

Luis Escobedo

## Whiteness in Political Rhetoric: A Discourse Analysis of Peruvian Racial-Nationalist “Othering”\*

Drawing upon Paulo Drinot's works on how racialized assumptions have been central to the transition toward industrialization, and neoliberalism in early 20<sup>th</sup>-, and early 21<sup>st</sup>-century Peru, respectively, this monograph analyses how contemporary powerful state agents efficiently naturalize whiteness among Peruvians by equating it with progress and constructing the non-core group as a racialized “Other”, in and through the articulation of language and meaning. I claim that direct, naked, and offensive anti-communist and anti-indigenous language is not the only, or the most efficient, way in which an antagonism is constructed in contemporary Peru. By understanding how whiteness operates in political rhetoric, we will be able to visualize more clearly how even the most common, widely accepted, and allegedly inoffensive expressions can be effective in the construction of racial antagonisms. In order to accomplish these objectives and support these claims, I will engage Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's theory of discourse.

**Keywords:** Peru, Alan García, discourse analysis, whiteness, neoliberalism.

*What better way to demonize those who oppose yet another mining concession or the privatization of communal lands than to associate them with Abimael Guzmán and his followers.*  
(Drinot 2014b, p. 178)

### 1. In the Name of “Progress”

In the epigraph, Peruvian historian Paulo Drinot exposes in one sentence a common way of doing politics in post-Fujimori Peru, and more specifically during former President Alan García's second mandate in 2006–2011: the state approves a project (“mining concession” and “privatization”), identifies a target for “progress” (“communal lands”), defines potential obstacles (“those who oppose”), and develops a strategy to overcome such obstacles (“to demonize”

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\* Parts of this short monograph have been developed thanks to the supporting comments of Maria-Luiza Lucescu (SOAS University of London graduate), Dr. Maria Asavei (Charles University in Prague), Dr. Tamir Bar-On (Monterrey Institute of Technology), and Syme de Leon (LSE).

and “associate them with Abimael Guzmán and his followers”)<sup>1</sup>. Ultimately, the state subdues them and proceeds with its project. Although this may seem like a common way of doing politics in many parts of the world, in “societies structured by racial dominance” (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1), such as the one in Peru, this kind of procedure “necessarily has racist implications” (Escobedo 2015, p. 6).

In *The Allure of Labor: Workers, Race, and the Making of the Peruvian State* (2011), Drinot provides us with one of the most outstanding contributions to the study of racism in Peru. Following South African race theorist David Theo Goldberg's ideas, he invites us to understand how Peru has functioned as a racial state since the beginning of the twentieth century. Using a Foucauldian perspective, Drinot shows us how governmentality has been central to the process of creating a racial state in Peru. A racial state, according to D.T. Goldberg (2002), is a state where whiteness is the rule. Modern states are racial by virtue of their modes of defining, determining, and structuring populations, which are diverse in terms of race, gender, and class (p. 104) – I would also add nationality (e.g., migrants, refugees) to the list. In *The Allure of Labor...* (2011), Drinot also discusses how labor policies enacted by the Peruvian state in the early twentieth century worked as mechanisms of transformation of indigenous people and identity into a working class. During this time, labor policies were created in order to fulfil the elite's vision of an industrial nation, a nation equated with “progress” and “civilization” (Drinot 2011). Drinot also suggests that these racialized assumptions are reflected in the persistent inequalities of contemporary Peru. This idea is further developed in his edited book *Peru in Theory* (2014).

Part of Drinot's latter work focuses on analysing the way political agents during Peru's “neoliberal «revolution»”, since the beginning of the 1990s, have articulated discourse in order to define the domestic “enemy” (Drinot 2014a, pp. 1–2) in racial terms. He claims that although Peru has often been portrayed as a capitalist success story in the last twenty-five years, some of the consequences of the implementation of the neoliberal economic model have been the gradual depletion of the country's natural resources, social conflicts, and the accentuation of longstanding inequalities and exclusions (Drinot 2014b, pp. 173–175). In the chapter titled “Foucault in the Land of the Incas: Sover-

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<sup>1</sup> Abimael Guzmán was the leader of *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), a far-left militant group classified by the Peruvian government as a terrorist organization. It was founded around 1970, carried most of its operations between 1980 and 1992, and was engaged in an armed conflict against the Peruvian state between 1980 and 2000. For more on *Sendero Luminoso*, see C.I. Degregori (1988, 1993), G. Gorriti (2008), G. Portocarrero (2012), S. Roncagliolo (2007), among others.

eighty and Governmentality in Neoliberal Peru”, P. Drinot (2014b) focuses on former President of Peru Alan García's second mandate, 2006–2011, in order to exemplify how these processes take place and at the same time reflect racial assumptions. He argues that García's project of rule was characterized by the privileging of sovereignty over governmentality, in other words it was “a politics that privileges the police or discipline of the population over its «improvement» and constitution as self-regulating free subjects in the sense that while governmental power is deployed among a minority of the population, sovereign power is used to discipline a majority” (Drinot 2014b, pp. 176–177).

Drinot bases his study on Giorgio Agamben's (1995, p. 142 in P. Drinot 2014b, pp. 170–171) approach to the concept of sovereignty: “in modern biopolitics, sovereign is he who decides on the value or non-value of life as such”. Through the analysis of García's public speeches and other media appearances, Drinot (2014b) observes that the former president, in order to legitimize the *disciplining* – sometimes in the most violent ways, as in the 2009 Peruvian political crisis whose military intervention is referred to as the *Baguazo* – of a majority of the population, opted for the creation of a domestic “enemy” deemed responsible for Peru's failures. This enemy's most important inscribed feature was its relation to communism, something that after approximately 20 years of armed conflict between 1980 and 2000 carried a negative connotation in the minds of the majority of Peruvians. In this way, those who critiqued or protested against García's policies were all bracketed together as “communists”, “anticapitalists”, “protectionists”, and “environmentalists” (Drinot 2014b, pp. 176–177). As a racialized and marginalized non-core group, indigenous peoples are associated with these elements by the core group, something the latter sees as a condition of “backwardness” (Drinot 2014b, pp. 176–177)<sup>2</sup>. Thus, García's

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<sup>2</sup> I borrow the terms core group and non-core group from Harris Mylonas, and articulate them for the purpose of this monograph. By core group, H. Mylonas (2013, p. 23) refers to “the members of the ruling political organization that has the military and administrative capacity to enforce its decisions within the borders of a state”. A non-core group, on the contrary, is “any aggregation of individuals that is perceived as an unassimilated ethnic group (on a linguistic, religious, physical, or ideological basis) by the ruling political elite of a country” (Mylonas 2013, p. xx). H. Mylonas (2013, p. 27) suggests using the term non-core group instead of minority for a number of reasons: First, non-core group members are conscious of their difference without necessarily being mobilized around this difference. Second, the term non-core group does not imply anything about a size. Third, this term allows us to approach even stereotyped members of the demographic core group as targets of assimilationist policies. Finally, “non-core group” does not imply a legal status or an official recognition as “minority” does. See H. Mylonas (2013).

agenda was a biopolitical one. It consisted in the de-Indianization of Peru, confirming that in fact his capitalist revolution was enacted *against* the Peruvian population as a result of the privileging of sovereignty over governmentality (Drinot 2014b, pp. 176–184).

Drawing upon Drinot's work, this monograph examines excerpts from two of García's televised speeches, given during his second mandate, through the lens of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse. The objectives are to analyse how, from the articulation of language and meaning, powerful agents in the state: 1) efficiently naturalize whiteness among Peruvians, and 2) construct non-core groups as the "Other", racializing them, and making them vulnerable to the power of the sovereign. I claim that direct, naked, and offensive anti-indigenous and anti-communist language, as we have seen in Drinot's analysis of Alan García's rhetoric, is not the only, or the most efficient, way of constructing an antagonism in neoliberal Peru. By understanding how whiteness operates in political rhetoric, we will be able to visualize more clearly how even the most common, widely accepted, and allegedly inoffensive expressions can construct racial antagonisms efficiently. This would shed light on how the most ordinary discourses in Peruvian politics establish and normalize a structure in which racism can flourish, persist, and become a central element in, for example, social conflict in relation to oil or mining concessions. In racial states (Goldberg 2002), or, for that matter, in any society "structured by racial dominance" (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1), the imposition of meaning through language necessarily has racist implications (Escobedo 2015, p. 6). In order to accomplish the objectives and support the claims stated above, I will answer the following questions: 1) What does whiteness look like in an ordinary political speech? 2) How, within this process, are identities created in hierarchically different and opposing political spaces? In order to answer these questions, I will explain and apply Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's theory of discourse.

## **2. A Discourse Analysis of Peruvian Racial-Nationalist "Othering"**

### **2.1. Whiteness, an Ideological Construct**

Whiteness is most of the time understood as a describable social phenomenon that relates primarily to whites, phenotypically speaking. M. Steyn (2005, p. 121), drawing from the South African experience, explains it as "an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to people of European descent as a consequence of the economic and political advantage gained during

and subsequent to European colonial expansion”. However, whiteness could also be understood as an analytical perspective (Clarke and Garner 2010, p. 2). S. Garner (2007, p. 2) describes it as a marked racialized identity that exists in relation to other racialized identities. In this monograph whiteness is conceived of as “the manufactured outcome of cultural and legal definition and political and economic identification with rulership and privilege” (Goldberg 2002, pp. 112–113). That is to say, being white depends, above all else, on social, economic, political, legal, and cultural superiority rather than solely on skin colour, head and nose shape, eye colour and shape, hair texture, and so on. B. Byrne (2006, p. 3) argues that “whiteness is more than a conscious identity, it is also a position within racialized discourses as well as a set of practices and imaginaries”. As such, whiteness is “a location of structural advantage in societies structured by racial dominance” (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1). Following these definitions, whiteness applies equally to the white and the whitened. It is ideologically constructed rather than genetically inherited.

## 2.2. The Communicative Objects of Analysis

In June 2009, faced with protests by indigenous people from the Amazon rainforest opposing oil development, former President of Peru Alan García (1985–1990 and 2006–2011) declared a state of emergency and sent in the military. The official death toll reveals 23 policemen – plus one missing – and 10 indigenous people. This incident is referred to as the *Baguazo*. The communicative objects to be analysed are excerpts from two televised speeches made by García during his second mandate. The first one is part of a speech that took place during an international conference in Lima on 25 March 2009, two and a half months before the *Baguazo*. The second one is an excerpt of an interview with host journalist Cecilia Valenzuela at WillaxTV<sup>3</sup> political affairs program *Mira Quién Habla* on 28 January 2011, almost two years after the *Baguazo*. The aim is to take the attention away from the direct, aggressive and offensive anti-communist and anti-indigenous language often articulated by García, and to focus instead on his most ordinary, widely accepted, and allegedly inoffensive expressions. I claim that the latter are as efficient as, or even more so than, his

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, the name WillaxTV, a channel transmitted on the Internet, cable TV, and DTTV, is inspired on the word *willakuy*, Quechua for “news”. Another interesting and relevant fact is that the interview started with García congratulating the channel and the journalist for using Quechua language in its name. He stated that it is “important that the very name works as a symbol of identity” (García 2011).

symbolically violent speeches at naturalizing whiteness among Peruvians by equating it with progress and constructing non-core groups as the racialized “Others”. The excerpts from the two speeches are transcribed below.

Speech 1: *We are an Andean country. That is, an essentially sad country.*

And the most important thing for me is to use the crisis as an instrument to *finish off the culture of defeatism and fear...* of a society that possesses slightly *higher psychological elements of defeatism* than the ones possessed by Brazilian men. They have more sun, more of a black dose, and more joy than *we, the Andean people*. [...] We are an Andean country. That is, *an essentially sad country*. Not like I said about Brazil, or Colombians, who are hyperactive. They are a mix of Northern Spanish, Basque, Catalanian, and a higher black dose, and a bit of primitive anthropophagous [sic]. They are hyperactive. And, they have more sun and the Caribbean. [...] Here, *we still have indigenous people harvesting coca leaves. Still!* So, hyperactivism [sic] is over there. *They have a car [racing] world champion; they have a first-class bullfighter.* All of that is *racial and genetic hyperactivism* [sic]. [...] But, certainly, *we are sad and here everything is always bad.* That's true<sup>4</sup>. (Translation and emphasis mine)

Speech 2: *The souls of their ancestors reside surely in paradise; not there!*

In the third place, to defeat the *absurd and pantheistic ideologies*, which follow the belief that the walls are gods, and that air is god. Anyway, to return yet again to those *primitive formulas of religiosity*, in which it is said “do not touch that mountain because it is an *Apu*, made of a millenary spirit and who knows what”, right? Anyway, if we are going to get to that point, then let's not do anything, not even mining. “Do not touch the fish because they are divine creatures and are the expressions of the god Poseidon”. We would be returning to some kind of *primitive animism*, right? *I think that we need more education.* But, that is something to be done in the long run. That cannot be *fixed* just like that. You could go to any place, where the population, with the best intention (!) and according to their level of education, could tell you “do not touch this region because it is a sanctuary”. I can only wonder what kind of sanctuary they are talking about. If it is an environmental sanctuary, well that's good. But, if it is a sanctuary because there reside the souls of their ancestors...Hey! *The souls of their ancestors reside surely in paradise; not there!* Moreover, those who live now are nourished by the work and investment done in those mountains! So, it is a long process! The fact that we are moving forward does not *mean* that we have gotten over all of our old types of thought<sup>5</sup>. (Translation and emphasis mine)

<sup>4</sup> To see a full discussion on García's speech, see C. Bruce (2009).

<sup>5</sup> To see the full interview, see A. García (2011).

### 2.3. A Discourse Analytical Framework

Political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001, pp. 108–109) define discourse, or discursive formation, as a “differential and structured system of positions” constituted by linguistic and non-linguistic elements. For them, every existing object is an object of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 107). That is, everything is embedded in discourse; nothing is non-discursive (Simonsen 2016, p. 88). In this way, Laclau and Mouffe deny essentialism, and lead us to the idea that all social practices are discursively constructed – for example, an anti-mining protest could be structured as a “barrier to economic growth”, as “part of the civil rights struggle”, or as something else. In a discursive system, where every element occupies a differential position, every identity is relational and every relation between identities has a necessary character (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 106). The ambiguity and contingency of all identities, however, cause their incompleteness. In social structures, ultimate meanings are impossible; no identity can ever become fully fixed. Thus, if one element can only obtain meaning through its relation to other elements, and “modifications of the whole and of the details reciprocally condition one another” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 106), then fixation of meaning presupposes struggle (Simonsen 2016, p. 88). When social agents (e.g., the state or an indigenous community) realize the impossibility of attaining their identities (e.g., a *true* nation-state, an *autonomous* ethnic nation) and interests, they construct a social antagonism, an “enemy” deemed responsible for this “failure” (Howarth 2005, p. 105).

In order to understand how social antagonisms are constructed, Laclau and Mouffe (2001, pp. 129–130) propose we look at the way the logics of equivalence and difference work. Under the logic of equivalence all elements that structure political space A are the direct negation of all elements that structure political space B. The elements in A are, in other words, anti-identity B; as the excluded elements of space B, they enter a chain of equivalence in space A. Under this logic, B has the illusion of having become its “true” self through the annihilation of the elements that threaten and prevent such a realization. In this way, the political space is simplified (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 130). The logic of difference, on the other hand, works in the opposite way by breaking the existing chains of equivalence: “a pure space of differences” is constituted with elements coming from A and B (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 130). In this way, the political space is expanded and its complexity increased (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, p. 130). One of the central theses in Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) is that a complex “chain of equivalence” needs to be

formed in order to include a diversity of democratic struggles for a “collective will” to truly be reflected. In this way, following the logic of difference, a new hegemony is formed through the determination and exclusion of a “they” threatening this new, heterogeneous, complex and *democratic* “we” (Mouffe 2005, pp. 53–54). This third type of relation could also be understood under the term “agonism.” By “agonism”, C. Mouffe (2005, pp. 19–20) refers to

a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are “adversaries” not enemies. This means that, while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place.

#### **2.4. Peruvian Racial-Nationalist “Othering”: Listening to Alan García with Laclau and Mouffe<sup>6</sup>**

As previously mentioned, the communicative objects of analysis are excerpts from speeches delivered by Alan García on 24 March 2009 and 28 January 2011, two and a half months before and almost two years after the *Baguazo*, respectively. These speeches differ from his classic direct, naked, and offensive dog-in-the-manger, anti-communist, and anti-indigenous speeches and writings, in which one can find the following expressions: “these people are not first-class citizens”, “how can 400,000 natives say to 28 million Peruvians «you have no right to come in here»?”, “in *essence* they are small groups who do not represent the most advanced [people] in the country”, to name but a few (Archivo de Noticias – Perú 2009, translation and emphasis mine). On the contrary, although the chosen speeches are indirect, highly confusing, patchy, inconsistent, seemingly unprepared, Alan García comes across surprisingly calm, highly unlike his usual public appearances. I claim, however, that these speeches are as efficient as, or even more so than, his direct and clear references to a racialized and demonized “enemy” in building a racial antagonism.

Following a logic of equivalence, García's speech brackets elements in opposing political spaces: A *versus* B. Expressions such as “the most important thing for me” make a heading for political space A by creating a we/they binary relation. Given that García is the then representative of the majority of Peruvians,

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<sup>6</sup> This subtitle was inspired by the subtitle of Tim Walters' book chapter “White Elephants and Dark Matters: Watching the World Cup with Slavoj Žižek”. See T. Walters (2014).

a “true nationals”/“false nationals” binary is also suggested<sup>7</sup>. “To use the crisis as an instrument to finish off” or “to defeat”, reflect a powerful/non-powerful binary. Those in the powerful position would constitute what H. Mylonas (2013, p. 23) defines as the core group: “the members of the ruling political organization that has the military and administrative capacity to enforce its decisions within the borders of a state”. Economic binaries such as industrial/agricultural, more industrialized/less industrialized, urban/rural, or progressive/backward are also suggested when comparing Peru to countries such as Brazil and Colombia, both of them among the four Latin American economies with the highest GDP as of 2015 (The World Bank 2016)<sup>8</sup> – Brazil is not only the strongest economy in the region, but also a member of BRICS, the elite of the emerging economies. Said binaries match with expressions such as “They have a car [racing] world champion; they have a first-class bullfighter”, “mining”, “education” *versus* “here everything is always bad”, “harvesting coca leaves”, “Andean country”, “absurd and pantheistic ideologies”, “primitive formulas of religiosity”, “millenary spirit”, “primitive animism”, “old types of thought”. Other binaries suggested are coast/mountains (“more sun and the Caribbean” *versus* “Andean country”, “an *Apu*”, “mountains”)<sup>9</sup>, Western/non-Western (“a mix of Northern Spanish, Basque, Catalanian”, “car [racing]”, “bullfighter”, “paradise” *versus* “we, the Andean people”, “an *Apu*”), nonindigenous/indigenous (“more of a black dose”, “a mix of Northern Spanish, Basque, Catalanian, and a higher black dose” *versus* “indigenous people”, “an *Apu*”), happy/sad (“more joy” *versus* “essentially sad country”, “we are sad”), active/passive or energetic/apathetic (“primitive anthropophagous”[sic], “hyperactive”, “hyperactivism [sic]”, “car [racing] world champion”, “first-class bullfighter” *versus* “culture of defeatism and fear”, “society that possesses a slightly higher psychological elements of defeatism”, “indigenous people harvesting coca leaves”, “absurd and pantheistic

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<sup>7</sup> I borrow and contextualize the terms “true nationals” and “false nationals” from Étienne Balibar due to its constructivist connotation rather than its exact meaning. “True nationals” or “essential nationals”, Balibar indicates, are “*constructed* by means of ambiguous juridical conventions or cultural particularities”. For example, Australian, Canadian and US American nationalism finds itself in a difficult position in front of the claims of the natives to prior identification with the territory. However, the immigrant origins of Australia's, Canada's and the United States' nationals have given them the status of “true nationals” while reducing natives to categories such as Aborigines, First Nations people, and Native Americans, respectively. See É. Balibar (2009, pp. 284–285); G. Cowlshaw (2004, p. 6).

<sup>8</sup> Peru would be Latin America's sixth economy (The World Bank 2016).

<sup>9</sup> *Apu* is a Quechua word that is commonly used to refer to a sacred mountain (Restrepo 2002, p. 184).

ideologies”, “primitive formulas of religiosity”, “primitive animism”, “old types of thought”), and, most importantly, white/non-white (“All of that is racial and genetic hyperactivism [sic]”).

In brief, what García was suggesting with these statements, and what most people would take as a factual truth, is that Peru is a sad and backward country because, as an Andean nation with a large number of people with indigenous descent, Peruvians have “low racial and genetic” capacities. In other words, García's message is that indigenous people and their identity, along with other non-core groups, are obstacles to “progress”, hence policies should be directed to their accommodation, assimilation, and, if necessary, their exclusion or extermination – as people, as identities, or as both<sup>10</sup>. This responds to our two main questions: 1) This is what whiteness looks like in an ordinary political speech, and 2) this is the way in which identities are created in hierarchically different and opposing political spaces. This, however, raises a new question: what kind of Peruvians do García and other powerful agents of the state, media, and civil society, want to create? The prototype of an ideal Peruvian seems to still be white, urban, middle class, Spanish-speaking subject, preferably born and/or raised in Lima or in another large city of the coast, and whose physical and/or behavioural traits reflect Western or European origins or influence. In contrast, the “Other” would still be a non-white Peruvian of Quechua, Aymara or other indigenous ancestry, and/or of African origins, especially if they (or at least one of their relatives) was born and/or raised in the rural areas of the Andes or the Amazon, and whose physical and/or behavioural traits reflect little to no Western or European origins or influence. A number of authors from a variety of disciplines support the idea that such a racial dualism is still present in twenty-first-century Peru<sup>11</sup>.

### 3. Conclusion: In the Name of Whiteness

In this monograph, I approach whiteness as an ideological construct, “the manufactured outcome of cultural and legal definition and political and economic identification with rulership and privilege” (Goldberg 2002, pp. 112–113). Alan

<sup>10</sup> I borrow the terms accommodation, assimilation, and exclusion from Harris Mylonas in his study of ethnicity and citizenship in the Balkan states during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. See H. Mylonas (2013).

<sup>11</sup> See J. Bruce (2007, 2012), L. Escobedo (2013, 2014, 2015), A. Espinosa et al. (2007), A.S. Janampa (2015), G. Portocarrero (2009, 2010, 2015), D. Sulmont (2005, 2010), D. Sulmont and J.C. Callirgos (2014), N. Valdivia (2003), N. Valdivia, M. Benavides and M. Torero (2007).

García's speeches are not hate speeches in the traditional sense. They are not meant to offend, or to call for action directly. They are merely sermons on what “progress” is all about, sermons similar to the ones Peruvians listen to in the most ordinary situations: from a motivational speaker giving a group of students advice on how to *succeed* in their professional careers; to a father explaining to his children why strict rules are used for their own future *good*. García is defining, describing, explaining, comparing, problematizing, and testing his audience. We, his students, are listening, and can make our own judgments. His speeches, however, become polarizing and create racial antagonisms the moment they are openly delivered in a society that is diverse in racial, cultural, sexual, and other terms. From that perspective, García is teaching us that “progress” in fact means “whiteness”.

Between 2006 and 2011, García's regime promoted whiteness in direct and indirect ways. For most core group members, it felt like the effective continuation of a revolution, a capitalist revolution. However, for most non-core group members – if we refer to the victims of the *Baguazo*, then by non-core group I refer to both police officers, generally from impoverished backgrounds, and indigenous people – this period represented some kind of *Terreur à la péruvienne*<sup>12</sup>. García, expected to foster “liberty, equality, fraternity” – to use mundane terminology inspired by the French Revolution – among all the Peruvian people, instead privileged sovereignty over governmentality, and deployed sovereign power to discipline part of his population (Drinot 2014b, pp. 176–177). His dog-in-the-manger, anti-indigenous, and anti-communist rhetoric and actions, however, have not yet met the critique and protest that they should meet at the hands of the majority of the Peruvian population.

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<sup>12</sup> The use of the French term *terreur* is inspired by Robespierre's Reign of Terror. The Reign of Terror, also known as *La Terreur*, is the period following the French Revolution (1789–1799) in which Maximilien Robespierre's Jacobin government (1793–1794) ruled France with extreme violence. It is not, however, my intention to claim that García ruled Peru with extreme violence. By articulating this term, I intend to acknowledge the combination of fear, impotence, and injustice present among the non-core groups when approached by different kinds of subjective and objective violence in the hands of the state, media, and civil society. Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2008) has made the distinction between “subjective violence” and “objective violence”. On the one hand, subjective violence is the direct and visible kind of violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent (Žižek 2008, pp. 1–13). On the other hand, Žižek divides objective violence into two categories: symbolic and systemic violence. While by symbolic violence he means the “violence embodied in language and its forms”, by systemic violence he refers to “the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems” (Žižek 2008, pp. 1–2).

Whiteness, as an ideological construct, has been deeply materialized in educational, cultural, familial, and media, as much as in governmental, administrative, penitentiary, and military institutions. It is ingrained in the most ordinary language and objects that we use without the intention of offending or attacking anybody. Whiteness resides within signifiers like “progress”, “development”, “advancement”, “success”, “good”, and so on. These and other words and objects are taken as universal values, as if they mean the same thing to all of us. However, the more diversity in class, race, gender, and other similar terms, the more there is a need to ask what each signifier means to every individual and collective identity. If someone chooses to become the president of a highly diverse context, the first step one should take is to first become a student and then a teacher. In this way, the population would be able to learn from every public speech that the signifier “progress” means many different things to many different people. “[T]he task of democracy is to transform antagonism into agonism” (Mouffe 2005, pp. 19–20).

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## **Białość w retoryce politycznej: analiza dyskursu “otheringu” peruwiańskich rasistowskich nacjonalistów**

### **Streszczenie**

Wychodząc od prac Paulo Drinota, poświęconych centralnej roli założeń rasowych w przejściu do industrializacji na początku XX w. i neoliberalizmu na początku XXI w. w Peru, dokonano analizy sposobów, w jakie potężne czynniki państwowe materializują i naturalizują białość wśród Peruwiańczyków, konstruując jednocześnie grupę spoza tego rdzenia jako nacechowanych rasowo „innych”. Bezpośredni i obraźliwy język kierowany przeciwko ludności rdzennej oraz komunistom nie jest jednak jedyną, a nawet nie najbardziej skuteczną metodą konstruowania antagonizmu we współczesnym Peru. Przedstawienie funkcjonowania białości jako konstruktu ideologicznego pozwoli nam lepiej zrozumieć, w jaki sposób najbardziej powszechne, najszerzej akceptowane i nie-obraźliwe wyrażenia mogą skutecznie stworzyć antagonizmy na tle rasowym. Główne cele artykułu osiągnięto, analizując teorie marksistowskie oraz teorię dyskursu Ernesto Laclau i Chantal Mouffe.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Peru, Alan García, analiza dyskursu, białość, neoliberalizm.

Luis Escobedo, dr

Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESM), Department of International Relations and Humanities, Epigmenio González #500, Fracc. San Pablo, 76130 Santiago de Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico.