often becomes a mark of social marginalization.

Indeed, what I found most inspiring in this article was the authors’ careful examination of the interiority/exteriority question with regard to the role of affect in processes of racialization. They insist that it is not merely possible but also politically vital to account for the interplay between what they term “liable affect” and “empowering affect.” “Liable affect” is characterized as a vital component of the formation of marginalized subjects. It is disciplinary, in that it serves to racialize affective dispositions and practices associated with vulnerability and marginalization and to essentialize them in public discourse. It also, however, creates a zone of protective interiority, which may be individualized or collective. “Empowering affect,” on the other hand, denotes the affective dispositions and practices associated with privilege and whiteness. These affective modes work together in productive tension to maintain privilege. The self-conscious performance of affective attunement highlights the fact that “populations can become strategically devoted to learning the ‘appropriate’ affective demeanor for particular interactions and situations.” This brings another level of complexity to the theorization of affective dispositions and performances and also opens up room for methodological innovation in seeking to document the interplay of these factors ethnographically.

The authors’ efforts to theorize the intersection of affective processes and racialization processes move the discussion on affect forward both by recognizing and scrutinizing role of anthropology in building conceptual frameworks that contribute to these dynamics and by laying bare the historical and contemporary political stakes of these frameworks. By connecting these fields conceptually (and pointing out the multiple ways they have been mutually implicated in political and social practice over the course of the twentieth century), the

authors enable us to ask innovative questions about what feeling structures. Exploring these questions, in turn, could afford anthropology a new opportunity to contribute to public debates about racialized inequality in the United States and elsewhere.

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This thought-provoking essay brings work in the human sciences on racialization together with scholarship on affect. Berg and Ramos-Zayas do an admirable job of showing how cultural categorizations have often relied on what the authors call “racialized affect.” In attending to the ways in which affect is racialized, the authors seek to “problematize the assumption that only populations of color have a ‘race’ while also acknowledging the context-specific ways in which white supremacy is sustained, produced, and reproduced.” The authors underscore the relationship between affect and racialization and put forward a laudable challenge to future research in anthropology that attends to these topics. They provide important insight into the fact that affect is almost always political. Nonetheless, the claim that affect is “inseparable and in diachronic articulation with racialization processes” and the authors’ “insist[ence] on qualifying ‘affect’ as ‘racialized’” raises a set of questions. Do the authors mean that all affect is always-already racialized? Or might there be manifestations of affect that are not racialized?

The essay prompts two further provocations. First, with regard to method, it might have been useful if the authors had distinguished between affect as an empirical object and affect as an analytical device. This would entail differentiating the instances in which affect is evident as a thing in the world and those in which scholars explicitly identify affect as a window into or explanation for social and cultural phenomena. The authors draw mainly on the history of US anthropology as evidence for their argument. Thus, the evidence for the essay is mainly based on an historical overview of how anthropology has used affect as an analytical device during the twentieth century, focusing on how anthropologists and others have deployed affect to make racialized classifications of human populations. The authors argue that representations of “cheerful” and “happy-go-lucky” Latin Americans converged with the orientation of the culture-and-personality approach in cultural anthropology. They further note how, in an earlier anthropology, generalizations regarding culture were premised on generalization about affect. I have no quarrel with the facts of this argument, but I wonder what sort of anthropological project these observations enable. In other words, how does the concept of racialized affect

facilitate ethnographic inquiry? What sorts of ethnographic insights does it enable?

My own research (Rudnycky 2010, 2011) and work that I conducted with Analiese Richard (Richard and Rudnycky 2009) took a somewhat different approach. Rather than treating affect as an analytical device, or, in the authors’ words, “a productive lens” that enables generalization, I have sought to treat affect as an empirical object. That is to say, I have sought to show how affective enactments are critical sites for an ethnographic inquiry dedicated to conceptual clarification and innovation. In attending to affect in this manner, I have (both collaboratively and in my own work) sought to explain how affect is deployed empirically as a medium of subjectification, that is to say, as a means of making human beings amenable to specific modes of discipline, management, and government. In this vein, I wonder how a concept of racialized affect might be useful to approaches that have treated affect less as an analytical device than as an empirical object. Such an approach might be designed not so much to deploy affect as a lens to examine racialization as to understand how affect is elicited to produce racialized subjects.

Second, one might ask whether affect is something that needs to be “theorized.” In part, this has to do with my own ambivalence toward theory, which is prompted by the later work of Michel Foucault, in which he wrote that he hoped his work would “move less toward a ‘theory’ of power than toward an ‘analytics’ of power: that is, toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis” (Foucault 1978:82). Foucault came to realize that his theorization of power as productive led to a political impasse, insofar as it led to a situation in which we “are always-already trapped” (83). Thus, Foucault came to see theory itself as potentially replicating the very structures against which it set itself. Theory, like the state or colonialism, contains within it the seeds of an aspiration to generalization, totalization, and control. Thus, it runs the risk of becoming part of the very edifice that it purports to call into question. In this vein, one might ask how theorizing affect enables creative ethnography that simultaneously does analytical work. I would be very interested to learn how racialized affect enables ethnographic work and would encourage those inspired by this concept to develop this line of analysis in empirically situated inquiries.

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Berg and Ramos-Zayas make an extremely productive intervention with this essay designed to articulate analyses of race

and processes of racialization with analyses of affect. The authors argue that race and affect produce each other historically and socioculturally and that affect should therefore be considered an intersubjective phenomenon that both generates and is generated through material conditions at multiple levels of scale. In arguing thus, the authors challenge the scholarship that presents affect as precultural, neurobiological, individual, or universal, instead (1) seeing affect as situated within the particularities of economic, political, and social contexts and (2) thinking racial political economies through the embodied dimensions of intimate relations. This reframing allows the authors to make an additional point that has to do with the epistemological dimensions of scholarship considering racialized minorities in the United States and to argue that for anthropologists to effectively analyze affect in relation to history and materiality, we must rework our methodological tools.

There are many insights that emerge from the “economies-of-affect” perspective Berg and Ramos-Zayas are advancing, and I will emphasize only two here. First, this perspective marries political economy and the more intimate dimensions of life, not in a causal manner but in a way that emphasizes coproduction. This helps us account for the persistence of inequality, stereotype, and stigma within interpersonal and intimate relations (even in the absence of legislated institutional discrimination) as well as within broader spheres, such as those of representation and policy. Second, the concept of “racialized affect” can elucidate some of the ways affect works within the broader contemporary contexts of neoliberalism and white supremacy (and indeed, how it sustains these projects).

My questions regarding the essay emerge not from the basic proposition, which I believe is sound and long overdue, but from the theoretical scope of the essay as it relates to a historical geopolitics of modernity, and thus from the evidence put forward to advance its claims. Berg and Ramos-Zayas focus on Latino/as and Latin American migrants within the US context (their own areas of considerable expertise), as well as certain canonical anthropological texts from the mid-twentieth century (and beyond), because they see migration “as a key social process and site for the production of racial affect.” Certainly, migration—the crossing of territorial borders—makes explicit the ways the parameters of normative citizenship and the ideologies and structures of nationalism are dynamically produced and reproduced through racial vectors. It also allows them to critically and insightfully think through the ways racialized affect shapes knowledge production, informing the kinds of questions that are asked and the categories that are developed, in this case those having to do with the associations between economic status and family formation and with the modalities of expressive cultural production. But if we are asking a question about where and how the articulations between affect and processes of racialization are most visible, why not extend the lens more broadly?

As is made clear throughout the essay, the projects of US imperialism and nationalism are the workshops within which racialized affect is forged, both in relation to “native” minority populations within the United States and vis-à-vis migrants. However, the importance of the Spanish-Cuban-American War and the ensuing Good Neighbor policy, military interventions, and continued colonial relations seem to appear as technical and historical contextual realms, where they could be productively elaborated as theoretical propositions. If they were, the Americas would emerge as the space that produces modern understandings of racialized difference alongside and in relation to modern transformations in capitalist development (mercantilist investment in plantation-based production for export and subsequently industrial production, both agricultural and factory). This production would also thus be understood as a discursive condition linking violence and value, thereby also creating a new and global condition into which everyone (those who migrate as well as those who stay behind) is interpellated. Within this rubric, we would render visible the centrality of African slavery to contemporary racialization processes and would have a way to more critically understand why, as the authors write, the US-born children of migrants end up becoming the “‘embodiment’ of everything associated with the always-already criminalized US-born minority, most closely associated with the experience of African Americans.”

Taking a theoretical position that more closely imbricates scholarship on racialization and affect with scholarship on empire, diaspora, and liberalism would encourage us to look not only at movement but also at stillness (Nassy Brown 2005; Young 2010), not only at transnationalism but also at diaspora (Thomas 2008), not only at governance but also at nongovernmental regulation (Clarke 2009; Thomas and Clarke 2013). In other words, mobilizing the broader hemispheric theoretical lens would demonstrate the articulation of racialization and affect as a global phenomenon that has been rehearsed most canonically within the spaces of Plantation America (Wagley 1957) and in relation to imperialism (European and US). This may also give us a way to find agential spaces within and through the cracks in empire at particular temporal and spatial junctures, so that we have some sense of alternatives to “liable” and “empowering” affect, both of which seem to be poles defined by the dominant racial ideology.

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## Reply

*The impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body allows hate to circulate in an economic sense, working to differentiate some others from other others, a differenti-*

*ation that is never "over," as it awaits for others who have not yet arrived. (Ahmed 2004a:123)*

We would like to begin by thanking our commentators for the excellent and thought-provoking feedback they have very generously offered us. This kind of public peer review has been a thrilling experience, and we are hopeful that it exhibits the dynamic, intellectual, and creative process that goes into developing and fine-tuning contentious propositions for a new ethnographic terrain. We structure our response thematically but attend to specific commentators' points when appropriate.

The impetus for this work emerged from numerous conversations about visceral encounters with race and racialization in New York City, where we both live, and engagement with our respective fieldsites as well as from our observation of a lack of cross-fertilization between scholarship on racialization and that on affect. On the one hand, race scholars seemed hesitant to take on affect theory, because they rightfully feared a reemergence of legacies of emotional pathologies historically projected onto racialized and colonial populations. On the other hand, we frequently encountered affect theorists who did not necessarily prioritize (and sometimes altogether ignored) race, in what Sara Ahmed, quoted above, calls the "materialization of collective bodies" (Ahmed 2004a: 121). In this sense, our work complements Ahmed's seminal analysis of "affective economies," in which she demonstrates the crucial work of emotions in aligning bodies to larger collectivities, including racial and national identifications. By theorizing "racialized affect," however, our claim is somewhat different: we are viewing affect's work not as one of primarily creating self-serving collectivities but as one in which such collectivities are, often intentionally, projected, with specific sociopolitical consequence, onto "other others."

Our article is thus concerned with the political and intellectual project that racialized affect could enable. Several of our commentators welcomed our insistence that an approach to affect is always-already grounded on a racial and racializing project, situated in social and political fields, and imbedded in dialectics of difference and displacements. We examine, in this sense, convergences of race, affects, and power, including a consideration of how "affect theorized as separate from cognition is an affect theory based in whiteness/privilege" (Nouvet); a distinction between affect as liability and affect as empowerment through a "careful examination of the interiority/exteriority question with regard to the role of affect in processes of racialization" (Richard); and an insistence on situating affect in a political economic context that would enable us to think of racial politics through embodied dimension and intimate relations (Thomas).

While our discussion here is profoundly motivated by the experiential and empirical archives that each of us has encountered through long-term fieldwork in Peru, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and the United States, these regions are not discrete

case studies. Instead, we aim to highlight the productive ways in which racialized affect intervenes in comparative ethnographic discussions. Taking this goal into consideration, Thomas urges us to highlight even further how "the Americas" might more prominently emerge in our paper as a "space that produces modern understandings of racialized difference alongside and in relation to modern transformations in capitalist development" and the global conditions of interpellated (and uneven) mobility and immobility this creates. Rather than viewing history as a bounded context, in this sense, history becomes a productive site of social relations and state projects of race. In particular, the centrality of historical systems, especially slavery, is critical in the production of the racial affect that we theorize in our article.

Thomas's pointed suggestion that US colonial/imperial interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean are the foundational "workshops" for the practice and development of US blackness is not only provocative but also in alignment with the ethnographic work we ourselves have conducted. Ramos-Zayas, for instance, shows how in Brazil and Puerto Rico, US blackness is not only circulated in predictable forms of popular culture but also manifested in the ordinary, as quotidian and embodied practices among migrant youth who return to Belo Horizonte and San Juan, respectively. Modernity projects of "blackness"—and also of whiteness—become dynamic sites of affective subjectification in ways that become arguably more prominent in the Americas. From this perspective, it seems curious that McElhinny considers our discussion as one "framed as largely between mestizos and indigenous peoples," especially since the very concept of racialized affect questions the assumption that "race" more readily evokes "Black" or "mestizo" or "indigenous" thus neutralizing whiteness, in all its privilege and dominance, as peripheral to Latin American racialization projects. Indeed, our reference to Fanon's contribution is certainly not "only about Algeria" (McElhinny) or even about "blackness" but about systemic racial inequality, colonialism, and white supremacy. Furthermore, as Ahmed has importantly noted, antiracism and the turn toward (white) pride as a response to black critiques over guilt and shame in fact fail to move beyond the narcissism of the white subject, because they keep returning to whiteness, making antiracism just another white attribute or even a quality of whiteness (Ahmed 2012:170). By its very concern with white supremacy, a focus on "racialized affect" in Latin America and the Caribbean is therefore not reduced to one in which the "contributions from Black scholars . . . [are] outside a discussion framed as largely between mestizos and indigenous peoples" (McElhinny).

We do not intend to ignore the important contributions of interdisciplinary scholars—many of them self-proclaimed as "antiracists," "feminists," and "queer"—who address the intersection of affect and capitalism. What we have noticed, however, is that, even in some of the most well-intended literature (and literary criticism), race frequently evaporates under intersectionality or universalism—or is subsumed un-

der popular identity-politics rubrics assumed to be “equivalent” (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality). Illustrative of this tendency is precisely one of the specific academic canons that McElhinny presents as predecessor to our own: the global “care chain” scholarship. Although we critically engage this literature at considerable length in the article, and although we recognize its value in theorizing labor through intersectionality, for instance, we do not view it as reflective of the racialized affect we are proposing.

When considering which ethnographic contexts might be particularly productive for examining racialized affect, we do, in fact, view migration processes as major sites for examining racialized affect, and this leads us to a critical question Thomas poses: Why is migration—and not stillness—a prime site? We view stillness or immobility as equally constitutive of the global condition of transnationalism, diaspora, and displacement. Thus, it is important for us to clarify that we are not proposing mobility as a naturalized state or contemplating it from what Cresswell (2006) has called a “normadic metaphysics,” privileging mobility over traceable histories and geographies. Quite the contrary. We still recognize stillness and immobility as intersubjective conditions that are experienced not necessarily in isolation but as part of intimate, social entanglements. Perhaps the seeming privileging of mobility in our piece has to do with our intention to emphasize that the migrant subject in our particular research projects is intentionally coded as less legitimate and often illegible. Migrants’ racialized affect, as noted by Nyberg Sørensen, “speaks to the ways in which the migration crisis becomes embedded in larger projects of exclusion.” This position dovetails nicely with Thomas’s contention that “mobilizing the broader hemispheric theoretical lens would demonstrate the articulation of racialization and affect as a global phenomenon.”

Several commentators raised the question of whether there might be manifestations of affect that are not racialized. For example, Grimson notes that “there is a production of alterities relying on affect that are related to religion, sexual orientation, social class, and so on.” Moreover, Nyberg Sørensen suggests that the notion of racialized affect might also apply more broadly, to force scholars to rethink approaches to “globalization, nationalism, and religion.” More explicitly, Rudnycky asks, “Do the authors mean that all affect is always-already racialized? Or might there be manifestations of affect that are not racialized?” We appreciate these scholars’ interest in both delimiting and expanding the scope of affect to realms that do not explicitly articulate in the language and experiences of race. While we realize that affect intersects with multiple axes of social difference, including gender, sexuality, nationality, legal status, and so on, we argue that race and racialization are foundational of those other intersections; this is historically, culturally, and politically the case throughout the Americas. We consider that anything hemispheric that involves the history of the Americas in the realm of US influence, including places of imperial and colonial intervention

that are—geographically speaking—“outside” of the Americas (e.g., the Philippines), cannot be understood even marginally outside of race and racialization practices. We stand, in this sense, in closer alignment with De Genova’s position that being racialized involves a continuous labor that is necessarily affective and that “this is as true for those racialized as white as for those subordinated by white supremacy.” Thus, as De Genova rightfully states, “How much do we lose—or rather, how much more can we afford to lose—by failing to see affect as a constitutive dimension of racialization?”

As we reflect on the theoretical advantages of approaching “racialized affect” as an analytical lens and perspective, we highlight that this does not negate our investment in treating affect as an empirical object situated in particular socioeconomic, historical, and political projects and ethnographic contexts. As Nouvet notes in her comment, our paper focuses on “the very different experiences of affect for differently positioned social actors and groups.” We aim to demonstrate how racialization processes are built on unevenly distributed dispositions, local neoliberal aspirations, and nation-state projects. The embodiment and materiality of racialized affect—as analytical lens and empirical object—are best articulated, we believe, in the vital distinction between forms of affect that render some individuals “liable” and others “empowered.” As Richard’s reading of our concepts of “liable affect” and “empowering affect” suggests, racialized affect is an empirical and “self-conscious performance of affective attunement” that highlights the fact that intersubjective encounters are approached differently (and require different strategies, investments, and demeanors), depending on the populations that are implicated. As Richard proceeds to note, this “opens up room for methodological innovation in seeking to document the interplay of these factors ethnographically.” Thus, we do agree with Rudnycky that “affective enactments are critical sites for an ethnographic inquiry dedicated to conceptual clarification and innovation,” but we remain cautious about assuming that affect is something that can be “bracketed” into an “affective moment” at the expense of understanding affect in the fluid, dynamic contexts of everyday intersubjective processes of racial subjectification.

We are grateful to and energized by the several commentators that recommend the development of a methodological approach to “racialized affect.” Rudnycky, for example, asks, “How does the concept of racialized affect facilitate ethnographic inquiry? What sorts of ethnographic insights does it enable?” Although both of us have addressed these questions in our respective book-length ethnographic projects (see Berg 2015; Ramos-Zayas 2012), we consider these methodological and epistemological concerns so critical to our theoretical perspective on “racialized affect” that we decided to explicitly engage these issues in a separate article (U. Berg and A. Ramos-Zayas, unpublished manuscript). In our forthcoming article on the methodological questions behind examinations of affect, we analyze the ethnographic requirements and

epistemological possibilities of empirically examining racialized affect, by approaching knowledge production through what we call “ethnographic attunement” and “generative fieldsites.” Drawing from our work among Brazilian and Puerto Rican return migrant youths (AYR-Z) and Peruvian labor migrants to the United States and back (UDB), we explore ethnographic attunement in anthropological fieldwork as an epistemological tool to critically trace how older racialization models are reinvigorated under processes of circulation and new patterns of regulation—a point raised elsewhere by Thomas and Clarke (2013).

Throughout our collaboration, we remained attentive to the dire need to review exactly how conceptions of affect, in general, and affect and race, in particular, are primarily produced and centered around Euro-American experiences. We are committed to undertaking Thomas’s proposition, to carry our perspectives on racialized affect in a direction that has the potential to “give us a way to find agential spaces within and through the cracks in empire at particular temporal and spatial junctures, so that we have some sense of alternatives to ‘liable’ and ‘empowering’ affect, both of which seem to be poles defined by the dominant racial ideology.” Ultimately, our intervention is a political critique of and action against enduring racial projects within and outside the existing “metropolitan provincialism” (Lins Ribeiro 2014), particularly noticeable in US academia. In relation to the literatures produced in Latin America and the Caribbean, we enthusiastically welcome Alejandro Grimson’s invitation to broaden the debate toward a more comparative perspective that takes into account the historical scholarly trajectories, including the links between “society” and social-science discourse, produced in different national and transnational contexts.

—Ulla D. Berg and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas

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