

“We still have to unlearn [...]. We are programmed, you know?”

Analyzing Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black Africans

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Abstract

In South Africa, “xenophobia” – the label commonly used to refer to Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black Africans - is often primarily connected to economic competition, which might silence any racial dynamics at play. Yet, given how western colonialism and White supremacy have shaped South Africa’s trajectory, exploring the role that racial identities and racial relations play in Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black Africans, is relevant. To do so, I mobilized a decolonial qualitative approach that I conceptualized as a two-fold process aiming at: 1. assessing whether the colonial past remains present and 2. highlighting possible paths to interrupt such cycles at the individual and collective levels.

Accordingly, on the theoretical front, I first provided an overview of dynamics associated with western colonialism’s racist violence, namely identity erosion and the confinement into colonial archetypes, narcissism, and trauma bonds. I then focused on racist colonial violence in South Africa and also identified narcissism, identity erosion and trauma bonds as central dynamics along nationalism. Methodologically, I approached the decolonial aspirations of this study as requiring the positioning of Africa and Africans as privileged vantage points. I consequently centered orality as an epistemology and spoke over the phone with 79 Black Africans in South Africa (three citizens and 76 foreign nationals) who shared stories about racial identities and racial relations among Black Africans, including Black South Africans’ relationship with foreign Black Africans.

My decolonial intersectional narrative analysis of these stories suggested that Black Africans’ contemporary racial identities might still be informed by colonial identity erosion, i.e., the confining of Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other eligible for racist, capitalistic, and gendered colonial violence. As for racial relations between Black Africans, I suggested that they might be informed by colonial identity erosion, narcissism, trauma bonds and indirect rule. In participants’ stories, resistance to such dynamics manifested whenever protagonists rejected the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other – whether applied to themselves or the person they assisted – and refused to banalize violence against Black Africans. This study thus contributed to drawing attention to the violent and long-lasting psychological impacts of western colonialism along paths to interrupt such coloniality, namely by reclaiming identities that challenge colonial ideals.

Declaration

I, Christiane Ndedi Essombe, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature: Date:

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Dedication

To my father and all the ancestors.

May we learn,

May we heal,

May we lead,

Asè.

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¹ Mosley et al. (2020), p.3

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Chapter One

Western colonialism:

Global racialization, narcissism, and the fabrication of colonial archetypes

This doctoral research project focuses on the racial dimension of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. In this first section, I contextualize this phenomenon within the specific sociopolitical trajectory of South Africa, and I point to the common silence around race post-Apartheid. I use this omission of racial dynamics as an entry point to highlight how a similar silence and more generally, the overlooking of racism as a structural phenomenon, is also present in western psychology. I then present three prevalent explanations in social sciences for Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans: Afrophobia, scapegoating and alleged bio-cultural differences. I argue that they all point to the dehumanization of Black Africans, which is itself rooted in the colonial encounter. Using Fanon (1967), I then reflect on the implications of Black peoples confining one another into colonial archetypes. I then argue that a decolonial approach - which I frame as a two-fold intervention that analyzes how the colonial past remains present and seeks to interrupt this pattern - is required for this research.

1.1. Project overview

From slavery (Worden, 2023) to Apartheid (Phiri & Matambo, 2018), anti-Black¹ racism and White supremacist violence have undeniably shaped South Africa's trajectory. Despite this context, in the post-Apartheid era,² literature about foreign Black Africans' antagonization and targeting by Black South Africans (Neocosmos, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 1998; Crush, 2000; Steenkamp, 2009; Mah & Rivers, 2016; Labys, Dreyer & Burns, 2017; von Holdt et al., 2011; Landau, 2010), rarely presents anti-Black racism and White supremacist violence as root causes.³

¹ I capitalize racial identities to highlight that they are made up labels. They are invented social constructions within a White supremacist paradigm. A Black person's skin hue is not always best described as 'black'. Similarly, a Black person in Turtle Island, (colonially known as North America) might be considered Coloured in South Africa. This further illustrates that racial identities are socially engineered labels and not objective characteristics hence why I capitalize them.

² Just like "postcolony" (Mbembe, 1992) and "postcolonial" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013), "post-Apartheid" here does not imply a successful overcoming of Apartheid's violence but rather a paradigm in which a society is still entangled with and reacting to the legacy of Apartheid.

³ Some scholars such as Mbembe (2015) have evoked anti-blackness when discussing violence against foreign Black African nationals (see: <https://africasacountry.com/2015/04/achille-mbembe-writes-about-xenophobic-south-africa>). However, the body of academic work focused on anti-blackness as a root cause of the violence against foreign Black African nationals in South Africa remains relatively scarce compared to other hypotheses.

Instead, that violence is reduced to crime or conflated with immigration challenges (Crush & Ramachandran, 2016), and rarely put in dialogue with the country's history of White supremacy. As a result, the specific targeting of Black Africans out of all foreign citizens in South Africa, is presented as a phenomenon that is allegedly universal and unspecific to the South African context. While xenophobic violence can transcend borders, labelling as such the violence against foreign Black Africans might be misleading since it seemingly overlooks the targeting of a specific racial group out of all foreign citizens in South Africa. Such a framing crystallizes what Malherbe et al. (2021) qualify as "racism of zero-point" (p.439): racist dynamics – in this case the targeted violence against Black Africans - left unacknowledged and excused by their alleged ubiquity. Such a careful avoidance of any critical racial analysis amounts to collaborative conversational silence (Durrheim, 2023) in which factual racist dynamics are overlooked. In the case of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, a binary 'either or' thinking is seemingly at play. Accordingly, alleged immigration issues and crime cannot coexist along anti-blackness as causes of enmity. An alternative reading however might indicate that crime and immigration are societal concerns in which racist anti-Black ideology transpires the most (Crush & Ramachandran, 2016). As such, racist anti-Black ideology might be left unproblematized when associated with those themes. Such an outcome can be analyzed as illustrating ultramodern racism (Neville et al., 2013): a form of racism that normalizes racial asymmetries and inequities to the point of neither acknowledging nor problematizing them. Interestingly, South Africa has formally adopted non-racialism and racial eliminativism (i.e., the elimination of any references to race and racial categories) (Msimang, 2018) in its constitution. The combination of these two concepts can be understood as the adoption of racial silence to some extent. Indeed, while non-racialism was advocated for by Steve Biko, it is fundamental to not conflate it with racial eliminativism (Harris, 2017). Non-racialism was a desired socio-political state rooted in Black consciousness and solidarity across racial identities opposing White supremacy (Harris, 2017). By rejecting race as a biological concept, non-racialism also embodied a stand against racist hierarchies and racial capitalism (Alexander, 2013). In contemporary times however, non-racialism appears to be mostly understood as racial silence rather than as a vision of liberation from White supremacy and racial capitalism. Beyond seemingly hypothesizing that by not talking about race, centuries of White supremacy in South Africa will go away on their own, racial eliminativism also seems to grossly underestimate the ubiquity of racism, in addition to reducing it to a false biological concept.

Research corroborates that whenever race becomes a taboo, the odds of placing people of European descent as the norm and everybody else as the Other (Said, 1978), increase (Helms, 2020). Furthermore, silencing conversations about race overlooks the protective role of racial identity in the psychological and social adjustment of racialized people (Whaley & McQueen, 2010). Within a paradigm in which people of European descent are placed as the norm, racial silence can lead to framing race as a concern only for the (racialized) Other (Hazelbaker et al., 2022). The resulting unilateral focus on racialized people often translates into the deployment of racist stereotypes when discussing racism (Durrheim, 2023) - and western psychology is no stranger to such a practice. As an example, Jussim (2012) has argued that racist stereotypical representations of Black American men as violent, were factual and not harmful generalizations. Such a reading seemingly indicates a complete disregard for all structural, societal, and institutional characteristics of the colonial White supremacist context of the United States (US), to theorize why violence might be particularly reported when occurring among Black American men or, what structural inequities, barriers and oppression might lead some members of this population to resort to violence. Such shortcuts point to the existence of homogenizing fabricated archetypes that legitimize colonial dehumanization. Accordingly, all individuals sharing characteristics that have been used to create colonial hegemonies such as those of race, class, and gender, are restricted to a set of colonial expectations about their behaviour, morality, and abilities. In this case, the persistence of racist stereotypes about Black men feeds into the archetype of the alleged deficient and dehumanized Black Other who is to blame for the very violence they might experience. Reciprocally, it also feeds the archetype of the innocent sacred White human who allegedly does not engage in racist violence – or is supposedly justified when doing so (Jussim, 2012). This alleged innocence results in framing White Europeans' racist behaviour as that of a few bad apples rather than an artefact of structural White supremacy. Those two archetypes have historically been attributed based on phenotypes, namely skin colour (Robinson, 2021). To this point, western psychological studies have assessed that racism rooted in “old-fashioned” biological concepts no longer existed in the US, and had instead modernized itself (Dovidio, Gaertner & Pearson, 2017, p. 267). For anybody adopting an antiracist stance, it is unclear why any iteration of racism – including a modernized one – would be acceptable. This implicit assumption lays bare the ubiquity of colour-blindness (i.e., the belief that race and racism are allegedly in the past - Neville et al., 2013) in western psychology.

Unlike western sociology (Bonilla-Silva, 1997), western psychology has historically dismissed racism as a structural phenomenon. It has instead reduced it to interpersonal dynamics, individual prejudice, and bias (Durrheim, 2023). Western psychology research on allyship and intergroup relations (Durrheim, 2023), is seemingly another manifestation of such an individualistic framing of racism. Indeed, this approach does not acknowledge that intergroup contact can reinforce racist stereotypes and racial hierarchies (Dixon et al., 2010). Furthermore, the oversimplistic reduction of racism as an intergroup issue that can be solved by connecting individuals claiming different racial identities, ignores supremacist dynamics at play in postcolonial societies (Rodney, 1972, Robinson, 2021).

When examining Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, research in social sciences presents three prevalent explanations: 1) Afrophobia (Matsinhe, 2011) rooted in Apartheid-era isolation from the rest of the continent (Tella, 2016; Matsinhe, 2011; Steenkamp, 2009), 2) scapegoating (Crush, 2000; Neocosmos, 2008) notably fueled by socio-economic dissatisfaction entrenched in racial capitalism, and 3) alleged bio-cultural differences (Tella, 2016, Steenkamp, 2009, Nyamnjoh, 2010, Matsinhe, 2011). Although commonly presented as independent hypotheses, these explanations all seem to stem from the othering and dehumanization of Black Africans. Such an outcome would confirm the existence of the colonial archetype of the deficient and dehumanized Black Other, which is mobilized both in racist stereotypes that precede Black men in the US and in narratives about foreign Black Africans in South Africa. When applied to the South African context, this archetype implies that the "foreigner" is supposedly dangerous, criminal, and above all, one to exclude and confine to the margins of South Africa, both figuratively and literally (Neocosmos, 2008). Because of its anti-Black premise, this portrayal appears rooted in White supremacist ideology. To this point, Nchindila (2010) and Matsinhe (2011) have both argued that the violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa is rooted in Black South Africans' century-long colonial oppression. Such an argument points to the long-lasting impact of White supremacist violence in South Africa. Indeed, the earliest documented episodes of violence against foreign Black Africans go back to December 1994, in Alexandra (Matsinhe, 2011). Ever since then, mostly nationwide outbreaks of violence with visible fatalities have received media coverage. Among those, the two weeks of territory-wide violence against foreign Black Africans in May 2008 that resulted in an estimated 63 deaths, hundreds of people

injured, and between 100 000 and 200 000 people displaced (Cabane, 2015 and Kapp, 2008), have made several frontpages, including in the international press (Vromans et al., 2011). In April 2015 and September 2019, additional deadly flares of violence against foreign Black African nationals resulted in looting (Human Rights Watch, 2020), close to 20 documented deaths (Davies, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2020) and thousands of targeted people displaced (Mavhinga, 2017).

Since 2020, the hostility toward foreign Black Africans has become further crystallized with the emergence and consolidation of Operation Dudula⁴ (Sinwell, Maggott & Ngwane, 2023). Originally a national self-labelled vigilante group claiming to protect South African interests from foreign Black Africans' alleged crimes (Sinwell, Maggott & Ngwane, 2023), Operation Dudula is now a registered political party in South Africa (Schwikowski, 2023), still active as of May 2024. Its partisans are known for firmly opposing the presence of "illegal"⁵ foreign Black Africans and for "taking the law into [their] own hands" (Sinwell, Maggott & Ngwane, 2023, p.1). This notably translates into harassing foreign Black Africans for their documentation and money (Sinwell, Maggott & Ngwane, 2023). Operation Dudula also forbids foreign Black Africans from owning business in South Africa and claims that such opportunities are exclusively for citizens (Schwikowski, 2023). Foreign Black African business owners – particularly spaza⁶ owners – have consequently been harassed with demands to close their shops. Even when foreign Black African stores owners have all the required paperwork, any excuse might be used to demand the closing of their store, including the sell-by date on products (Schwikowski, 2023).

This rhetoric is not exclusive to Operation Dudula, as other political parties have echoed such sentiments in the lead-up to South Africa's 2024 general elections (Schwikowski, 2023). Populist, nationalist, and far-right discourses have gained in popularity in several countries in recent years (Bieber, 2018; Jenne, 2018), indicating that in a postcolonial world, the racialized Other is usually an acceptable scapegoat for local voters.

Back in South Africa, Matsinhe's (2011) and Nchindila's (2010) work is critical to connect the legacy of White supremacy in South Africa to the violent treatment of foreign Black

⁴ 'Dudula' means to 'push back' or 'bulldoze' in isiZulu.

⁵ This term is prominent in Operation Dudula's rhetoric and refers to the alleged assessment that foreign Black Africans are not authorized in South Africa –even with permits proving otherwise. I personally reject the idea that a human being could ever be "illegal".

⁶ Spazas are convenience stores in South Africa.

Africans. Matsinhe (2011) has argued that those read as foreign Black Africans are despised and attacked because they remind their Black South African assailants of their formerly oppressed selves. Indeed, during colonialism and Apartheid, Black South Africans were unauthorized (i.e., “illegal”) in South Africa (Mamdani, 2020). Nchindila (2010), upon conducting a mimetic analysis, concluded that hatred toward foreign Black Africans could be rooted in the dehumanization, marginalization, and violence that Black South Africans have themselves been experiencing since colonial times. Such scholarship constitutes a premise to interrogate to what extent Black Africans see one another through a White supremacist lens. Phrased differently, one might wonder to what extent Black Africans confine one another into racist colonial archetypes and exert violence accordingly. While the psychological ramifications of colonialism are complex and cannot be reduced to binary outcomes, it is critical - albeit possibly counterintuitive and uncomfortable- to acknowledge that experiencing colonial violence in its racist, capitalistic, and patriarchal manifestations, does not inherently translate into disavowing it. On the point of race and colonial violence, Fanon (1963, 1967) famously argued that ever since the colonial encounter, blackness and whiteness mutually define each other through dynamics of domination. Colonialism has positioned Europeans as ontologically superior to anybody else in a colonized world, and Black peoples as the opposite: colonial subjects eligible for totalitarian colonial violence (Fanon, 1963). Since European colonizers are the most privileged in a (post)colonial society, and since the premise of the (post)colonial world has been built by the same European colonizers, colonized peoples’ ambitions to redress their social status might, consciously or not, result in embracing colonial ideals imposed by European colonizers. This led Fanon to affirm that “There is but one destiny for the [B]lack man. And it is [W]hite.” (Fanon, 1967, p. xiv). The risk that colonized Black peoples end up upholding European colonizers’ ideals, urgently requires to be both assessed and addressed. As previously hinted, for Black Africans, this implies assessing whether we confine one another into the archetype of the deficient Black Other. It also implies assessing the coloniality of state institutions and the accompanying structural violence (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Fanon, 1963; Robinson, 2021) against Black Africans. This research thus argues that any attempt to interrupt colonial violence, necessarily requires Black Africans to both assess their partaking in those dynamics, and the leverages at their disposal to dismantle them. Focusing on Black Africans’ possible entanglement with colonial violence by no means absolves other social groups. Instead, this approach chooses to center Black Africans’ agency, sovereignty, and resourcefulness. In a

post-colonial post-Apartheid world, asking social groups with significant societal leverages to stop oppressing Black peoples, would likely translate into depending on groups that benefit from White supremacy. Such a strategy, historically, has always failed: asking people who benefit from oppression, to halt their oppression, has never led any oppressed peoples to liberation (Shakur, 2001; Anderson, 2021). This research therefore suggests focusing on what Black Africans can relatively control in a global racist paradigm: the way they perceive and treat one another.

This research uses a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach which situates African societies as privileged spaces to 1. examine whether the colonial past that has confined Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the dehumanized Black Other remains present and 2. highlight strategies to counter such coloniality at the individual and collective levels. Overall, the decolonial posture of this research aligns with Durrheim (2023)'s three conditions to challenge the conversational silence around race in psychology. First, the decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach used in this research does not privilege the privileged but instead underscores the agency, sovereignty, and resourcefulness of the oppressed. Second, it centers rather than elides racism. Finally, by examining Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, this study aims to offer ways to interrupt it. This ambition is both academic and personal: as a diasporic Black African woman living in the settler colonial state of Canada, I have committed myself to the life-long journey of resisting White supremacist violence however it might manifest and particularly among people I identify with, i.e. Black Africans. In the next section I define key concepts used to analyze the violence between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans in South Africa.

1.2. Key concepts

In this section I define nine key concepts: 1. Decolonial Africa(n)-centered approach, 2. Race and racism, 3. Racial identity and racial awakening; 4. Whiteness and White gaze; 5. White supremacy; 6. Black; 7. Africa and African; 8. Negrophobia; 9. Narcissism. All these concepts are framed from a perspective that seeks to outline and interrupt the coloniality of knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007) notably by interrogating and provincializing western interpretations.

1.2.1. Decolonial Africa(n)-centered approach

“Decolonial” in this study refers to the two-fold approach of identifying the colonial roots of contemporary rationale, hierarchies, and perspectives on one end, and highlighting alternatives to rupture with such coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) on the other. Although it can be jarring to reckon with the ubiquity of coloniality in contemporary societies, this outcome is to be expected in a postcolonial world radically transformed by colonialism. The specification of “Africa(n)” in the labelling of this decolonial approach indicates that Africa and Africans are used as standpoints to analyze manifestations of coloniality and counternarratives that challenge it. Indeed, the multiple encounters of Africa and Africans with several projects of European hegemony since the late 15th century CE make Africa and Africans very well placed to both talk about and talk back (Smith, 1999) to coloniality.

1.2.2. Race and racism

In the humanities, race is a social construction (Bonilla-Silva, 1997) that can be traced back to European Modernity (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008) and ambitions of European hegemony (Robinson, 2021; Gallego-Duran, 2011). Race is not a biological concept but at best “a poor proxy for genetic diversity” (Gannon, 2016; Yudell et al., 2016, p.1). Racism is consequently the instrumentalization of insignificant genetic variations to discriminate entire communities and present them as inferior to Europeans. That instrumentalization has been key to justify the global exploitation of non-Europeans for the capitalistic enrichment of Europeans and the normalization of European hegemony through slavery, colonialism, and Apartheid.

1.2.3. Racial identity and racial awakening

Racial identity refers to: “The process of identifying [...] with a racial group (or groups) to derive social value, intergroup distinctiveness, intragroup connectedness, and reference for normative thoughts, feelings, and behavior.” (MacInnis & Hodson, 2020 p.4249).

Racial awakening is the increased understanding of the implications of one's racial identity (Neville & Cross Jr., 2017). In this study, whenever participants describe the implications or connections they made between their Black racial identity and the often-negative treatment they experience, such discourse is conceptualized as racial awakening.

1.2.4. Whiteness and White gaze

Because it can be defined from multiple perspectives and because its definition might seem obvious, whiteness can be a misleading concept. Commonly, whiteness often refers to the physical characteristic of being white. From a socio-political perspective, however, Frankenberg (1993) defines whiteness as:

“a structural positioning from which the White subject sees others and itself; a position of power that is unnamed, experienced in a social geography where race is a comfortable place and from which one can attribute to the Other which it will not attribute to itself.” (p.197)

While this definition provides a premise to understand how Euro-American women interviewed by Frankenberg (1993) understood their identity and (entitlement to) power, it is worth problematizing the affirmation that the position of power that characterizes whiteness is unnamed. Historically, and to this day, explicit White supremacist reasonings have been deployed to justify racist domination (Robinson, 2021). Since western European powers' hegemony and identity are rooted in exploitative othering endeavors such as slavery and colonialism that made race uncomfortable for non-Europeans while shielding them from the same, Europeans in a (post)colonial world are commonly conceptualized as White (Frye, 1983), both ideologically and politically, i.e., they attribute to racialized people what they will not attribute themselves and use their power in a way that marginalizes racialized people.

Whiteness can also be linked to western colonialism since both are rooted in the othering of racialized peoples. Indeed, to ensure that western colonial violence remains directed toward the Other it becomes critical to use allegedly irreconcilable differences. That is the role that race – falsely presented as ontological and biological (Dunn & Dobzhansky, 1946; Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008) – has played ever since the colonial encounter. Although phenotypical differences do play a significant role in the paradigm of whiteness, in this research, whiteness is not limited to skin hue. It is an ideological and sociopolitical positioning, not a genetic trait. Consequently, in this study, the capitalized word “White” describes an individual who abides by whiteness. People of European ancestry can theoretically challenge whiteness and people who are not of European ancestry can theoretically appropriate whiteness. They do so whenever they - consciously or not - position themselves and other racialized people as the Others while placing people of European descent as the standard. For racialized people this posture amounts to seeing oneself through the eyes of White people. This positioning echoes elements of Du Bois' double consciousness (1968)

yet, remains distinct from it. It limits itself to the way a racialized individual might perceive themselves and other racialized people and does not theorize the reconciliation of two identities. In this research such positioning is labelled “White gaze”.

1.2.5. White supremacy

White supremacy is the system of domination based on the unsubstantiated belief that European people are superior and entitled to a level of privileges and safety out of reach for anybody else (Cardoso, 2010). Within that ideology, Europeans sit at the top of a racist hierarchy in which Black Africans rank the lowest (Christian, 2019) and are exposed to the most dehumanizing forms of violence (Robinson, 2021).

1.2.6. Black

In the ancient civilizations of Kemet (which means “black” in ancient Egyptian – Diop, 1974, p.7) and Sudan (which translates into “country of the Blacks” – Harper, 2023, p.1), the word “Black” was used in a sovereign way, independent from any experience of exploitation or dehumanization. In a postcolonial world however, Robinson argues that “Black” is a “homogenizing intemporal aspatial” (Robinson, 2021, p. 81) denomination that “divorces people from any specific history, geographic space, or civilization” (Robinson, 2021, p.81). As such, in contemporary times, Black people are constantly defined through a White supremacist gaze that has used their phenotype as a signifier of inferiority and inadequateness ever since Modernity (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008; Gallego-Duran, 2011).

In South Africa, “Black” carries a meaning rooted in the struggle against Apartheid and referred to identify any racialized people who faced White supremacist violence. To this day, the legacy of Apartheid still informs the meaning of “Black” in South Africa. The label is used in legislation such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act to refer to “Africans, Coloureds and Indians who are citizens of the Republic of South Africa by birth or descent or who became citizens [...] before [...] or after 27 April 1994⁷ and who would have been entitled to [...] naturalization prior to that date.” (B-BBEE commission, 2023, p.1).

⁷ The first democratic elections in post-Apartheid South Africa took place on 27 April 1994. This day is celebrated in South Africa as Freedom Day. See: <https://www.gov.za/FreedomDay2022#:~:text=Freedom%20Day%20is%20the%20commemoration,could%20vote%20regardless%20of%20race>

In this research, Black with a capital 'B' refers to people who have been dehumanized by White supremacy notably through successive global racist phenomena such as the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, Apartheid, and ongoing coloniality.

1.2.7. Africa and African

It is documented that Romans were the first to use the word "Africa", likely when they distorted the name of a nation in present-day Libya and extended it to the entire continent and its peoples (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013). "Africa" is therefore not a self-assigned name, but a European homogenizing label used to other non-Europeans south of the Mediterranean and deny their plurality. For this research, Africans are conceptualized as descendants of indigenous peoples of Africa. Accordingly, it is acknowledged that not all Africans are Black (e.g. Amazigh peoples who are indigenous to the northern parts of the continent).

1.2.8. Negrophobia

Fanon (1963, 1967) has extensively written about how Black people, notably in his natal island of Martinique, can deliberately seek to distance themselves from people they read as too "Black", i.e. too far removed from Europeans, whether that is in their physical appearance or alleged manners. Such aversion of Black people would, both from a semantic and conceptual perspective, crystallizes the rationale of Negrophobia. In this study, Negrophobia is conceptualized specifically in the context of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa. It is defined as the "fear and dislike of Black people" (Chinweizu, 2005 in Skuy and Verryn, 2008, p. 197). Since they both point to racially motivated hatred, anti-Black racism and Negrophobia speak to the same dynamics. "Negrophobia" specifically refers to anti-Black racism among Black Africans in post-Apartheid South Africa. It is used to acknowledge the existing terminology put forth by scholars who have challenged the term "xenophobia" and its colourblind approach to the violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa. "Anti-Black racism" is used to describe the general dislike, othering, and dehumanization of Black people regardless of where such dynamics take place.

1.2.9. Narcissism

Within the paradigm of western psychology, Lambe et al. (2018), present narcissism as "a dissociation between an unconscious sense of inadequacy and a conscious feeling of superiority" (p.7). Brazilian sociologist Maria Aparecida Bento (2002) when examining dynamics in Sao Paulo workplaces, connected narcissism to whiteness by defining whiteness as a narcissistic pact. As narcissism – specifically, grandiose narcissism – is often characterized by the pursuit of status (Grapsas et al., 2020), narcissism can be understood as the process deployed by individuals who unconsciously feel a sense of inadequacy and long for a sense of superiority. In a (post)colonial world, such longing for superiority ought to be put in dialogue with western colonialism that dehumanizes and exploits the colonized Other to increase the White colonizer's status. Western colonialism can consequently be conceptualized as the culmination of narcissistic whiteness, i.e. the culmination of the othering of colonized people that fuels the colonizer's sense of superiority. Narcissism in this study is as such a collective process informed by western colonialism, that aims to quench a thirst for colonial superiority, upon fostering a sense of colonial inadequacy.

This proposed definition of narcissism which connects narcissism, whiteness, and western colonialism, offers a framework to examine western colonizers' behaviours a posteriori - which is an exercise that western psychology seldom engages in. Accordingly, western colonialism can be conceptualized as White European settlers' collective display of narcissism and reciprocally, as a collective experience of narcissistic abuse survived by colonized peoples. Furthermore, this framework of narcissism also lists characteristics (i.e., an unconscious sense of colonial inadequacy and the conscious pursuit of colonial superiority) that might help identify the ongoing impact of western colonial violence on colonized peoples. Interestingly, Omarjee's (2023) also connected narcissism to the legacy of colonialism when writing about the obsession with controlling the colonized Other to serve one's self-interests. Such convergence might outline the central role of narcissism in colonial violence.

Since this research explores racial identities and racial relations, in the next section I provide an overview of the historical context surrounding the false scientific framing of race.

1.3. European "Modernity" and the exportation of race, whiteness, and colonial archetypes

In this section, I discuss how race has been engineered and used by European powers to further

the European colonial project through the solidification and propagation of racist colonial archetypes presented as ontological and immutable.

Starting in the late 17th century CE, Western European people's quest to distance themselves from medieval beliefs of fate and providence (Mouzakitis, 2017) ushered in the Enlightenment era which focused on alleged "endless progress", rationality and evolution (Mouzakitis, 2017, p.1). It is consequently following their own assessment of the inadequacy of some of their previous chosen paradigms (i.e., fate and providence), and by attributing undesirable traits to those who kept on mobilizing such paradigms, that western European thinkers started advocating for a new framework to make sense of the world around them. That premise in and of itself embodies postures rooted in both whiteness and narcissism. For the former, it attributes to the Other what one will not attribute themselves (in this case, backwardness – Mouzakitis, 2017) and for the latter, it seeks to reclaim a sense of superiority upon developing a sense of inadequacy.

From that time on, western European philosophers such as Descartes (Descartes & Jacerme, 1990), Voltaire (Nepomnyashchy, 2006, p. 150 in Gallego and Duran, 2011, p.75; Voltaire, 1756), Hume (2018) and Kant (Kant et al., 2019), dedicated much effort to correlate humanity with rationality; and limit rationality to people who look and reason like them, i.e., "rational" White European men. It follows that if only White European men were rational, only they could be considered human. Western philosophy consequently deemed the rest of the world as subpar to their self-proclaimed standard for humanity. Hume (2018) affirmed between 1753 and 1754, that "[...] Negroes, and in general all other species of men, [are] naturally inferior to the whites" (p.691); while Voltaire specifically targeted Black peoples and assigned them "a median place between Europeans and apes" (Harrison, 2020, p.1). As illustrated in these citations, White European philosophers were particularly determined to frame Black peoples as ontologically and intellectually inferior, or, in other words, presenting them as a different race. These philosophers played a critical role in creating and propagating the racist animalizing archetype of Black Africans as non-humane, "inferior to the whites" (Hume, 2018, p.691) and overall, less capable than virtually any other peoples. Furthermore, White European philosophers from the Enlightenment era also played a fundamental role in theorizing, formalizing, and propagating the archetype of the White European man as the alleged universal standard for rationality and humanity. It is worth mentioning that race was not a new concept in 17th century Europe. It had been used to create social hierarchies during

feudal times between enslaved European people from Eastern Europe (i.e., Slave peoples, from whom the noun “slave” will be derived), peasants, bourgeoisie, and nobility among others (Robinson, 2021). However, due to the 17th century focus on rationality, rather than presenting such identities and hierarchies as determined by fate as had been the case up to that point, pseudo-science became the justification of choice. First, around the mid-point of the 18th century, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, also known as Carl von Linné, sought to map out every living creature on Earth. This project extended to the human species which Linné categorized using criteria such as geographical location, perceived skin color and alleged behaviour (Dunn & Dobzhansky, 1946; Gould, 1981). This endeavor resulted in the determination of six races⁸ which were at that time not ranked. Twenty years later, the German anatomist Blumenbach, revisited Linné’s conclusions by focusing on skin colour and geographic location on one hand, and by creating a hierarchy on the other. This biased endeavor led Blumenbach to conclude that white-skinned or Caucasian people (previously named *Homo Sapiens Europeus* by Linné), were the original and most beautiful race on Earth, while other races were mere subpar variations (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008). Where Linné created questionable categories that warrant him to be considered the father of scientific racism to this day (Hübinette, Wikström & Samuelsson, 2022), Blumenbach created a hierarchy that can only be understood as racist and White supremacist. That pseudo-scientific framing of race would become a premise to both confine non-European peoples around the world to racist archetypes defined by a few White European men, and “justify” their colonial exploitation (Vartija, 2021). In the next section, I discuss some of the implications of that false scientific framing of race, notably as it relates to racist stereotypes about Black Africans.

1.4 Modernity and racist stereotypes

As presented in the previous section, western European philosophers were not short of dehumanizing adjectives and representations to refer to Black Africans. In this section, I suggest approaching such portrayal of Black Africans as some of the first -if not the first-, globally propagated racist stereotypes about Black peoples.

⁸ These were: *Homo sapiens americanus*, *Homo sapiens asiaticus*, *Homo sapiens europeus*, *Homo sapiens africanus*, *Homo sapiens ferus* and *Homo sapiens monstrosus*. These last two categories were considered secondary ones and were entirely based on alleged temperaments.

The concept of stereotypes refers to beliefs that people hold about individuals based on their membership in a specific social group (Allport, 1954). Given how western European philosophers claimed without any corroborating facts – or, one could argue, despite contrary evidence (see Diop, 1974) – that Black Africans were incapable of reasoning and as such, could not be considered human beings, one can conclude that western European philosophers set a fundamental premise for negative stereotypes about Black Africans. The dehumanizing and animalizing stereotypes presented about Black Africans as done by Voltaire (Harrison, 2020), contributed to depicting Black Africans as ontologically unpredictable and “savage”. To this day, racist stereotypes that present Black Africans and generally Black peoples as dangerous and predisposed to committing crimes still abound (Durrheim, 2023; Jussim, 2012).

Racist stereotyping forces entire groups of people under a White supremacist othering lens. Such an infringement on racialized peoples’ portrayal and representation impedes individuals from these groups to define and (re)introduce themselves on their own terms. Furthermore, in addition to informing the behaviour of those who hold them, racist stereotypes can also influence the behaviour of those they misrepresent. This phenomenon is called the “stereotype threat” in western social psychology (Spencer et al., 1999). Accordingly, people aware of existing stereotypes about the group they claim membership in, might perceive themselves and their abilities through that lens. They might consequently anticipate being judged against those stereotypes, which might lead them to conform to said stereotypes. Doing so confines members of stereotyped groups into a predefined archetype. From a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological perspective, it would be relevant to interrogate whether such dynamics have taken place in (post)colonial African contexts. Such a pattern would further confirm that western colonialism negates colonized peoples’ sovereignty over their own identity and confines them into detrimental colonial archetypes.

In the next section I discuss the interconnectedness of western colonialism, the unilateral attribution of race to the colonized Other, and narcissism, in the African context.

1.5 Western colonialism: the culmination of whiteness’ grandiose narcissism

In this section, I first discuss the practical implementation of colonialism on the African continent. I argue that dynamics of whiteness and narcissism, can be identified in the deployment of western colonial violence in African contexts.

At a practical level, colonialism is the process by which European colonial powers have denied the sovereignty and humanity of indigenous peoples outside of Europe, and have exploited their resources to serve the European hegemonic project (Rodney, 1972; Robinson, 2021). In Africa, colonialism can be traced back to the late 15th century CE when Bartolomeu Dias, mandated by the crown of Portugal to find a sea route to India, reached the southernmost point of the continent (Ravenstein, 1900).

Contacts between Africa and Europe did not start in the 15th century CE. Many artefacts corroborate that sustained exchanges occurred between Kemet and Greek civilizations before then (Diop, 1974). In the 15th century CE however, European voyages were explicitly part of a project of domination crystallized in Papal bulls. In 1455, Pope Nicholas V signed the *Romanus Pontifex* bull which irrevocably changed the trajectory of Africa. It gave the Portuguese crown the monopoly of trade on the continent and authorized the enslavement of Africans (Moore, 1919).⁹

With such a backdrop, it is hardly disputable that colonial ventures aimed to accomplish anything but exploit and dehumanize Africans to facilitate the economic, political, and racial domination of Europeans (Robinson, 2021). It is consequently not surprising that despite Portugal's initial monopoly over African territories, other Christian European nations such as France, England, Germany, and Italy, quickly joined the colonial venture and started claiming territories in Africa as well (Rodney, 1972). As we live in a postcolonial world where history remains written by colonial powers (Diop, 1974), accounts of resistance on the continent are likely under-documented to this day. And yet, Africans' refusal of colonial rule has been embodied by the Battle of Adwa on March 1, 1896, in which hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians defeated Italy and ended its colonial ambitions (Jonas, 2011). The same refusal has fueled battles from the late 19th century to the early 20th century against German colonial rule in Tanganyika (Iliffe, 1967), and has sustained King Behazin's wars against the French in 1890 and from 1890-1892 (Irvine, 1958). Those few examples are nowhere near exhaustive. They only aim to challenge the Eurocentric recounting of European colonial endeavors in Africa and highlight Africans' agency.

⁹ This study focuses on Africa, yet it is worth highlighting that Papal Bulls also played a role in the colonization of so-called America. In 1493 – not so coincidentally mere months after Columbus landed in Guanahani (present-day Bahamas) –, Pope Alexander VI signed the *Inter Caetera* Bull giving the Castile crown the monopoly of territories west of Azores and Cape Verde. *Inter Caetera* also formalized the Doctrine of Discovery allowing Europeans to “discover” any territory that was not inhabited by Christians and claim it as theirs. See: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/04093_FPS.pdf

While Africans fought to resist colonial domination, Europeans fought among themselves to decide who could exploit Africa and Africans the most (Rodney, 1972). From a psychoanalytical perspective, such consistent complicity in the utter disregard for the survival of Africa and Africans, might incarnate whiteness' narcissistic pact (Bento, 2002). It might also explain why European colonial powers never challenge one another's self-proclaimed entitlement to colonial exploitation. Furthermore, when analyzed through the lens of colonial archetypes, it appears that White European settlers have historically attributed themselves the archetype of the raceless ontologically superior party, while confining non-Europeans into racialized colonial archetypes. This tendency would point to dynamics of whiteness.

According to western psychology, the preoccupation with status can result in aggression and violence against those seen as less deserving, particularly following a threat to the ego (Grapsas et al., 2020; Lambe et al., 2018). In other words, a threat to the ego - which can usher in a sense of inadequacy - might exacerbate the need to claim superiority, and as such, fuel dynamics of narcissism. When put in dialogue with previous accounts of Africans' resistance against western colonial violence, it is worth considering whether such defiance might have constituted a threat to White European colonizers' ego and as such, exacerbated their colonial aggression.

This possibility provides additional elements to further analyze the violence of western colonialism (Rodney, 1972) from a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological perspective.

It is worth highlighting that connecting western colonial aggression to narcissism, and threats to the ego, does not aim at pathologizing White European colonizers, i.e., reducing their violence to an illness disconnected from entire societal hegemonies and systems of oppression (Thomas & Brunσμα, 2014). Narcissism is instead suggested as a process to look back at western colonial aggressors and examine the root of their own violence and incivility, instead of focusing on the alleged incivility of colonized peoples (Nwoye, 2015, Tuck & Yang, 2023). In keeping with a decolonial approach that identifies the trail of the past in the present to interrupt it, mobilizing the lens of narcissism also aims at identifying how the intersection of western colonial violence and narcissism, might have informed relationships among colonized and racialized people too. In the next section, I review the colonial engineering of the country of Liberia to assess the potential role that colonial violence, colonial archetypes and, narcissism, might have played in it.

1.6. Not all White colonizers are Europeans: lessons from Liberia

In this section, I first use the example of Liberia and Americo-Liberians to argue that the interconnectedness between western colonial violence, colonial inadequacy, and the need to reclaim colonial superiority (i.e., narcissism as defined in this study), can be identified in this historical event. Since I previously argued that whiteness is central to western colonial violence, I suggest that interrupting whiteness (including when mobilized by Black peoples) might be a potential path to interrupt western colonial violence. I then interrogate what the perpetuation of western colonial violence among colonized Black people might reveal about their relationship with White European colonizers.

As whiteness is a social positioning and, since western colonial violence can be implemented by anybody familiar enough with it, White colonizers are not required to be of European ancestry. More precisely, since a level of familiarity with western colonial violence is required to redeploy it, and because according to western psychology, narcissism stems from an unconscious sense of inadequacy (Lambe et al., 2018), non-European colonized peoples seeking to redress their colonial dehumanization are theoretically well placed to redeploy western colonial violence. There has been at least one such precedent on the continent of Africa.

In 1822, the American Colonization Society (ACS) allocated money to relocate newly freed, Black people out of the US (Santana, 2012). The thought of free Black people appeared to have been so unbearable to Euro-American settlers that, they preferred parting ways with the people they exploited for a living, rather than see them live freely in the US. As such, between 1822 and 1867, close to 20 000 formerly enslaved Black people left the US and reached the West African coast to create the country of Liberia (Santana, 2012). These Black people - who would become Americo-Liberians (Santana, 2012) - were mandated by the ACS to “[spread] the gospel and [promote] western civilization” to indigenous Black Africans (Santana, 2012, p.8). Americo-Liberians aggressively fulfilled this mandate; they exploited indigenous Black Africans in what was to become Liberia by exerting violence eerily akin to the one they had themselves survived. Indeed, Americo-Liberians enslaved indigenous Black Africans and created a hierarchy that they sat atop of, while indigenous Black Africans were trapped at the lowest rank (Santana, 2012). Santana (2012) hypothesizes that the violence with which Americo-Liberians sought to “civilize” indigenous Black Africans, speaks to their need to overcome an interiorized feeling of inferiority,

rooted in the dehumanization of slavery. Such an urge crystallizes a sense of inadequacy and the pursuit of status – two key indicators of narcissism as conceptualized in this study. It can thus be said that these formerly enslaved Black people from the US, dehumanized by western colonial violence, mobilized that very violence to address a sense of colonial inadequacy.

The trajectory of Americo-Liberians, from the US to their arrival in present-day Liberia, provides a premise to argue that western colonial violence can and has redeployed itself among Black peoples. Furthermore, this trajectory illustrates how colonial violence ultimately traps its protagonists into colonial archetypes of either the White colonial oppressor or the dehumanized Black Other. Such a cycle aligns with Linda Smith's affirmation that "[...] the cycle of colonialism is just that, a cycle with no end point, no emancipation." (Smith, 1999, p.259). This trajectory also perfectly illustrates Fanon's (1967) framing of Black and White identities as mutually defined through the colonial encounter. It signals that an outcome like the early Liberian society is not indicative of Americo-Liberians' individual traits, but rather of the totalitarian nature of colonialism. As such, if one aspires to interrupt western colonial violence and the dehumanization of Black peoples, it is critical to explore elements that contribute to the normalization of western colonial violence by Black people.

In the case of Americo-Liberians their redeployment of the western colonial violence they had themselves survived, might indicate that they had not broken free from Euro-American settlers' violence, and had possibly developed some bond with them. In western psychology, such a bond between an abuser and an abused person can be described as a trauma bond (Carnes, 2016; Reid et al., 2013). There are many elements at play in a situation of abuse. As such, in this study, the concept of trauma bond is presented as only one possible outcome of abuse, that is in and of itself highly situational and therefore irreconcilable with any oversimplistic framing. In western psychology, trauma bonds are often presented as involving an abused person navigating a situation they might not know how to escape from. It could be argued that being forced to navigate an abusive paradigm an entire people might not know how to escape from, evokes the oppressive realities of colonial settings as experienced by colonized peoples. Western psychology theorizes that in such a situation of captivity, abused people who develop a trauma bond with their abuser (i.e., not all individuals) might justify their abuse and rely on their abuser for survival (Alexander & Klein, 2009; Bachand & Djak, 2018; Reid et al., 2013). It remains unclear why some individuals develop such bonds and others do not, however the absence of total dehumanization seems to play

a role (Alexander & Klein, 2009). One can consequently infer that in situations in which the individual held captive is not exclusively subjected to abuse and instead experiences what they might read as episodes of validation, such a bond might develop.

In the case of Americo-Liberians, being entrusted as a people (and not a few individuals) with a “civilizing mission” might have been received as evidence that Americo-Liberians had not been totally dehumanized by White Euro-American settlers and were still useful to them – even if this was to dehumanize Black Africans and further enable White supremacist ambitions. After being devalued as enslaved people in the US, Americo-Liberians' identity had acquired a new layer: that of tokenized (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990) representatives of White Euro-Americans in what was to become Liberia. Their identity was still defined by White Euro-American settlers, yet their newest status allowed them to also dispense western colonial violence instead of only enduring it. Those changes had been accompanied by hopes for a relatively better future and were sustained by funding and material resources from the ACS (Santana, 2012). Such a progression in Americo-Liberians' relationship with White Euro-American settlers, aligns with the four common elements of a trauma bond: identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement and devaluation (Howard, 2019). According to western psychology, identity erosion allows the abuser to manipulate the abused individual's identity to serve their (the abuser's) interests. Within the context of western colonial violence in Africa, this could be crystallized in the confining of (Black) Africans into a racist colonial archetype that places them in a subordinate position in relation to western colonial powers. False promises constitute another characteristic of trauma bonds. The abuser formulates such promises which mislead the abused individual into thinking that, should they do as told by their abuser, they will gain some reward from them. To prevent them from severing ties, the abuser consequently occasionally shows marks of consideration, or take actions that the abused individual might read as rewards. Such dynamics are labeled intermittent reinforcement (Howard, 2019). However, since the rapport between parties involved is one of abuse, there is infallibly some devaluation. The abused individual is exploited and mistreated by the abuser to feed into their sense of superiority. In (post)colonial Africa, false promises can be likened to neocolonialism and promises of “development” notably via structural adjustments. Furthermore, so long as colonized people did not challenge western colonial violence, they could expect some rewards (Rodney, 1972). Occasionally, groups of people who had assimilated into western colonial ways and distanced themselves from their indigenous identities – such as *la petite*

bourgeoisie (Fanon, 1963) - would receive privileges that other colonized people would not. Such rewards can be likened to intermittent reinforcement. Nevertheless, the colonially engineered underdevelopment of African countries ever since western colonial contact (Rodney, 1972) and its multiple detrimental consequences to this day, speaks to dynamics of devaluation.

In the case of Americo-Liberians and White Euro-American settlers, it can be argued that a trauma bond has been woven by way of: 1) devaluation through enslavement, 2) identity erosion by being reduced to the dehumanized Black Other first and later into ACS representatives, 3) false promises of life as free people in another land (Howard, 2019; Santana, 2012) and 4) intermittent reinforcement through the ACS' financial and logistic support to enact western colonial violence on the African continent on their behalf (Skinner, 1956, Santana, 2012).

Americo-Liberian settlers who fostered a sense of colonial inadequacy, might have engaged in the pursuit of colonial status to address their abuse at the hands of White Euro-American settlers. Such historical events substantiate the conceptualization of narcissism as a process through which colonized peoples might wield colonial violence to claim western colonial superiority and address their sense of colonial inadequacy. As the very root of this pursuit is identity erosion and confinement into colonial archetypes, any trauma bond with the abusive party who engineered that false identity, is a significant factor.

One could argue that the imprint of such a trauma bond can be outlined in any colonial project on the African continent. Particularly, manipulative partial dehumanization (i.e., the lack of total dehumanization), might have played a fundamental role. This is notably evidenced in the divide and rule strategy of indirect (colonial) rule. For indigenous African peoples who formally contributed to the implementation of western colonial rule, and received colonial responsibilities accordingly, their identity was likely reshaped into a multi-layered colonial construction (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012), premised on their role as agents of indirect rule. Their identity was thus colonially eroded. Partaking in indirect rule was likely accompanied by false promises. This would illustrate trauma bonds' characteristic of the same name (Reid et al., 2013). As any colonial project ultimately seeks to exploit colonized peoples for the colonizer's benefits, although agents of indirect rule might have enjoyed relative privileges compared to the rest of the colonized population – a pattern that evokes intermittent reinforcement-, they were likely devalued and not considered as ontologically valuable. As such, they may have fostered some discomfort toward

their indigenous identity and seek to assimilate into dominant colonial identities (Mamdani, 2020). Such a quest would further sustain colonial identity erosion and confinement into colonial archetypes.

It is striking that the conceptualization of the forced relationship between colonized Black African peoples and western colonial powers as a trauma bond, is virtually absent from western psychology. Similarly, the wielding of tremendous dehumanizing violence by western colonial powers has hardly ever been examined in that discipline. Yet, from a decolonial perspective that acknowledges that the colonial past remains present and seeks to interrupt it, it is not incoherent to frame any relationship between colonizers and colonized people as a trauma bond; a relation that scars both colonizers and colonized at a psychological level (Memmi, 1965; Fanon, 1967). Neither is it incoherent to suggest, based on theory and historical facts, that when colonized Black Africans embark on a narcissistic journey to increase their colonial status, they might emulate their colonial abuser and normalize western colonial violence. Indeed, Black Africans can do so under the pretense of nationalism and national liberation (Fanon, 1963), as was the case for Americo-Liberians. Along similar lines, several US-based liberation movements defending Black peoples, also ended up legitimizing some aspects of coloniality. For example, Garveyism engaged with the fascist White supremacist Ku Klux Klan and the Black Panther Party relied on a male-dominated patriarchal structure (Anderson, 2021). By illustrating how common falling back into coloniality is, these examples capture both the constant threat of coloniality, and the urgency to neutralize it collectively. Such a commitment is necessary since colonialism is a totalitarian project (Fanon, 1963) that always sets the stage for colonized peoples to partake, one way or another, in the very colonial violence that dehumanizes them.

After setting the historical, conceptual, and political context in which this study anchors itself, in the next section, I outline my research objectives and research questions.

1.7. Study objectives and research questions

This research mobilizes a decolonial Africa(n)-centered approach of psychology to explore Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black African nationals in South Africa. It seeks to 1. Theorize contemporary racial identities of Black Africans on the continent and 2. Identify what such racial identities reveal about racial relations between Black Africans in contemporary African societies.

Specifically, the research seeks to answer the following main research question:

- What does a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological analysis of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black African nationals reveal about postcolonial racial identities and racial relations among Black Africans on the continent?

This question is sub-divided into three secondary research questions:

1. How are racist narratives against Black Africans interwoven in Black South Africans' and foreign Black Africans' life stories?
2. What does a decolonial antiracist Africa(n)-centered psychological analysis of Black South Africans' and foreign Black Africans' life stories reveal about the implementation of: 1. The coloniality of modernity, 2. White normativity, 3. Everyday structural racism and 4. The racism of zero-point in South Africa?
3. How do Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans describe the impact of anti-Black racism on their racial identity?

These questions follow a progression. They first interrogate anti-Black narratives, they then analyze some attitudinal and structural consequences of these narratives, and finally they assess the impact of both anti-Black narratives and anti-Black violence on Black Africans' racial identity. By assessing how anti-Blackness might be upheld among Black Africans and by tracing anti-Blackness to colonialism, this research explores the coloniality of racial violence among Black Africans in contemporary African societies. In line with a decolonial approach, in addition to evidencing coloniality, this study also seeks to interrupt it. Such ambitions are critical to reach decolonized futures in which Black Africans have severed most – if not all - ties with colonial domination and redefined themselves outside of the colonial paradigm.

In the next section, I present the overview of the eight chapters of this thesis.

1.8. Thesis structure

After introducing the concepts of western colonialism, narcissism, and the resulting colonial othering of racialized peoples by White European settlers in chapter one, in chapter two I focus on the South African context. The chapter presents the interconnectedness of narcissism, identity erosion, and trauma bonds in that society. It also positions South African nationalism as informed

by White supremacy ever since the colonial encounter. That premise is used to restress the relevance of mobilizing a decolonial approach to interrogate what Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans reveal about racial identities and racial relations. Chapter three presents the methodology, first by outlining how key concepts informed the data analysis and secondly by explaining how a commitment to a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach informed the research design. Chapter four answers the first secondary question which focuses on anti-Black narratives in participants' life stories. It presents the ubiquity of the colonial archetype of the dehumanized Black Other and its link with colonial violence exerted against Black Africans. The chapter also offers a counternarrative that calls on Black peoples to challenge colonial identity erosion. Chapters five and six address the second secondary question articulated around Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework of a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism. In chapter five, I discuss three axes of the framework (i.e. 1. the coloniality of modernity, 2. the racism of zero-point, 3. White normativity). I outline how the persistence of colonial archetypes results in the colonial framing of personhood which in turn leads to an intersectional deployment of colonial violence against Black Africans, and particularly against impoverished Black African women. I then recount some participants' interruption of violence against Black Africans and position it as a decolonial alternative. In chapter six, I analyze the last axe of Malherbe's framework, i.e., everyday structural violence. I argue that South African institutions partake in an hauntology of Apartheid, and I recount one participant's efforts to interrupt such violence. Upon examining the normalization of western colonial violence, I suggest the existence of trauma bonds between 1. White European settlers and Black South Africans, 2. Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals and 3. foreign Black African nationals and White European settlers.

Chapter seven addresses the impact of anti-Black violence on participants' racial identity. It narrates the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) that is present in most participants' stories. I contrast it against alternative narratives that position the Black racial identity as a symbol of political consciousness against White supremacy rather than a (false) biological trait. The last chapter (chapter eight) restresses the urgency for Black Africans to break free from colonial archetypes and reclaim sovereignty over their identity. The theoretical and methodological contributions of this research, as well as limitations and significance for future research, are also discussed.

Chapter Two

Narcissism, trauma bonds and nationalism in (post)colonial South Africa

After presenting how western colonialism, narcissism and whiteness intersect to create global colonial archetypes, in this chapter, I provide an overview of the interconnectedness of these three concepts and their manifestation in the South African society, specifically. I do so to underscore the relevance of this research in the context of South Africa. I start with an overview of White European settlers' trajectory in South Africa and its connection with narcissism and trauma bonds.

2.1. The European feudal premise of South Africa and the colonial manufacturing of the Black South African

In this section I present an overview of western colonial endeavors in South Africa. I argue that White European settlers engineered in South Africa a colonial society in which they could claim the most privileged colonial archetype while confining anybody else, specifically Black Africans, into a subordinate and dehumanized colonial archetype. I use this South African-specific history of colonial racist hierarchies and anti-blackness to further stress the relevance of interrogating racial identities and racial relations in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans from a decolonial perspective - as defined in this study.

Claiming superiority and entitlement is inherent to narcissism. A narcissist setting can consequently only be a hierarchical one where status takes precedence over affiliation (Grapsas et al., 2020). Transposed into a settler colonial state, narcissism necessarily births rigid hierarchies. Prior to claiming present-day South Africa as theirs, White European colonial nations were themselves familiar with such hierarchies. As Christian feudal kingdoms, in addition to religion, Portuguese, Dutch, and British societies were organized around the three pillars of economic status, race (e.g., being a member of the nobility or a serf) (Robinson, 2021) and patriarchy (Rodney, 1972). The arrival of this model of society in what would become South Africa, resulted in the adaptation of these pillars. The feudal racial order antagonizing nobility and peasants became a White supremacist hierarchy antagonizing White European settlers and indigenous Black Africans. Capitalism morphed into racial capitalism or the exploitation of non-European peoples to generate capital (Robinson, 2021). Patriarchy, within such a context of White supremacy, led to

the intersectional marginalization of Black African women who were forced at the bottom of all social hierarchies (Rodney, 1972). Finally, and in line with the European colonial project, Christianity has also been a tool of European imperialism in South Africa (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986). The synergy of these forms of supremacism (Marya, 2020) resulted in the racist, gendered, patriarchal exploitation of Black Africans through enslavement, colonialism, and Apartheid (Phiri & Matambo, 2018; Worden, 2023). At that time, White European settlers created systems rooted in their sense of superiority and entitlement, that aimed at dehumanizing the Black African Other. For indigenous Black Africans in the territory that became South Africa, this notably resulted in the negation of bio-citizenship and the restriction of mobility across arbitrary borders (Mbembe, 2019). From such negation arises the overdependence on documentation to verify the colonized's terms of exploitation as per the colonial oppressor. It is consequently not a coincidence that so much energy has gone into controlling indigenous Black Africans' movements, whether with bantustans (Mamdani, 2020) or the pass system (Shear, 2013). Such a task fell squarely into the police's mandate of implementing segregation through unchecked brutality against Black Africans (Bruce, 2002). Indeed, under Apartheid, South African institutions sought not to protect Black Africans, but to subject them to multi-layered colonial oppression instead. As an example, only sexual violence against European women was considered a crime back then (Armstrong, 1994; Gender Security Project, 2021). Such legislation crystallizes a hierarchy in which European women sitting closer to the top of the racist pyramid had rights, while Black African women, trapped at the bottom, had none. Sexual violence against Black African women was consequently never criminalized during Apartheid and instead became "part of life for poor Black women" (Gender Security Project, 2021, p.1).

At an interpersonal level, derogatory names were also mobilized to feed into White European settlers' sense of superiority and leave clear that indigenous Black Africans were perceived as inferior.¹ The racist slur² commonly used to refer to Black people in South Africa is hypothesized to have originated from an Arabic word that translates into "unbeliever". This term was used by Muslim Arab traders to designate any non-Muslim individual. As such, this label would have also

¹ These slurs have not remained confined to the past. In 2016, after a White European South African citizen used one such slur on social media to insult the South African Minister of Sports (Feltham, 2016; Mtyala, 2016 in Mbowa, 2020), the South African Supreme Court ruled that racial slurs targeting Black African people as well as people of Indian ancestry in South Africa could be considered hate speech (Williams, 2015, p.26 in Mbowa, 2020).

² I choose not to include it in this thesis to avoid normalizing it.

applied to White European settlers in both the 15th century CE when Bartolomeu Dias reached the Cape of Good Hope, and in the 18th century CE when the last European settlers (i.e., the British) arrived in present-day South Africa (Mbowa, 2020). Yet, rather than maintaining the original framing of that label which encompassed both Europeans and Black Africans as non-Muslims, White European settlers substituted the religious premise for a racist one, thus reaffirming their urge to claim western colonial superiority by attributing to the Black Other what they would not attribute themselves. Such a development might point to White European settlers' need to reclaim some superiority upon feeling a possible sense of inadequacy for being simultaneously othered by Muslim Arab traders, and referred to by a designation also used for the very Black Africans that White European settlers dehumanized. Consequently, elements of narcissism as defined in this study (i.e., the combination of a sense of inadequacy and the need to reclaim colonial superiority) can be identified in these dynamics. Furthermore, the tendency to attribute to the (racialized) Other what one will not attribute themselves, evokes whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). As such, White European settlers' reframing and weaponizing of an Arabic word into an anti-Black racist slur might crystallize dynamics of both narcissism and whiteness. This observation re-emphasizes the interconnectedness of narcissism, whiteness, and western colonialism, as discussed in chapter one, and captures some of its consequences in the South African context.

Analyzing the context that accompanied the emergence of a racist slur specific to Black Africans in South Africa, also illustrates that within a western colonial paradigm, the colonized's identity is engineered and carefully associated with negative characteristics. Such manufacturing embodies identity erosion, which I presented in chapter one as one of four characteristics of a trauma bond (Carnes, 2016; Reid et al. 2013). To this point, the relationship between White European settlers and Black South Africans seemingly exhibits all four characteristics of a trauma bond, namely identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation. With both Dutch and British settlers, indigenous Black Africans were forced into identity erosion upon being defined from the perspective of White European settlers who sought to dispossess them of their land and exploit them. Ethnic identities were manipulated and imposed onto Black Africans in the form of restricted languages, geographic areas and engineered customary laws that aimed at facilitating colonial rule (Muiga, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). False promises were infamously embodied by Apartheid's lie of a "separate but equal development" (Phiri & Matambo, 2018, p.68). This slogan amounted to a promise according to which, if Black Africans (and more generally,

racialized people) in South Africa abided by the Apartheid regime's policies, they too, would benefit from "development". There was as such a rhetoric that associated the Apartheid regime to alleged incentives which would only be within reach if the overall dehumanizing premise of Apartheid was not challenged. In the post-Apartheid era, one can argue that the unmaterialized pledge of a cohesive rainbow nation (Babou Ngom, 2019) amounts to false promises. As for devaluation, slavery, colonialism, Apartheid (Phiri & Matambo, 2018) and worsening structural disparities (Khadiagala et al., 2018), as well as racist interpersonal violence illustrative of a long-standing patriarchal capitalist White supremacist ideology (Magome, 2022), all crystallize how Black Africans in South Africa have been dehumanized and abused. Finally, one could argue that the proclaimed end of slavery, colonialism and Apartheid, might have fed into some intermittent reinforcement. The formal end of these systems and regimes may have contributed to a sense of accomplishment and freedom for Black South Africans who resisted that violence and fought for liberation. However, the end of a White supremacist regime does not imply the dissipation of its ideology. The formal end of slavery, colonialism, and Apartheid as such, may have only acted as partial positive reinforcement in the face of ongoing White supremacist dehumanization.

In this section, I identified dynamics of narcissism and trauma bonds in the colonial engineering of South Africa. Since a decolonial approach posits that the colonial past remains present, it is necessary to broaden the temporal frame of analysis and assess whether similar dynamics might have also been at play before the formal colonial engineering of South Africa. To do so, in the next section I present a brief overview of the colonial ambitions that have connected White European settlers from the Netherlands, Portugal and Britain to South Africa.

2.2. Reframing European colonial ambitions as possible manifestations of narcissism

In this section I focus on the trajectory that led Dutch (later Afrikaner) settlers to South Africa, and that shaped their colonial ambitions in that country. I argue that from the 16th century until Apartheid, one can identify in that trajectory two pillars of narcissism as defined in this study, namely a sense of inadequacy and the ambition to increase one's status.

2.2.1. Netherlands: From Spanish rule (1556) to the first Dutch settlement in South Africa (1652)

From 1556 to 1714, the Habsburg Netherlands were ruled by the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty. Under the rule of Philip II of Spain, the Seventeen Provinces – i.e., the territory corresponding to present-day Belgium, Luxemburg, Netherlands, and northern France (Britannica, 2023) - became a possession of the Spanish Crown (Tarver & Slape, 2016).

As a catholic, King Philip II followed in his father's steps and imposed Catholic Reformation. Those measures were not well received and triggered in 1566 revolts that would culminate in the Eighty Years War (1568–1648) (Mulder, Doedens & Kortlever, 2008).

In 1579, the Union of Utrecht unified the northern provinces and declared them independent from the Spanish Crown (Grattan, 2019), which was part of the Iberian union (de Oliveira, 1972). These newly independent Dutch nations fought Iberian people, both in Europe and overseas. Their strategy consisted of disturbing international trade routes and attacking Iberian (specifically, Portuguese) possessions (Boxer, 1965).

In 1654, the Dutch were defeated by the Portuguese in present-day Brazil (Flores Fernandes Araújo, 2022). That defeat occurred only two years after the Dutch had settled in the Cape of Good Hope (Fourie, 2013), the very place where Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias had arrived two centuries earlier (Ravenstein, 1900).

It was consequently in the context of identitarian dispute triggered by religious impositions from a Spaniard king, and while seeking to resist foreign Iberian domination, that Dutch settlers claimed a territory that had been previously claimed by Portuguese settlers. Such a succession of events appears to indicate that a possible sense of inadequacy rooted in both the disruption of identity and defeat at the hands of other European powers, may have been a significant factor in Dutch efforts to claim South Africa as a colony, and position themselves as the dominant group rather than the dominated one. Such a concern would speak to a preoccupation with the pursuit of status, which, along with a sense of inadequacy, would indicate the presence of narcissism.

Since those events are quite far removed from present day, it is difficult to gauge to what extent Dutch settlers may have developed a trauma bond and with what specific political entity(ies). However, based on the geopolitical context of that time, it appears that Dutch people generally did not have many allies in Europe - or anywhere else (Mulder, Doedens & Kortlever, 2008). Yet, in a context of imperial and colonial domination such as was the case with King Philip II's reign and

the war against Portuguese settlers for the exploitation of Brazil, partaking in alliances and allegiances would not have been unlikely for Dutch people. It is consequently not impossible that Dutch settlers have experienced some identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation as part of their interactions with several European entities of that time. The combination of such dynamics would amount to a trauma bond.³

In the next section I document the trajectory of Dutch settlers from the 17th century to the 20th century CE to evidence how both narcissism and trauma bonds with British settlers might have been at play.

2.2.2. From the first Dutch settlement (1652) to the end of the Apartheid regime (1994)

If Dutch settlers sought to reclaim sovereignty and distance themselves from European imperial and colonial wars that threatened to place them in a subservient position, the arrival of British settlers in the Cape in 1795 likely upset those ambitions. At an identitarian level, a hierarchy was created to rank British settlers as superior to Dutch settlers. Short of any phenotypical traits that could be used to discriminate, cultural and linguistic differences were emphasized to pit Dutch and British settlers - with the same colonial ambitions - against one another. Dutch and British fought to assert their supremacy over indigenous Black Africans, leading to a short-lived Dutch rule in 1803 and a British rule in 1806 (Cobbing et al., 2023). The bleak prospects of sharing a dubiously claimed land with other European settlers who affirmed their superiority, not only over indigenous Black Africans but also over them, culminated in Dutch settlers completing the Great Trek from 1835 to 1854. This endeavor aimed to distance Dutch settlers physically, politically, and culturally from British rule (Phiri & Matambo, 2018), and resulted in the creation of the Orange Free State (Phiri & Matambo, 2018). Mere physical distance was not enough to quench British settlers' thirst for total domination. War broke out twice between British and Dutch settlers, respectively from 1880 to 1881 and 1899 to 1902 (Marks, 2015).

During the second Anglo-Boer war, the British used a Scorched Earth Policy, destroying any resources that could have been used by Dutch settlers. They also engaged in the forced internment

³ At an ideological level this bond was likely neither questioning nor negating Dutch people's humanity. Consequently, the possible trauma bond between Dutch people and other Europeans is not presented as comparable to the trauma bond of the colonial encounter between White Europeans and Black Africans.

of Dutch settlers into camps, regardless of gender or age (Marks, 2015).⁴ Furthermore, at an economic and political level, Britain had also asserted its domination by taking over Dutch possessions, such as the Dutch East India Company (Cobbing et al., 2023). It can then be hypothesized that the encounter with British settlers might have caused a sense of inadequacy in Dutch settlers. From that perspective, the Great Trek appears to have aimed to address that sense of inadequacy on one end, and to improve Dutch settlers' social status on the other. Such mutually reinforcing dynamics point to narcissism as defined in this study.

If one mobilizes the concept of trauma bond and its four main characteristics (i.e., identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation), it could be argued that British settlers' antagonization of Dutch settlers, eroded the latter's identity. As both settler nations sought to claim land and exploit indigenous Black African peoples, British and Dutch settlers had to collaborate and co-exist to ensure that indigenous Black Africans could not enjoy any sovereignty. Such negotiations and agreements would constitute a phase of false promises: should Dutch settlers abide by British rules and leave them unchallenged, they too would enjoy privileges of White supremacist domination over indigenous Black Africans. While years of wars and their violence cannot be minimized, Dutch and British settlers have co-existed for decades in non-confrontational ways. This seemingly indicates that there was some intermittent reinforcement at play. However, because the premise of the relationship between Dutch and British settlers was one of domination, devaluation materialized during both Anglo-Boer wars, particularly the second one. The four main characteristics of a trauma-bond can consequently be identified in Dutch and British settlers' interactions.

Decades later, the implementation of the Apartheid regime can be, if not connected, at least put in dialogue, with the probable sense of inadequacy fostered in Dutch settlers by British settlers' violence. The Apartheid regime was spearheaded by descendants of Dutch settlers – by then called Afrikaners - and took place over 40 years after the end of the Second Anglo-Boer war. This endeavor can be approached as a political project that sought to redress the domination that Dutch settlers had experienced at the hands of British settlers over a century before (Marks, 2015). More specifically, one could argue that this political project aimed at inflicting dehumanizing violence

⁴ Forced internment certainly amounts to dehumanizing violence. Yet, this war did not result in the engineering of a society structurally premised on the dehumanization of Dutch settlers. The possibility for Dutch settlers to complete the 'Great Trek' and create the Orange Free State illustrates that their legitimacy as sovereign peoples, while significantly challenged by the second Anglo-Boer war, was not fundamentally negated, unlike that of indigenous Black Africans.

instead of experiencing it. Doing so, Afrikaners distanced themselves from the identity of the defeated, exploited social group, and became instead associated with the ruling social class, therefore increasing their social status.

With Apartheid too, a potential trauma bond can be outlined with, if not British settlers and their descendants, the global West. British domination had left Afrikaners with a wounded self-image and positioned them as subordinate to British settlers; those are two outcomes that can be conceptualized as contributing to Afrikaners' identity erosion. From Afrikaners' perspective, the eventual fall of the Apartheid regime might have amounted to some false promises. Indeed, during that era, in addition to redeploying a type of violence reminiscent of the violence that British settlers had become internationally known for during colonial times (Robinson, 2021), Afrikaners adopted a posture which did not challenge in any way British settlers' colonial domination. Instead, that posture was squarely anchored in White supremacy and as such, upheld British colonial ambitions in South Africa. Consequently, as long as Afrikaners occupied that position, they could expect the rewards of being shielded from British colonial violence and aspire to maintain the highest status in South Africa. For over four decades, the Apartheid regime provided Afrikaners some intermittent reinforcement. They could enjoy White supremacy unapologetically, side by side with the very British settlers whom, several decades earlier, they had been abused by. Yet, the international pressure to end the Apartheid regime, particularly from western powers, would overthrow the Apartheid regime and fold any Afrikaner ambition of enjoying the same status as British settlers in South Africa. Instead, Afrikaners were framed as "moral delinquents" (van der Westhuizen, 2018, p.25) and living symbols of White supremacy. Such devaluation possibly put another dent in the Afrikaner's identity (van der Westhuizen, 2018). van der Westhuizen (2018) argues that this legacy forged the path for Afrikaners' quest of uprightness and respectability, which are now central elements of contemporary Afrikaner subjectivity.

Overall, the trajectory of Dutch settlers in South Africa includes violent episodes that have most likely contributed to a sense of inadequacy. It might have in turn been overcompensated with the pursuit of colonial superiority, both in the 19th and 20th century CE. Such dynamics evoke narcissism and a possible trauma bond with, if not western powers in general, at least British settlers and their descendants. That conjuncture would corroborate that among European settlers too, western colonial domination has been closely tied to narcissism and has resulted in trauma bonds. Such an assessment would reaffirm the decolonial premise of this research. Indeed, on one

end it evidences repeating cycles connecting western colonial violence, narcissism, and trauma bonds ever since the 16th century CE. On the other, it underscores the urge to break such a cycle. Although the scarcity of information makes it challenging to further gauge the possible connection between narcissism and western colonialism, it would be valuable to assess to what extent other European nations that have claimed territories in present-day South Africa (namely, Portugal and Britain) also experienced a sense of inadequacy and sought to increase their status as a result. It would also be adequate to assess whether such experiences might have informed their colonial ambitions for South Africa.

In the next sections I provide some context to the arrival of Portuguese and British settlers in what would become South Africa to assess whether dynamics of narcissism and trauma bonds can also be identified in their colonial ventures.

2.2.3. Rethinking Portuguese and British colonial contacts with Africa

In the early eighth century CE, an army of mostly Kabyle people led by Tariq ibn Zayad defeated King Rodrigo - then Visigoth ruler of the Iberian Peninsula (Kennedy, 1996) - and paved the way for several centuries of Muslim rule. Almost immediately, inhabitants of the peninsula fought back to gain independence and maintain their (non-Muslim) identity, resulting in both the Conquista and Reconquista eras (711-1492) (Kennedy, 1996). Possibly invigorated by the eventual defeat of Muslim rulers following the Reconquista, the Portuguese sought to establish a route to Asia to gain access to the spice trade – coincidentally controlled by Muslim Arabs merchants (Vidal, 2020). It is consequently after centuries of threat to their sovereignty, at home and abroad, that the Portuguese started a maritime journey to Asia, using the technology they had been exposed to while under Muslim rule (Hobson, 2004, p. 141). That journey eventually led Bartolomeu Dias, a Portuguese navigator, to the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 (Ravenstein, 1900).

When Louis 16th was executed in 1793 in France, France and Britain's different political project and shared aspiration to dominate Europe put them at odds (Watson, 2003). France was set on exporting the idea of abolishing monarchy and establishing the republic (Watson, 2003), while Britain was (and remains) a defendant of monarchy (Clancy, 2022). At the core of the dispute was consequently a threat to both nations' respective foundational principles. Claiming domination implied preventing the other European nation from controlling key routes and resources. Both

empires consequently attempted to claim the sea route to Asia (Cobbing et al., 2023), eventually leading Britain to the Cape in 1795 (Cobbing et al., 2023).

As crystallized in these historical facts and their timeline, Portugal and Britain may have been on their own journey to address threats to their sovereignty and political authority. As such, both Portugal and Britain's arrival in present-day South Africa does not appear to be coincidental since, it can be read as efforts to redress the status of these European nations after possibly identifying inadequacies in their claimed political hegemony.

Information is scarce to lay out the specificities of relationships with other European powers when Britain and Portugal respectively claimed territories in South Africa. It is as such difficult to assess whether such relations could be likened to trauma bonds. Nevertheless, it remains relevant to interrogate the role that narcissism and trauma bonds may have played in Portugal and Britain colonial ambitions in South Africa – in addition to their shared predisposition to reduce Black Indigenous peoples to bodies to exploit.

Analyzing western colonial violence from a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological perspective helps challenge the proclaimed inherent ontological superiority of western colonial powers (Rodney, 1972; Robinson, 2021). It provides a premise to interrogate whether a possible sense of inadequacy and the need to redress European nations' status might have informed their deployment of colonial violence worldwide.

Overall, by examining the colonial past from an Africa(n)-centered perspective, and by identifying that narcissism and trauma bonds might have informed European colonial powers' trajectories in South Africa for centuries, this overview restressed the relevance of a decolonial approach to examine whether colonial violence, narcissism and trauma bonds also inform Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans.

In the next section, I zero-in on a key element of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans: South African nationalism⁵ (Neocosmos, 2010). Specifically, my goal is to assess whether narcissism and trauma bonds might inform that nationalism. To do so, I first present the context that underpinned Black South Africans' access to citizenship post-Apartheid.

⁵ I conceptualize South African nationalism as the support of initiatives presented as beneficial to South African citizens even as they might jeopardize relationships between Black South Africans and Black Africans from the rest of the continent.

2.3. South African nationalism as a colonial sedative⁶ and unfinished Pan-African ambitions

In this section, I first provide a brief overview of the social climate that precipitated the end of Apartheid and the early post-Apartheid era. I contextualize it within the broader timeline of Pan-Africanism and argue that colonial matrixes of power can be identified in the unfulfilled promises of these significant political changes. I argue that for Black South Africans post-Apartheid, South African nationalism might have subdued racial solidarity with Black Africans from the rest of the continent, and become a premise to alienate them instead. Specifically, South African nationalism might have been used to both claim superiority over Black Africans from the rest of the continent and address a sense of inadequacy rooted in Black South Africans' exclusion from citizenship during Apartheid.

Although there was international pressure to demand the end of Apartheid several years before its fall (Vats, 1991), its White supremacist colonial ideology could not disappear overnight. Rather than dismantling racist hierarchies, it appears that the strategy of the post-Apartheid government was to dissimulate them. As such the "South African" label was extended to racial groups beyond White Europeans (Mamdani, 2020) as a formal common identity that theoretically embraced all racial identities. Yet, defeating the Apartheid regime did not necessarily translate into dismantling centuries of White supremacist ideology in the South African social imaginary. In other words, although Black South Africans gained access to the South African citizenship and the acknowledgement of their human rights post-Apartheid, that access alone did not guarantee the radical erasure of White supremacist rationale. It follows that, even with "South African" as a collective identity for all citizens in the country, racist inequities and their underpinning White supremacist ideology persisted in South Africa, this time, in unofficial, non-legislated ways. To this point, when discussing Black peoples' oppression, Anderson (2021) uses the metaphor of shackles restraining Black peoples' freedom. These shackles might get occasionally loosened up, yet they remain in place. Anderson (2021) consequently warns against the normalization of a life with chains and advocates instead for radical freedom from racist abuse. For Black Africans in South Africa, while formal White supremacist systems of exploitation such as slavery and

⁶ Cakal et al. (2011) hypothesize that in South Africa, intergroup contact between Black and White European South Africans did not translate into less racism. That hypothesis builds on Reicher (1986)'s sedative effect: the more intergroup contacts take place between groups with a different status, the less the lower status group might identify the higher status group as responsible for its relative deprivation.

Apartheid were abolished, being called “South Africans” has not yet translated into an equitable treatment (Khadiagala et al., 2018). As such, it appears that the extension of the South African label to Black Africans has neither resulted in radical freedom from racism, nor in the full enjoyment of basic rights for the vast majority of Black South Africans.

Beyond South Africa, on the rest of the continent, it is the reclaiming of the “African” identity that has fueled efforts to resist western colonial violence. The most impactful movement connected to such upholding of the African identity is Pan-Africanism. Sometimes conceptualized as an ideology and other times as a political project (Appiah, 1999), Pan-Africanism refers to the interconnectedness of Black peoples globally, rooted in the survival of racist colonial violence exerted during the Transatlantic slave trade and western colonialism (Adi, 2018). Pan-Africanism is consequently a uniting and humanizing response to the dehumanization of Africans that has unfolded since the colonial encounter (Adi, 2018; Kessi, Boonzaier & Gekeler, 2022). The Pan-Africanist commitment toward Africans’ liberation has translated into the severing of colonial ties between African countries and European colonial powers, as well as the rebuttal of imperialism more generally. As a result, calls for international solidarity between peoples of African descent across borders, and sustained efforts toward the creation of independent African states (Adi, 2018), have both stemmed from Pan-African consciousness. Such outcomes reveal that colonial borders have represented a paradox for Pan-Africanists. They have historically divided Africans, yet they also have been restrengthened during the independence era. The dilemma that accompanies colonial borders has also fueled discourses about a unique African state that would forego such borders, and welcome all peoples of African ancestry (Nkrumah, 1970; Appiah, 1999).

In line with the commitment to sever colonial ties, Pan-Africanism significantly contributed to the Non-Aligned Movement. This coalition of 120 countries embodied an unequivocal refusal to join the Eastern or Western bloc during the Cold War (Gerits, 2015). Instead, it sought to center the interests of countries that had been colonized and fight against “imperialism, colonialism, [...] racism, and all forms of foreign aggression [...]” (Castro, 1979, p.1).

On the continent, such commitment also led to a Pan-Africanist’s rebuttal of the Apartheid regime. In the 1960’s, the Organization of African Unity set up a Liberation Committee that aimed to provide military and financial aid to sustain the fight against Apartheid (South African History Online, n.d.). Countries such as Algeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Mozambique, provided military

and economic support to anti-Apartheid movements in South Africa (Adi & Sherwood, 2003). In 1972, Jeanne Martin Cissé, the first African president of the United Nations Security Council and the first woman in that role, passed a resolution condemning Apartheid (Barry, 2007). Back in South Africa, Pan-Africanism resonated with the struggle for liberation, and culminated in the creation of the Pan-Africanist Congress (Oloruntoba, 2020). Yet, if ideologically Pan-Africanism implies refusing colonial domination, its practical implementation in a postcolonial world where significant geopolitical leverages remain in the possession of European colonial powers, has been at times ambiguous. The Lusaka Manifesto in 1969 crystallized such tensions, as it both advocated for Black Africans' right to govern themselves, while simultaneously using a "conciliatory tone" toward the Apartheid regime (South African History Online, n.d., p.1). A similar ambiguity was also present at the beginning of the 1960's in newly independent African countries' political postures toward colonial powers. While African countries united under the Casablanca Group were explicitly calling for an end to all colonial ties (Gerits, 2015), several francophone African countries from the Brazzaville Group sought to maintain ties with France (Arnold, 2001). Such tensions illustrate the difficulty to totally rupture with colonial matrixes of power (Grosfoguel, 2007). Furthermore, while Pan-Africanism has shaped African political discourses, it is unclear that it has transcended the political, academic, and activist spheres to be adopted by the lumpenproletariat (Fanon, 1967).

Back in South Africa, despite the support of various African countries to defeat the Apartheid regime, and despite South Africa's tentative spearheading of an African renaissance (Vale & Maseko, 1998), several scholars assess that to this day, the isolation experienced during Apartheid has fostered some disconnection between Black South Africans and the rest of the continent (Matsinhe, 2011; Tella, 2016; Crush, 2000). When examining Black South Africans' relationship with foreign Black Africans (or lack thereof), the challenge to effectively claim a shared identity, is identifiable. For some Black South Africans, Africans from the rest of the continent might remain either quite unfamiliar or only known through the White supremacist perspective of the Apartheid regime (Matsinhe, 2011; Tella, 2016; Crush, 2000; Neocosmos, 2008). Such disconnection from the rest of the continent has necessarily informed Black South Africans' identity. Adding to it South Africa's racial eliminativism (Msimang, 2018), which silences racial inequities and can act as a form of ultramodern racism (Neville, 2013), one could argue that in the post-Apartheid, Black South Africans have implicitly been asked to center South African

nationalism over Pan-Africanism and its central pillar of racial solidarity among Black Africans (Adi, 2018). Emphasizing nationalism over international solidarity is not exclusive to South Africa's trajectory. Such an orientation is a characteristic of the modern nation-state that enforces (settler) colonial violence (Mamdani, 2020), and is as such necessarily nationalist. Consequently, despite joining the rest of the continent in the struggle against colonial rule, and successfully abolishing the Apartheid regime, post-Apartheid, Black South Africans had no concrete premise to unite with Black Africans from the rest of the continent. Neither could they claim ties with other racialized groups in South Africa whose ranking in the White supremacist hierarchy resulted in a different experience during Apartheid. Finally, the entire premise of Apartheid and before that, colonialism, and slavery, expectedly made it impossible for Black South Africans to claim a shared socio-racial identity with White European South Africans. Consequently, despite sharing the South African label with all their fellow citizens, Black South Africans post-Apartheid remained to some extent kept at the margins, i.e., where they had historically endured racist colonial violence.

While becoming citizens has not made Black South Africans ineligible for racist colonial violence, it has been an administrative shelter against the violence historically exerted against foreigners in South Africa (Neocosmos, 2010; Mamdani, 2020). For Black South Africans who were once made foreigners on their own land (Neocosmos, 2010; Mamdani, 2020), the South African citizenship might thus represent a theoretical shield against the White supremacist violence of the Apartheid. Any display of nationalism by Black South Africans might thus be an unsurprising outcome, particularly when factoring in that they remain alienated to the bottom of the South African social hierarchy (Khadiagala et al., 2018). From such a unique positioning, some Black South Africans might experience the tension of fervent nationalism on end, and pronounced disillusionment toward the state on the other. The attachment to the South African citizenship could therefore also be read as seeking to address a colonially rooted long-lasting sense of inadequacy. It might allow Black South Africans who have been historically dehumanized to assert their right to no longer face the dehumanization exclusive to foreigners (Neocosmos, 2010; Mamdani, 2020), and instead demand privileges historically reserved for (White European) citizens in South Africa. These two ambitions (addressing a sense of inadequacy and demanding privileges or, in other words, seeking to increase one's social status) can be connected to narcissism as defined in this study.

For Black South Africans, claiming the South African citizenship and nationalism, can be conceptualized as a possible trauma bond with White European settlers. Indeed, successively first

disqualifying and then making them eligible for the South African citizenship, might have fueled some (colonial) identity erosion in Black South Africans. As mentioned earlier, the South African citizenship came along largely unfulfilled promises for Black South Africans, as they still experience racist inequities. At the same time, intermittent reinforcement might be experienced whenever Black South Africans can freely engage in civic duties (e.g. voting) that were out of reach under Apartheid. Yet, despite that, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries on the planet, where Black South Africans' devaluation has evolved but not disappeared (Khadiagala et al., 2018). The four characteristics of a trauma bond can therefore be identified in some Black South Africans' rapport with nationalism.

In this section, I have pointed out that Black South Africans' nationalism can be connected to patterns of narcissism and trauma bonds. I have also underscored that it has seemingly been informed by White supremacy ever since Apartheid. Given this premise, it is relevant to interrogate how the legacy of such nationalism informs Black South Africans' relationships with other Black Africans. It is also relevant to interrogate how narcissism and trauma bonds – two elements that can be connected to Black South Africans' nationalism as argued in this section - might inform said relationships.

In the next section I review some literature about Black South Africans' relationship with other Black Africans.

2.4. “Xenophobia”: the perpetuation of South Africa’s White-supremacy-informed nationalism?

In this section, I first provide an overview of South Africa's framing of and relationship with “foreigners”. I do so to gauge whether White-supremacy-informed nationalism, narcissism, and trauma bonds, play a role in it.

Under Apartheid logic, the native was an indigenous Black African and the African was illegitimate in South Africa (Mamdani, 2020). “African foreigners” or “native foreigners” were therefore redundant labels. Similarly, within the same paradigm, “xenophobia” could only imply hatred toward Black Africans in South Africa.

Outside of the confines of the Apartheid rationale – which is officially where South Africa currently claims to be (Msimang, 2018) -, the label “xenophobia” is misleading and deliberately

colour-silent. It neither acknowledges nor problematizes the possible racial dimension underpinning Black South Africans' enmity toward foreign Black Africans. "Xenophobia" embodies the paradox of postcolonial African societies, where one remains entangled with colonial ambitions and ideals, in this case, the exclusive framing of Black Africans as "foreigners". Given the decolonial ambition of this study to assess whether the colonial past remains present to interrupt it, it cannot be overlooked that foreign Black African nationals who survive Black South Africans' contemporary violence, are commonly called "foreigners". That label echoes the very identity imposed onto Black South Africans during Apartheid when they were denied South African citizenship, forced into under-resourced bantustans, and denied rights (Neocosmos, 2010). That label, in addition to pointing out the legacy of Apartheid, might possibly indicate that some Black South Africans' nationalism remains informed by White supremacy in post-Apartheid South Africa. In practice, this seemingly implies that while some nationalist Black South Africans reclaim the exclusivity of privileges and rights, White supremacist violence remains active against all Black Africans. Accordingly, the label "foreigner" and its weaponization might indicate the creation of a new lowest rank in South Africa's White supremacist hierarchy; that of the "kwerekwere"⁷ or "foreigner" who can be antagonized and brutalized by both Black South Africans and the rest of the South African society (Neocosmos, 2010). Indeed, contrarily to Apartheid times, dehumanizing Black Africans on the ground of their citizenship while flaunting the South African citizenship, is no longer only accessible to White Europeans (Mamdani, 2020). The simultaneous incorporation of Black South Africans into the South African identity and the othering of Black Africans hailing from the rest of the continent as "foreigners", speaks to the colonality of power crystallized in the South African citizenship. Accordingly, sharing a citizenship historically reserved for White European settlers, makes Black South Africans eligible to claim the colonially engineered space of South Africa as exclusively for them and their fellow citizens. That claim translates into framing the Black Other as banned from that space (Mamdani, 2020) and eligible for violence should it enter it. In the resulting violence between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans, one can therefore reconstitute the historical colonial dehumanization of the Black Other, even as it is performed by Black people themselves in present times. Consequently, it could be suggested that some Black South Africans who engage in violence

⁷ Derogatory term used to refer to foreign Black Africans in South Africa which indicates an alleged inability to speak indigenous languages (Matsinhe, 2011). That term turns foreign Black Africans into bodies onto which "literal texts[...] of the most graphic and scrutable messages of aversion are written" (Matsinhe, 2011, p.302)

against foreign Black Africans could be addressing an Apartheid-rooted sense of colonial inadequacy. Dehumanizing foreign Black Africans in contemporary times might aim to redress their status and seek a sense of colonial superiority. For Black South Africans who operate within an Apartheid-informed paradigm, their rapport with foreign Black Africans (or lack thereof) would thus prioritize status over affiliation (Grapsas et al., 2020). This characteristic, along the combination of a sense of colonial inadequacy and the need to redress one's colonial status, point to narcissism as defined in this study.

From the perspective of Black Africans from the rest of the continent, ever since the struggle against Apartheid, the relationship with Black South Africans might have been a paradoxical one. It has involved joint efforts against western colonialism and White supremacy and yet, to this day, racial liberation is not a reality for Black Africans in South Africa regardless of citizenship. Furthermore, the exclusive pejorative labeling of foreign Black Africans as “kwerekwere” or “foreigners” – which holds dehumanizing connotations in the context of South Africa - could be approached as an erosion of foreign Black Africans' identity. The fall of the Apartheid regime has thus not yet translated into freedom from racist injustice for Black Africans in South Africa and, to some, might represent some false promises. Joint Pan-Africanist initiatives, both in the past and more recently (Adi & Sherwood, 2003; Barry, 2007; Oloruntoba, 2020), might have helped develop some proximity between Black Africans from the rest of the continent and Black South Africans. It might have as such intermittently reinforced a non-harmful rapport. Yet, the continuous violent devaluation of foreign Black Africans in South Africa, has remained (Neocosmos, 2010; Matsinhe, 2011; Davies, 2020). The four characteristics of a trauma bond (identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation) can therefore be identified in Black South Africans' relationship with Black Africans from the rest of the continent. After identifying how White-supremacy-informed nationalism, narcissism and trauma bonds seemingly shape Black South Africans' relationship with Black Africans from the rest of the continent, in the next section I focus on relationships among Black South Africans. Specifically, I focus on the documented violence among Black South African men. I do so to assess whether narcissism and trauma bonds can be identified in violence among Black people in South Africa, even when citizenship is not a point of contention.

In South Africa, lethal violence is mostly deployed among Black South African men (Ratele, 2013; Seedat et al., 2009), and commonly tied to patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities (Ratele, 2013; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Nonetheless, the South African context in which Black men have been simultaneously dehumanized by racist capitalist hierarchies while enjoying relative patriarchal privileges, requires to reframe how such hegemonic masculinities might come into play (Ratele, 2013). If patriarchy is a given in a postcolonial society, post-Apartheid realities of racism, socio-economic inequalities, unemployment, and a criminal justice system that has been questioned (Ratele, 2013; Seedat et al., 2009), cannot be disconnected from Black South African men's patterns of violence. Neither can the history of state repression and legalization of sexual violence against Black women under Apartheid (Gender Security Project, 2021), be overlooked in that violence. In both the Apartheid and the post-Apartheid eras, Black South African men have been exposed to racist capitalistic violence. They have effectively been made ineligible for the same level of privileges that (White European) South African citizens have historically enjoyed (Mamdani, 2020), and common targets of deadly violence (Ratele, 2013). Despite such constant threats to their life, Black South African men have been expected to appear fearless (Ratele, 2013). Yet, fear has been identified as a pivotal and central characteristic of the South African society (Biko, 2004). Ratele (2013) consequently argues that as key targets of deadly violence, Black South African men who are forced to abide by patriarchal expectations, cannot express the fear commonly felt in South Africa. This impediment translates into a façade of fearlessness, which might contribute to Black South African men's entanglement with deadly violence (Ratele, 2013). It can then be said that the violence associated with Black South Africans is not inherent to them. It is instead a response to western colonialism's disqualification of Black South African men from enjoying the basic right of safety even as citizens.

Black South African men's constant exposure to deadly colonial violence might have thus fostered in them a sense of colonial inadequacy, exacerbated by the inability to meet patriarchal and capitalistic expectations of men in a postcolonial world (Ratele, 2013). To redress their social position, Black South African men might then prioritize status over affiliation. This would set the premise to target people with similar realities, i.e., Black South Africans surviving racial capitalism, rather than people who enjoy higher social privileges, including privileges rooted in centuries of racist exploitative colonialism, i.e., South Africans of European ancestry (Ratele, 2021). Furthermore, the pursuit of status over affiliation might normalize hegemonic masculinities

(Gqola, 2021) that legitimize patriarchal violence, in this case particularly against Black women. Indeed, patriarchal violence wielded against Black women might be informed by the fear that some Black South African men simultaneously experience (Ratele, 2021) and exert against people occupying a similar or more precarious social ranking. In both cases, Black African women, would be eligible as recipients of that violence (Gqola, 2015). Such a possible pattern of seeking to increase one's social status to address a sense of colonial inadequacy, would illustrate narcissism as defined in this study.

As colonial social expectations inform how Black South African men perceive themselves and one another (Ratele, 2013), it is also possible to talk about identity erosion (i.e., in this case confining a group of people into a colonial archetype) when reflecting on violence among Black South African men. According to western psychology, such an erosion would indicate a possible trauma bond between Black South African men and the broader post-Apartheid South African society.

When analyzing Black South African men's portrayal post-Apartheid, it might be suggested that they are likely to be framed as inadequate, be it because they do not meet colonial expectations of socio-economic success, or because they are commonly presented as aggressors (Ratele, 2013). Black South African men might consequently seek to address their sense of inadequacy, whether by staying away from violence or by engaging in it. This decision can be likened to the stage of false promises in a trauma bond, as it is a step taken to reap potential future rewards. It follows that anytime Black South African men relatively improve their socio-economic status either by distancing themselves from violence or by engaging in it, within the framework of a trauma bond, they might be possibly experiencing some intermittent reinforcement. Yet, since in post-Apartheid South Africa, Black men are highly exposed to violence, such a threat might foster a constant sense of devaluation. The four stages of a trauma bond (identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation) can consequently be identified at a theoretical level in Black South African men's violence among themselves, and in their relationship with the broader South African society.

It is important to highlight that the existence of such a bond does not negate the additional complexities and transformations inherent to one's life journey. Consequently, the framework of a trauma bond is merely a tool to outline and identify this specific pattern when present in social relationships.

In earlier sections, I have pointed out that South African nationalism appears to be informed by White supremacy and that dynamics of narcissism and trauma bonds can be identified in it. In line with the decolonial approach of this study that suggests that the colonial past remains present and must be interrupted, in the next section I attempt to assess whether narcissism and trauma bonds can also be identified in the earlier days of Black South Africans' mobilization to defend their interests and rights against colonial White supremacist violence. I do so by reviewing literature about the colonial engineering of the South African identity and South Africa as a country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013).

The colonial ambition to turn the geographical space at the south of the continent of Africa into a settler colonial state, resulted in the engineering of a nation with the same name. This process has amounted to turning "a geographical-figurative expression [...] into the idea of a nation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013, p.152).

Within that geographical space, the very first encounter between European settlers and indigenous Black Africans confined the latter into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other (Mamdani, 2020). Such an outcome can be approached as having eroded indigenous Black Africans' identities, just like the colonial project's endeavor to impose rigid ethnic identities onto Black Africans (Mamdani, 2020).

Furthermore, South Africa's history of slavery (Worden, 2023) and indentured labour (Mamdani, 2020), points to colonially engineered identities and thus identity erosion of racialized communities. To uphold the colonial project in its earlier days, such an identity erosion might have been accompanied by false promises of relative prosperity so long as the oppressed racialized communities did not upset colonial ambitions. Intermittent relative reinforcement might have been experienced whenever manifestations of White supremacist violence would be relatively less direct or lethal. Yet, since colonialism can only dehumanize the colonized, devaluation remained active for communities who were ranked as inferior to White European settlers - specifically to British settlers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013).

More broadly and to the point of identity erosion, Black South Africans' identity is generally presented in the literature as having emerged in response to White Europeans' western colonial violence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013). From the Mfecane in the early 1830's (Cobbing, 1988) to the Bambatha Uprising in 1906 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013) and the birth of the

Black Consciousness Movement in the late 1960's (Biko, 2004), significant historical events in South Africa's history are at their core indigenous Black Africans' responses to sociopolitical changes ushered in by western colonial aggression. This also applies to the Mfecane as South African historians have suggested that European colonial ambitions have fueled political unrest and confrontations among Nguni nations to serve colonial interests (Cobbing, 1988; Boddy-Evans, 2020).⁸ The aforementioned sociopolitical events and movements explicitly sought to reclaim indigenous Black Africans' sovereignty and to redress their status after experiencing western colonial violence and dehumanization. Because they connect a possible sense of inadequacy (rooted in the experience of colonial dehumanization), and the need to reclaim some superiority, dynamics of narcissism as conceptualized in this study might have underpinned these events that have been pivotal in forging Black South Africans' identity.

Consequently, narcissism and trauma bonds can also be identified in the earlier stages of Black South Africans' mobilization to defend their rights and interests against White supremacy on their land.

Since nationalism in South Africa can seemingly be connected to narcissism and trauma bonds, and since nationalism in South Africa also appears to have been informed by White supremacy ever since the colonial encounter, this literature review provides a premise to interrogate whether Black South Africans' enmity toward "foreigners" (i.e., foreign Black Africans), might also be influenced by White-supremacy-informed nationalism, narcissism, and trauma bonds. One possible entry point to answer this question, is to explore racial identities and racial relations in the context of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. Such a goal is captured in the main research question of this study.

2.5. Chapter summary

This chapter presented how identity erosion, trauma bonds and narcissism can be identified in European colonial endeavors in South Africa. It argued that South African nationalism appears to have been informed by White supremacy ever since the colonial encounter. Furthermore, the chapter also pointed out dynamics of narcissism and trauma bonds in the colonial engineering of

⁸ As wars between Nguni nations resulted in important migrations and the weakening of any cohesive identity among indigenous Black Africans, the Mfecane became an excuse for European settlers to claim "vacant" land and allege that Black Africans were engaging in "Black-on-Black" violence on their own, allegedly without any European interference.

Black South Africans' identity. These observations provided some ground to interrogate whether Black South Africans' contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans might be influenced by White-supremacy-informed nationalism, narcissism, and trauma bonds. One possible way to answer this question is by examining what Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans reveals about contemporary racial identities and racial relations among Black Africans - which is the main research question of this study. Finally, by presenting repeating patterns throughout South African (post)colonial history, this chapter also evidenced the relevance of a decolonial approach as conceptualized in this study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapters one and two respectively focused on presenting the interconnectedness of western colonialism, narcissism, identity erosion and trauma bonds on one end, and their specific manifestation in the context of South Africa on the other. Jointly, these two chapters built a premise to ground the relevance of this study. Furthermore, in those chapters, I defined a decolonial approach as a two-fold process that seeks to evidence how the colonial past remains present to then interrupt such a cycle. In this chapter, I first present how I mobilized a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach for this research both at a conceptual level and in the research design. I discuss efforts taken to reach people whose lived experiences and perspectives capture daily realities that can help inform the decolonial commitment to both examine and interrupt colonial violence among Black Africans. I also reflect on approaches used to highlight African traditions such as orality, and storytelling. I conclude this chapter by sharing how a decolonial intersectional narrative framework shaped the writing of the analysis.

3.1. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

In this first section, I present key concepts that I mobilized for both design and analytical purposes. I start with Malherbe et al. (2021)'s decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism and how it informed this research. I pursue by discussing concepts that I identified using an inductive-deductive reasoning during the data collection. Among those is the concept of a White gaze which I connect to Fanon (1967)'s framing of the colonial relationship between Black and White identities. I reflect on how such dynamics might be crystallized in participants' stories and I consequently suggest some elements to pay close attention to. I then discuss narcissism – also identified using an inductive deductive reasoning during the data collection - and how it might have been narrated by participants. I end this first section by discussing how I conceptualized trauma bonds from a decolonial psychological approach.

3.1.1. A decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism

As this research intends to challenge coloniality, it would be incoherent to uncritically mobilize western psychological frameworks. Western psychology has significantly contributed to

pathologize and objectify populations placed as subservient to wealthy, able-bodied, educated White Euro-American heterosexual men (Nwoye, 2015). It is thus critical to interrogate and provincialize hegemonic western knowledge (Malherbe et al., 2021) - in this case, western psychology - and center lived experiences, knowledge, and worldviews of colonized and racialized peoples.

For this research I used a decolonial psychological approach grounded in the understanding that the colonial past remains present and that such coloniality must be interrupted. Accordingly, my posture was to assess whether any rationale for the dehumanization of Black peoples identified in Black Africans' contemporary life stories, could be connected to colonialism. This approach which connects the past and the present, is critical to argue that contemporary anti-blackness can be understood as an outcome of White supremacist colonial violence.

To structure my analysis of violence among Black Africans and its possible colonial premise, I used Malherbe et al. (2021)'s decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism. A decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism positions Africa as a "center of gravity [...] and locus of enunciation to address itself to antiracism" (Malherbe et al., 2021, p.438). This framework encompasses a two-fold intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) understanding of racism that acknowledges it as a by-product of colonialism and a characteristic of postcolonial societies. The framework also seeks to center African peoples' meanings of racism. A decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism (Malherbe et al., 2021) counts four dimensions: 1) the coloniality of modernity, i.e. the persistent use of colonial ideals from European Modernity; 2) the racism of zero-point, i.e. the presentation of racist dynamics as colourblind and universal; 3) White normativity, i.e., the use of whiteness as a normative paradigm and 4) everyday structural racism, i.e., how the architecture and functioning of society uphold racism on a daily basis. Those four dimensions informed the data collection and analysis, and have been used to structure chapters four to seven.

Since this research focuses on contemporary racial identities and racial relations among Black Africans, analyzing race is a central concern. Such an analysis implies an examination of whiteness, i.e., the ideological and sociopolitical paradigm that attributes non-European peoples a race and alleged racial characteristics. In the next section I present some conceptual and

methodological implications of examining racial identities and racial relations in postcolonial African contexts.

3.1.2. White gaze and appropriated whiteness

As presented in chapter one, whiteness is a social positioning from which the subject attributes to the Other what it will not attribute itself (Frankenberg, 1993). As an ideology and social positioning, whiteness can be mobilized by anybody, including racialized peoples. Fanon (1967) has argued that in a postcolonial world, White and Black racial identities are mutually defined with White Europeans having historically enjoyed colonial privileges through their colonial domination of Black peoples. Fanon (1963, 1967) also argues that racialized peoples are consequently primed to resemble White European settlers whether it be because they aspire to claim colonial privileges, or because they exist in a (post)colonial society rooted in White Europeans' ideals. In practice, such a setting can only normalize the colonial dehumanization of racialized people. It follows that racialized people might, consciously or not, perpetuate colonial narratives that both position White Europeans as the norm and marginalize racialized people. From the perspective of racialized people, such a posture amounts to looking at oneself through the eyes of the White standard (Du Bois, 1968). It also embodies whiteness since it attributes to the racialized Other what it will not attribute White Europeans. In this study, I use the terms "White gaze" and "appropriated whiteness" to signal narratives in which the Black narrator describes themselves or other Black people from the perspective of the White standard. Neither a White gaze nor appropriated whiteness imply blindness to racist violence. Instead, these concepts highlight that the narrator presents racist violence from a perspective that echoes that of the dominant racial group. It could be argued that recounting racist violence is in and of itself an interruption of coloniality. In this study, it could also be argued that since violence against foreign Black Africans has been documented for decades (Human Rights Watch, 1998; Neocosmos, 2008; Neocosmos, 2010; von Holdt et al., 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2020), it is talking back (Smith, 1999) to the dehumanization of racialized people (i.e., offering rehumanizing narratives about racialized people) that would suggest the interruption of coloniality and a decolonial shift.

In this study, I also suggest that whenever whiteness is appropriated by Black people, it leads to a two-fold marginalization: 1. the marginalization of Black people in relation to White Europeans,

and 2. the marginalization of Black people in relation to the Black narrator who mobilizes a White gaze, and subsequently confines other Black people into the archetype of the deficient Black Other.

Furthermore, participants' general posture toward racial identity can also indicate when a White gaze and a paradigm of whiteness are mobilized. Since within a paradigm of whiteness, the White subject attributes to the Other what it will not attribute itself, a Black person operating within a paradigm of whiteness might simultaneously present themselves as not having a race while using racial labels to refer to other racialized people. Alternatively, that person might describe their racial identity using denigratory terms and not do the same when discussing White Europeans' racial identity.

The use of pronouns when discussing Black Africans' racial identities and racial relations, might also reveal which standpoint the narrator uses. Specifically, pronouns might signal whether the narrator is sharing their own subjectivity, or mobilizing another party's perspective. In such cases, it would be critical to assess whether for the narrator that external perspective amounts to looking at Black people from the standpoint of the White standard. Furthermore, the differential use of "we" and "they" might also reveal whether the narrator claims a shared racial identity or not with other Black people, and if so, in which cases.

The preoccupation with identifying to what extent Black Africans might mobilize a colonial and dehumanizing White gaze when engaging with one another, is in line with an Africa(n)-centered decolonial approach that interrogates how the colonial past remains present so that it can be interrupted. Despite how uncomfortable that exercise might be, a decolonial commitment makes it critical to assess whether Black Africans engage in colonial violence against one another so that such a pattern – if identified - can be interrupted. Furthermore, and as stated in chapter one, in the immediate impossibility to dismantle structural racism in postcolonial societies, focusing on what Black people can influence (i.e., the way they perceive and treat one another) might be a significant leverage toward some decolonial change.

In the next section, I discuss the methodological approach used for what the literature review in chapters one and two positioned as a key underpinning of western colonial violence: narcissism.

3.1.3. Narcissism and narcissistic violence

In chapters one and two, I have argued that White Europeans' engineering of global racist patriarchal capitalism through colonial violence can be understood as a pursuit of western colonial status fueled by a sense of inadequacy – conscious or not. Since this study uses a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological perspective, it is critical to assess to what extent the same colonial rationale manifest in African settings, among Africans, so that it can be dismantled. Consequently, any data pointing to a colonially rooted sense of collective inadequacy in Black Africans on one end, and Black Africans' need to assert colonial domination on the other, were approached as potentially illustrating narcissism as conceptualized from a decolonial psychological perspective. In line with this framing, such trends cannot be reduced to individual traits but should rather be approached as societal consequences of western colonial violence. As such, whenever the same tendencies are observed across multiple stories and simultaneously point to a sense of inadequacy and the need to claim some colonial superiority, narcissism can be hypothesized as being at play. It is worth highlighting that when these two elements are independent and disconnected from colonialism, they do not necessarily amount to narcissism. As an example, if an individual fails to master a skill they wish to acquire (e.g. play an instrument), they might feel a sense of inadequacy. Yet, that feeling might not necessarily translate into the urge to claim superiority over someone. Similarly, an individual might wish to improve their social status without necessarily feeling a sense of inadequacy. These two examples would not embody narcissism as defined in this study. It is instead the combination of a sense of inadequacy and a need to claim superiority to redress one's colonial identity (e.g., "Black South African", "African", or "foreigner") that might indicate narcissism in this research.

In the next section, I explain how I conceptualized trauma bonds between colonial aggressors and colonized peoples (see chapters one and two) in this research.

3.1.4. Trauma bonds as conceptualized from a decolonial psychological approach

Within the framework of a decolonial psychological approach as conceptualized in this study, a trauma bond (with its four characteristics of identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation) is tied to a societal context, which is itself rooted in the broader global phenomenon of western colonialism. Such a conceptualization of a trauma bond differs

from an interpersonal approach because it does not tie trauma bounds to specific individuals but to group identities. For example, whenever White European settlers, Black South Africans or foreign Black African nationals are mentioned, a decolonial psychological analysis does not refer to specific individuals but rather to the political entities constituted by people with these social markers. The scale and the temporality of these two approaches are consequently different: a decolonial psychological approach necessarily implies an analysis that stretches across entire populations and centuries, while an interpersonal approach typically focuses on specific individuals and centers on specific generations (e.g., the individual's and their parents'). Finally, and as already hinted, a decolonial psychological approach situates individuals within a historical sociopolitical context. It acknowledges that in a (post)colonial world the collective violence of colonialism has shaped collective identities. Groups of individuals with shared experiences of colonial violence might therefore recount similar experiences and hold similar worldviews and understanding of social dynamics. Such patterns are imprints of colonialism rather than individual traits. The individual and their stories are consequently not the final analytical frame in a decolonial psychological approach. They are instead an entry point into the identification of manifestations of structural coloniality in a postcolonial world. While a decolonial psychological approach focuses on societal trends, it does not dismiss individual trajectories. Individuals have free will. They can respond in their own unique ways to coloniality and can decide to challenge the coloniality of their environment.

With the theoretical concepts now presented, the rest of this chapter exposes how I sought to go from theory to practice and conduct research while following a commitment to decoloniality.

3.2. A decolonial qualitative approach as research design

To prevent reducing participants' experiences to statistics and capture instead the intricacies and complexities inherent to western colonial violence, racial identities, and racial relations in South Africa, the data was collected through a decolonial qualitative approach (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). A decolonial qualitative approach provides a framework to center alternative epistemologies (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021) such as orality, which was the main paradigm mobilized during data collection. Because it goes beyond the immediate visible three-dimensional reality and brings into the psyche what one has not yet seen but can already hear (Oyewumi, 1997),

focusing on hearing opens broader possibilities to turn auditive stimuli into knowledge. Centering orality therefore demands that one resists apprehending data primarily through their sight – an approach that, in and of itself, challenges coloniality. By de-centering the most important sense attached to bio-logic (Oyewumi, 1997), and focusing instead on hearing, the methodology aimed to avoid reducing participants to bodies that could be further dehumanized. Instead, it centered their voices by positioning participants’ stories and storytelling as the foundational premise for the inductive-deductive reasoning from which all analysis and theorization stemmed. Consequently – and in line with a decolonial qualitative approach –, rather than question the veracity of stories from members of underrepresented marginalized groups, participants’ stories were entry points to examine intersectional identities, power, and oppression. Centering participants’ voices also implied highlighting their global relevance by emphasizing any similarities in lived experiences across postcolonial contexts. Doing so positioned participants not only as narrators of their lived experiences but also as narrators of the lived experiences of many Black Africans in a postcolonial world. Furthermore, since many African cultures have an oral tradition (Nwoye, 2017), it seemed appropriate to emphasize orality along with the positioning of Africa and Africans as privileged standpoints.

Centering stories implies anticipating stories narrators have been exposed to, stories narrators share with people around them and stories that narrators tell themselves. All those stories often evolve throughout time, creating additional layers to the initial stories themselves. At times, stories can also be narrators’ retelling of their actions (Fleetwood et al., 2019). Mobilizing narrative research can consequently help outline how narrators perceive themselves (i.e., which role they attribute themselves in their stories), as well as how they perceive their social surrounding. To this point, stories can reveal who in the narrator’s environment is empowered to speak, whose words are given importance and who benefits from credibility or not. That is one of the ways that narrative research helps bring forth and interrogate power dynamics (Fleetwood et al., 2019). On that point, elements of narrative research have been mobilized to assess how the violence against Black Africans was approached – both in past and contemporary times. The methodology of narrative research was also used to highlight both long-lasting oppression (whether witnessed, directly experienced, or enacted) and resistance strategies since “narratives undergird power as well as resistance.” (Fleetwood et al., 2019, p.1). Narrative research consequently allows a glimpse not only into narrators’ realities but also into how these realities are recounted. Furthermore, and of

importance for this study, narrative research is compatible with a decolonial approach. Narratives often carry the imprint of colonial rationale, colonial ambitions, and colonial power structures, i.e., coloniality. By documenting narratives that crystallize coloniality and by questioning them, in addition to leaving bare the mechanism of colonial rationale, one can start imagining alternatives to challenge, resist and possibly rupture with the colonial machinery, even if only at a limited scale. Consequently, the preoccupation with going beyond what meets the eyes, refusing current conjunctures as innate and seeking to change society (Fleetwood et al., 2019) to improve marginalized groups' realities, is a terrain where both decolonial research and narrative research meet.

In this study, narrative research was implemented by way of the life history approach (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019). This method invites narrators to share memories and experiences to present a specific aspect or period of their life (Ssali, Theobald & Hawkins, 2012). The life history approach conceptualizes the individual as an open ecosystem, where personal experiences are connected to macro-dynamics (Harrison, 2009). It then seeks to analyze the meaning and impact of these experiences, ultimately turning these stories into live artefacts of broader societal dynamics. As violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa is complex, a storytelling approach allows for a more layered and intricate recounting of these dynamics as understood by participants. To this point, in this study the life history approach situates the epistemic vantage point of preference in Black Africans' daily realities. In keeping with African psychology that rejects the self-contained conceptualization of a person (Nwoye, 2015), the life history method approaches people as entities shaped by cultures, communities, and geopolitical events that overlap several timelines and whose ripple effects are not limited to a given space or time. This approach is thus theoretically relevant to examine both participants' and their communities' perspectives on violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa, racial identity, and racial relations and their trajectory over time. The life history approach can therefore help identify transgenerational trends (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019), which can help complement the analysis.

In the next section I present the sampling strategy I used.

3.2.1. Sampling to amplify voices

In keeping with a commitment to a decolonial praxis of qualitative research (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021), the sampling was conducted to avoid generalizing narratives and instead reach a group of participants whose experiences and understanding of the violence against foreign Black Africans could add depth and layers to the theorization of this phenomenon. Consequently, my inclusion criteria were set to welcome stories from both South African and foreign African nationals. Practically, the call for participants was made to both South African citizens and citizens from any other African country. Since racial identities and anti-blackness are central to this research, another inclusion criterion was to self-identify as Black. As most episodes of violence that have been explored in literature or covered in the news focused on adults, I added being at least 18 years old as a criterion. Although the violence against foreign Black African nationals does not limit itself to adults, my rationale was that children's experiences would likely be brought up by their adult family members. Finally, since the most direct manifestations of violence against foreign Black African nationals have consistently been documented in informal settlements, I also listed the familiarity with such socio-geographic areas as an inclusion criterion. To avoid stigmatization and because I acknowledge that people who had not or did not live in informal settlements at the time of data collection could still have had significant interactions with those settings through their work or personal life, I deliberately chose the words "familiar with" rather than the preposition "from" when formulating that inclusion criterion (see Appendix 2).

In addition to the aforementioned inclusion criteria (i.e., being over 18, identifying as either a foreign Black African national or a Black South African national, having some familiarity with informal settlements and having spent the last five years in South Africa), geographic location, gender identity and socio-economic status were also taken into consideration when approaching prospective participants even as they did not constitute inclusion criteria. In practice, no participant was specifically included in the study because of their gender identity or economic status. However, I took those variables into consideration during data collection and analysis. Indeed, literature indicates that violence against foreign Black African nationals is gendered (Labys, Dreyer & Burns, 2017) and deadliest in economically impoverished areas (Cabane, 2015). As a result, I adapted my questions with participants who explicitly mentioned living in such areas to acknowledge their greater exposure to violence and avoid sensationalizing it. Although class was

a sociodemographic marker taken into consideration and although my initial contacts with some local organizations could have led to conversations with employed people with a regular income, those opportunities did not materialize. As a result, very few participants in this study reported some economic stability. The sample was mostly made of people experiencing capitalistic violence and socio-economic hardships. Among participants who spontaneously chose to share their occupation despite not being asked about it, working in markets, beauty salons, restaurants or as car guards was commonly mentioned, as well as delivering food and driving for ride-sharing companies. In terms of gender identity, participants mostly identified as female (49 participants out of 79 participants). Finally, although this piece of information was not explicitly requested, some participants discussed their sexual orientation over the course of our conversation: two participants identified as gay and one as lesbian.

In the next section I discuss how participants were recruited.

3.2.2. Recruiting through community networks

Eight South Africa-based organizations, coalitions and foundations advocating for foreign African nationals or with references to “xenophobia” in their mandate (Appendix 1a) were contacted by email and Facebook and asked to circulate the call for participants (Appendix 2). While these organizations were approached as gatekeepers to potential participants, it must be acknowledged that recruiting through organizations with an explicit mandate against “xenophobia” might have caused some bias. Indeed, some participants might have concluded that since they had learned about the study through an entity advocating against the violence experienced by foreign Black Africans in South Africa, their stories had to emphasize said violence. To maximize the odds that participants could share their life stories rather than abide by some implicit expectations rooted in the mandate of the entity that had made them aware of the research, interviews were designed to make space for any counternarratives participants wished to share. Notably, I decided to explicitly inquire about any counterexamples or any element in participants’ life stories that challenged dominant narratives about violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa. With those parameters proactively set to minimize any bias created by the recruitment strategy, in late January 2023, an introduction email presenting the project was sent to three organizations. A few days later, the same email was sent to four other organizations (Appendix 1a). The approach was

deliberately sequential to tweak and finetune the introduction email based on organizations' questions and comments. That feedback fed into a slightly revised version of the introduction email which indicated that the research proposal and ethics clearance were available upon request (Appendix 1b). I would send this revised introduction email whenever I would follow up with organizations. In such follow-up emails I would also clarify that arrangements could be made to limit the organization's role to circulating the call for participants in their network instead of interacting with prospective participants as initially envisioned. I would also request a go-to contact at each organization should a participant require some assistance from somebody in South Africa (Appendix 1c). The eighth and last organization contacted did not have a website or an email address. I used Facebook to send a shorter message providing an overview of the research and asking for an email address to provide further information (Appendix 1d). Out of the eight organizations contacted, seven appeared to be active based on their online publications. Out of these seven organizations, three signed the consent form to participate in this study. Out of these three organizations, two referred prospective participants by either providing me with their name and contact information, or by circulating the call for participants (Appendix 2) among prospective participants.

By the last week of February 2023, the first three participants had been referred. A few weeks later, I connected with representatives of a coalition of local associations - most of those led by foreign Black African nationals - that shared my call for participants in their networks. Following this call, over 60 prospective participants reached out over a few days during the second and third week of March. The geographic locations of prospective participants consequently expanded to include KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga, in addition to the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Gauteng as initially planned based on the geographic location of organizations contacted.

Between February 2023 and August 2023, 156 people replied to the call for participants. Such an interest in a research project that did not offer any financial incentive can be read as illustrating participants' strong desire to share their stories and challenge any silence or perceived misrepresentation that might surround their realities. This response might therefore speak to both the absence of avenues for participants to share safely their stories and viewpoints, as well as their possible dissatisfaction with the common exposition of this topic. These two points were mentioned repeatedly by several foreign Black African participants. The possible sense of injustice

resulting from such unaddressed needs and misrepresentations might thus have led some prospective participants to reach out in the hopes of obtaining some support and validation.

While most participants reached out via WhatsApp, 28 people reached out by email or provided an email address as their primary contact. In some cases, instead of contacting me, some prospective participants would get in touch by filling out the online consent form first (Appendix 3). I would subsequently contact them to confirm their interest, at times sending the French or Swahili version of the consent form to ensure that language was not a barrier. Overall, 148 participants filled out a complete consent form. In addition to participants being referred by the two active organizations involved in this study, participants occasionally referred other people by sharing their phone number and indicating that they might be interested in this study.

All participants received the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (Appendix 3), which was also available in French. I would ask participants to go over the FAQ document and either confirm or withdraw their participation. In addition to centering their agency, this step aimed at ensuring that all prospective participants understood that they were engaging in a research project. On a few occasions, some prospective participants had learned about the research via WhatsApp groups and had received neither the call for participants nor the FAQ document. These prospective participants shared that they had assumed that they might be eligible for some financial or material help upon submitting a consent form. Along the same line, several participants mistook the data collection for interviews conducted by non-governmental organizations to assess an individual's eligibility for their services. I consequently implemented the additional step of confirming prospective participants' understanding and interest even after they had filled out a consent form to maximize the odds of them making an informed decision and minimize the risks of misleading anyone.

At the time when I wrote the proposal for this research project, I envisioned the data collection as both remote and in-person. My initial ambition was to remotely pilot interviews, and then meet with interested and available prospective participants in South Africa. Yet, since significantly more people than anticipated replied to the call for participants, and since no participant flagged any hurdle caused by the modality used, I ended up conducting the entire data collection remotely.

The impact of such a remote setting has been quite ambiguous. On one end, the sense of anonymity that came with this distance might have created space for participants to be less constrained: they

did not have to commute to a specific place to meet with me nor did they have to receive me at their place. The same distance might have also contributed to some closeness: some participants reported sharing aspects of their life they rarely discuss. Geographic distance was also possibly read as lowering the threat of retaliation for participants, which is a concern that some people explicitly verbalized. I consequently concluded that in the context of this study, for many participants distance implied anonymity and safety. As the person conducting this research from abroad, I was relieved to know that participants felt safe. On the other hand, whenever participants conveyed strong emotions, I wondered whether having been physically in the same room as them might have provided some comfort, although I acknowledge that sharing a physical space does not necessarily translate into emotional proximity and trust. In those instances, I questioned whether the geographical distance between them and I could be received as emotional distance and a lack of concern on my part. Since I had no visual cues, I would pay close attention to any changes in participants' tone or cadence. Whenever participants would sigh loudly or pause, I would remind them that they did not have to share anything they were not comfortable with. I would also thank them for everything they had shared up to that point and asked them how they were feeling in that moment. It was my way to convey that I did not approach our interactions as transactions but rather as spaces in which their realities had to be honored, heard, and validated.

On my end of the call, although it was not a conscious reaction at the time, I believe that I approached geographical distance, the absence of any visual cues and the possibility to temporarily mute myself, as permission to not bottle up some of my emotions. I have been admittedly emotionally impacted by virtually all stories I was privileged to record. This made me wonder whether geographic distance was a shield for me. This question became more present as I would listen to what at times appeared to be endless stories of violence against people whom I share several identities with. Distance also allowed me to mask all the emotions and questions that came up whenever I would ask myself what treatment I could receive in South Africa as a foreign diasporic Black African woman. Overall, such remote data collection forced me to rethink the very concept of distance. When participants would call me instead of South African institutions as per their own words, was I really that far, or was I the closest person who could offer some support? In such situations, was I a member of the diaspora too far removed from the realities of the continent, or was I approached precisely because I was seen as someone who would understand the seriousness of these situations?

Although, to my knowledge, entirely remote data collections are not common in academia, at no point did I assess that I was lacking information or context because I was based in a different country. On the contrary, it seems that distance became an opportunity to dive deeper in my conversations with participants since I had no visual cue such as nodding to use as indicators of a shared understanding. At times, this translated into slowing down the pace or spending several minutes on the same point to ensure a common understanding.

Distance was also an opportunity to center self-introspection. I asked myself several times to what extent I was partaking in dynamics narrated. I also wondered to what extent aspects of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans also manifested among Black communities around me. I suspect that I was able to have such reflections because I operated outside of an in-person research paradigm, and had to mobilize other epistemologies, in this case, orality and storytelling.

In the next section, I present step by step how interviews took place.

3.2.3. Centering orality and bypassing sight in interviews

Once a participant had been contacted, had filled out a consent form, reviewed the FAQ document, and confirmed their interest in the research, the time and day to connect were decided based on their availability. All participants received a written reminder by WhatsApp the day before their scheduled interview, which became an opportunity for some participants to indicate in which language they wanted to share their stories. Calls took place primarily in English, with a couple of conversations entirely in French. Occasionally, conversations would take place in English and Swahili: I would ask questions in English and participants would reply either in English or Swahili.

Each call began with a review of the consent form: participants were first invited to summarize what they remembered from the consent form, including their option to withdraw. I would then read out loud the form and I would ask participants to confirm their consent. Two participants decided to withdraw from the study during those first minutes upon obtaining some clarifications on what their consent entailed, namely being recorded even if under the condition of anonymity.

In total, between February 2023 and August 2023, 79 people were interviewed. Out of those, 76 were foreign Black African nationals and three were Black South Africans. As citizenship and

specifically being a foreign African national are grounds for discrimination in the dynamics this research examines, I deliberately chose not to ask any participant about their citizenship. South African participants were all referred (by one of the participating organizations and one participant respectively) to provide a South African perspective in this study, which allowed me to infer their citizenship. I would also infer South African nationals' citizenship based on their standpoint and their use of "we" when discussing South African nationals or South Africa as a country. For foreign Black African nationals, since it was indisputable that their citizenship had been used to justify violence against them in South Africa, and since several participants shared fleeing from their country after being targeted by their government, I was particularly careful to never require participants to indicate their country of citizenship. Furthermore, in keeping with a decolonial approach, I was not particularly interested in centering colonial borders drawn by European colonial powers for anything but the sovereignty and prosperity of African peoples. My decision not to ask about citizenship also aimed at increasing the odds of putting foreign Black African participants at ease. Although I am cognizant that our respective contexts are very different, as someone quite familiar with the discomfort and sense of othering that can result from being asked "where are you from?" (Creese, 2019) by members of the dominant social group (in my case, White Europeans), I deliberately wanted to avoid causing such potential discomfort as much as possible. Staying away from asking foreign African nationals where they were from was also a way to indicate that the importance and validity of their stories would not be conditioned by their citizenship. My rationale was that participants who wished to volunteer that information would do so regardless. And indeed, many participants took it upon themselves to indicate where they were from, either in the consent form (even if that piece of information was not solicited) or during our call. Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi, were among countries frequently mentioned as the places participants were hailing from. Since I did not systematically collect data about foreign African nationals' citizenship, that variable is not included in the overview of participants' demographics (table 1).

Interviews took place from Monday to Saturday, primarily between 11:30 am SAST and 9pm SAST¹ over WhatsApp, Skype and once via a Teams videoconference. All interviews took place

¹ South African Standard Time

at no cost to participants. Whenever internet data was an issue, I would give a regular phone call to participants.

Citizenship	South African		Foreign African nationals		Total number of participants
	3		76		
Gender identity	Female-identified		Male-identified		79
	49		30		
Sexual orientation	Explicitly identified as gay, lesbian, or questioning		No explicit mention of sexual orientation OR implied their heterosexuality		
	3		76		
Province	Western Cape	KwaZulu Natal	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	
	3	68	6	2	
Age range	20-35	36-50	51-65		
	37	41	1		

Table 1: Overview of participants' demographics

Although some prompts (Appendix 4) were prepared to discuss participants' racial identity and the violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa, oftentimes referring to those was unnecessary. Since participants knew that the research focused on the relationship between Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals, they would spontaneously recount stories on this topic.

The mobilization of the life history approach was intended to be sequential (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019) by diving first into life stories related to racialization and subsequently into stories of collective violence against foreign Black African nationals in South Africa. However, since many participants arrived with detailed accounts of their personal experiences in South Africa, the anticipated sequential order of the interview was often reversed. Conversations would start with participants' stories of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, and we

would then discuss how those experiences have informed their racial identity. Conversations would last between an hour and an hour and a half. On two occasions, conversations lasted for almost two hours without any interruption. All conversations were recorded (with participants' consent) via the free and open access Open Broadcast Studio (OBS). As I would record my screen along the sound coming out of either my computer for Skype calls, or out of my phone for WhatsApp calls, each interview is associated with an MP4 file. That file, when opened with Microsoft video player, can be processed by artificial intelligence (AI) to create captions and subtitles. I used that option to have a first draft transcript of every conversation which I then manually reviewed and finalized. The data was then coded with NVivo 1.7.1 using an inductive reasoning. As the data collection went on and very similar stories were shared, the inductive reasoning morphed into an inductive-deductive interpretation. Whenever elements of a new story did not echo elements of stories already documented, I would use an inductive approach when coding that latest transcript. I would then assess how these new codes (i.e. these new stories) aligned or not with previous ones. This overall amounted to mobilizing an inductive-deductive approach throughout the data analysis.

In the next section I discuss measures taken to abide by ethical principles.

3.2.4. Ethics and confidentiality to honor life stories

This research received the ethical clearance PSY2022-048 on December 6, 2022. As all interviews were conducted remotely without any visual component (except in one call during which the participant and I turned on our respective cameras for a few minutes), to limit distress, I relied on intonations, silences, sighs, and hesitations as flag mechanisms. Whenever a participant would sigh prior to sharing something, or whenever it was audible that they were sobbing, I would remind them that we could take a break. I would also repeat that we did not have to dive deeper into the story that had caused that reaction. There were as such some informal engagement rules, namely that although my questions would necessarily orient the conversation, I could not oblige participants to share specific stories or discuss specific topics. I adjusted the pace of my questions based on participants' storytelling. For example, whenever participants' words flowed and indicated some ease, I understood it as a possible need to verbalize their experiences and I would not speak until they either prompted me to or stopped talking. Participants consequently had the

leeway to be independent narrators of their life stories and share only what they saw fit. To maximize the odds of shared understanding, I would continuously confirm participants' answers either by repeating them, asking participants to validate my understanding, or asking follow-up questions. For many participants, constantly validating my understanding of their stories became a prompt to share more stories. Indeed, it was not uncommon for participants to use moments of clarification as opportunities to further expand on a dimension of their life in South Africa, namely by recounting other situations that crystallized the same dynamics. At the end of the calls, to prevent leaving participants in any distress after re-visiting difficult episodes, I would try to anchor them in the present moment by asking how it felt to share their stories with me. On some occasions, I would ask them about some of their go-to practices whenever they feel overwhelmed and discouraged. This question played the dual role of anchoring them in the present moment and reminding them that they had some agency to respond to the emotional state they were in.

Overall, the life history approach in and of itself appears to have created some rapport between participants and me. Some participants remained in touch via WhatsApp months after their interview, at times requesting an additional call, or sending voice notes to share updates on a specific story they had shared during our initial conversation. In some cases (on six occasions), participants reached out after an assault or attempted assault on them or someone from their family. In those cases, after clarifying that they understood that I could only listen to them and document their experience, I would redirect them to the list of resources that I continuously updated over the course of the data collection (Appendix 5). On one occasion, after securing both parties' consent, I put a participant in touch with another foreign Black African national as a potential resource for support. As such, my approach to ethics implied at times mobilizing unanticipated strategies to alleviate some of the distress participants reported. Overall, aiming to minimize exploitative dynamics traditionally associated with academic research proved to be a conundrum. For example, providing financial incentives to compensate prospective participants for their time could have been read as commodifying stories of violence and as enticement to "perform" rather than recount one's life stories. However, not providing any financial compensation could also be read as exploitative and dismissive of participants' emotional labour. It could have also been considered a deliberate dismissal of the documented economic precarity many Black Africans (regardless of their citizenship) experience in postcolonial South Africa. I consequently opted for a different type of incentives: socio-psychological and legal resources to address, even if partially, participants'

concerns. Furthermore, the decision to leave open the lines of communication during the entire period of the data collection and have follow-up conversations with participants as they requested them, might have also prevented some harm. It provided an additional space for participants to go to when they assessed it necessary and possibly minimized their odds of feeling unheard or instrumentalized for the purpose of data extraction. Ethical responsibilities in this research therefore translated into providing participants with some moral support, even if minimal and if only for a few hours over six months. This approach strayed away from the typical design of research projects in which research benefits for participants might be either overlooked or conflated into the absence of significant harm. Despite such efforts, it remains that as the person leading this research, I obviously significantly benefit from this study at an academic and professional level. While I could not provide similar benefits to participants, I sought to maximize the odds of participants getting something they assessed as useful out of their involvement, whether that was a sense of alleviation or the contact of some organizations whose services they were eligible for. This study might consequently have contributed to a different approach to ethics by positioning a people-centered approach and the provision of immaterial support (e.g. moral support, active listening) as critical grounds. Such an approach that expects researchers to provide a safe environment in which participants can verbalize and act on their emotions rather than have them ignored, minimized, or entirely severed from the research design, is coherent with decolonial qualitative research. Overall, the ethical considerations followed in this research might have contributed to suspend even if temporarily the violence of academic research.

Since violence can also manifest in academia's disregard for participants' real-life consequences of engaging in research, maintaining confidentiality was expectedly critical in this study. No participant was ever required to corroborate the name they provided as I would only use it to refer to them during our interactions. On one occasion, at the end of a call, one participant shared that they had filled their consent form with a different name to preserve their anonymity. Upon feeling comfortable during our chat, they volunteered their first name and invited me to use it to refer to them moving forward. At a logistical level, to ensure confidentiality all my calls took place while I was in a closed private office. I also encouraged participants to choose a place where they were either alone or surrounded by people they trust. All transcripts and recordings have been stored on UCT OneDrive and can only be accessed via my UCT student account which is secured with multiple-factor authentication. Finally, in chapter four to seven, all names have been changed and

selected quotes were redacted to conceal any personal information that could be used to identify participants.

In the next section, I conclude this chapter by discussing my analytical approach.

3.2.5. Analyzing through a decolonial intersectional narrative framework

The analytical methodology employed in this research examines how matrixes of power and systems of domination established during colonization still manifest to this day (Grosfoguel, 2007). Practically, the decolonial intersectional narrative framework (Boonzaier, 2019) was mobilized to examine: 1. what stories participants share about Black South Africans' violence against Black Africans; 2. what these stories indicate about intersectional power dynamics and identities notably as they relate to racial identities and racial relations; and 3. how my analysis and retelling of these stories can destabilize oppressive societal dynamics. Consequently, my textual analysis of participants' stories sought to focus on the narration of specific identities and the barriers or privileges associated with said identities. Specifically, I sought to assess whether the imprints of oppressive colonial hierarchies rooted in White supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy could be identified in participants' stories. For any recounting of racial relations and racial identities, I mobilized Fanon (1967)'s framing of Black and White identities as mutually defined along a rationale of domination (i.e. colonial White supremacy) ever since the colonial encounter. I also outlined any elements that possibly crystallize the narrator's positioning within a paradigm of whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993) and mobilization of a White gaze (Du Bois, 1968) as defined in this study.

In keeping with decolonial methodologies, destabilizing oppressive societal dynamics aims to contribute to some justice (Tuck & Yang, 2023) for affected populations. In this study, this group refers to Black Africans in South Africa and beyond, regardless of their citizenship. Although the study predominantly features stories of foreign Black Africans since they were the largest group of participants, a commitment to destabilize oppressive societal dynamics necessarily implies refraining from looking at these realities from a simplistic zero-sum standpoint. It is not because Black South Africans' experiences of violence were less reported in this study that they are denied or assessed as secondary. It is consequently critical to resist ranking Black communities' suffering against one another. Instead, in line with a decolonial approach that investigates how the colonial

past remains present to interrupt it, one ought to deliberately identify how the colonial violence experienced by one Black African community echoes the violence experienced by another Black African community. Foreign Black Africans' stories in this study should consequently be understood as an entry point into a violence that transcends colonially engineering identities and commonly afflicts Black Africans in South Africa regardless of citizenship. This analytical approach possibly also acts as a reckoning of some sort: by identifying, naming, and problematizing the violence of coloniality, one ought to ask themselves to what extent they have normalized that very violence. Acknowledging oppressive societal dynamics and our (conscious or not) complicity in those, aims to constitute a starting point to challenge those very dynamics. As such, this study's analytical approach is admittedly political - as any decolonial qualitative methodology requires (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019). Furthermore, in keeping with a decolonial commitment, such an approach also seeks to refuse research (Tuck & Yang, 2023). This refusal is grounded in an acute acknowledgement of how academia: 1) hoards stories of pain only to leave them unaddressed, 2) commonly silence participants and denies them expertise on their own lived experiences and 3) contributes to the portrayal of historically marginalized populations from a colonial perspective that dehumanizes them (Tuck & Yang, 2023; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). To try and address those three dimensions, the analysis in this study aims to constitute in and of itself an intervention; one that seeks to interrupt the pervasiveness of western colonial violence, as it transpires in both Black Africans' portrayal and relationships with one another. The analysis aims to spur reflections and actions to "transform oppressive forces into a better future despite the overwhelming odds" (Mosley et al., 2020, p.3). To prevent silencing participants, and in keeping with orality, many quotes were used to try and remain as faithful as possible to participants' storytelling.

Overall, the analysis is informed by a will to generate counternarratives (Tuck & Yang, 2023; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). This responds to the mandate of resistance inherent to a decolonial intersectional narrative framework (Boonzaier, 2019) as well as to the decolonial psychological approach that premises this research. Practically, as the stories shared all recounted racial (and consequently colonial) violence, it was critical to use an analytical framework that simultaneously conveyed truthfully what participants had shared while problematizing the oppression embodied in their stories. As required by a decolonial intersectional narrative approach, I consequently sought to both identify and contextualize participants' messages. I reflected on how

social norms and dynamics might have led participants to both experience what they had narrated, and to recount such experiences in the specific way they did. I would then examine how the intersectional dehumanization of Black people informed these stories in both their content and form. I would subsequently ask myself how my re-presentation of these stories in this thesis risked exacerbating colonial divides and colonial archetypes already present in participants' stories. I opted for an analytical write-up that put the emphasis on trends present across participants' stories regardless of their citizenship and tied those to the broader legacy of colonial violence. Such an approach simultaneously rejected colonial divisions of Black Africans and minimized the odds of pathologizing participants by pointing to the structural and pervasive nature of colonial violence rather than individual behaviours and beliefs. Furthermore, I also sought to emphasize narratives that challenge the colonial dehumanization of Black peoples. This choice had to be an integral part of the analysis precisely to avoid reinforcing colonial narratives and the colonial status quo of academic research. Finally, in keeping with a decolonial approach in which research is admittedly political and as such has an impact on the researcher, this study also relates how collecting and analysing data has affected me as a diasporic Black African woman. My positionality and questioning about my identity, where I belong and where I can be shielded from White supremacy (if anywhere) has influenced my behaviour during this study and as such is also analyzed in the rest of this thesis. This decision both aims to reject the so-called objectivity of academia and answers the decolonial intersectional narrative framework's call to pay attention to intersectionality, identities, and power, and how they inform the telling and re-telling of stories (Boonzaier, 2019).

3.3. Chapter summary

This chapter presented measures taken to mobilize a decolonial approach throughout the study. In addition to theoretical frameworks, this chapter detailed how orality and storytelling helped create some rapport with participants despite geographical distance. It presented measures implemented to respect agency, minimize harm, and center participants' voices. This chapter also went over considerations taken to welcome counternarratives, and deliberately mobilize a political analysis that rejects the so-called objectivity of academia.

Chapter Four

“We still have to unlearn. [...] We need to be Black and proud, you know? We are made not to think. We are programmed, you know?”: the imperative to reject anti-Black colonial narratives

In the next chapters (chapters four to seven), I present and analyze participants’ life stories to answer my main research question. It asks what a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological analysis of Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black African nationals in South Africa, reveals about contemporary racial identities and racial relations among Black Africans on the continent. I do so by answering three secondary questions which focus on three forms of violence against Black Africans, respectively: 1. the interwovenness of anti-Black racist violence against Black Africans in participants’ life stories, 2. the implementation of the coloniality of modernity, White normativity, everyday structural racism, and racism of zero point (Malherbe et al., 2019), and 3. the impact of violence against Black Africans on participants’ description of their racial identity.

In this chapter, I answer my first secondary question which focuses on anti-Black narratives in participants’ life stories. I identify in participants’ stories the ubiquity of colonial narratives which seemingly fuels a colonial portrayal of Black Africans. Using participants’ stories, I discuss how such a paradigm might have informed the Black South African identity. I then attempt to map out how nationalism might have led Black South Africans who survived Apartheid to exert colonial violence against foreign Black Africans. I close this chapter by highlighting a counternarrative that calls on Black peoples to unlearn colonial norms and be proud of their Black identity. In all stories participants’ names have been changed. Furthermore, to not emphasize colonial borders and avoid sharing information that could compromise anonymity, participants’ countries of origin are not explicitly named.

4.1. Narrating colonial archetypes: the deficient Black Other and the sacred White European human

Based on the conversations I engaged in for this research, it appears that for virtually all 79 participants, their earliest memories around race involve an experience of othering. That othering manifested when participants were in spaces supposedly open to all only to be discriminated

against based on their skin color. In this first section, I share narratives from two participants who presented experiences of racial segregation in church when they were children as their earliest memories about race. In those stories, being Black is presented as undesirable while being European is associated with privileges participants could not claim. From a decolonial perspective that analyzes how the colonial past remains present to interrupt this cycle, such a portrayal cannot be considered a mere coincidence. Rather, it appears to be a consequence of the colonial violence that negates Black people's sovereignty and confines them into the archetype of the deficient racialized Other, deviant from the colonial standard (i.e. deviant from the White European). Positioning White Europeans as the standard of humanity implies that anybody else is "different". That very notion of alterity as a core characteristic of the Black individual was consistently present in participants' stories as illustrated in Denise's stories of segregation in a South African church.

"Denise: [...] we used to go to a White church [...]. I used to attend [...] the Youth. So, [...] you used to get like, the Blacks they are on their own side, and then you get the Whites as well on their own side. And, like, you know, [...] I want to go in, associate myself with the Whites. You get, like.... [...] they don't like, talk to you. They talking [sic] to the ones that share the same color. [...]. And then, we petitioned as well to [...] become part of [...] a choir [...]. So, like, with us the Blacks, they were really not that much interested. [...]. So, it's really discouraged me. Every time I go there, I feel like 'no, my skin color is a problem for me to be here and nobody wants me here' [...]."

Denise, a foreign Black African participant, presents the church as a "*White Church*". In addition to illustrating how foreign Black Africans who grew up in South Africa have also experienced racist segregation, this description is a reminder that religious spaces are not exempt from White supremacist practices. The Catholic Church played a fundamental role in justifying the dehumanization of Black and Indigenous peoples around the world, normalizing the grabbing of land, and propagating the idea of a European God that ought to "save" the souls of non-European peoples (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008; Robinson, 2021).¹ With this premise, it is not surprising – from a decolonial perspective at least – that even in recent times, churches still engage in racist practices. Denise continues by describing how "*the Blacks they are on their own side*" and "*the*

¹ This is illustrated in the use of the word "exorcism" to refer to the baptism of Black people. An example of this would be the drawing of the baptism of enslaved Black people in a Moravian congregation entitled "Exorcism-Baptism of the Negroes": <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/aarslavesbaptlg.htm>

Whites as well on their own side.” This setup is one where phenotypes define geographic spaces and access to opportunities and resources: indeed, Denise and “*the Blacks*” had to petition to join the choir. It is worth interrogating why European churchgoers provide Black people access into their “*White church*”, if it is only to display their reluctance to treat them fairly, as narrated in Denise’s story. To this point, Cardoso (2010) has theorized a form of whiteness that he labels “(hypo)critical whiteness”. It refers to people who simultaneously position Europeans as the norm and attribute to the racialized Other what they will not attribute Europeans, while being concerned about how they are perceived. People who abide by (hypo)critical whiteness might consequently seek not to “look racist”, even as they are convinced of White Europeans’ superiority. Based on this story, White Europeans in Denise’s church might have abided by (hypo)critical whiteness. This positioning reveals that for White people to showcase their privileges, for them to show that they “*[are] really not that much interested*” in anybody other than themselves (i.e., “*the ones that share the same colour*”), there needs to be an audience. This story illustrates how whiteness can only be implemented when there is a racialized Other to marginalize and dehumanize. Such a premise points to the co-construction of racial identities and racial dynamics. Indeed, it is because Denise’s efforts are overlooked and dismissed by White churchgoers, that she ends up concluding that “*[her] skin color is a problem*” and “*nobody wants [her] here*”. Denise’s narration hints that she did not hold those views prior to this experience. According to her story, those views are consequently not inherent but rather acquired from her encounters with White supremacist beliefs.

Denise’s narration uses the vantage point of White European churchgoers to illustrate that in that church, she was the Other. Denise – echoing White European churchgoers- attributes to herself what the White subject does not attribute itself. Indeed, there is no indication that White European churchgoers ever questioned their own skin colour or their own legitimacy in that church. It could be argued that by recounting such racist treatment, Denise is refusing to be silent about racist violence and as such displaying resistance. This is corroborated by the petition Denise took part in to join the choir, and thus by her refusal to be kept at the margins in that church.

While Denise detailed those efforts, it could also be argued that in her narration she is not presenting black skin and Black people from a perspective that is different than White European churchgoers’. Indeed, an alternative reading of Denise’s narration might be that while Denise is talking *about* racist violence and the action she took to challenge it (i.e. petitioning to join the

choir), she is not talking *back* (Smith, 1999) to the White supremacist framing of black skin. Instead, she explains how that racist violence ended up affecting her own relationship to her skin in that space (“[...] *I feel like ‘no, my skin color is a problem for me to be here [...]’*”). Such problematization of black skin could be read as mobilizing the vantage point of the White subject, and not explicitly problematizing the very dehumanization of black skin. It follows that in her narration, even as she is recounting racist violence and how she sought to interrupt it, Denise might consequently be leaving unchallenged the White gaze that dehumanizes black skin and Black people.

The second story examined in this first section is that of Unathi who also recounts experiences of racial segregation at church as a child in his home country. Similarly to Denise, I argue that his recounting can be read as talking about racial violence and not necessarily talking back to it notably by rehumanizing black skin and Black people. It is worth highlighting that two participants who do not know each other, both described stories of segregation at church in different countries and at different moments. Such a convergence might indicate that White supremacist colonial violence is structural in postcolonial states. It follows that regardless of one’s actions or their individual characteristics, Black people are forced to navigate racist violence. These two participants’ experiences therefore provide a glimpse into the operationalization of colonial violence and the role that the Church played in it. In his story, Unathi describes how the water break at the church he would go to, reinforced racist hierarchies positioning European children as entitled to a privileged treatment while Black African children were not.

“Unathi: [...] Maybe when you want to go [...] take the water. To drink. We are just going to the tap [...] and them [...] they don’t go and drink where we use [...] the tap. [...] They’re using their [...] water bottles. So, [...] they’ll be queuing us Black people, and them, they’ll be standing, looking at us. With [...] water in their bottle. [...].”

In Unathi’s answer, three pronouns are used: you, we, and they. It seems that “you” and “we” ultimately refer to individuals who would “*use the tap*”, i.e., Black people. These pronouns (“you”, “we”) are also seemingly contrasted against “*them*” – White Europeans. This narration points to the existence of racist dynamics in which the Black Other is subjected to a denigrating treatment that White Europeans are shielded from. Because the Black Other is made eligible for a denigrating treatment and White Europeans are seemingly positioned as entitled to the highest level of

privileges in this situation, such dynamics crystallize how racial identities are weaponized to uphold White supremacy. Unathi's narration thus points to a paradigm in which he seemingly is confined to the colonial archetype of the Black Other that is dehumanized in a White space. That dehumanization is further exacerbated by the contrasts between the two actions attributed to Black and White European children respectively: queuing and standing. In Unathi's last sentence, Black people are presented as moved around by "they" (a reference to the White European church staff): they are made to queue or get in line. This is a quite poignant image when one appreciates that those are Black kids in a setting where authority is supposedly divine, always associated with a White European figure, and unchallengeable even as it upholds White supremacy. Furthermore, the phrasing "*they'll be queuing us, Black people*" could be read as indicating a ritual and not a punctual occurrence. Every time there was a water break, White European adults would physically move around Black children to form a line in front of the water tap. This routine embodies a multi-layered negation of sovereignty: in addition to being imposed a colonial religion and a colonial identity, even to drink, Black African children must abide by colonially defined rules. This stands in contrast to White European children who are described as "*standing, looking*" (at Black African children). Unlike Black children, they are described in the active form. They are "*standing*" – alone, with nobody ordering them to queue. They are "*looking*", which could be read as them enjoying a spectacle: that of Black African children reduced to bodies moved around. This framing would further confirm that White and Black identities are mutually defined along a rationale of domination that fuels the spectacle of racial humiliation. In that parade of privileges (or lack thereof), Unathi is simultaneously a protagonist and a spectator. He describes his dehumanization using the perspective of White people, while experiencing it.

"Chris: And what did you think of it at the time? [...]"

Unathi: At that time, you are just thinking it's because you're different. [...] So, you think 'Ah, maybe they don't use our taps. [...]'. [...]"

In this excerpt, Unathi's narration only mobilizes the notion of difference to refer to himself and Black children. The same adjective is not used to narrate White European children who were likely phenotypically different from most children in a Black African country. Just like Denise, Unathi's storytelling indicates that he is not blind to the racist dynamics at play. He can describe them in detail decades after experiencing them, which confirms the appropriateness of approaching Africa

and Africans as privileged standpoints to examine colonial violence. Furthermore, like Denise, Unathi's recounting could be approached as resistance in and of itself because it does not silence racial violence. Alternatively, it could be argued that just like Denise's, Unathi's narration talks about racial violence and does not talk back to the othering of Black people. In his narration, Unathi is seemingly using the same perspective as the ideologically White people involved rather than using a perspective that centers Black Africans and their norms. For example, despite being part of the statistical majority in a Black African country, and despite commonly drinking from the tap, as per his words, Unathi hypothesized that the taps were at fault. He recounts having reasoned that, Black children were "*different*" from White European children - who did not act or look like the majority. This might reveal that in this narration the standard "normal" person was a White European, possibly male, which is a belief documented beyond Africa, notably in European colonial powers (Puwar, 2001). It is worth highlighting once again how such a viewpoint is likely a consequence of an exposition to western colonial violence and White supremacy. This portrayal of Black and White European children in Unathi's story consequently echoes Denise's story by outlining the existence of colonial archetypes. That of the deficient Black Other who should be kept at the margins, whether that means being disqualified from church activities that White European churchgoers are automatically eligible for, or exclusively using taps while the standard White European human is supposedly above doing the same. To this point, Unathi shared another story which took place decades later, in South Africa. He explained that he was forced to comply with racist rules that denied basic dignity to Black employees.

"Unathi: The boss that I was working for... [...]. They are not allowing you to use [...] the toilet. You need to come from your home knowing that 'I'm not going to use the toilet the whole day'. [...] Even when they give you the food, you are eating in a different plate. [...]. And also [...] those plates, they put on [sic] another site. Not [...] where they put their stuff [...]. So, I feel like, I think this was exactly what was happening when we were young as well."

In this answer, in addition to verbalizing how past racist violence against Black people remains present ("*[...] I think this was exactly what was happening when we were young as well.*"), Unathi might be talking about himself while possibly adopting the perspective of another socio-racial group – the dominant one (Du Bois, 1968). As was already the case in his recounting of his experience at church, "*they*" refers to White Europeans, and "*you*" refers to Black people who are

dehumanized, including Unathi. Accordingly, in his recounting “you” and “I” are seemingly interchangeable. Just like in his story about church, “*they*” also employ dehumanizing practices, this time against Black employees. Rather than be excluded, Black employees are allowed in such White spaces, precisely to be dehumanized and humiliated. One can then conclude that Black people are required in those spaces for White people to *be* White. Similarly to Denise’s story of racist segregation at church, Black and White identities are mutually defined by a colonial rationale that positions the White identity as entitled to basic rights denied to Black people and as such, as entitled to dehumanize Black people. Unathi then recounted the following interaction.

“Unathi: [...] I... asked the lady up there. I said, ‘I want to use the toilet’ and they said ‘No, here they don’t allow us to use the toilet’. [...] ‘Why?’ [...] ‘No, because we are different’. [...] ‘But you, you are working inside the house, are you not using the toilet?’. And she said ‘No. We [...] only clean the toilets. [...] They don’t allow us to use the toilet.’. So, I feel so pained [sic] [...] So it was, for me, it was traumatized [sic] to see such things. [...]”

When the employee Unathi asked about toilet access affirmed “*we are different*”, the only possible shared identity this “*we*” can refer to is Black. As Black employees they were the Others, regardless of whether they worked inside or outside the house –which is a framing eerily reminiscent of plantation dynamics in the “Americas”.² In these plantations in which Black Africans would be enslaved and exploited for their labour, exploitation would take place both inside the plantation owner’s house and outside, in the fields. Because of the different type of labour involved and the proximity to the plantation’s owner family, being “*inside the house*” often implied enjoying relative privileges compared to enslaved people in the field (Joseph, 1993). Centuries later, on the other side of the Atlantic, by stating: “*You are working inside the house, are you not using the toilet?*”, Unathi’s question might indicate that it would not be surprising if the exploitation of Black employees followed a gradient. Black African employees working inside, closer to the White European employer’s living space and belongings, would then be ranked above other Black African employees, and as such allowed to use toilets. This assumption implies the existence of a racist hierarchy premised on proximity to White Europeans. Black Africans reduced to a dehumanized colonial archetype sit at the bottom while White Europeans, elevated to the colonial archetype of the standard human, sit at the top. It follows that to be treated as a person,

² I use quotation marks to signal that this name is a colonial one and not among the indigenous names associated with that continent.

even for something as trivial as using the bathroom, Black people need to be granted proximity to White Europeans.

Like Denise's and Unathi's stories, the next story also points to the existence of colonial archetypes that mutually define Black and White people by positioning White Europeans as the standard humans and Black people as allegedly "*different*" (in Unathi's words).

Tjamiwa, one of the few South African participants in this research, explicitly pointed to White supremacist violence when discussing narratives that might be associated with Black people in the collective imagination of postcolonial societies.

"Tjamiwa: I'm not sure how people perceive it, you know? But I think, those looking in most countries, they say 'Black', it's... [...] like... identifying someone who's not full [sic] human? Just a sub-human. You know? [...]."

Tjamiwa's use of pronouns when discussing the racist mistreatment of Black people possibly points to the mobilization of a White gaze. Tjamiwa initially uses "I" (*"I'm not sure how people perceive it"*), therefore indicating his own subjectivity. He then moves on to using "*they*" (*"[...] they say 'Black' [...]"*) when discussing how Black people might be perceived as "*not full[y] human*". At this point, Tjamiwa might no longer be indicating his own perspective but rather how "Black" is seen by a third party - signaled in his sentence as *"[...] those [who are] looking [...]"* - that dehumanizes Black people. By doing so, Tjamiwa's narration seems to describe the process of looking at Black people through the lens of the White norm. Tjamiwa's recounting, like all participants', conveys an acute awareness of racist dynamics. Therefore, for Black people, mobilizing a White gaze in their storytelling does not imply overlooking racist dynamics. Based on Denise, Unathi and Tjamiwa's stories, it might instead imply that no counternarrative is provided to mobilize a different vantage point that explicitly rehumanizes Black people and frames them outside of said White gaze. Of relevance here is also the fact that Tjamiwa presents it as a narrative present "*in most countries*". This assumption points to an international paradigm that dehumanizes Black people in South Africa and beyond. Such an assumption is echoed by facts. Western colonialism in its multiple iterations, from slavery to neocolonialism and racial capitalism, is a White supremacist project that has been global and whose consequences are still palpable to this day. Yet, as much as Black people are dehumanized in a White supremacist paradigm, evidence from several disciplines point to Africa as the cradle of humanity (Gomez,

Hirbo & Tishkoff, 2014). That descendants of the first humans are consistently dehumanized, once again, stresses the overwhelming ubiquity and extended reach of White supremacist colonial narratives that dismiss verifiable facts to uphold European hegemony.

This section centered on analyzing participants' converging stories that point to the existence of White supremacy as a structural element of postcolonial African states. The resulting upholding of anti-Black narratives is crystallized in colonial archetypes of the deficient Black Other that can be dehumanized and the standard White European human. In the next section I examine stories that (mis)represent the history of African societies and frame those narratives as stemming from the same colonial archetypes.

4.2. Revisionist White supremacist history

In this section, I present stories from foreign Black African participants that possibly illustrate how anti-Black narratives permeate the narration of African countries' history. Using two conversations with two different participants, I present exchanges that seemingly adopt a White supremacist approach by normalizing White Europeans' colonial violence and delegitimizing Black Africans' sovereignty. I start with Farid's presentation of the relationship between Black South Africans and European South Africans. In the following extract, Farid's answer appears to frame this relationship as one of hatred and rooted in Black South Africans' misreading of the settling of White Europeans in what became South Africa.

“Farid: They believe most Whites they've taken their land from South African land. [...] So, there is that big clash between them. [...] [T]his big hatred, you know? [...]”

In this quotation, settler colonialism and the taking of land seem to be presented as a “*belief*” and not facts. The issue at hand is linked not with colonialism but with this “*belief*” and “*big hatred*” that Black South Africans allegedly hold. These sentences can be read as indicating that the crux of the issue lies with Black people's alleged misunderstanding, which would reinforce the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. It could be argued that such an affirmation made while the narrator lives in the settler colonial state of South Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambani, 2013), highlights the structural nature of White supremacy. Even when surrounded by evidence, structural

White supremacy that refuses to challenge White European's behaviours or morality, leads to dismissing verifiable historical facts as beliefs.

This next story is taken from my conversation with Gladys which also featured what I read as unsubstantiated affirmations about western colonization in African countries. Those affirmations were made as Gladys explained it was crucial to prevent children from "*believ[ing] the bad things*" about White Europeans – a concern that Gladys had previously shared when reflecting on relationships between Black people and White Europeans. To this point, Gladys' narration emphasized the need to prevent "*hatred [...] without reason*". It is worth highlighting that in both Farid and Gladys' stories – two people who do not know each other – there appears to only be two possible reactions to White Europeans: either condoning colonialism or displaying "*hatred*". Such a binary framing can be connected to colonial archetypes: if Black people question western colonialism, they allegedly show "*hatred*" and are as such morally inadequate. If Black people condone western colonialism, they theoretically uphold the alleged superiority of White European settlers and their entitlement to dehumanize Black people through colonialism. In both cases, this binary framing contributes to painting White European settlers as allegedly superior and ineligible to be questioned. It also further illustrates that ever since the colonial encounter Black and White identities have been mutually defined (Fanon, 1967) along a rationale of colonial domination.

In our conversation about relationships between White Europeans and Black Africans, Gladys brought up what I read as colonial violence. In the next exchange, I attempt to assess why that topic was brought up when discussing the importance of not fueling "*hatred*" toward Europeans.

"Gladys: The White was beating. They was [sic], they were just stealing the minerals. Beat our great parents. You know maltreating [sic] them. Killing our, [...]our people. [...]"

Chris: [...] So, if you [...] say all this, why would the hatred not be justified?"

Gladys: What? I don't understand your question properly.

Chris: [...] you are explaining how White people did beat people [...], and steal minerals, right? And then before you were saying how people could grow with hatred in their heart without any reasons. [...]"

Gladys: That, no. [...] That, it was a long time ago. [...]"

Chris: So, you think this is no longer true?

Gladys: It is true. [...] We saw the movies. [...] They did wrong."

In this exchange, the narration centers on examples of colonial violence that might be read as indicating that there is some ground to develop “*hatred*” toward European settlers. This line of argumentation contradicts the earlier affirmation that Black people could develop “*hatred [...] without reason*” toward White Europeans. I was confused and unsure of what the takeaway message was.

“Chris: So... what...

Gladys: We need to, like, somehow, we will teach the kid. [...] To not [...] make a child grow up with something bad against the White people. You tell them ‘You know, when they came, they wanted to do this. Then our grandparents didn't want. [...]’ Is [sic] just example [sic] I give. [...] ‘Our grandparents didn't want them [...] to teach them, so that's why they start beating. [...] Because they didn't want to send other [...] people to school.’ In that way. [...]”

In the chronology of our conversation, this exchange took place immediately after Gladys had affirmed that European settlers “*did wrong*”. Gladys’ description of colonial violence indicates some awareness of the violent essence of colonialism. This description along the rest of that exchange seemingly do not problematize colonial violence in of itself but rather the accompanying discourse and how it could lead to “*hatred [...] without reason*”. In other words, one might read the progression of the storytelling here as indicating that for the narrator colonial violence, in all its brutality, does not constitute a valid “*reason*” to develop “*hatred*”.

It might be tempting to wonder whether language might have been a barrier in this conversation. Doing so might however be read as discrediting Gladys’ arguments on the basis that her posture is too unexpected to not be rooted in some misunderstanding. Language was not an issue at any point of our interactions and Gladys restressed the same apologist views about colonialism several times as is shown in the rest of this section. Her answer appears rooted in White supremacist beliefs rather than facts. Indeed, Gladys disregarded her own affirmations about colonial violence to instead focus on “*our grandparents*” whom she described as people who “*did not want to send other [...] people to school*”. One could argue that Gladys is referring to how “*our grandparents*” did not want to be taught by European colonizers (“*‘Our grandparents didn't want them [...] to*

teach them [...]'"), which might be read as speaking to resistance against colonial violence. Yet, her immediate next words seemingly justify European settlers' physical abuse of Black Africans ("*[...] so that's why they [i.e. European colonizers] start beating [...]*"). In that sentence, Gladys appears to present Black Africans as eligible for colonial violence because of their alleged resistance to (western) education. This portrayal upholds the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other and the sacred White European human, and crystallizes how such archetypes can lead to revisionist history. Furthermore, although in her answer White European settler violence is presented as having occurred "*a long time ago*", the recommendation to misrepresent those facts to children is a contemporary one. This tension in temporality encapsulates how the colonial past remains present. When asked about the purpose of misrepresenting history to Black African children, Gladys stressed again the imperative to not paint White European settlers in any negative light despite the wielding of colonial violence she attributed them earlier in the conversation. This seemingly confirms that with this story, Gladys is knowingly defending an apologist posture that can be read as White supremacist: it positions White Europeans as entitled to the highest level of privileges, in this case the privilege to dehumanize Black people while their (White Europeans') character and morality remain unquestioned.

"Gladys: [...] It's because when [...] you take even [...] ten people [...]. The same thing. They answer the same. I'm telling you, they'll answer the same. Only bad. Nothing good. [...] Question them like, 'Tell me the White people what they were doing in your country. Is it good or not? [...]' 'Bad things.' Another one: 'bad things.'"

This answer appears to assess as unfortunate that in a postcolonial world, Black Africans are aware of and discussing "*bad things*" associated with colonialism. I was admittedly caught off-guard and deeply troubled. I asked for examples of the "*good*" linked to colonialism.

"Gladys: A good thing is...A good thing is...OK, you reach some places there, you find people without knowing [sic] nothing. You start teaching them. Ask them. Peacefully. Not impose them [sic], to ask them what they want [...]. In that way.

Chris: And where have you read or learned that this is what happened?

Gladys: Where I learned? [...] Movies, when you go into [sic] movies, you

Chris: [...] Are you talking about the same movies where Black people were taught that they had dirt on their, on their skin?³

Gladys: No, no, no, no, no. Not that one. [...]

Chris: [...] And you don't think [...] those movies have the same message, even if they are different movies?

Gladys: Yeah, even they are different. They have the same message. Even they are different.

Chris: OK, I'm ...I'm ...I'm [...] confused. Because it seems you're saying two different things. You're saying on one end that White people came peacefully and did not impose anything, right?

Gladys: They must come like that instead of coming the way they came.

Chris: So, what... [...] I'm trying to understand. Because you said those people in South Africa when they talk about White people, they only say 'bad things'. I asked you what would be 'good things' and then you, you gave that example. So that means that for you...

Gladys: Can you please explain again?"

Gladys argued that there were “good things” about colonization, yet when asked to name those, the argument became about what settlers should have done “instead of coming the way they came”. This answer consequently acknowledges that historical facts do not support earlier affirmations about European settlers finding people who “kn[ew] nothing” and teaching them “peacefully”. What that progression possibly indicates is that, regardless of facts that indicate otherwise, White Europeans’ alleged moral superiority and sanctity should not be questioned. That progression also exemplifies how Gladys herself refrains from saying “bad things” about White Europeans - which in this case might have implied problematizing colonial violence rather than overlooking or justifying it. The disregard for verifiable facts embedded in Gladys’ storytelling evokes uncritical whiteness (Cardoso, 2010). In contrast to critical whiteness, people who operate within a paradigm of uncritical whiteness are more likely to reject documented historical and scientific facts since they do not substantiate White supremacist beliefs. They are also more likely to be overtly White supremacist as they are not concerned with how they might be perceived. Gladys’ narration and

³ When asked about her first memories about race and racial identities, Gladys mentioned a movie in which a Black child was told by White European children that she (the Black child) had dirt on her skin.

repeated White supremacist statements appear to embody at virtually all levels uncritical whiteness. At the end of this excerpt, Gladys indicated not following my rationale. This was the second time⁴ that she was doing so. The conversation at that point was tense as we had clearly opposite views. By asking me to explain my train of thoughts, my interlocutor might have used an argumentative strategy. She halted the pace of the conversation, putting the focus on me to explain my rationale instead of her. After some back and forth, Gladys eventually used a racist colonial trope according to which African societies had no knowledge prior to European colonial contact. That affirmation was made to substantiate the claim that White Europeans allow “*Black people to live their life*”. Although I knew intellectually that the goal of my conversations was not to agree or disagree with participants, I assessed that by remaining silent I would be complicit of White supremacy instead of challenging it, even if only for a few seconds. Using as an anchor Gladys’ awareness that I was based in Canada and that I live among people of European ancestry - many of whom uphold whiteness- I asked Gladys if she had ever lived among White Europeans.

“Gladys: [...] I don’t live with them, but is, they are like that. I’m sure! They are like that! I’m telling you! [...] OK. I’m, I’m gonna make you understand. White people, they came here with this. [...] Yeah, they took mineral [sic], but they teach, they teach [...] a good news [sic]. They teach us [...] to, how to wear clothes. They teach us how to write.⁵ They teach us how to read.

Chris: So, so you think Black people, they didn’t know how to do that before?

Gladys: No! [...] when you see it in my country long time ago, they wasn’t [sic] wearing clothes. [...]

Chris: OK... And [...], because White people did that, that means that [...] they don’t care about other people’s lives... It seems it’s the opposite, no?

Gladys: I know White people, they have a lot of positivity, [...] more than Black. They have a lot of positivity. White they did bad, it’s only beating [...], like maltreating [sic] someone. [...] But

⁴ The first time was when we discussed a movie with a racist White European character, and I asked why there would be no reason to feel hatred in such a situation. Both times, she signaled not understanding me precisely when I repeated her own affirmations about White violence and asked how she reconciled those with her call to not develop “hatred”.

⁵ The world most ancient written texts have been found on the continent of Africa (Winters, 1991; Winters, 1994) and predates European colonial contact.

they're doing goods [sic] to teach us. They brought so many things. Even the phone.⁶ If I can be in connection with you, it's because of the White."

In line with her previous answers, and based on available literature, Gladys' conclusions do not appear to be corroborated by facts⁷. Rather, they appear to be anchored in what she is "sure of", i.e., (White supremacist) beliefs commonly found in a postcolonial world. It is worth highlighting that in addition to evidencing how racist violence against Black Africans translates into a racist revisionist history, in this story, there is also an explicit objective to "make [me] understand". Such a goal might aim to force me into the narcissistic pact of whiteness (Bento, 2002), i.e., force me to be complicit in the positioning of White Europeans as the alleged universal standard and not challenge their attribution to Black people of dehumanizing traits that they do not attribute themselves. By including this story, I hope to simultaneously illustrate the far-reaching consequences of colonial archetypes, and how challenging whiteness (and its accompanying anti-blackness) can result in discord among Black Africans – in this case, between Gladys and me.

Revisionist narratives in both Farid and Gladys' stories might possibly illustrate how structural, ubiquitous, and pervasive White supremacy is in postcolonial societies, and how such a paradigm can result in the distortion of both history and relationships among Black Africans.

In the next section, I focus on anti-Black narratives in the South African context and how they inform both foreign Black Africans' narration of Black South Africans and Black South Africans' relationship with Black Africans from the rest of the continent.

4.3. Introducing the 'South African'

In this section, I present stories that point to how anti-Black narratives simultaneously permeate participants (i.e., mostly foreign Black Africans)'s portrayal of Black South Africans and Black South Africans' discourses about other Black Africans. I start by examining foreign Black

⁶ Ironically, a critical mineral to produce phones is coltan, which is naturally present in the soils of African countries (Ojewale, 2021).

⁷ It is incoherent to entertain the thought that precolonial African societies were deprived of any civilization for millennia and were passively waiting for Europeans to bring them knowledge. Assuming that these nations were supposedly knowledge-less, how did they manage to survive for so long?

Africans' labelling of Black South Africans, which seems to center Black South Africans' citizenship rather than their racial identity.

An element that consistently caught my attention during data collection was the label used to refer to Black South Africans. When discussing racial groups in South Africa, foreign Black African nationals would refer to Black South Africans by their citizenship (i.e., "South Africans"), without any explicit indication of racial identity or ancestry. In contrast, they would say, "Coloured", "Indians" or "Whites" to refer to South African citizens of mixed, Indian, and European ancestry respectively. During the first conversations, I would ask participants which racial group they were referring to since, for me, "South African" was a label that encompassed all South African citizens regardless of their ancestry. A decolonial intersectional narrative analysis of this labelling requires to identify what messages are embedded in such a label, and what they might reveal about intersectional identities and oppressive dynamics. Referring to Black South Africans only as "South Africans" might point to the critical role that citizenship plays in dividing Black Africans. Indeed, it appears that rather than highlight their shared racial identity as Black Africans, it is instead citizenship - the element that would divide foreign Black Africans and Black South Africans into different social categories - that is emphasized. Underscoring citizenship might also point to the oppressive societal dynamics that accompany those who are not citizens in South Africa. This might be why foreign Black Africans emphasize that aspect: to restress their marginalization as non-citizens in South Africa. Yet, it could be argued that labelling Black South Africans as only "South Africans" risks silencing the racist violence they experience to this day in their own country (Khadiagala et al., 2018). By being explicit about racial identities when referring to both Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans, one might therefore highlight their shared experience of racist violence in South Africa. Another possibility when analyzing the use of the "South African" label is that, since Black South Africans are the statistical majority in South Africa, in participants' imaginary a South African citizen might be primarily a Black individual. Limiting the "South African" label to Black South Africans and simultaneously positioning them as perpetrators when discussing the violence survived by foreign Black Africans, appears to lead to a two-fold outcome. On one end, it might contribute to overlook non-Black South African citizens' complicity in violence against foreign Black Africans –be it through interpersonal and capitalistic racist violence (as illustrated in Unathi's story of racist abuse at his workplace), scapegoating political rhetoric or the lack of condemnation of the violence foreign Black Africans

face. On the other end, this labelling might also exacerbate Black South Africans' portrayal as morally deficient and unilaterally responsible for violence, which would uphold the archetype of the deficient Black Other.

In the next section I examine how the same colonial archetype might be mobilized when foreign Black Africans narrate Black South Africans.

4.3.1. “*To them, the only Black Africans [...] in Africa are South Africans.*”: colonial (dis)orientation and the Black South African identity

In foreign Black Africans' stories Black South Africans were narrated as self-centered and dismissive of other Africans (specifically Black Africans). In my conversation with Barika, that portrayal was enhanced by the narrative that Black South Africans perceive themselves as the only Black people in Africa and consequently dismiss other Black Africans on the continent. In addition to crystallizing a supremacist colonial approach that denies the existence of indigenous peoples on a given land, such a posture would align squarely with the isolation of South Africa during Apartheid. At that time, Black South Africans were not recognized as citizens; they were disconnected from the rest of the continent and referred to as natives by the Apartheid regime (Mamdani, 2020). Furthermore, the competition for labour between Black people in South Africa and migrating Black Africans from neighboring countries engineered by the Apartheid regime (Neocosmos, 2010), might have led some Black South Africans to see themselves as the only legitimate Black people allowed to live within the colonial borders of South Africa, and as such the only Black people in Africa. Although several Black South Africans who opposed Apartheid went into exile in other African countries, the vast majority of Black South Africans remained in South Africa during Apartheid and as such did not have any interaction with the rest of the continent. This spatial and temporal isolation possibly exacerbated a sense of disconnection from other Africans. Interestingly, Apartheid was spontaneously mentioned in several stories whenever narrators hypothesized about Black South Africans' violent behavior toward foreign Black Africans. Specifically, Black South Africans' reported impossibility to deflect violence during Apartheid was connected to contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans in participants' stories.

"Barika: [...] Within the Apartheid era, because the White person was in charge... Now [...], that was a different story. But now, maybe because [...] they lost at that time, [...] they were powerless. They had nothing to say. So sometimes I feel like maybe that's why they usually like taking matters into their own hands. They never had the freedom to do such things back then [...]"

In Barika's answer, there is a temporal framing that positions *"the White person"* as the ruling figure during Apartheid, possibly implying that White Europeans no longer hold such a role. Although the political elite might no longer be predominantly made of people of European ancestry, European South Africans present the highest levels of income which provides significant leverages (Cakal et al., 2011; Khadiagala et al., 2018) in a settler colonial state built on White supremacy and capitalism (among other systems of oppression), and ranked among the most economically unequal countries in the world (World Bank, 2022). Such ongoing disparities between European South Africans and Black South Africans might complicate the insinuation that White European South Africans are no longer *"in charge"*. Similarly, the innuendo that *"the White person"* left Black South Africans *"powerless"* during Apartheid can be contextualized (for example by talking about economic powerlessness specifically) and challenged with documented acts of resistance led by Black people during Apartheid (Cooper & Ratele, 2018). One could argue that in this narration, facts that challenge the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other (in this case, Black people's resistance against White supremacist violence) are relatively less emphasized than colonial violence. While different from Farid and Gladys' affirmations, Barika's silence on Black resistance could be read as another illustration of revisionist history fueled by White supremacy in postcolonial African societies. In Barika's answer, the root cause of Black South Africans *"taking matter into [their] own hands"* is connected to the violence of the White supremacist Apartheid regime. Even as the narrative can be read as upholding the deficiency-based colonial archetype of the Black Other by presenting Black people as *"powerless"*, it still situates that violence as a reaction to White Europeans' and as such, not inherent to Black Africans. In this story there is as such no dehumanization of Black people per se, but rather some victimization - which deserves to be problematized as it might speak to the confining of Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. Furthermore, Barika's sentence essentially describes the very idea of narcissism as conceptualized from a decolonial perspective in this thesis: the process by which colonized people who fostered a sense of colonial inadequacy seek colonial superiority over another group. Indeed, since superiority is claimed over the figure of the Black

African that has been consistently dehumanized within a colonial paradigm, it is specifically colonial superiority, i.e., superiority within colonial racist capitalistic and gendered hierarchies, that is sought after. To this point, the next story speaks to the normalization of the violence that foreign Black Africans might face to disqualify them from enjoying privileges that Black South Africans did not have during Apartheid.

A participant recounted that a Black South African had told her that Black South Africans did not leave their country during Apartheid and that foreign Black Africans should consequently remain in their country regardless of the violence they might experience there. The morale of this story seemingly implies that the colonial oppression suffered by Black South Africans under Apartheid would justify the (post)colonial oppression that foreign Black Africans might experience in their home country. In addition to highlighting how the violence of Apartheid might remain present and still inform Black South Africans' posture toward other Black Africans, this story seemingly normalizes colonial violence rather than interrupt it. The argument of this story also further confines Black Africans into a colonial archetype that can be dehumanized seemingly endlessly, in one colonially engineered country or another. Presenting Black South Africans as having never left South Africa (and therefore as not having fostered links with other Africans) aligns with Barika's portrayal of Black South Africans considering themselves as the only Black Africans in Africa. It is worth reminding that those two narratives came from people who do not know each other. That convergence reconfirms the structural nature of White supremacy, in this case, that of the Apartheid and how it still informs Black Africans' identities and trajectories.

According to foreign Black African participants' stories, a potential consequence of only knowing South Africa is that the world for many Black South Africans might revolve around that colonially engineered space and the people who, through colonial violence, have come to inhabit it. To this point, Lindani recounted asking "*some of the guys in the city*" whether South Africa was in Africa or in Europe and being told "*South Africa, we have a border with Europe. We do not have a border with Africa.*" In that same conversation, Lindani's Black South African interlocutor described foreign Black African nationals as "*coming from the bush*". In addition to possibly constituting some ground to marginalize foreign Black Africans in South Africa, this reported racist stereotype would further outline the colonial archetype of the African; allegedly deficient in every possible

way and almost animalized to the point that “civilized”⁸ environments, are supposedly unknown to them. Such affirmations illustrate how anti-Black narratives shape and erode Black Africans’ identities regardless of their citizenship. While Black South Africans are narrated as actively seeking to distance themselves from foreign Black Africans whom they see as “*coming from the bush*”, Lindani as a narrator – and a foreign Black African - seemingly also distances himself from Black South Africans whom he recounts as ignorant of basic geography and decidedly hostile toward foreign Black Africans. In all those narratives, the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other is at play whether it applies to Black South Africans or foreign Black Africans. In line with Black South Africans being narrated as eager to distance themselves from other Black Africans, Eugene - another foreign Black African participant - recounted the following story.

“One day, I think in 2017, I was talking to the lady and I asked her ‘can you name me five African countries?’ Can you [...] believe this? She told me ‘India is in, in Africa. That’s why Indians are in this country’. It was crazy! [...] So, I was like ‘Are you for real?’. And she started, like, arguing with me [...]!”

Additional participants joined Lindani and Eugene, to share stories that also described Black South Africans’ alleged unapologetic ignorance about the rest of Africa, and disinterest in learning about it, let alone visit it. It is likely not happenstance that Black South Africans who would harm foreign Black African nationals are narrated by foreign Black African participants as believing that South Africa is geographically connected to Europe and India, and somehow totally disconnected from the rest of the African continent. To contextualize these participants’ stories, it is worth considering that Apartheid’s White supremacist dehumanization of Black Africans, might have resulted in the disfigurement of Africa, and the White supremacist reimagination of a world map that only makes sense under the Apartheid regime.

If colonial archetypes have shaped Black South Africans’ relationship (or lack thereof) with foreign Black Africans, colonial archetypes likely also inform the way foreign Black Africans perceive Black South Africans. Indeed, in foreign Black Africans’ stories, Black South Africans were almost systematically described as “*full of hatred*”, “*violent*” and prone to engage in deadly conflict. Black South African participants themselves had a choice of word for their fellow

⁸ In a colonial paradigm, civilized often means colonized and assimilated into whiteness and western ways (Rodney, 1972). I put this term in quotation marks to invite the reader to consider that this concept might ultimately be a colonial fabrication.

citizens. Tjamiwa affirmed that “*they hate themselves*”, while Noor assessed them as stubborn and resistant to change. Such a portrayal can be read as distancing the narrator (including Black South African ones) from the Black South Africans they are describing since narrators attribute them traits that they do not self-attribute themselves in their story. By doing so, narrators consequently position the Black South Africans they are describing as the antagonist in their story. It can be argued that such portrayal ultimately further confines Black Africans regardless of citizenship into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. Furthermore, in virtually all participants’ stories (including Black South Africans’), Black South Africans were presented as believing that they were superior to any other Black African. They were also narrated as unwilling to see another Black African succeed more than themselves, regardless of their citizenship. Black South Africans were also frequently presented as expecting “*everything for free*” and considering themselves entitled to “*everything*” in South Africa, from government support to foreign Black African nationals’ precarious occupations. Such recounting positions Black South Africans as more preoccupied with status than affiliation. Such a preoccupation would point to a possible pursuit of colonial status to address a sense of inadequacy rooted in colonial dehumanization which evokes narcissism as conceptualized in this study.

In the next section, I draw from participants’ stories to tentatively map out one possible premise of Black South Africans’ contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans.

4.3.2. From oppressed to oppressed and oppressing: Black South Africans’ colonial metamorphosis

In this section, upon analyzing participants’ stories, I suggest that the colonial dehumanization of Black Africans might have led Black South Africans to disavow other Black Africans. Specifically, I argue that Black South Africans might use the South African citizenship – historically reserved to White European settlers – as a premise to antagonize Black Africans who are not South Africans. This section consequently partially addresses some interrogations that emerged in chapter two about the role that nationalism and colonial violence might play in Black South Africans’ relationship with Black Africans from the rest of the continent (see section 2.4.).

As recounted in Lindani’s and Eugene’s respective story, Black South Africans are commonly described as positioning themselves as not sharing an identity or a border with other Black

Africans. Furthermore, citizenship has been positioned both in literature (Neocosmos, 2010; Sinwell, Maggott & Ngwane, 2023) and in participants' stories as the critical element used to draw the alleged abyssal line of difference between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans. As per foreign Black African nationals' accounts, Black South Africans seize every opportunity to remind them that they (foreign Black Africans) are "foreigners" and have no right to be in South Africa. In addition to betraying an Apartheid-informed understanding of "foreigners", such taunting might indicate that for these Black South Africans, status holds precedence over affiliation. Since the South African citizenship in these dynamics is used to underscore a higher social status, such a rationale would evoke one central element of narcissism as conceptualized in this study (i.e. to reclaim superiority). The other central element of narcissism as conceptualized in this study is a sense of inadequacy. In Barika's story, Black South Africans were presented as "powerless" during Apartheid. It might then be argued that Barika's narration suggested that the White supremacist violence of Apartheid caused a sense of inadequacy in Black South Africans. It is consequently possible to reconstitute narcissism with its two central premises in the narration of factors that might contribute to Black South Africans' contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans. Furthermore, identity erosion can also be identified in Barika's narration since the Apartheid violence that dehumanized Black South Africans and made them ineligible for South African citizenship (Mamdani, 2020), likely also eroded their identity. Consequently, from participants' stories it is possible to outline the role that the western colonial violence of Apartheid, narcissism, and identity erosion, might play in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. Such an observation would validate the theoretical possibility presented in chapter two (sections 2.3 and 2.4.) that connected nationalism, western colonial violence, and identity erosion on one end and hypothesized that these dynamics might inform Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans on the other.

While nationalism and its resulting emphasis of citizenship are used to disqualify foreign Black Africans from any rights in South Africa, citizenship alone does not explain why foreign Black Africans might be singled out of all foreign citizens in South Africa. The Apartheid legacy however, seemingly does. Indeed, during Apartheid only South African citizens had rights and only White Europeans could be South African citizens. As such, citizenship could only be used to dehumanize specifically Black Africans (Mamdani, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013). Yet, unlike White Europeans during Apartheid, Black South Africans in contemporary times who

might use citizenship as grounds to dehumanize foreign Black Africans are not exempt from that very dehumanization themselves (Khadiagala et al., 2018). This premise might exacerbate the need to reclaim one's privilege of being a citizen in a country that has historically been extremely violent against "foreigners" (Mamdani, 2020). It might also heighten the need to distance oneself from said "foreigners", notably by attributing them undesirable traits that one would not attribute oneself (e.g. Lindani recounted having heard from a Black South African that they perceived foreign Black Africans as "*coming from the bush*"). Once again, a link between western colonial violence (i.e. Apartheid violence), nationalism and identity erosion can be drawn. Specifically, identity erosion seemingly results in the confining of foreign Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other and in Black South Africans' upholding of the very colonial identity that was used to dehumanize them (i.e., the South African identity). In line with the decolonial approach of this research, it is thus necessary to indicate potential paths to rupture such cycles of ongoing colonial violence.

To this point, I conclude this chapter with an exchange that took place unprompted at the end of my call with Tjamiwa. In it, Tjamiwa acknowledges the devastating and divisive impact of colonial violence on Black Africans' identities and encourages Black Africans to "*unlearn*" this colonial programming.

"Tjamiwa: [...] we're made to believe that we are not the same. You know? So, we are made to hate each other. [...] So, we still have to unlearn [...]. We need to be Black and proud, you know? We are made not to think. We are programmed, you know?"

In this excerpt, Tjamiwa used both passive and active voices. This choice of tense could be analyzed as embodying a decolonial mandate that seeks to evidence how the colonial past remains present to interrupt it. Indeed, Tjamiwa used the passive voice to point to the colonial programming and manipulation of Black people into "*hat[ing] each other*", while he used the active voice to call on Black people to "*unlearn*" this colonial configuration and "*be Black and proud.*"

In these sentences, western colonial violence is also connected to identity erosion, by making Black Africans "*believe that [they] are not the same*". It is worth highlighting that Tjamiwa could have limited this spontaneous reflection to the description of colonial violence and how it erodes Black people's identity. Instead, he offered a possible way to interrupt such dehumanization: the reclaiming of the Black racial identity as a source of pride. Such a call essentially amounts to

challenging colonial identity erosion. With this progression, Tjamiwa both talked about colonial violence and talked *back* to it.

Of relevance is that among all participants, Tjamiwa was not the only one who spontaneously both described colonial identity erosion and explicitly called on Black Africans to embrace themselves and one another. Given the ubiquity of White supremacist violence in postcolonial societies, it is highly significant that some participants naturally adopted such a decolonial perspective. It can be read as indicating that in the face of relentless colonial dehumanization, refusing to be confined into any colonial archetype is a strategy that is already deployed in African societies.

4.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I answered my first secondary question which focused on the interwovenness of anti-Black narratives in participants' life stories. Using as examples Denise and Unathi's childhood memories, I argued that colonial archetypes that dehumanize Black Africans and position White Europeans as sacred and superior, are present in their life stories. By examining affirmations made by Farid and Gladys, I concluded that anti-Black narratives can also result in revisionist history, specifically about colonialism. I then presented how anti-Black narratives informed both Black South Africans' portrayal of Black Africans from the rest of the continent, and foreign Black Africans' narration of Black South Africans. I used participants' stories that framed the Apartheid violence as a potential explanation to Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans to corroborate that western colonial violence, narcissism and identity erosion seemingly inform Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. I concluded this chapter with a decolonial counternarrative that calls on Black people to unlearn the colonial programming by challenging colonial identity erosion.

Chapter Five

“This country, it’s like we are at war, when there is no war in this country”:

Colonial archetypes and totalitarian colonial violence

In the previous chapter (chapter four), I answered my first secondary question which focused on the interwovenness of anti-Black narratives in participants’ life stories. I pointed out that colonial archetypes that dehumanize Black Africans and position White Europeans as sacred and superior, can be identified in participants’ life stories. I added that those narratives can seemingly fuel a revisionist history of colonialism, as well as Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans’ mutual portrayal. I also outlined the intersection of the western colonial violence of Apartheid, narcissism, and identity erosion, that seemingly informs Black South Africans’ contemporary targeting of foreign Black Africans. In this chapter, I further explore the consequences of anti-Black narratives by highlighting how they result in structural violence against Black Africans. To do so, I use Malherbe et al. (2021)’s framework of a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism. Specifically, I focus on three dimensions of the framework: 1. the coloniality of modernity evidenced in the existence of a racist capitalistic gendered hierarchy, 2. the racism of zero-point crystallized in the normalization of racist violence against Black people and 3. White normativity which transpires in the positioning of White Europeans’ standpoint and comfort as universal norms. I conclude with narratives that interrupt such anti-Black violence which I position as decolonial alternatives.

5.1. *“It’s only always us. Black African[s] that are always being treated badly.”: the coloniality of modernity and the marking of Black people for violence*

In this first section, I analyze stories shared by participants that speak to the specific targeting of foreign Black African nationals. I suggest that such targeting reveals the existence of a social hierarchy that is racist, capitalistic, and gendered (i.e., a colonial hierarchy) and rooted in western Modernity’s ideals.

All participants (including South African ones) indicated that “xenophobia” was specific to foreign Black African nationals. Such specific targeting of foreign Black Africans was consistently denounced in foreign Black Africans’ stories and appeared to be a key message they wanted to convey.

“Geita: In South Africa, a foreigner is people like me [...]. So, [...] people from [country name], people from Nigeria. Especially Nigerians, they don't like Nigerians. [...] I don't think they have a problem with people [...] from Europe or [...] China. They don't care about Indians. [...] I don't know if it's the black skin that irritates other Black people. ‘Cause we are also Black and they are also Black. They will push that narrative that there is a lot of people from [country name] coming this side, they must go home. Or, there's a lot of people from Mozambique. [...] Of course, Chinese people also have shops [...]. There's even malls [...]. The whole mall belongs to a Chinese person. You will never hear ‘Chinese people are taking over the mall or taking over the streets.’ [...] If you are not from here [...], but if you are Black, you're a ‘foreigner’. [...]”

In her answer, Geita spontaneously shared that she is labeled a foreigner in South Africa. That immediate reaction might reveal that Geita is adopting the positionality of the dominant group to discuss how from its perspective, she is part of the out-group. Geita is therefore acutely aware of how she is read even if that identity is imposed onto her and not self-proclaimed. This tension possibly illustrates a dynamic of identity erosion in which instead of being Geita in all the complex layers of her identity, she is reduced to being a “*foreigner*” in South Africa. Geita contrasts “*people like [her]*” to “*people [...] from Europe or [...] China*” and highlights that Black South Africans do not have issues with the latter groups. Foreign nationals' race and country of origin are therefore presented as critical elements in defining who can be a target of Black South Africans' violence in South Africa. Accordingly, people who are from Europe – or read as sharing phenotypical similarities with people from Europe- are protected from violence. It follows that Black South Africans themselves who are neither from Europe nor share phenotypical similarities with Europeans, would also be at risk of being targeted. This framing helps contextualize why a third of victims from the May 2008 violence were Black South Africans (Landau, 2010) and highlights that participants' narratives reflect the structural violence any Black African is exposed to. Approaching the sovereignty and rights of Black people from Africa as challengeable, can be read as echoing western Modernity's scientific racism. Indeed, western Modernity's limitation of personhood to alleged “rationale” White European male thinkers of that same era, dehumanized Black Africans (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008). The Modernity-informed conceptualization of a person can therefore be put in dialogue with participants' stories about the violent consequences of denying Black people's personhood to this day, this time in African countries.

Geita's reflections on black skin and how it possibly "*irritates other Black people*", present black skin as phobogenic (Fanon, 1963). It evokes Blumenbach's White supremacist categorization of humans that reduced Black Africans to a skin colour (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008). That interrogation about the irritation that black skin might cause to "*other Black people*" can also be read as encapsulating the crux of narcissism as conceptualized in this study. The White supremacist dehumanization of Black people and their reduction to a skin color has presented Black people as inadequate. This might have fostered a need to reclaim some colonial superiority to not be confined into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. Such a posture might consequently lead some Black Africans to seek colonial superiority over other Black Africans, which in practice might imply exerting colonial violence against said other Black Africans. The negation of Black people's humanity and personhood inherited from western Modernity consequently appears to play a significant role in contemporary violence against Black Africans in South Africa.

Within such a paradigm, some Black Africans might seek to move up the Modernity-informed pyramid of personhood to distance themselves from the rank of the Black Other and get closer to White Europeans' "*side*". This word ("*side*") was common in stories, specifically those of foreign Black Africans. "*Side*" can be read as evoking colonial divisions and delimitations; zones of being and non-being (Cupples & Grosfoguel, 2018). If such spatial divisions are indeed at play, people who engage in violence might assess that "*foreigners*" have trespassed the South African side and should go back to their zone of non-being (i.e. their supposed "*bush[land]*") as mentioned in chapter four section 4.3.1.). Such a framing evokes an abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2007) which creates alleged irreconcilable differences between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans. When one appreciates that Black South Africans themselves used to be denied citizenship and were geographically restricted during Apartheid, whether one looks at the historical oppression of Black South Africans or the ongoing violence against foreign Black Africans, Black Africans' sovereignty both at an ontological and spatial level is constantly negated. Accordingly, Black South Africans might simultaneously see themselves as marginalized by White Europeans who sit atop the colonial pyramid of personhood and represent the colonial norm on one end and recreate that othering by positioning themselves as the relative norm in relation to perceived foreign Black Africans that they marginalize on the other. Another reading of said othering might be that Black South Africans project their own dehumanization at the hands of White Europeans onto foreign Black Africans. Ultimately, doing so seemingly creates hierarchies based on one's proximity to

White Europeans which hints again at the relevance of western Modernity's framing of personhood in the specific targeting of foreign Black Africans.

In Geita's answer, references to capitalism and its intersection with White supremacy are also identifiable. In her narration, people perceived as closer to White Europeans in their phenotype and social positioning, can embark on capitalistic ventures seemingly without any challenge. According to this story however, such a privilege is denied to Black people who are reduced to being "*foreigners*" and made "illegal" in South Africa. Perceived economic power is consequently presented as playing a role in the identification of targets as Barika, another participant, also pointed.

"Barika: Because [...] they have this perception. Like, are you coming from a poor country that has nothing and then you're coming here? You have nothing to add to the GDP¹ here. You've got no papers [sic], [...] you're not employed, [...] you don't pay tax [sic]. So they, they look at you [...] like a lowlife. So, the treatment will obviously be based on the way they perceive you."

In this answer, two interconnected premises are presented to make sense of the marginalization and othering of foreign Black African nationals: one's country's perceived economic situation and one's perceived intrinsic value. This framing in and of itself possibly indicates that Black Africans' circumstances are seen as permanent. If their country is going through economic hardship, that conjecture is not seen as mutable but as an inherent characteristic. If a Black African individual is read as less valuable, no matter what action they take, that perception remains. That would explain why even as foreign Black Africans own spaza stores and theoretically contribute to the South African economy, they remain seen as not contributing financially or socially. They are instead portrayed as taking opportunities away from South African citizens. In both Geita and Barika's stories, there is therefore a link between race, capitalism, and the targeting of specific populations in South Africa. This link crystallizes Fanon's (1963) affirmation about the intersections of race, capitalism, and colonialism: "You are rich because you are [W]hite, you are [W]hite because you are rich" (p.40). As racial capitalism was critical to "modernize" and industrialize Western European societies (Robinson, 2021), the racial and capitalistic targeting of Black African populations can also be read as their perceived ineligibility for colonial modernity. Within a

¹ Gross Domestic Product

colonial paradigm in which modernity means benefitting from racial capitalism rather than experiencing it, foreign Black Africans' stories indicate that they are perceived as incompatible with western Modernity, and instead marked as eligible for exploitation and dehumanization. Defining someone's worth and eligibility for violence based on their phenotypical and economical closeness to Europeans, would also explain why people from East Asia, particularly those who are white-skinned such as people of Chinese ancestry, are narrated as relatively shielded from violence in South Africa.

Like Geita and Barika who both pointed to South Africa's capitalist racist hierarchy, Eugene, another participant, did the same when describing relationships among South African citizens.

"Eugene: [...] White first. The Colored. Indian. And Black. That's [...] how things used to be before, and these things still are in people's mind."

While it focused exclusively on racial identifies, Eugene's answer ultimately highlighted the same hierarchy hinted at by Geita and Barika, corroborating that race and socio-economic status inform each other in a colonial paradigm. Furthermore, his answer describes the racist hierarchy of Apartheid and possibly reveals that this White supremacist colonial hierarchy remains present. By doing so, Eugene's words spontaneously pointed to the coloniality of South Africa's race relations. Based on participants' stories, this racist hierarchy appears to have gained some layers and complexity. Barika spontaneously spoke to it when she described who was a foreigner in South Africa and said, *"Especially Nigerians – they do not like Nigerians."* In addition to confirming the specific targeting of foreign Black Africans, this emphasis might indicate a possible internal hierarchy among targeted foreign Black Africans since it highlights the higher degree of enmity toward people read as Nigerians. It appears that at the core of that exacerbated hatred is the perception that such Black Africans are essentially challenging colonial hierarchies instead of surrendering to it. Farai who is part of another community of foreign Black African nationals particularly antagonized as per participants' stories, also spontaneously spoke to it. She hypothesized that their resourcefulness might leave Black South Africans feeling *"like we are being too much. Or we are overshadowing them. So mainly that's [...] jealousy or envy. It's because they feel a little bit overshadowed."* Farai narrates Black South Africans as showing *"jealousy"* and not wanting foreign Black Africans to overshadow them. This concern possibly points to a connection between narcissism and the negation of Black people's personhood. If the

negation of their personhood fostered a sense of inadequacy in Black South Africans, Black South Africans might in turn seek to reclaim colonial superiority. As such, they might feel “*jealousy or envy*” whenever they are unable to dominate other Black Africans whose personhood is also negated in a postcolonial society. As for the characterization of Black Africans who survive racial capitalism as “*being too much*” in Farai’s storytelling, such an assessment seemingly further reveals the coloniality of modernity that disqualifies Black people from everything. Since the colonial project is only concerned with anthropocentrism that commodifies colonized people to sustain racial capitalism and European hegemony, colonized people’s resilience is at odds with colonial ideals and can only be “*too much*” in a world where they are not expected to survive. Some scholars have argued that foreign Black Africans who “accept”² low wages and precarious jobs are seen as colliding with some employers (specifically those of European ancestry) (Kerr, Durrheim & Dixon, 2017). This assessment might overlook a critical element: even as Black Africans attempt to survive, they are still facing oppression (hooks, 2000) and the impossibility to distance themselves from White supremacist capitalistic violence that frames them as eligible for exploitation. Blaming foreign Black Africans for attempting to survive racial capitalism while leaving that very system and those who benefit from it unchallenged, ultimately only reinforces the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other and a racist capitalistic hierarchy. According to the 79 participants, that hierarchy rooted in the coloniality of modernity is organized as follows: White Europeans at the top, followed by people with some European ancestry (i.e. Coloured people). Next seemingly come people that participants labeled as “Chinese” (i.e., racialized people who can be read as white-skinned) and hardly ever reported as being submitted to any type of structural violence. Racialized dark-skinned people (e.g., people from South Asia) would come next, followed by Black people from Western countries and Black South Africans. At the bottom of that pyramid would be foreign Black Africans who do not “*overshadow*” Black South Africans and, finally, Black Africans who are seen as “*too much*”.

After discussing how the coloniality of modernity manifests along capitalistic and racist lines to dehumanize Black Africans, in the next section I discuss its patriarchal dimension and its consequences on foreign Black African women’s lives.

² This terminology implies the possibility to refuse. In the context of structural racist capitalistic violence, however, such an option is not always available.

5.1.1. “Foreign. Black. African. Woman”: A multi-fold colonial dehumanization

In this section, I analyze stories from foreign Black African women that illustrate how patriarchal terror is a tool of colonial violence and as such a constant threat in postcolonial states. I start by analyzing Farai’s story of the violence she survived in her home country. This story illustrates the multiple ways in which the coloniality of modernity denies sovereignty and rationality along racial and gendered lines, therefore turning Black women into eligible targets for violence.

During our call, as she was discussing her identity, Farai shared that when she was forced into a “traditional”³ heteronormative marriage despite not identifying as heterosexual, she “*got abused in all sorts of ways*”. With that phrasing, Farai chose to not explicitly describe the abuse she survived – and I chose not to dig deeper so that she would share only what she felt comfortable with. By not providing further information, Farai controlled her narrative. She named the abuse and shared how she managed to survive it. She also indicated that she has since then embraced her sexual orientation. Her refusal to conform to patriarchal violence was presented as standing in contrast to what was expected of her and of Black African women in general.

“Farai: If your husband beats you, he physically abuses you, you go and report [...] to your [...] family, saying ‘my husband hit me yesterday’. And they asked you ‘why did he hit you [...]?’ ‘Oh, he hit me because [...] I dished dinner for him late.’ [...] My aunt would say to me, ‘yes, he has the right [...] to hit you because he’s a man. A man needs to be fed in time.’”

Although I did not ask for any example, Farai described a situation of physical violence. Choosing this example might possibly indicate Farai’s assessment that as an interlocutor whom she does not know, I might be less likely to challenge her claims of abuse if she mentions physical interpersonal aggression which is commonly acknowledged as violence. This hypothetical thought-process evokes how even as women face patriarchal violence, they have to anticipate that it might not be acknowledged as violence. Farai’s description of the abuse (“*beats you*”, “*physically abuses you*”) in this exchange could therefore be a way to reclaim that word: calling that violence for what it is.

Farai uses the verb “*report*” to describe how she would inform her family of the abuse. By using this term, her relationship and her family’s support (or lack thereof) are presented as a formal administrative process. Just like in formal administrative claims, she conveyed that as a woman,

³ I use quotation marks to invite the reader to interrogate any social practice presented as “traditional” in postcolonial contexts.

she had to explain herself. The question “*why did he hit you?*” could be read as “*what did you do for him to hit you?*”. In such a patriarchal paradigm, the woman is the usual suspect while men’s actions, including their violence, is presented as justified and not questionable. Farai’s narration went on to recount how such interrogatory would go. The pronoun “*they*” seemingly referred to Farai’s family, possibly indicating that several family members on several occasions demanded her to justify the violence she survived. It is consequently a standard response that is described; a reminder that in patriarchal settings the default is to normalize women’s abuse. This norm further betrays the coloniality of modernity that denies women’s personhood, sovereignty, and rights.

In the premise for Farai’s abuse, the contrast between the act and the response (i.e., dishing dinner late and being physically abused) highlights the senselessness of patriarchy: even as men are supposedly superior, they must be spared the terrible harm of eating later than expected. While such a conclusion might sound absurd, it is precisely that absurdity that summarizes patriarchal terror (hooks, 2004): there is no rationale required to abuse women in all impunity, anywhere, anytime. This is true even for matters that a patriarchal and sexist ideology would theoretically disqualify men from engaging in, such as cooking. It results that in a patriarchal system, men are allegedly above cooking but can somehow assess when dinner should be ready. Since this research seeks to mobilize a decolonial approach, it is relevant to highlight that such patriarchal violence is a manifestation of ongoing colonial violence and consequently needs to be interrupted. In the next section, I take a detour to present facts that challenge western patriarchal violence in African societies and point to its foreign origin.

In precolonial African societies, a sexist distribution of gender roles was likely not universal. Cheikh Anta Diop (1974) when discussing sexism and the restriction of women to so-called “kitchen responsibilities”, presents such practices as disfigurements of matrilineage. Within matrilineal societies, the knowledge and authority of women were not to be questioned. Women who were sedentary and engaged in agriculture would as such develop some extensive culinary expertise. At that time, positioning them as stewards of culinary practices that could sustain communities did not amount to reducing them to being at men’s beck and call but was instead an acknowledgement of their fundamental knowledge. Because women held such expertise along the privilege of being women in a matrilineal society, not just anyone was allowed in the same space as them whenever they cooked (Diop, 1974). As such, associating women to the kitchen did not

uphold male hegemony but signaled their unique ranking (Diop, 1974). Such practices, along with rebellions like that of the Aba women's uprising (Newman, 2021)⁴, indicate that women's relationships with food were never synonymous with abiding by patriarchal expectations or being denied sovereignty. Finally, Oyewumi (1997) and other scholars (Mehra, Lemieux & Stophel, 2019) invite us to question the entire premise of gender in precolonial African societies and its binarism. These Africa(n)-centered references consequently challenge the universality of hierarchical systems in which men dominate women. Such a patriarchal societal model of domination has been presented as characteristic of western civilization (Diop, 1974). It follows that such a patriarchal understanding of women and their contributions to society is likely foreign and possibly gained prominence in Africa through western colonialism (Diop, 1974).

The disqualification of women from any rationality and rights, can be identified in Farai's story. Even as she explained the abuse she survived, her perspective, safety, and wellbeing were not considered. Farai also discussed how the patriarchal belief that women are by default in the wrong for challenging patriarchal violence, extends to the police and the general population.

"Farai: Even the police would not help you, like, to arrest the husband. [...] So, you will be on your own. You will be marked [...]. Like [...] 'Oh, you want to marry this one? Don't marry her [...]. She will report you to the police.'"

In settler colonial states created to either eradicate Indigenous people, keep Black people enslaved or ensure their illegality in a specific geographical space, the police's role has been connected to the multi-layered totalitarian dehumanization of Indigenous and racialized peoples (Maynard, 2017). This phrasing, however, appears to indicate that Farai's expectations were otherwise and that she anticipated support from the police. Such a contrast between the formal role of an institution and its actions embodies the deceiving façade of postcolonial societies. Despite officially positioning themselves as both chronologically and ideologically past colonialism, structurally, postcolonial societies are still informed by colonialism, and consequently designed to reproduce the same violence against whoever is denied personhood within a colonial framing. In Farai's case, this is evidenced by the police's upholding of racist patriarchy. As such, when Farai uses "you" (*"even the police will not help you"*, *"you will be on your own"*) she is likely speaking

⁴ The Aba women's uprising occurred when the British colonial administration sought to impose a tax on food market sales.

to generalized dynamics. Patriarchal violence is true not only for her but for any Black African woman. That choice of pronouns likely indicates that Farai is looking at the ostracization of women from the perspective of the male dominant group, knowing that she is part of the marginalized gendered group. This marginalization further confirms the coloniality of modernity and its negation of racialized and gendered people's personhood.

Farai presents defying such coloniality of modernity as wearing a stigma: "*you will be marked*". This evokes bio-logic and how it is ultimately the body that is used to define social rapports in a colonial setting. It is worth noting that there is no indication of who will do the marking. That omission might point to the structural nature of the coloniality of modernity: it is not a specific individual that does the marking but an entire society through the upholding of racist patriarchal norms and expectations. The woman who is marked, in addition to being treated as an object ("*this one*"), has her reputation preceding her. She is denied the right to re-introduce herself because she has been labeled as deviant and problematic. In her storytelling, Farai is dehumanized and ostracized because according to the coloniality of modernity, she is not expected to defend her sovereignty but instead to normalize her dehumanization.

Back in South Africa, stories from most female participants also crystallized the coloniality of modernity. Specifically, these stories highlighted intersectional challenges one faces for being simultaneously Black, female, African, a foreign citizen, seeking asylum, and in some cases, the head of a household. In a quite revealing pattern that illustrates how being a foreign Black African woman from a lower socio-economic background with a precarious administrative status, results in the negation of one's sovereignty, only foreign Black African women reported home invasions – whether at their place or at another woman's. It might be that only female participants decided to share such stories while male participants did not. This possibility might point to colonial expectations along gender lines: men might not share these stories because they might not want to risk being perceived as unable to maintain the safety of their own home. In any case, such stories and their exclusive targeting of women further reveal that foreign Black African women are not expected to be able to defend themselves or to be defended. Such assumptions outline again the multiple layers of violence that objectify foreign Black African women and trap them at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy in line with the coloniality of modernity.

On four occasions, women recounted that home invasions involved sexual violence. In one case, my interlocutor explicitly linked the assault to the survivor's "foreigner" status.

"Geita: If you are not from here, South Africa, but if you are Black, you're a foreigner. [...] I have a friend of mine who was raped because of xenophobia. So [...] as long as you are Black, they can come into your house. [...] And you mustn't say anything because you are Black. You're a foreigner."

Patriarchal terror here is narrated as foreign Black African women's punishment for trespassing the abyssal line dividing spaces of being and non-being (De Sousa Santos, 2007). It is a reminder that for assailants, foreign Black African women have no rights in South Africa, not even the right to sovereignty over their body, or the right to safety in their own home. That violence is a reminder that patriarchal terror can unleash at any moment and, echoing Farai's story, "mark" foreign Black African women for everyone to see. Although hardly mentioned in stories, Black South African women also face sexual violence (Gqola, 2015). This silence might illustrate how colonial identity erosion antagonizes Black Africans and compartmentalizes a violence that is collectively survived.

Patriarchal violence, just like any colonially rooted hegemony, is a violent spectacle. To this point, another participant - Oanale - sent me a voice note several days after our initial chat to recount the gendered street harassment and the threat of sexual violence she survived in front of her children.

"Oanale: I just want to say that... On Sunday, I went to church with my kids. When the church is finish [sic], we came back. [...] And we pass there and, one man he starts following us. He starts calling us. 'You from Nigeria, stand there. You from Burundi, stand there. You from Congo [...], stand there. You kwerekwere, stand there.' And he was coming after us. Then I tell my kids 'let's just go fast' [...]. We tried to go faster [...], he came. He said 'listen here, go and tell your husband you must go back to your countries. You know I can do anything here on [sic] the road.' And [...] there's so many people in [sic] the road there. [...] Then I was just scared. My kids start crying [...] and said 'Mami, what happen? [sic] [...] Why is he shouting? Why?'. And he [...] hold [sic] my clothes and touch [sic] me [...]. I told him 'don't touch me'. [...] And he told me 'You know I can do anything. [...] I can even rape you. Take you with the kids anywhere. No one will stop me'. I start praying in my heart. [...] Then when he released my clothes then I just ran with my kids. Yes. I ran away. I'm telling you. [kisses teeth] It was very scared [sic]. My kids was [sic] crying too much. Too much [sobbing]. Too much. Was [sic] crying. 'Mami what happened, mami? What

is going on?’ Ey... But, ah... [kisses teeth] [...] We thank God, we [sic] still alive. He didn’t do anything to us. [...]”

In that story, the assailant seemingly only needs to look at Oanale and her children to identify them as targets, confirming that bio-logic (Oyewumi, 1997) only upholds colonial identities and facilitates the violent coloniality of modernity. The male assailant grants himself the right to follow Oanale and her children in public, physically jeopardizing her sovereignty to occupy the space as she sees fit. In line with a patriarchal setting, the assailant tells Oanale to go tell her husband that they “*must go back*” – an exhortation that evokes again an abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2007) foreign Black Africans allegedly trespassed. The assailant does not know Oanale however according to patriarchal rationale, a woman seen with children must be married and heterosexual. Furthermore, by violently passing this message, Oanale is cast as a messenger, not an interlocutor. This encapsulates how little consideration this male assailant has for this woman whose subjectivity and agency he totally overlooks. It also further highlights that patriarchal terror and sexual violence against foreign Black African women is a weapon to “*mark*” the Black Other’s woman, sow distress among their relations, and rupture families and communities. Women in this paradigm are treated as objects whose mistreatment inflicts harm and loss in targeted communities.

As a woman without her husband, Oanale is even more objectified and is effectively left rightless in that moment when no one whose personhood is recognized according to the coloniality of modernity, (i.e. a man or somebody of either European ancestry or with proximity to Europeans) is present to defend her. The male assailant’s entitlement escalates into physically trespassing in her personal space by grabbing her clothes. He orders her around (“*stand there*”), indicating that he expects his authority to not be questioned but complied with. He does so while being aware that kids are present, further crystallizing how attacking a woman is a proxy to attacking a community by making “an example of her”. The assailant exerts all that violence in a few minutes, in broad daylight, “*with so many people*” present, thus likely aware that nobody will intervene. He is possibly also aware that Oanale has reached the same conclusion. This is likely why he tells her “*You know I can do anything*”: to rub salt in the colonial wound (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013) and remind her that she is so insignificant in a White supremacist capitalistic patriarchal society, that no one will intervene to protect her because she has no unconditional rights within that paradigm. Oanale is trapped in a situation where regardless of what she does, she is risking her life and her

kids'. Such a threat would explain her relief ("*We thank God, we [sic] still alive*"). In her recounting, Oanale highlights her kids crying and, as she does so, she is sobbing. Oanale's tears might very well capture the transtemporal nature of colonial violence: she cries for what happened, she cries as she relives what happened, and she might cry about the future implications of that assault. Although she did not bring this up, one might ask: if Oanale met that man on the way back from church, and if she goes to church every week, what then might happen the next time she comes back from church?

In the socio-racial pyramid of post-Apartheid South Africa, and in line with the coloniality of modernity, being a foreign Black African woman is consequently associated with the highest level of violence. Foreign female Black bodies are commodified, brutalized, and waved as symbols of colonial warfare, often in the name of nationalism, illustrating how the colonial nation-state is ontologically patriarchal (Yuval-Davis, 1993). Sexual violence was also reported during the wave of collective violence against foreign Black African nationals in Gauteng in 2008 (Nkealah, 2011). In keeping with the cyclical essence of colonial violence that only repeats itself, the ills of contemporary times can be traced back to colonialism: sexual violence against Black African women was common during slavery (Baderoon, 2014) and against indentured labour (Vahed & Desai, 2010) in South Africa. During Apartheid, sexual violence was also a tool to terrorize and punish Black women and their communities (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1996).

Although this research focused on the South African context, some stories from female foreign Black African participants provided a glimpse into dynamics in their home countries. Whenever they would mention the threat of sexual violence in South Africa, they did not contrast it to a different reality in their home country like they did when discussing Black South Africans' enmity toward other Black Africans. Three foreign Black African women shared having witnessed or survived sexual violence in their home country. These stories describe international patriarchal terrorism (hooks, 2004) and the impossibility for Black African women to shield themselves from it wherever they are. Patriarchal terror is thus a pillar of colonialism and characteristic of spaces that perpetuate western colonial violence under the pretext of western modernity.

In the next section I analyze the reported reaction (or lack thereof) to the specific targeting of foreign Black Africans in South Africa to discuss Malherbe et al.'s (2021) concept of racism of zero-point.

5.2. “*They just watching. They’re not doing anything.*”: the routine of colonial violence

In this section I use an episode of street harassment survived by a participant - Bongani- as a premise to continue the analysis of Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black Africans. I conceptualize this episode as an illustration of the racism of zero-point (Malherbe et al., 2021). I identify in these interactions dynamics that can be connected to potential trauma bonds respectively between the Black South African assailant and the broader South African society on one end, and Bongani and this assailant, on the other.

A sense of constant unpredictability and volatility was present in foreign Black Africans’ stories about Black South Africans. The image commonly used was that Black South Africans can supposedly be smiling one second and assaulting someone the next, causing a constant state of tension and anxiety for their potential targets. Such a constant threat of violence, in all impunity, in public settings with nobody intervening, evokes narratives of warfare. It is precisely that image that Bongani used when he described his life in South Africa as follows: “*this country, it’s like being at war, when there is no war, in this country.*” This affirmation can be read as crystallizing two perspectives. From the perspective of the dominant South African groups shielded from this violence, “*there is no war*”. From the perspective of (foreign) Black Africans in this study, it appears that living in South Africa is “*like being at war*”. Unlike field-based wars, in the confrontation between Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals, there is no armed conflict and no geopolitical gain to be made. The immediate gains might be instead material or possibly intangible ones: the satisfaction of humiliating and inflicting pain publicly; the superiority one might feel when dehumanizing the infamous deficient Black Other; the guarantee of knowing that since it reinforces a racist capitalist patriarchal hierarchy, one will not face any consequences for engaging in such colonial violence. If this war is not geopolitical, it is certainly a war on Black Africans’ identities and sovereignty, regardless of their citizenship.

The next section presents the transcription of an incident between Bongani and a Black South African assailant. Bongani shared the audio recording with me shortly after the incident, and weeks after our initial conversation.

“Bongani: Why you calling me ‘kwerekwere’? [...]

Assailant: Give me your phone.

Bongani: Why you taking my phone?

Assailant: I'm, I'm robbing you.

Bongani: Why you robbing me? [...] For what?

Assailant: You are a small boy. You are [inaudible]

Bongani: Why you calling me a small boy?

Assailant: Because you're a foreigner [...] Because you're a 'kwerekwere'. You came to take, [...] our wives here. Our jobs. Everything. That's why.

Bongani: No, man. Stop saying that. That is not a good thing...

Assailant: [laughs]

Bongani: Don't start laugh [sic]. It's not a good thing for you to laugh. [...]

Assailant: No no no. It is a good thing. [...]

Bongani: Who's the other guy who was here? [...]

Assailant: I don't know his name. You tell me what his name is. Because here now in South Africa it's like you know everything.

Bongani: ...No, it's not about...

Assailant: You must tell me. Tell me! What's his name? You know everything now!

Bongani: I don't know his name. I want to explain what he was saying.[...]

Assailant: You must go where you belong. This is not your country. [...] This is South Africa. You can't belong here. [...].

Bongani: Why you have to speak like that while we are African you and I?

Assailant: Yes, we are Africans but [...] you belong to another country. Yes you are Black, I'm Black, but, you must go back to your country. [...]

Bongani: Do you think I chose to, do you think I chose to come here and stay here? Or it's a situation that brought me here? You mustn't speak like that, Baba.

Assailant: No, no, no, no, no. I have to speak like this because you see, maybe, I should be the one driving this bike. [...] If you were not here.[...] I have a right to drive this bike. I have a right to take this position [inaudible] if you were not here. I'm the one supposed to earn 25 000, 25 000 that you are earning.

Bongani: Eh? How you know that I'm earning 25 000?

Assailant: I know. I know. [...]

Bongani: Why you got self-hate? Why you hate me? [sic] (Assailant: When you...) Why are you hating me? [...]

Assailant: Eh, wena⁵ ...

Bongani: Why are you hating me?

[scratches]

Assailant: Haibo.⁶

Bongani: Why are you hating me? You want to beat me now?

[Bongani screams]

[Scratches]

[Recording ends]"

The recording opens with Bongani indicating that the assailant had just called him a derogatory name. From that opening, one can infer that the entire exchange was unprompted and that there was a high risk of escalation – which would explain why Bongani decided to record it. The unpredictability and volatility commonly mentioned by participants throughout data collection are identifiable in this dialogue and were also identifiable in Oanale’s retelling of the assault she and her kids survived. Similarly, impunity is also present in Bongani’s story. In broad daylight, in a public space, the assailant explicitly announces that he is in the process of robbing Bongani. There is no attempt to dissimulate this aspiration, which likely indicates that the assailant is not preoccupied with any negative consequences. Such cavalier attitude also encapsulates the assailant’s entitlement, in this case to Bongani’s attention, sovereignty, and material items. In this exchange, the assailant successively lists alleged reasons to mistreat Bongani. From being “*a small boy*”⁷ to not being a South African citizen, and supposedly taking away opportunities (including “*wives*” who are objectified as common goods): Bongani - whom the assailant just met - is only attributed negative traits. All these supposed characteristics theoretically do not imply any negative outcomes for the assailant: indeed, Bongani having a bike, does not impede the assailant from having a bike too. And yet, what Bongani has –whether factual or imagined – is presented as the reason for the assailant’s inability to secure what he has “*a right to*”. Bongani is presented as a

⁵ “You” in isiZulu

⁶ IsiZulu expression used to convey disbelief or shock.

⁷ This expression might hint to the limited socio-economic leverages that the assailant attributes Bongani.

scapegoat in a zero-sum colonial paradigm in which social, economic, and material opportunities are limited and Black Africans are expected to compete against one another to secure those. Based on the assailant's statements, the only solution is consequently to rescind Bongani's access to such resources and have him "*go back to [his] country*". The assailant's restlessness over Bongani's ownership of what he believes he is entitled to, is woven throughout their interaction. This narrated entitlement might reveal that in the assailant's mind, at a socio-economic level he must be above Bongani - and possibly above any foreign Black African nationals. The assailant's affirmations might embody how in the post-Apartheid, Black South Africans might feel short-changed. The resulting sense of inadequacy might be addressed by attempting to finally claim colonial superiority over people who sit at the lowest rank of the colonial hierarchy, i.e., "foreigners". Such thinking evokes narcissism as conceptualized in this study. Furthermore, trauma bonds are also identifiable in that exchange. By labelling Bongani the way he does and telling him to leave South Africa, the assailant explicitly claims the South African identity: a colonial construction that has eroded Black peoples' precolonial identities in present-day South Africa. Referring to the South African identity can be connected to South African nationalism, which might point again that narcissism and South African nationalism interact. The assailant's frustration at seeing Bongani in a socio-economic situation that he likely reads as superior to his (i.e., employed, with a bike and a phone), might speak to the assailant's unfulfilled hopes for a similar economic status. Such unfulfilled hopes might hide unaddressed promises of economic improvements and opportunities. As a South African citizen in post-Apartheid South Africa, the assailant has likely indirectly been made such promises. However, since his socio-economic situation might not have improved, as a citizen, the assailant might feel in his right to show entitlement and unleash violence against "foreigners". The impunity with which he assaults Bongani in broad daylight, might have fed into some intermittent reinforcement for the assailant. In that moment he might have enjoyed the privileges of being a South African citizen in South Africa, a country where historically citizenship has been instrumentalized to deny human rights to Black people. Yet, assaulting Bongani cannot undo the historical marginalization and disenfranchising of Black South Africans. If the assailant's only option to improve his socio-economic situation is to assault someone he himself labels a "*small boy*", his situation might be quite dire. To add insult to injury, that "*small boy*" "*knows everything now*". The assailant who seemingly confined Bongani into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other must now reckon with the fact that this "*foreigner*" possibly defies his racist

expectations (or lack thereof); the “*small boy*” might be doing better than him. This possibility might exacerbate the assailant’s feelings of devaluation, and frustration at unfulfilled promises. Such frustration could exacerbate his need to claim what he perceives to be what he has “*a right to*” as a South African citizen, which would further confine him into a colonial identity. This hypothetical thought process would display all four characteristics of a trauma bond and would point to the possible erosion of the assailant’s identity. It would also underscore the long-lasting impact of colonial identities and the possible trauma bond between present-day Black South Africans and social groups with significant leverages in South Africa or their proxies.

From Bongani’s perspective, his identity is also eroded the second he is reduced to being a “*foreigner*”, even as he presents himself as “*African*”. In this interaction, Bongani is neither engaging in crime - a behaviour commonly attributed to foreign Black Africans in South Africa - (Crush & Ramachandran, 2016), nor does he show any aggressiveness. Instead, he engages with the assailant, possibly to challenge the assailant’s assumptions. Despite such efforts, Bongani is othered and mistreated. The assailant does not immediately assault him however: he first entertains a conversation for a few minutes which gives Bongani time to start recording the exchange. Those small achievements might be received as intermittent reinforcement and a signal for Bongani that by promoting shared identities (i.e. being Africans) and signaling his willingness to engage in dialogue, this interaction might not result in any harm. Yet, Bongani is quickly reminded that to the assailant he is a “*kwerekwere*”. The timing of this reminder is likely not coincidental. It is specifically when Bongani shows his critical thinking by asking about a third person that the assailant’s irritation appears to get exacerbated. Minutes later, the assailant physically lunges toward Bongani, with no one intervening, forcing Bongani to run away to avoid getting physically hurt. This succession of events can be read as a reminder of the devaluation Bongani faces in South Africa for being a “*foreigner*”. In this progression too, all four characteristics of a trauma bond, this time with Black South Africans, can be identified.

As illustrated by Bongani’s interaction with that assailant, and previously with Oanale’s story, violence against foreign Black Africans rarely gets interrupted. All foreign Black African nationals without any exception indicated that no one had ever intervened whenever foreign Black African nationals were physically assaulted. Although violence against foreign Black African nationals can be traced back several decades (Matsinhe, 2011), it ought to be acknowledged that bystanders

not publicly intervening might reveal a common fear of retaliation. Not intervening might therefore be a learned behaviour that might hint at how colonial violence can shape collective memory, notably around public violence, retaliation, and punishment.

In Bongani's story, the racist and capitalistic denial of foreign Black Africans' sovereignty and the banalization of such violence can be identified. Despite this, that violence is seemingly disregarded even as it crystallizes intersecting historical dynamics associated with Black people that are unique to the South African context. Because such context-specific manifestations of anti-Black racism are seemingly received as universal and mundane and disqualified from being interrupted, I argue that they encapsulate the racism of zero-point (Malherbe et al., 2021).

In the next section, I discuss how the third axe of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework, i.e. White normativity, transpired in participants' narratives.

5.3. White normativity as a vantage point

As White supremacy has denied Black peoples' humanity for centuries and formalized a racist hierarchy that normalizes anti-Black violence, White supremacy has also translated into positioning White Europeans' subjectivity as the undisputable norm and their privileges as structurally guaranteed. In this section, I analyze narratives that speak to such privileges and underpinning White normativity. I start by discussing disparities in terminology and expectations related to people of European ancestry.

5.3.1. The colonial imperatives of White comfort and White innocence

In conversations, participants would commonly explain that foreign nationals of European ancestry were referred to as "*investors*" or "*tourists*" in South Africa, not as "*foreigners*". This labelling might signal a preoccupation to not associate Europeans with labels used for Black Africans in South Africa. It might consequently aim at maintaining an abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2007), between people of European ancestry and Black Africans. That participants report such terminology by no means implies that they are condoning it; however, it is worth highlighting that no participants recounted having challenged that terminology. In theory, this could be done by extending the "foreigner" label to anybody who is not a South African citizen, including foreign nationals of European ancestry. This semantic use would complicate the connotations of "foreigner" rather than reinforce existing ones. In any case, such disparities along racial lines

seemingly crystallize that the comfort of people seen as bringing economic opportunities as Barika discussed, must be ensured both through labels and spoken languages. To this point, Farid discussed tensions among South Africans rooted in the use of different languages and initially made no references to European South Africans, focusing instead on Black South Africans.

“Farid: Yes, even among themselves. [...] If they found out they're speaking different languages, you know [...], there is a clash. [...] What I've noticed, there's a bit of clash. [...]”

Farid's observation highlights how indigenous languages can become a source of conflict between Black South Africans. It also portrays Black South Africans as prone to conflict *“even among themselves”*. Given that Black South Africans commonly speak multiple indigenous languages, such a tension could theoretically be minimized as the odds of finding a common language are not null. Yet, this answer focuses on some *“clash”* between parties involved. This portrayal speaks to rigid colonially engineered identities that do not center commonalities but only divide Black Africans. The focus on what makes Black Africans different from one another and not what unites them, might speak to the divide and rule colonial underpinning of Black Africans' identity erosion. Farid's spontaneous response did not refer to European South Africans, implying that he might not have considered them as involved in such tensions. Upon reflecting on what could happen between a Black South African who speaks isiZulu and a White European South African who does not, Farid shared the following.

“Farid: [...] It depends with [sic] the person they're speaking to. Because if that person knows Afrikaans, obviously they will go along. But if you don't know Afrikaans and, Afrikaners they're speaking to you in Afrikaans, obviously there will be a clash. Yeah, there will be a clash. [...]”

In that answer, there is an explicit expectation that Black Africans must comply with what White Europeans are comfortable with. As such, a Black South African who knows Afrikaans will *“obviously”* speak it, while the involved Afrikaner is not required to speak the Black South African's indigenous language. This difference in expectations is made obvious when Farid's answer seemingly associates Black South Africans who *“don't know Afrikaans”* with *“a clash”*, indicating that it is their responsibility to speak White European South Africans' languages and prevent such a *“clash”*. Although in this hypothetical situation White European South Africans are not taking any action to prevent a conflict, Farid's reflection does not question them. It instead

positions their language as a universal one that Black people must adapt to. Such a narration can be read as outlining a paradigm of White normativity.

Beyond words and languages, never questioning people of European descent's privileges was present in conversations, mostly whenever race was explicitly mentioned. On a few occasions participants answered that they did not know why non-South African citizens of European descent were not targeted. In those cases, I received that answer as participants refusing research (Tuck & Yang, 2023). I reasoned that if the same participants who described in detail White supremacist violence that specifically targets them, answered "I don't know" to this question, it might have been their way to send the question back to me and point out that I already had my answer. Rather than engaging in conversations that only repress the White supremacist violence they face and not gain anything from it, or worse, risk facing retaliations for denouncing it, these participants might have assessed that "I don't know" encapsulated the multi-layered implications of this conundrum. Some other participants would explicitly reply that the social and political consequences would not be the same if Europeans (or anybody who is not a Black African) were attacked, highlighting a hierarchy in which Black Africans are at the bottom and exposed to violence in all impunity. On some occasions, some participants' answers conveyed an explicit refusal to question White Europeans' contribution to social inequities and racial violence. Such storytelling might indicate a colonially rooted preoccupation with the upholding of White innocence (Wekker, 2016): White Europeans' alleged unawareness of racist dynamics they partake in. To this point, many participants would use either standpoints that deny White Europeans' participation in racist dynamics or they would not explicitly name White privilege even as they described it. Farai, who from my perspective had been quite explicit about her opposition to patriarchy, capitalist violence and the violence experienced by foreign Black African nationals in South Africa, replied the following when asked whether targets could be European citizens.

"Farai: There's no way that you hear any of them saying 'Let's go. We have a British citizen in South Africa'. No, they won't say that. They will say 'Let's go after a Zimbabwean and there's Malawians taking our jobs. Zimbabweans taking our jobs. Nigerians accused of doing drugs. Congolese taking our jobs[inaudible]. And then we have Pakistan, Somalians that are taking our shops.' You see? [...]. I'm not saying that, you know [...] they must do xenophobia [to] all of us, even to Americans. But I'm saying [...] that's [...] who they target."

In this answer, Farai states that she is not advocating for violence to spread to more communities. She instead seemingly highlights the targeting of Black Africans and their scapegoating (“*Malawians taking our jobs. Zimbabweans taking our jobs. Nigerians accused of doing drugs. Congolese taking our jobs.*’ [...]”). Since for me “*British citizen*” does not indicate a racial identity, I asked Farai whether she had in mind a person of European ancestry. She replied positively – and did not communicate that she had the same racial identity in mind when listing African nationalities earlier. She then shared the following when asked why European foreign nationals would not be targeted.

“Farai: I, I wouldn't say I know why, but that's what I see. [...] That's what they do. And you know, [...] at the end of the day... it's, it's hectic to make it about, about race.”

Farai signals not having a definitive answer about that targeting and, interestingly, her last sentence ends with “*race*”. Even as Farai’s answer refrains from positioning race as the core reason for the specific targeting of some communities, racial dynamics are interwoven in her examples. Right after the racial silence around the hypothetical British citizen she mentioned was broken, Farai implied that they would be spared from violence by perpetrators and that such an outcome was visible (“[...] *that's what I see*”). Farai prefaced her answer by sharing that she does not know why such selective targeting takes place (“*I wouldn't say I know why [...]*”). Right after describing what can be linked to White privilege, Farai stated that it was “*hectic to make it about race*” in reference to such selective targeting. This progression can be read as Farai refusing to explicitly question foreign Europeans’ privileges despite describing them. Frankenberg (1993) has suggested that whiteness implies operating from a silent positioning. Accordingly, naming, and challenging White people’s privileges would go against a core pillar of whiteness.

To end this section, I reflect on the potential deadly consequences of both White normativity and the colonial imperative to not challenge White Europeans. In a conversation I had, my interlocutor justified the shooting of Black South Africans by White European South Africans. He spontaneously brought up this topic when discussing relationships among South African citizens. As I was unsure of the takeaway message my interlocutor wanted to convey, I asked whether he thought that violence was justified. I was troubled to hear several times that according to him, Black South Africans’ behaviour – such as allegedly drinking and being violent – could warrant such violence. Even as my interlocutor concluded that to White European South Africans, foreign

Black Africans and Black South Africans might be lumped into the same group of “Black Others”, he assessed that only Black South Africans would be eligible for such a possible death penalty because of their alleged unmistakable “*drinking and fighting*”.

“Chris: [...] You said that [...] White people, they don't know, [...] who is from South Africa or not [...].

Juma: Yeah...

Chris: ... And [...] I'm asking, what if a White person, they see you and they believe that you also drink and you [...] fight and you deserve to be shot, even if you have never done any of those things, how would you feel?

Juma: Hm. I never, I never see [...] people for [sic] another countries [sic] drinking and fighting here like South Africans. But maybe there is. But I never see. I never see anyone.”

In this exchange, my question is left unanswered. Only the alleged behaviour of Black South Africans is problematized. The behaviour of White European South Africans who would engage in homicidal violence is not. Sharing this story aims at highlighting how White normativity and White supremacy can kill; both because they deny Black people’s sovereignty to exist outside the colonial archetype of the deficient and dehumanized Black Other, and because a Black person using the same vantage point might end up normalizing Black people’s senseless death. It is consequently critical to be attentive to these dynamics so that they can be interrupted. Including this exchange has been a challenging decision. Finding a balance between sharing participants’ stories with integrity, sharing my analysis that is necessarily subjective and political, while remaining coherent with a decolonial intersectional narrative framework that requires my retelling to destabilize oppressive societal dynamics (Boonzaier, 2019), is a difficult balancing act. What does the destabilization of oppressive societal dynamics look like when oppressive societal dynamics might not be read the same way from one side of the Atlantic to the other, or when my own analysis might be read as oppressive? I decided to include this story to signal that experiencing colonial violence daily might leave people like Juma with few options but to normalize White normativity and its colonial dehumanization of Black people. Such a risk should not be ignored but interrupted. In the final section of this chapter, I present stories that speak to what such an interruption could look like.

5.4. Interrupting Black peoples' dehumanization with re-humanization

After presenting stories that illustrate how Black Africans appear to be confined into the archetype of the deficient Other eligible for colonial violence, in this section, I share some recounted efforts to interrupt such colonial violence.

Among the stories shared by participants, on a couple of occasions, foreign Black African participants described how Black South Africans intervened to help them when their physical integrity was not immediately threatened. In those stories, the person intervening seemingly claimed a shared identity with the foreign Black African involved instead of othering them. For example, after Chane shared that her daughters were harassed on their way to school by Black South African boys who would “*touch their hands*”, she explained that two Black South African women who had witnessed the scene intervened. They told the boys to leave Chane’s daughters alone and the boys complied. In this story, it would not be unlikely that the shared experience of racist patriarchal violence informed these two women’s decision to intervene.

When Busela Jabula recounted that she had to go pick up her daughter during the 2015 outbreak of collective violence, she explained that a Black South African man she did not know (and still does not know to this day) accompanied her to the creche. He instructed her not to speak so she would not be identified as a foreign Black African national.

“Busela: I don't even know him [...]. He came and carried me and told me [...] I must not talk any language. [...] So, he's the only one who helped me. And he went with me. And we fetched my daughter.”

In that moment, it appears that rather than centering colonial identities based on citizenship, race or gender, the only priority was to ensure Busela’s safety and that of her daughter. The man described reportedly not only intervened, but also leveraged his privileges (i.e., being a male South African citizen who speaks local languages) to protect Busela and her daughter. His presence likely reduced their odds of being identified as foreign Black African nationals and as such, increased their safety, particularly in the context of an outbreak of collective violence. Such tactics – i.e., members of the dominant group helping members of a targeted group conceal their identity in public spaces - evoke warfare. It is thus critical to acknowledge the considerable courage embodied in such a decision to not be complicit in violence, while possibly risking retaliations (von Holdt et

al., 2011). Such actions constitute decolonial leadership since they interrupted a violence that can be assessed as colonial, both in its rationale and manifestations. The Black South Africans described in these stories, were not among participants of this study. I consequently could not ask them what informed their decision to step in. I did ask Chane why, according to her, the two Black South African women intervened upon witnessing her daughters being harassed. Chane explained that these women would see her daughters walk to school daily, and that this relative familiarity, might have played a role in their decision to defend them. As for Busela, I did not get a chance to ask her this question during our call. She moved on to share a different story after recounting how her family managed to remain safe during that wave of collective violence. What appears to be present in both these stories, is the rejection of the archetype of the deficient Black Other whether imposed onto another Black African or self-assigned. Such a rejection can be read as resisting colonial identity erosion. It is also relevant that in both stories, the people at risk were female-identified Black Africans. As discussed in section 5.1.1., their eligibility for racist, patriarchal colonial violence is commonly acknowledged. This might explain why Black South African bystanders intervened. These stories illustrate that decolonial leadership that interrupts colonial violence in practical ways, even if only for a moment, already exists among Black Africans and should be further fostered.

5.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I sought to mobilize Malherbe et al. (2021)'s decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism to present how the coloniality of modernity, the racism of zero-point and White normativity manifest in participants' stories. In addition to their presence in these stories, I pointed that those dynamics outline the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other, both when presenting Black South Africans as violent and unpredictable, and foreign Black Africans as inherently eligible for colonial violence. Upon identifying the coloniality present in participants' stories, and in line with a decolonial approach as conceptualized in this study, I presented stories of Black South Africans interrupting colonial violence against foreign Black Africans. I argued that such actions embody decolonial leadership and resistance to colonial identity erosion.

Chapter Six

The labyrinth of everyday structural racism: an hauntology of Apartheid

In chapter five, I analyzed the recounting of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. In it, I identified three dimensions (i.e., 1. The coloniality of modernity, 2. the racism of zero-point and 3. White normativity) of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework of a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism. In this chapter, I focus on the last dimension of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework: everyday structural violence. I look specifically at stories about state institutions, since interactions between civilians and government employees can crystallize daily dynamics of state-sanctioned racist (mis)treatment, and as such dynamics of everyday structural racism. I conclude that South African institutions' treatment of the new "foreigners" (i.e., foreign Black Africans) seemingly indicates an hauntology of the Apartheid. As such, it can be approached as a form of indirect rule. I end the chapter by sharing one participant's efforts to interrupt such colonial violence.

6.1. The engineering of foreign Black Africans as "illegal" in a tiered system

In this first section, I discuss the administrative violence recounted by foreign Black African participants. These stories described siloed practices that seemingly overlook how practical implications of paperwork renewal (e.g. unclear requirements, unexplained rejections, delays, arbitrary police controls), affect foreign Black Africans. Documentation (referred to as "*ID*" in conversations) was very frequently mentioned. It was presented as determining participants' access to public institutions, jobs, banks and of course, as fundamental to their possibility to remain in South Africa. Such overreliance on documentation can be read as the negation of foreign Black Africans' inherent unconditional basic rights. It can also be read as evoking the Apartheid violence that negated indigenous Black Africans basic rights. Notably, the dehumanization of the "foreign native" (Neocosmos, 2010, p.9) during Apartheid, led to both the forced displacement of indigenous Black Africans (Mamdani, 2020) and the implementation of the pass system (Britannica, 2023). Since their presence in South African spaces was illegal and punishable (Mamdani, 2020), Black Africans could only access South Africa as per the terms defined by the Apartheid regime. The control of documentation was thus used back then to control Black Africans' movements, and physically exclude them from South Africa's higher-resources areas

(Mamdani, 2020). In contemporary times, it could be argued that the overreliance on foreign Black Africans' documentation follows a similar rationale (Matsinhe, 2011).

Participants' stories about the violence they experience from South African institutions included additional characteristics that evoked the Apartheid violence. Among those is the existence of a tiered system seemingly rooted in a White supremacist rationale that negates foreign Black Africans' human rights. That negation appears to be particularly pronounced for Black Africans seeking refuge and asylum in South Africa as their storytelling conveyed being reduced to an administrative status. All foreign Black African participants without exception described an asphyxiating institutional environment cornering them into precarity. Most reported that not having a permanent immigration status jeopardizes their odds of formal employment and exacerbates financial hardship. It also reportedly complicates common procedures such as opening a bank account. The imperative to constantly renew one's immigration status as one experiences financial hardship, and receives no administrative support to fill application forms, was presented as a potential reason for expired documentation. It was also connected to the precarity of living one valid permit at a time, and not knowing whether that permit would be renewed. To this point, virtually all foreign Black African participants spoke to the risk of getting arrested and deported if stopped by the police in-between permits. They also reported that even upon showing their documentation as requested, the police commonly question its authenticity. As an example, Geita's narration framed such difficulties as engineered by the very institutions that could prevent them.

"Geita: So it's not that people don't [...] have legal [...] documents. [...] There is no means to [...] renew your papers, 'cause papers get expired. You have to renew it but how you gonna renew your permit? [...] So it's like they're looking for a much quicker way to chase people away before they even open Home Affairs."

This answer highlights that institutions' role is seemingly not to regularize foreign Black Africans' administrative status so that they can remain in South Africa, but instead to "[look] for a much quicker way to chase people away [...]" That rationale evokes that of the Apartheid regime that only conceptualized Black Africans as illegitimate, and as such never sought to facilitate their permanent presence in South Africa (Mamdani, 2020).

Also in line with the segregationist structure of Apartheid that denied citizenship to indigenous Black Africans, citizenship in contemporary South Africa was narrated as out of reach for foreign

Black Africans. More precisely, citizenship was presented in foreign Black African participants' stories as gatekept, specifically for Black African asylum seekers who described a system that denies both birthright citizenship and naturalization later in life, even when all eligibility criteria are met. Participants also pointed out that they would only see other foreign Black African nationals in line when applying for such certificates. In their stories, a couple of participants - among which Bini - narrated "*Ethiopians*" as having a relatively easier access to paperwork.

"Bini: [...] Ethiopian [sic] always will be coming. You can see [...] someone is coming from inside. Come straight and call the name. And then the people come outside to go straight with [...] that person [...]. This, even as we came here since morning, but no one came to call us. [...]"

In this answer, "*Ethiopians*" are described as receiving a preferential treatment. Instead of waiting in line like Bini, staff at Home Affairs ("*[...] someone [...] from inside. [...]*") seemingly know about their presence and identity since, someone "*[c]ome[s] straight and call the[ir] name.*" The staff then allegedly escort them into the building ("*[...] go straight with [...] that person [...]*"). I asked Bini why Ethiopians might get a relatively more favorable treatment - since I understood this to be the message from her story.

"Bini: [...] I think [...] they are scared. Because [...] that's a Home Affairs, it's for all foreigners. [...]"

Bini's answer hints at two realities. "*Ethiopians*" are not included among "*all foreigners*": this might indicate that they might be perceived as "*investors*" instead (see chapter five, section 5.3) and treated based on their ability to accumulate capital. They would consequently rank higher in the racist capitalistic hierarchy in place in South Africa, and relatively closer to Europeans and their privileges. Interestingly, while Bini did not explicitly say so, some foreign Black African participants shared about perceived Ethiopians that they were "*White*" or "*light-skinned*", and thus benefitted from a relatively preferential treatment. Based on these accounts, there is seemingly a White supremacy rationale at play in such disparities of institutional treatment. Secondly, Bini's answer hints that Home Affairs officials might fear the consequences of treating Ethiopians the same way they treat "*all foreigners*" ("*[...] I think [...] they are scared. [...]*"). Such fears might be rooted in Ethiopians' perceived "*investors*" status and in the socio-economic leverage that warrants them a preferential treatment over "*all foreigners*" according to Bini's story. Those accounts outline a tiered system where people read as Black Africans in South Africa – whom in

this context appear to be understood only as asylum seekers— are eligible for the worst treatment. Such narrations thus position the institution as upholding the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other.

In the next section, I share more of foreign Black African participants' recounting of their experiences with Home Affairs and its central role in the marginalization and oppression they described.

6.2. Home(less) Affairs

In this section, I present stories that describe administrative and attitudinal violence associated with Home Affairs as an apparatus of the South African state. First, I share a story that illustrates how experiencing administrative violence seemingly foments competition among foreign Black Africans and results in interpersonal violence. I then share a story that further outlines the segregated functioning of Home Affairs described throughout data collection. I subsequently point out that this institution is narrated as designed to unleash violence specific to foreign Black Africans.

All foreign Black African nationals who discussed their experience at Home Affairs highlighted that the application process to receive and renew their administrative status was particularly cumbersome. Many pointed out that delays were such that they essentially forced applicants into irregular status, echoing Geita's affirmation in section 6.1. Several participants also highlighted how during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., 2020), they were unable to get their paperwork renewed because some Home Affairs services had closed. In their stories, all foreign Black Africans narrated the renewal of paperwork as a continuous worry. Participants with asylum seeker status explained that they must renew their paperwork every six months. Bongani for example, explained that he has had to renew the same document every six months for the past 17 years. Not only can that obligation be assessed as cumbersome, the current application process in and of itself has been reported by all participants as confusing. Without any assistance to address their doubts, participants shared being familiar with receiving rejected applications without any accompanying explanation. The refusal of a single application was narrated as impacting entire families, as Junior indicated.

“Junior: [...] I'm living in [sic] asylum-seeker documents. [...] So I'm not out for 14 years. I'm not accepted as a refugee. Currently, my wife [...] she was using asylum seeker [sic]. They rejected her and [...] They gave her a 'must leave' notice. Currently my [...] kids can't [...] get [...] birth certificate [sic], because my wife doesn't have a document. [...] And the police they catching [sic] her and they put her in prison. [...]. It's very hard.”

Junior's story describes the ramification of one rejected application on an entire family and across generations, with his children now unable to receive their paperwork (“[...] Currently my [...] kids can't [...] get [...] birth certificate [...].”). This narration positions Junior and his family as trapped in administrative ordeals, with no clear path to resolution other than leaving the country. This story thus positions the narrator and his family as undesirable in South Africa and pushed out by all possible administrative avenues. It consequently presents Home Affairs as an institution that marginalizes and ostracizes anybody related to a foreign Black African national, ultimately resulting in the marginalization of entire communities. In line with making it almost impossible for foreign Black African nationals to regularize their situation, the recounted violence of steps applicants have to take, crystallizes the assault on their dignity and sovereignty. Specifically, several foreign Black African nationals described having to wait in line for several hours, without any water or food, at Home Affairs. Such an ordeal also evokes dynamics of warfare (see chapter five). Male participants specifically were more likely to report such experiences.

“Bongani: [...] When I arrive to [sic] Home Affairs. I find a lot of people [...] in the queue. [...] Waiting for asylum seeker [sic]. So I stay in that place for two days. [...] Like, staying on [sic] the queue to wait [sic] somebody to assist you. So it was a bit hard because [...] some other people come like [...] the next day [...] they want to be the first people. [...] I remember that day. [...] ...Somebody came and punched me on [sic] my face to leave the queue. [...] So, I was holding on the pole to not leaving [sic] my [...] space that I'm in. Because I've been [sic] over one day over there, you know? Like I sleep over there too. [...]. So I remember that day one person gave me such a hard punch in my face, but I couldn't leave the queue [...] to go [...] against that person [...]. You can't get [...] back in that line [...] because no one will give you the space to go in there. So, what they did [...], because it's [...] like a [...] space where you stand and there is another ramp [...] on top. Now those people, they start throwing bottles on [sic] top of the wall. [...] So then I remember one guy was like, cut on the head, and I saw it. It was bleeding so hard they called

the ambulance [...]. Difficult. It was very difficult, to be honest. [...] It was such a painful [sic], you know? I mean, you can just being on [sic] the queue for two days. [...] I'm talking about 2006. Back in the days. [...] I mean, [...] you can sleep on [sic] the queue. No one willing to help you. I mean, if you find a person that maybe got a good heart [...]. You go and ask. [...] 'Can I have the water?' [...]"

In this story, the applicant is presented as having to be constantly on his guard and experiencing harm, be it physical altercations, thirst, fatigue, and hunger. Surrounding individuals are presented as potential threats and competition. People with “a good heart” are not described as common (“[...] if you find a person that maybe got a good heart [...]”), which reinforces the recounted hostility of the place, and its impact on the individuals required to stay there. Bongani reported having to wait in line for days, without any conditions that would allow him to maintain some basic hygiene. This might speak to Black Africans’ constant fight to maintain their sovereignty in postcolonial societies that negate their humanity and deny them any dignity. As for the reported fights Bongani survived and witnessed, such dynamics possibly illustrate the tokenistic nature (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990) of Home Affairs as recounted in these stories. Although some individuals who “[...] got a good heart [...]” might provide support as Bongani stated, his story outlines a paradigm of systemic inequities and unfairness. In it, competition among foreign Black Africans is fostered so that a few eventually secure some benefits from the discriminating system, while the majority remains abused (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990).

To that point, and as hinted in Bini’s story, participants’ recounting outlined that not every foreigner is exposed to such mistreatment. Specifically, their recounting described a service of Home Affairs exclusively for citizens, and another one exclusively for foreign nationals, with some sub-divisions based on citizenship and socio-economic status in the latter. This point echoes what Bini shared when discussing people she read as Ethiopians and their alleged privilege to not wait in line with “all foreigners”. Given how socio-economic status appears to be a proxy for racial identity and vice versa, these stories might indicate that the service for foreign nationals is, in practice, racially segregated. In this excerpt, Junior mapped out the different divisions and sub-divisions of Home Affairs when asked if he ever saw people of European ancestry in line.

“Junior: White people? No [...] this [sic] our Home Affairs. There's no White. [...] Some countries that are allowed to be there and some countries who [sic] are not allowed to be there. [...] There

is a Home Affairs for South African [sic] and Home Affairs for foreigners [...]. Only you can go to the Home Affairs of South Africa [sic] [...] to register a child for [...] birth certificates. Or if [...] you need, like, passport[...]. But we, if you are asylum [sic] or you have a refugee ID [...]? You get it at that Home Affairs that deals with refugees."

Junior's answer explicitly describes a tiered system. Reportedly, there is a service exclusive to South African nationals and inaccessible to foreign Black Africans unless they have a child in South Africa. There is "[...] *Home Affairs for foreigners [...]*" and then there is the "[...] *Home Affairs that deals with refugees.*" Indeed, according to Junior's and multiple participants' stories, within the service for foreign nationals, there is a distinction between people who "[...] *have a refugee ID [...]*" and those who do not. This distinction possibly points to countries' reported political and socio-economic stability. This might in turn negatively impact foreign Black Africans specifically, since they are reportedly not perceived as contributing to South Africa's socio-economic status (see chapter five, section 5.1). Such interconnectedness between race and class echoes the coloniality of modernity, and its racist capitalistic pyramid that specifically denies the personhood of foreign Black Africans trapped at its bottom. In Junior's answer one can also appreciate that such colonial hierarchies seemingly translate into spatial segregation – which also evokes the Apartheid lie of a "separate but equal" (Phiri & Matambo, 2018, p.70) treatment. This is explicitly indicated in the description "[...] *There is a Home Affairs for South African [sic] and Home Affairs for foreigners [...]*". In these stories of administrative violence and segregation, the institution of Home Affairs is described as implementing a tiered system that keeps "*foreigners*" at the margins - just like it did during Apartheid. Specifically, depending on their proximity to Europeans, foreign nationals might get a relatively favourable treatment with people read as foreign Black African asylum seekers experiencing the worst mistreatment. Because it seemingly perpetuates racist and capitalistic colonial violence rooted in Apartheid rationale, and because staff participants reported interacting with were almost exclusively presented as Black South Africans, it might be argued that Home Affairs was narrated as implementing indirect rule, i.e., colonial violence implemented by Black Africans against other Black Africans.

In the next section I discuss how foreign Black Africans' stories about the police also evoke everyday structural racism and administrative violence.

6.3. *“They just stay with the uniform but they don’t do the job”*

In this section, I share stories that describe foreign Black Africans’ reported abuse at the hands of Black South African police officers.

In our conversation, Bakari recounted being arrested by the police whenever he does not carry his documentation with him. To get out of such situations, he reported having to “*pay something*” or asking someone to bring over his immigration documents. This narration positions Bakari as the character initiating the action that leads to a resolution. By situating himself as the sole character able to mitigate the situation, it possibly indicated that he could not expect anybody else to act on his behalf. What this narration also revealed is that rather than providing foreign Black Africans with an option to provide the requested paperwork, the police’s first impulse is reportedly to imprison them and request bribes. Bakari’s narration thus seemingly portrays the South African police as corrupt and eager to imprison foreign Black Africans. Since being intercepted by the South African police without documentation seemingly makes foreign Black Africans *de facto* imprisonable, these practices might repress that foreign Black Africans are inherently not read as legitimate in South Africa, unless they have some authorization justifying their presence. Such an assessment would, again, echo Apartheid’s pass system (Britannica, 20023; Mamdani, 2020).

Furthermore, some participants like Kani described being physically mistreated by the police.

“Kani: [...] They will violate us. They will humiliate us. (sigh) [...] OK, you are [...] catching me [...]. I do not have the proper documents. I agree to go with you. What is the reason for you to call me a name [...]? I never ran. I never fought. [...] Ok, you are taking me to the police station? Yes? Ok, let’s go. Why are you pushing? [...] You know?”

In this story, the police’s general demeanor toward foreign Black African nationals is described as violent (“*[...] They will violate us. [...]*”) and humiliating (“*[...] They will humiliate us. [...]*”) for no reason (“*[...] I never ran. I never fought. [...]*”). This framing consequently positions foreign Black Africans as targets of an unwarranted violence in all impunity. As colonial terror is patriarchal by design (Diop, 1974; Rodney, 1972), it is not happenstance that just like patriarchal violence, police brutality seemingly needs no reason to deploy itself in these recounted stories. In line with a colonial paradigm, even when foreign Black African nationals follow instructions as described by Kani, they are seemingly still (mis)treated as the deficient Black Other.

Many participants also recounted going to the police to seek assistance or certify the authenticity of a document and being told by Black South African officers to “*go back to [their]country*”. According to participants, officers would also often dismiss their concerns, justifying everything by the fact that the person is a “foreigner”. In our conversation, Farai spontaneously recounted that the officer yelled at her and her son when she reported having received several death threats after being promoted at her workplace. He then reportedly concluded that he could not do anything because the people threatening Farai “*[...] just want [her] to leave the job because the permit is expired [...]*”. Farai continued that the officer ordered her to “*go to Home Affairs and fix [her] permit [...]*”, even as she had come to report death threats. In that story, these threats were totally ignored. The focus was Farai’s permit, which reminds the fundamental role that documentation plays in foreign Black Africans’ stories. Reportedly, the police officer in this interaction spoke on behalf of Farai’s assailants, explaining that the crux of the matter was that her work permit was expired. According to this story, the officer seemingly did not question why citizens who were not presented as government officials were so concerned with an expired work permit. He did not question either why Farai’s assailants would know about said work permit in the first place. Such reported disregard could be read as an implicit pact between the officer and the assailants, with each party not questioning the other one as long as it mobilizes its leverages to alienate foreign Black Africans. While Farai did not explicitly verbalize it as such, her recounting can be analyzed as positioning her as alone to face both her assailants and the police officer - whom she narrated as seemingly siding with her assailants, as her child witnessed the scene. In this story, Farai thus conveyed that Black South Africans’ hostility against foreign Black Africans translates into their (foreign Black Africans’) ineligibility for basic safety in South Africa. This would translate into foreign Black Africans’ rights being also dismissed by the police. This narration consequently pointed out that Farai could not rely on the police. It is worth reminding that this was not the first time that Farai’s storytelling outlined such a conclusion (see section 5.1.1.).

Overall, in both Kani and Farai’s stories, the message conveyed is seemingly that being a foreign Black African individual from a lower socio-economic class implies being constantly considered “illegal” and mistreated in South Africa. As such one is permanently disqualified from receiving any support, let alone from the police. This narration thus presents the police in South Africa as an institution that upholds a colonial White supremacist violence rooted in the Apartheid’s dehumanization of “foreigners”. With this assessment as the backdrop, reaching out to the police

for help was, unsurprisingly, virtually always depicted as futile and useless. This would even cause some foreign Black African participants to let out a defeated laugh whenever the police would be mentioned.

In this next section, I share Shandukani's story which details how a police unit abused their power as they asked for his documentation while he and his wife were grocery shopping. As soon as Shandukani produced the requested documents, the police then asked for his wife's documentation, which was in their home.

"Shandukani: [...] So I took my ID [...]. I gave [...] them. They checked it and then they gave it back to me. And then they start [...] searching me. They even searched the car and after that they said 'OK, also your wife has to bring her [...] papers' and [...] 'my wife doesn't have it now but let me go check in the room because she didn't bring it with her'. [...] 'Let me bring the paper'. So now when I left, I want to go to the house. One of them [...] said 'no, no, someone must follow them [...]'. So [...] two police guys [...] followed me [...]. So, when I reach [sic], in the house, I told them 'No, you can remain here in the sitting room. So I can go and bring the papers'. 'Say, 'no, no. We have to follow in [sic] the room'. I said '[...] No, this is like abusing me now. You found me on [sic] the street. Now you want to follow me in [sic] the room. You don't even have a search warrant [...]. Please stay in the sitting room, I will bring the paper'. They didn't listen. They force themselves [...] in [sic] the room. [...] I took out the papers. I showed them all. 'This is paper [sic] for my wife and this paper [sic] for my son.'"

In this narration, the police are presented as increasingly trespassing on Shandukani's private space. His body is searched; his car is searched; then the police follow him to his house where they refuse to let him out of sight, demanding even access to his bedroom. This progression restresses that police violence against foreign Black Africans is colonial violence; it consequently denies any sovereignty to the colonized. It also illustrates how the colonized is always at fault – even when they are not. This would explain why despite producing all the documentation required, the police kept on asking for more documentation. The police eventually requested the documentation of an extended family member who was with Shandukani and his wife at that time. Shandukani did not have any documentation to present for that person since he is not a direct relative.

"Shandukani: And then they said, 'OK, the other boy who is outside?' I said 'no, this boy does not stay with me, but we can [...] phone the mother to bring the [...] paper here'. 'Since he doesn't

have the paper, we're gonna take him away'. [...] Then they force the boy inside the van. I ask them: 'OK? Tell us at least where you're taking him. Which police station?' [...] The guy is saying 'no, no, you don't have any right to ask us'. 'I don't have [...] any right to ask [...]?' So, what should I tell [...] the father or the mother when they ask me where is the boy [...]?' 'We're taking the boy.' [...] So, I took my phone out. I took [...] a photo. [...] They found out I was taking photo [sic]. Now [...] they followed me. They want to grab my phone. [...] I went inside. They followed me. My wife was pregnant. By the time my wife tried to [...] stop them [...]. They push her [...]. She was eight months pregnant. [...] So they forced their way inside the house. I ran. [...] So by the time, that movement [...]; all [...] the kids [...]; they screamed badly. You can even cry if you were there. [...] Those police, when they saw things were very serious, they left me, and they went out. [...] They told the boy who was already in the van 'You just come out of the van because your father is [...] taking a photo of us'. So, they drove [off]."

In this story, even as Shandukani reported suggesting how to retrieve the young man's documentation, the police officers were depicted as immediately responding by threatening to "[...] take him away [...]". Such a response underscores that in this story, verifying documentation might not be the actual goal of the police. If it was, measures would be taken to obtain said documentation. Instead, documentation appears to be an excuse to infringe on foreign Black Africans' sovereignty and remind them that they are always eligible for mistreatment. There are no attenuating circumstances in the scene described; even risking harming Shandukani's pregnant wife or his kids is seemingly not a concern as per this story. This storytelling outlines again that foreign Black Africans are dehumanized as communities. This assessment aligns squarely with western colonial violence's collective dehumanization of colonized people.

The threat of possible accountability is the turning point in the narration. It is because Shandukani demands to know which station those officers are based at, and starts documenting their abuse, that they eventually let "*the boy*" go. In other words, it is because Shandukani takes actions that are not directed by the police, that the situation reaches a resolution. This progression in storytelling might be read as indicating that for Shandukani, defending his rights is not compatible with blindly following police's orders. Such a framing positions the narrator as facing all by himself an institution that can deploy force – and has allegedly done so. In addition to positioning Shandukani and his family as deprived of any support to defend themselves against such institution

violence in South Africa, this story might indicate at least two things. First, the police seemingly did not expect to be held accountable and to face someone who would in that moment challenge their authority. Second, although policing is colonial by design¹, those officers are recounted as quite aware that their perpetuation of colonial violence through such abusive practices, was difficult to justify. Shandukani hinted at it when he recounted that he subsequently went to a police station to report the abuse and was discouraged from taking things further. In addition to illustrating how oppressive postcolonial paradigms are (a person abused by the police must go to the same police to seek justice), such an outcome indicates that, according to Shandukani, even as his interlocutor could acknowledge the abuse, there was no interest in vindicating him and his family; or interrupting such behaviours to prevent future abuse. Such an ending reinforces the message interwoven throughout Shandukani's story, i.e., his rights are not respected by the police. This story also portrays said police as ethically questionable since no agents were held accountable. Furthermore, such recounting echoes Farai's and Bakari's respective story. It positions Shandukani as one man facing alone an entire institution that seemingly banalizes the dehumanization of the Black Other.

On that point, whenever foreign Black Africans described the police response during outbreaks of collective violence, all but one described passivity. For example, Fifonsè shared that: *"[...] The problem, the police [...] when that action starts, [...] they used to [...] run away. [...] When you go to the police, they tell you that 'these people when they are angry, just leave them'. [...] They used to tell you like this. [...] So, the police, they will come after people they've already killed, others they are already injured. [...] They can come maybe after one or two days. Then they can come [...]."*

By presenting the police as fleeing outbreak of collective violence against foreign Black Africans (*"[...]when that action starts, [...] they used to [...] run away.[...]"*), and by framing police officers as essentially making excuses for assailant and not holding them accountable (*"[...] 'these people when they are angry, just leave them'.[...]"*), this answer can be read as presenting the police as complicit. That posture is documented in literature (von Holdt et al., 2011). Interestingly, it was reported along the police's concern not to antagonize Black South Africans involved in these

¹ The genealogy of the South African Police Service indicates that it emerged from the remolding of Boer law enforcement units that joined the Boer army during the second Anglo-Boer war (Potgieter, 1974).

episodes of collective violence (von Holdt et al., 2011). In Fifonsè's answer, the portrayal of the police as mobilizing several strategies to not engage with assailants (e.g., "[...] run[ning] away", not holding assailants accountable – "*these people when they are angry, just leave them*" –, and coming to the scene late "[...] maybe after one or two days.[...]"), might possibly outline a similar concern. By being presented as not taking any action that Black South African assailants might read as intervening to defend targeted foreign Black Africans, this story might also point to the police seeking to not upset said assailants. Dynamics of a possible informal pact between the police and Black South Africans engaging in the colonial dehumanization of foreign Black Africans, can thus also be identified in this story.

While the police as a colonial institution still enforce colonial laws just like it did under Apartheid, a critical difference between Apartheid and contemporary times is that Black South Africans can now represent over 60% of the police in cities like Johannesburg (Newham, Masuku & Dlamini, 2006). These individuals might have personal experiences of the violence deployed against indigenous Black Africans who were denied the South African citizenship during Apartheid. Indeed, participants consistently highlighted that Black South African police officers were the most violent and abusive ones. This portrayal can be read as participants possibly attributing negative traits to Black South African officers even as the entire institution of the police could be questioned. Such an outcome would theoretically indicate a paradigm in which Black people are consistently presented as the deficient Other - as established in chapters four and five, and now as also illustrated in these stories about institutional violence. In the case of institutional violence however, subjecting the Black African to state-sanctioned violence, might particularly point to a possible repeating cycle of colonial violence. Indeed, if these Black South African police officers have an intimate knowledge of Apartheid violence, they might have fostered a sense of colonial inadequacy. Such a sense of inadequacy might have in turn fostered a need to claim some colonial superiority. Such a process would be one of narcissism as conceptualized in this study. Accordingly, some Black South Africans with institutional leverages might then seek to redress their status by exerting colonial violence over the most dehumanized people during Apartheid: foreigners, i.e., Black Africans who are not South African citizens.

Such a potential perpetuation of colonial violence evokes hauntology, both in its original conceptualization (Derrida, 1994) and in its subsequent framing through the lens of Black

feminisms (Saleh-Hanna, 2015). When Derrida reflected on capitalism following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 (Salmon, 2021), he positioned the transformation of labour under capitalism as one initiated at a “fictive” origin and “contaminated” in advance by some “use-value” (Derrida, 1994, p.160) , a concept that in Marxist economics refers to the potential of a commodity to satiate human needs (Mehrotra, 1991). In other words, for Derrida, within capitalistic rationale, any commodity and labour are ontologically inhabited – or haunted – by the imperative to hold enough value to satiate human needs even before said commodity and labour come to exist. Such a fate, shaped by the imperative to maintain capitalistic oppression, led Derrida to conclude that haunting is intrinsic to every hegemony (Derrida, 1994). Since hegemonies are inherently hierarchical, and since oppression is central to hierarchies, maintaining oppressive hegemonies throughout time implies that past hierarchical oppression will keep on shaping future societies. Derrida consequently affirmed that “the future can only be for ghosts” (Derrida, 1994, p.45). In Black feminist hauntology, such a prediction is connected to the absence of justice for Black peoples ever since Modernity (Saleh-Hanna, 2015). As White supremacist oppression has not been defeated, racism - specifically anti-blackness - keeps haunting societies (Saleh-Hanna, 2015) and South Africa is no exception (Hoosain & Bozalek, 2020).

Indeed, the possible redeployment of Apartheid violence by Black South African police officers described in participants’ stories, appears to embody such dynamics. As justice has not been achieved for Black Africans, the imprint of colonial violence against Black Africans has not been exorcized. Such unresolved oppression keeps fueling violence against Black Africans, notably in the form of police brutality - which is also commonly documented against Black South Africans (Mwanajiti et al., 2002; Bruce, 2020). Using Derrida’s original conceptualization (1994), one could argue that the premise to perpetuate colonial violence against Black Africans in post-Apartheid South Africa, was in place even before such a society formally existed. Furthermore, the appointment of Black South African officers in contemporary times to implement the practicalities of totalitarian colonialism, also evokes indirect rule: Black Africans instrumentalized to administer colonial violence against other Black Africans.

In the next section I present how this perpetuation of colonial violence that evokes indirect rule can also be identified in participants’ stories about public hospitals in South Africa.

6.4. “*That hospital, specially here [...]. It’s bad. Especially when you are a foreigner.*”

Safe for one participant, all foreign Black Africans reported negative experiences in public hospitals in South Africa. These included purposefully not being spoken to in a language they understood, being ignored for hours, and experiencing physical abuse. All female-identified participants who gave birth in a public South African hospital recounted being humiliated by nurses as they cried for help. Such stories align with literature documenting obstetric violence in South African public hospitals, particularly against impoverished Black African women, including South African citizens (Chadwick, 2017; Zerucelli Rucell, 2017; Lappeman & Swartz, 2019).

In our conversation, Denise recounted being slapped by a nurse when she spoke in her language during labour and told “*go back to your country and see if you’re gonna get a free treatment.*” The intersection of the violence of patriarchy, White supremacy, capitalism, the upholding of engineered colonial citizenships, and the overall vulnerability in which one might find themselves when giving birth, results in some unique violence as per foreign Black African women’s stories. During our call, Denise reported fearing for her life when she gave birth. Several foreign Black African women also recounted fearing for their child’s life, thus narrating what can be read as the transgenerational nature of colonial violence, its negation of the colonized’s sovereignty to survive, and its consequences for unborn children. Pregnancy loss while at or after visiting a public hospital was reported twice over the course of data collection. For example, Jema described witnessing an acquaintance - a foreign Black African woman - bleeding in the waiting room. She reported that she later learned that said acquaintance had had a miscarriage. Nlela for her part recounted that she had arrived pregnant at the hospital and gotten a perfusion. She explained that a few weeks after that visit, she noted unusual bleeding. This led her to go back to the same hospital, where she was then attended by a foreign Black African doctor. She recounted learning at that time that she had been giving abortion medication unbeknownst to her during her first visit. According to her story, the intervention had only been documented in her file under the name of the drug used. In Denise’s, Jema’s and Nlela’s respective stories, not only is pregnancy loss seemingly banalized by hospital staff, but health personnel is portrayed as playing a role in facilitating it, whether by ignoring pregnant women’s distress for hours or deliberately ending their pregnancy. Such stories of violence remind that in a colonial paradigm, racialized and gendered people - in this case Black women - are reduced to bodies they cannot claim any sovereignty over.

Indeed, several foreign Black African women described practices that evoked coerced sterilization as the final step in their pregnancy care. Among them, Bini shared this to recount when she found out that she had been scheduled for sterilization.

“Bini: Last year [...] I was pregnant. [...] they tell me I must come there [...] to sleep there, and then in the morning they must do me [sic] operation. [...] And then, one lady came here. [...] ‘Today they gonna close you’. ‘They’re gonna close me?’ ‘They gonna close. You can’t get pregnant again.’ I said ‘No, they can’t close me!’ [...] If you say I don’t know English, yes. But I, I didn’t sign anyone [sic] to close me!’ [...] And they say, ‘OK, let me call your doctor’ [...]. I [...] tell [sic] doctor ‘Since when I tell [sic] you, me, I’m gonna close? You must ask me!’ [...] And then I refuse until they took another patient. [...] They was [sic] telling me things that say ‘you’re gonna die’, things like that; to make me [...] scared. ‘[...] I say ‘No, if I’m dying, is [sic] my time. Is [sic] not your problem.’ [...]”

In Bini’s story, women are presented as objects that can be shut closed without their consent. As for the appointment for sterilization, it is one during which women are possibly held against their will. In our call, Bini shared that she physically pushed back the medical staff and stood on the bed to avoid the surgical intervention. Bini spoke enough English to understand the situation, and she had in that moment the ability to defend herself; but one might wonder, how many women do not? As somebody living in the settler colonial state of Canada, I am aware of the forced sterilizations of Indigenous women here. Those were at some point justified by eugenics legislations that denied the cognitive abilities of Indigenous peoples (Canada’s Human Rights History, n.d.) and of anybody in government-run institutions – which, given Canada’s genocidal project (Matheson et al., 2022), was also likely to refer to Indigenous peoples. Such parallels highlight that western colonial violence, whether looked at through the lens of patriarchy, capitalism, or White supremacy, follows the same rationale around the globe. Between 1930 and 1980, countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, had legislations allowing the forced sterilization of specific people, among which racialized ones (Alexander et al., 2020). In 2011, the Open Society Foundations documented forced and coerced sterilization in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, South Africa, and Venezuela (Open Society Foundations, 2011). In more recent years, the forced and coerced sterilization of marginalized

women - and specifically of Indigenous women - continues to be documented in Canada (Collier, 2017; Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2021).

In her story, upon refusing to get sterilized after her third pregnancy – which several foreign Black African women presented as the moment when forced sterilizations were brought up - Bini described the nurses as having become hostile toward her. That narration can signal that Bini is presented as being (in)directly punished for defending her sovereignty over her body, and for refusing the negation of her personhood.

In her recounting, Bini emphasized racial identities along the type of treatment she received from different individuals. In an excerpt not included, she mentioned a “*White person*” who inquired about her wellbeing and provided care while she was pregnant with her third child. She contrasted such a reaction against the treatment she received from Black South Africans. Bini also said that her first and second births went well. In addition to being one of the very few times participants reported positive experiences in the context of births, there was a possibility that Bini had received decent care from Black South African health professionals those two times. Such a testimonial would have constituted evidence of Black South African health professionals challenging everyday structural racism. I consequently asked Bini who was the doctor these two times.

“Bini: [...] It was an Indian man. The second one was [...] Indian man. The third one, it was Black people. [...] And [...] when they was [sic] operate [sic] me; [...] you not [sic] hear [sic] nicely, but he is like.... He's angry, things like that. [...] To be honest [...], they did not treat me well with this operation for the last time. [...] ‘Yeah, we know you, you foreigner. Every [...] year. You coming [sic] here [...].’ Same day [...], before I went inside: ‘Look that lady. She refused to [...] close.’ [...]”

In her answer, the hospital worker called Bini a “*foreigner*” and denied her the opportunity to introduce herself. “*We know you*” implied that she had been reduced to a colonial archetype. Like Farai when she refused to abide to patriarchal violence (see chapter five, section 5.1.1.), in her story, Bini was also “*marked*” for standing up for herself and challenging colonial violence. The command “*look that lady*” evokes the gesture of pointing at, signaling someone, in this case, Bini; a foreign Black African woman experiencing gendered racist capitalistic violence who, as per her narration, seemingly had had the ‘audacity’ to successfully defend her sovereignty over her reproductive health.

Despite such stories of abuse, most participants recounted deciding against filing complaints and “open[ing] a case”. They presented it as useless and as exposing themselves to retaliation.

“Jema: Us here if we have a problem [...], we can't go [...] open the case. Because [...] if you're going to open the case, maybe after that, their friend can come [...] kill you.”

The threat of death was frequently mentioned by foreign Black Africans, specifically female-identified ones. In a context of colonial violence, it would not be impossible that the survival of those perceived as the deficient Black Other be undesired in South Africa and as such, intentionally jeopardized. The multiple accounts of coerced sterilization reported in this chapter hint to such a possibility.

It is worth highlighting that in these stories, the worst violence – whether it was being almost coerced into sterilization or harassed by staff – was attributed to Black South Africans. Once again, such trends might be connected to narcissism. Indeed, as hierarchical structures central to the colonial project in African countries (Rodney, 1972), the three aforementioned institutions are very likely to exert colonial violence that is racist, capitalistic and gendered, against Black (South) African employees. Such daily violence might jeopardize Black South African employees’ sense of adequacy and possibly fuel a need to reclaim colonial superiority. When discussing hospitals, foreign Black African women specifically reported Black South African female nurses’ abuse. As the Apartheid regime dehumanized people based on race, class, and gender, impoverished Black African women are more likely to have directly faced that violence. As such, Black South African women who were colonially abused might now be more likely to normalize colonial violence against people they have been taught were sub-human, i.e. people who look like them. This seemingly confirms the hypothesis that western colonial violence might be normalized and perpetuated to address a sense of colonial inadequacy. This pattern once again evokes hauntology and how in the absence of justice, violence against Black people remains alive, including among Black people themselves. That possibility crystallizes how individuals surviving everyday structural racism, might end up partaking in that very violence. This trajectory might crystallize colonial oppression: the absence of choice (hooks, 1984 / 2000) to get away from colonial violence, both on the receiving and exerting sides. This confirms that for colonized peoples, colonialism never leads to freedom and only reinvents itself. It is thus urgent to ask ourselves: who might be next in line to be dehumanized?

In the next section, I share one participant's recounted efforts to challenge structural violence.

6.5. “Despite the overwhelming odds²”: challenging colonial violence one individual at a time

In line with a decolonial approach that seeks to evidence how the colonial past remains present to interrupt it, I close this chapter with a story shared by Tjamiwa, a Black South African participant. This story recounts how he sought to interrupt the police's banalization of violence against foreign Black Africans.

Tjamiwa shared that after a wave of collective violence against foreign Black Africans broke out in his settlement, him and other Black South Africans in his community, organized themselves. They went door to door to retrieve looted items and brought them back to store owners which included foreign Black Africans. Tjamiwa reported that as they were doing so, the police watched and refused to help.

“Tjamiwa: I think on our second day, few criminal elements went and looted the shops in our area. [...] So, in my organization, in my area, we went house to house looking for these things. We found them. We brought them back, you know. So we call the shop owners. Somalians, Ethiopians, and we had also who are not Africans. [...] We did that [...]. Even though the police didn't want to work with us or help us to get those things, you know?”

Just like in other participants' stories (e.g. Shandukani's, Farai's), the reported passivity of the police might restress that in postcolonial states, institutions are designed to normalize colonial violence. Alternatively, and as discussed in section 6.3., such passivity might also signal the police's strategy to avoid any friction with Black South Africans assailants (von Holdt et al., 2011). In any case, such a lack of support can be read as indicating that in a post-Apartheid setting, there is no help for whoever attempts to interrupt the totalitarian colonial violence that follows Black Africans wherever they are (Fanon, 1963). Change is consequently not likely to come from (colonial) institutions, however, individuals can refuse the archetype of the deficient Black Other – whether that means refusing to confine themselves or other Black Africans in it. This is what Tjamiwa reported having done. He explained that he decided to go retrieve and return looted items because foreign Black Africans could not be scapegoated for Black South Africans' socio-economic hardship since they also experience it. As such, shared patterns of socio-economic

² Mosley et al., 2020, p.3

precarity experienced by both groups, are identified in this reasoning. Furthermore, this rationale seemingly rejects a zero-sum mindset and avoids exacerbating involved foreign Black Africans' socio-economic precarity. Like in other stories (see chapter five, section 5.4), challenging capitalistic White supremacist violence against Black Africans, implies refusing their confining into colonial archetypes. This restresses the importance of challenging colonial identity erosion. As a male Black South African citizen in an organization known in his settlement, Tjamiwa had some privileges that possibly made intervening less challenging for him than it would have been for a person with different social markers. However, Tjamiwa could have decided to not leverage his privileges and not risk facing possible retaliation by both Black South African assailants and the police. Such a story can be approached as another example of critical decolonial leadership present among participants and their mobilization to challenge the daily colonial dehumanization of Black Africans.

6.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I analyzed the last axe of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework: everyday structural violence. I looked at stories about participants' daily interactions with South African institutions and highlighted how Home Affairs specifically, was narrated as engineering the very "illegality" subsequently reproached to foreign Black African nationals. By sharing participants' stories about other institutions such as the police, and public hospitals, I evidenced a violence that seemingly echoes that of Apartheid. I identified in this possible perpetuation of colonial violence the imprint of hauntology: the ontological haunting of hegemonic systems by unresolved past oppression, in this case, White supremacist violence against Black Africans in South Africa. Upon examining the obstetrical violence described by foreign Black African women and its patterns of coerced sterilizations, I argued that such violence had colonial roots. I framed its contemporary perpetuation as indirect rule and suggested that indirect rule, colonial identity erosion, and narcissism, all intersect. In line with the decolonial approach of this research, I concluded with a story that recounted the interruption of such colonial violence.

Chapter Seven

Identity erosion and community disfigurement: the impact of violence against Black people on their racial identity

In chapter four, I analyzed participants' stories that illustrate the interwovenness of dehumanizing narratives against Black people throughout their life. In chapter five, I presented stories that detail how the violence against foreign Black Africans appears to embody the coloniality of modernity, the racism of zero-point and White normativity. In chapter six, I presented stories about everyday structural violence, and I argued that such violence might constitute a hauntology of Apartheid. In this chapter I focus on my third and last secondary question: how do Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals describe the impact of anti-Black racism on their racial identity? To do so, I present participants' narration of race and of their identification with other people of the same racial identity. I argue that colonial identity erosion yields narcissism as defined in this study, which itself contributes to indirect rule. Given the ubiquity of White supremacy in postcolonial states, I also share the different postures toward White supremacy embodied in participants' narration of their racial identity and relationships with other Black Africans. I suggest that such postures might point to what I conceptualize as a White supremacist survivor syndrome. I end this chapter with a story about reclaiming the Black racial identity to reject White supremacy.

7.1. Race: a consequential White lie

In this first section, I share participants' narration of race which I analyzed as embodying some racial essentialism that limits Black people to a fixed identity and seemingly, fixed phenotypical characteristics too. This framing can be read as echoing the premise of scientific racism from the Enlightenment era. It might as such point to the persistence of dehumanizing colonial narratives against Black people in contemporary times. Based on participants' stories, I suggest that this possible racial essentialism might also approach the violence toward foreign Black Africans as immutable, which might fuel a desire to distance oneself from that identity.

Most participants' narration of race embodied what I read as a paradox (Bhabha, 1983); the simultaneous framing of race as both a uniting notion (i.e. the genetic human race) and a dividing othering concept in which phenotypes - namely skin colour and hair texture- define different categories. Furthermore, in participants' stories, race appeared to be an indicator of one's

positioning within a social hierarchy and consequently, an indicator of one's relative status compared to the dominant social group.

The violence of western colonialism cannot be separated from racism and White supremacy, two concepts that have been anchored in false claims of biological races and the alleged ontological superiority of Europeans. A decolonial approach as conceptualized in this study, implies assessing to what extent those false beliefs remain present in contemporary times to subsequently dismantle them by offering alternative readings that rehumanize racialized peoples. Consequently, participants would be invited to share why they identified as Black. In virtually all conversations except two, participants would share a reasoning akin to Unathi's which is presented below.

“Unathi: [chuckles] [...] I'm born Black and I... I believe that[...]... I'm Black.

Chris: So, is that based on the colour of your skin?

Unathi: Yes, like uh...yeah.

Chris: So [...] a Black person born in Mexico is also Black the same way as you are?

Unathi: I'm sure. Because I believe that they are Black. Maybe we might be different with the colour, but I believe that if I'm born as a Black [...], I'm Black. Like... yeah.”

Regardless of their citizenship, gender, socio-economic status or geographical location, most participants used phenotypical traits such as skin colour and hair texture to define racial identity. Like Unathi did, many would chuckle when asked why they identified as Black, which might indicate that for most participants, racial identity is self-explanatory likely because it is conceptualized as a visible phenotype. In this exchange, Unathi stated *“I'm born Black”*. As we were not in the same space and could not see each other, it was not possible from my end to know whether he used any gesture to refer to his skin colour. However, the initial chuckle and the affirmative answer when asked if his racial identity was based on his skin colour, might indicate that Unathi was most likely using phenotypical markers as the main premise to anchor his racial identity.

As a diasporic Black African woman in Turtle Island, race for me has never been based only on skin pigmentation. I have seen people of Black African ancestry with very different skin hues – some of which might not be considered “black” in some societies - self-identify as Black and be

subjected to manifestations of White supremacy. It consequently took me a few iterations before deciding whether to capitalize “Black” in the above exchange with Unathi. Unathi was referring to a colour, yet in a postcolonial world, “Black” is often not a colour but a marker of eligibility for colonial violence that goes beyond one’s pigmentation. Such awareness constitutes the essence of Black consciousness (Biko, 1971) and is the reason why Black people with different skin tones can all come together to advocate for Black people’s rights: our respective skin hue has never protected any of us from White supremacist violence although it certainly informs its virulence. Unathi’s hesitation (“*Yes, like, uh...yeah*”) when asked whether his racial identity is based on his skin colour, could possibly indicate that he might question the accuracy of the word “black” to describe his skin hue. Without entertaining the sterile White supremacist slippery slope of debating racialized people’s skin tone, it is commonly observable that Black people’s skin colour is not always best described as black. To this point, a few participants shared that qualifying their skin colour as “brown” might be more accurate. Ironically, “Brown people” refers to another racial category on Turtle Island.¹ Whether Black or Brown, the inaccuracy of those labels when reduced to skin colours highlights that in White supremacist societies, the only certainty is that people to whom such labels are assigned, are not perceived as being of European ancestry. The colonial logic of defining racialized people based on what they are not (i.e., people of European descent), and submitting them to dehumanizing violence that reduces them to a skin colour, eventually convinced me to capitalize “Black” in the above exchange with Unathi. Although we might have used different conceptualizations of race (i.e., one based on phenotype and the other on political identity), I reasoned that in a postcolonial world, it is White supremacist violence that racializes both Unathi and I. Capitalizing “Black” consequently highlights that in a White supremacist world, even as one claims to be looking at a phenotype, such an urge likely mirrors the colonial gaze which racializes those who cannot be mistaken for Europeans.

In addition to using skin colour, Unathi also rooted his racial identity in a geographic space when he said “*where I’m born*”. This can be read as indicating that for Unathi, Black people are mainly born on the African continent. Although he moved on to discuss his skin colour, as somebody in

¹ In Canada and the United States, “Brown” is commonly used to refer to dark-skinned racialized people who are not read as having any Black African ancestry. This label is notably used to refer to people from what is colonially known as South Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

the diaspora surrounded by people who identify as Black and were not born on the continent, I wondered how Unathi reconciled such realities. Unathi's answer about his reading of Afro-Mexicans as Black included *"Maybe we might be different with the colour"*. That possibility was stated after Unathi had answered positively when asked whether his Black racial identity was *"based on the colour of [his] skin"*. Unathi consequently refers to skin hue when discussing both his racial identity and that of a hypothetical Afro-Mexican. This might illustrate that bio-logic (Oyewumi, 1997) plays a role in Unathi's framing of racial identities. That practice might be common in Unathi's environment. If this was the case, this reflection – and similar ones from other participants – might provide a sneak-peak into the co-construction of race and its roots in bio-logic in postcolonial states.

Although for virtually all participants, bio-physiological markers were the primary premise to define racial identities, several people also emphasized that there is only one human species and that it was thus inaccurate to talk about multiple races. Although that genetic fact (Gannon, 2016; Yudell et al., 2016) would be brought up, seconds later, participants would share narratives in which bio-physiological markers (specifically skin) were used to point out the existence of several races. The following excerpt from Nathalie's story crystallizes that dynamic.

"Nathalie: If I'm able to give another human being blood, there is no difference. The difference, it's just a colour. That's the skin colour. [...] Because I never knew that I'm able to give the White person blood. [...] So, I don't see the difference. Between White person [sic] and the Black person beside this skin colour. [...] If I can give you my kidney. If I can give you my heart. Maybe if I died and it's still using my heart to give someone else and that person is a White person. [...] Only skin that makes us to be different."

Nathalie's answer can be read as indicating that genetic races both exist and do not. It emphasizes that race as a genetic concept is a fallacy hence why people with different skin pigmentation can donate and receive blood from one another. Yet, by referring to *"White people"* and *"Black people"*, the narration technically creates two races from that unique human race. It is also striking that despite affirming that there is only one genetic human race, Nathalie's confession (*"Because I never knew that I'm able to give the White person blood"*) could be read as indicating that she assumed that as a Black person, there were physiological differences between her and people of European ancestry that prevented her from donating blood to them. It is also worth highlighting

that in this answer, only two racial identities are mentioned: “*the Black person*” and “*White person*”. No other racial group is acknowledged, which appears to dismiss the entire ethnic diversity of humankind and reduces it to two categories. Such a framing evokes Fanon’s (1967) analysis of White and Black identities as mutually defined through the colonial encounter. It might point to a White supremacist paradigm in which one is either (White) European or Black. Nathalie’s answer thus possibly indicates a perspective from which Black people are seen as the antithesis of Europeans: they are the Other when Europeans are supposedly the default standard. If Europeans are the standard for humanity, and Black people are not, their eligibility to donate blood to “standard” humans is not taken for granted. Such a rationale helps contextualize Nathalie’s confession and might hint to underpinning narratives that humanize Europeans and dehumanize Black Africans.

Biophysiological references are present in both Nathalie and Unathi’s answers about racial identities (e.g., “*skin colour*”, “*blood*”, “*kidney*”, “*heart*”). Such references evoke the false biological premise used during the Enlightenment era to theorize race and present it as a scientific fact. As this study seeks to identify how the colonial past remains present to interrupt it, it is worth highlighting that biophysiological references are still brought up when discussing racial identities close to four centuries after Linné and Blumenbach spearheaded scientific racism (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008).

Colourism - i.e., the belief that the lighter in skin tone a racialized person is, the more privileges they deserve - can be put in dialogue with the false biological premise of White supremacy. If white-skinned, European people are the default standard for humanity, within a White supremacist paradigm, phenotypical proximity to them would be desirable. Nathalie spoke to such a dynamic in the following excerpt when she described the change in treatment that accompanied her resettlement from her home country to South Africa. She explained how some phenotypical markers (e.g., skin hue) that used to grant her a higher status among Black Africans in her country, were meaningless in South Africa.

“Nathalie: My father is from Belgium, my mother [...], her parents are from [African country] [...]. We are eight [...] and some of us are light complexion. [...] I took from my mom. My hair is definitely a Black person’s. So, I grew up in a family where there is that small colour. [...] So, for me growing up, [...] I make myself proud because, if God wanted me to be that light colour

complexion, he could do that. But he didn't do that [...]. When I arrived in South Africa, that's when I realized that 'Oh, okay, it doesn't matter. I'm still an African, a Black African woman.' It's when they point fingers [...] and say: 'hey wena, you're a foreigner. Hey wena, you're a kwerekwere.' Back home people could call us like 'oh they are coloured'. This means, that we are maybe a second class. But in South Africa we're the last one [...]."

In the above exchange, Nathalie seemingly contrasts her siblings' "*light complexion*" to her hair, presented as "*definitely a Black person's*". That latter affirmation could be read as indicative of some essentialism: Black people are believed to only have one specific type of hair. This affirmation points to a single representation of Black people that negates their factual diversity and plurality (Gomez, Hirbo & Tishkoff, 2014). Furthermore, based on that phrasing, one could infer that this light complexion, unlike Nathalie's hair, might lead to some racial ambiguity since it is not described as being "*definitely a Black person's*". Consequently, an alleged characteristic of Black people in a (post)colonial world, in addition to being positioned as the antithesis of Europeans, is a specific hair texture and skin tone. In an excerpt not included, Unathi, who does not know Nathalie and grew up in a different African country, also mentioned hair texture to clarify why he identifies as Black. Such converging narratives do not appear to be coincidental. They might point to the ubiquity of White supremacy in postcolonial African societies, and its accompanying racial essentialism. Accordingly, anybody who is not European is racialized, reduced to a skin tone, a hair type and ranked based on their closeness to Europeans.

In her recounting, Nathalie explained that her siblings and her would be considered "*second class*" in her country. From my positionality, being referred to as "second class" implies a hierarchy in which anybody who is not considered first class is discriminated against. As I could infer that "*second class*" did not have the same meaning in her story, I asked Nathalie what it meant for her.

"Nathalie: In my country, uh...people who got that colour and [...] that soft hair like Brazilian² hair, [...] different to [sic] others', [...] you are in a second class. It means after White people, it's you guys. And you'll be taken in consideration in such a way that...They [...] prefer to have a wife

²Based on this answer, indigenous peoples from what is now called Brazil might not be taken into consideration in this description. Likewise, given her previous comment that might be read as indicating some racial essentialism, this description might not apply to Brazilians who only trace their ancestry back to Africa.

like that, so [...] the kids [...] come out that colour. [...] They prefer to give you a job [...] because of that colour. So yeah. In my country, people put in those class [sic], those level [sic], like that."

Nathalie's answer describes a racist hierarchy in which Europeans are at the top and people with "that colour" and "that soft hair", come next. As European ancestry and white skin are presented as superior attributes that grant first class privileges, Nathalie's answer essentially describes a White supremacist hierarchy. This might indicate that racist supremacist narratives that position Europeans as superior to anybody else, are still present in predominantly Black societies on the continent to this day. In the first excerpt, the reference to God not making Nathalie that "light colour complexion" can be read as presenting being phenotypically closer to Europeans as a divine intervention. Put in dialogue with the biblical affirmation that "God created man[kind] in his own image" (Genesis 1:27), for those who provide a preferential treatment to people who are "second class", being light-skinned might be perceived as having been blessed. Although other readings are certainly possible, the affirmation from the Enlightenment era that Europeans were the original human race and as such the closest to God in phenotype and morality (Lipko & Di Pasquo, 2008), can be reconstituted in Nathalie's answer. Two lessons can be drawn from that possibility. First, such a White supremacist reading of Black people's skin hue is likely not indigenous to Africa since it evokes so clearly the European Enlightenment era. Second, a White supremacist rationale has possibly permeated social norms and expectations of postcolonial settings to the point of being seemingly banalized. Indeed, in her story, Nathalie spontaneously mobilized what can be read as a White supremacist lens. Her narration seems to imply that attributing a higher value to a "small colour" and "soft hair" is self-explanatory, or at least, understood by me and consequently internationally acknowledged. As per her narration, in her country, Nathalie likely never had to justify the premise of colourism, which reminds that race is co-constructed and that people around her likely shared an understanding similar to hers. It is worth reminding that Nathalie shared this story to contextualize her mistreatment in South Africa. The story thus likely aimed at conveying her change in social status, not at problematizing colourism or White supremacy. Through its assumptions and silences, this story seemingly points to the banalization of portraying traits associated with Black people as not fully desirable. It also illustrates racial essentialism by associating rigid phenotypical traits with Black people in the first place.

In her answer, Nathalie indicates that “*soft hair*” and “*small colour*” are traits specifically looked for in women. Men are only mentioned to explain that they prefer to “*have a wife like that [...] so the kids come out that colour [...]*.” The Black woman here is reduced to the person who gives birth, unilaterally transmits skin complexion, and consequently concretizes any aspirations to have “*second class*” children. Men’s role in this colourist White supremacist endeavor is completely silent, seemingly indicating that they do not play any. Furthermore, racial capitalism is highlighted in Nathalie’s connection of a lighter skin complexion to preferential treatment for jobs (“*they prefer to give you a job*”). This transactional dynamic reminds that in (post)colonial settings, those perceived as relatively closer to White European colonizers enjoy the legitimacy to accumulate capital at the expense of racialized colonized peoples assessed as too far removed from that same White European colonizer (Fanon, 1963). In such a paradigm, Black women consequently contend with the simultaneous violence of patriarchy, White supremacy, and classism. This embodies the coloniality of modernity present throughout participants’ stories. This story thus captures how the intersection of colonial hegemonies apply to women and how their skin hue (a characteristic they have no control over) will define how racist, capitalistic, and patriarchal violence applies to them. In her home country, Nathalie was seemingly relatively shielded from that violence because of her lighter hue yet she shared having lost that immunity upon arriving in South Africa. The phrasing “*When I arrived in South Africa, that’s when I realized [...]*” implies a change in perspective, a before and an after. It also restresses how racial identities are co-constructed: the same person who was “*second class*” in one country, is called “*kwerekwere*” in another. What remains clear in both contexts is that Nathalie is never read as European when it is her proximity to Europeans that defines her treatment and privileges (or lack thereof). It can thus be argued that participants’ narration of their racial identity is informed by the racist violence they face and try to avoid. It is worth reminding that all participants who shared answers pointing to such perspectives, do not know one another, come from different countries, are of different ages and shared their stories at different times. The homogeneity of their answers about their conceptualization of race therefore likely speaks to dynamics that are neither individual or coincidental but structural and colonial. Indeed, these narratives might reflect the violence of a persistent colonial system that is contained neither in time nor space in a postcolonial world. Its imprint can consequently be identified both in the late 1600’s and the early 2020’s, both in western Europe and on the continent of Africa.

In this section I sought to highlight how participants seemingly approach racial identity from the standpoint of racial essentialism, with biophysiological references present in most participants' stories about race. Doing so, I sought to problematize the possible main premise used to define racial categories rather than the use of racial categories in and of itself. In the next section, I present stories that embody a potential consequence of racial essentialism and the framing of the Black identity as ontological and undesirable: the attribution of the Black racial identity to the Other and not to oneself.

7.2. *"I can't understand what you are asking": narrating race as belonging to the dehumanized Other*

In this section I analyze the discomfort or confusion present across most conversations whenever I would explicitly mention race. I suggest that such discomfort stems from racial essentialism which dehumanizes Black people and leads Black participants to seemingly avoid discussing their racial identity while simultaneously mobilizing racial labels to refer to racialized people around them.

As somebody used to discuss race almost daily, particularly with other Black people, I am rarely exposed to reactions from Black people that indicate discomfort about their racial identity. Because I was engaging with people who live in South Africa, one of the few African countries where racial categories have been associated with a legal framework, I was initially surprised at what I read as silence around race. Based on participants' reactions, it appeared that for many the very notion of race is taboo. Indeed, participants would either signal not understanding what race referred to or they would explicitly indicate not wanting to discuss it. Such instances were reminders of my own unspoken assumptions and positionality. I had assumed that participants employed the same framing of race as I did and that since we are all living in a postcolonial society, they were as used to thinking about race as I am. As this exchange with Bunya shows, this was not necessarily the case.

Chris: [...] You live in South Africa and in South Africa, they have racial categories, right? [...] With which racial label do you identify and why?

Bunya: Please come again?

Chris: [...] With which racial labels do you identify and why? [...]?

Bunya: Yeah, but I was staying only [with] Black people.

Chris: You stay only with...With Black people?

Bunya: Yeah, but I know... My first time here when I was newcomer, I stayed around the White people.

Chris: And how do you identify? [...]

Bunya: No, no, I can't remember because I was new. I don't know what happened.

Chris: No, no, but...You. Right now. You, as a person in South Africa. [...] When you think of your race, what would you say your race is?

Bunya: Don't say that, please."

Bunya then immediately went on to describe an incident that reportedly occurred the previous day: a taxi driver called her derogatory names and took away her "traditional"³ scarf. While Bunya did not indicate her racial identity, she presented its consequences: being harassed and being silenced. Bunya said when recounting the incident "*He was calling me that.*"⁴ [...] *I'm not allowed to speak.*" In this story, racial identity is therefore narrated as a marker of one's eligibility for violent abuse. Avoiding discussing race might thus be a strategy to avoid summoning more violence. Along the same lines, on a few occasions, participants answered that their race was "*foreigner*" or "*asylum seekers*". They did so after signaling that they had possibly misunderstood the question, just like Bunya did ("*Please come again?*") possibly indicating that being explicitly asked about their racial identity might be unusual for them.

Barika, another participant also used "*foreigner*" when discussing her racial identity. However, she indicated that prior to moving to South Africa, she would have not defined her race as such. Barika's answer indicates that she had to renegotiate her racial identity to reflect the (mis)treatment she receives because she does "*not have a South African citizenship.*"

Bunya and Barika both connected their racial identity to mistreatment in South Africa. They also all showed some surprise at my question about their racial identity while they spontaneously

³ I use quotation marks to invite the reader to keep in mind that given how colonialism eroded indigenous identities and instrumentalized them to serve the colonial project, alleged "traditions" deserve to be interrogated.

⁴ A few seconds before that exchange, Bunya had mentioned that the taxi driver had called her derogatory names used to refer to foreign Black Africans in South Africa.

mobilize racial labels to refer to other racialized people around them. For example, Bunya, who asked me not to talk about race, referred to “*Black people*” and “*White people*” only a few minutes into our conversation and did so throughout our call. Similarly, several participants who first signaled not understanding my question about race, did not ask me to clarify whom I was referring to whenever I would use racial labels such as “*Coloured*” and “*Black*”. More generally, no participant referred to racial identities or framings that I was unfamiliar with (save for “*second class*” in Nathalie’s story). This indicates that we likely had a common framing of race. Yet, race was often only mobilized in reference to other people and not participants themselves. This pattern is encapsulated in this exchange with Unathi in which he seemingly does not understand my references to race when that concept applies to him, yet, does not ask me to clarify it when I use racial labels to refer to other people.

“Unathi: I am not getting the... the... the... the question correctly. Maybe I am not...I don’t know. Maybe you can start to explain [sic]?”

Chris: OK, so [...] the question is about racial labels. [...]How would you describe your race? And why?

Unathi: You mean like... let’s say if I am like a girl or [inaudible]?

Chris: Sorry I didn’t get that?

Unathi: You mean if, like, [recently] I describe [myself] as a girl or [...] I identify as male or...?

Chris: No, so that would be your, your gender identity.⁵ But race would be related to, let’s say if you identify as... As Black, or as Coloured [...].⁶

Unathi: Oh. (Chris: Yeah). Like... I’m Black. Yeah.”

One reading of Unathi’s initial hesitation might be that since this research specifically sought to reach people who identified as Black, Unathi’s racial identity could be inferred based on his participation. My question might therefore be unexpected because of how obvious the answer is. Another reading however, might be to ask: if Unathi’s racial identity can be inferred and informed

⁵ In this exchange, I spontaneously approached Unathi’s initial answer as being about gender identity and not about racial identity. Immediately after doing so, I questioned my own legitimacy to make such an affirmation. In hindsight, it would have been more in line to nuance that statement and present it as my own understanding of gender and racial identity.

⁶ This back and forth in which Unathi seemingly did not understand my question and I repeated myself adding examples of racial identities, went on for several minutes before Unathi eventually replied “I’m Black”. The exchange was shortened for clarity.

his decision to engage in this research, why did he report not understanding my question about his racial identity?

The confusion dissipated the moment I used examples of racial categories in South Africa which Unathi did not ask me to clarify. Unathi is therefore familiar with racial labels (as could already be assessed from his answer to the call for participants). Being asked to verbalize his own racial identity however, might have caused some confusion. That pattern of attributing racial identities to other people, and yet displaying some confusion when asked to self-identify racially, might boil down to attributing to others what one does not attribute themselves. If so, this tendency would evoke dynamics of whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). It might consequently be that in postcolonial societies where White supremacy has dehumanized Black people, some Black people might look at one another using a White supremacist vantage point, consciously or not. An implication of such ubiquitous White supremacy might therefore be that if being Black is undesirable, one might not claim that identity, yet they might attribute it to people around them.

The rejection of the Black identity in such a paradigm is not only ideological but accompanied by violence and ostracization. Indeed, Unathi – who identified as a gay man - instinctively associated race with dimensions of his identity that result in ostracization in a patriarchal heteronormative society: his gender identity and sexual orientation. This reaction, along that of Bunya and Barika who also connected their racial identity to mistreatment, seemingly constitutes a pattern that only associates participants' race with violence. That tendency was present in all stories.

Since race is associated with violence and since violence implies relational dynamics, race in these conversations is likely also rooted in intergroup relationships. This would explain why participants like Bunya and Barika spontaneously specified a socio-geographical context. This specification might have hinted that their racial identity is based on their social treatment and environment in a given context. When that treatment is one of violent marginalization exacerbated by racial capitalism, participants might decide against claiming the racial identity warranting said mistreatment, even as they describe how that very racial identity defines who is targeted by violence.

As mentioned earlier, from my subjective standpoint, there was a general uneasiness and surprise whenever I would explicitly ask participants how they racially identified. Such discomfort about conversations focused on race and racial identities did not stop at participants. In the early stages

of this PhD research, a prospective supervisor also discouraged me from researching race. Such a trend that goes beyond participants might illustrate how common racial silence is in post-Apartheid South Africa.

In the next section, I share more stories that illustrate the unilateral attribution of race to the alleged deficient Black Other. I argue that such a tendency fuels erosion in Black communities.

7.3. “*So, we are made to hate each other. [...] Because I think what we are doing to Africans, [...] we’re not doing to others.*”: the dehumanization of Black people and the erosion of Black communities

In this section, I share stories that appear to illustrate some consequences of White supremacist violence. These include identity erosion that leads participants to confine other Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other and unilaterally attributing them the Black racial identity. Such dynamics might be read as positioning other Black people as inherently different from the narrators. This in turn seemingly results in some participants banalizing the wielding of violence against Black people.

In virtually all conversations, being Black was hardly ever associated with positive characteristics or accomplishments. Participants’ stories notably included some antagonization between narrators and people they called “Black”. For example, in the conversation with Juma (which I mentioned in chapter five section 5.3.1. when discussing potential lethal consequences of White normativity), we spent over 15 minutes discussing White supremacist homicidal violence against Black South Africans. I had asked Juma whether he believed that such violence was justified. Upon documenting his positive reply, I attempted to introduce the idea that a shared identity could be conceptualized between Black South Africans and himself or people from his country. Despite highlighting shared identities between them (i.e., Black South Africans) and himself, “*Maybe the Black people want to do the bad things*” remained the justification for White European South Africans’ homicidal violence. Such phrasing possibly indicates that the narrator does not claim membership among the Black people mentioned. The following exchange then took place.

“Chris: And how do you know that Black people are doing something bad?”

Juma: You can see. You can see.

Chris: So, if a White person says that you are doing something bad, do you also agree with

that?

Juma: Uh...Yeah...Yeah.

Chris: So, you believe you are doing something bad?

Juma: Me? [...] Not to kill. Not to kill. [...] I can do something... Maybe I can. [...] Maybe I can tell [...] someone something bad. We can [sic] angry. Just like that. [...]"

This answer seemingly implies that the narrator would agree that they “[...] *are doing something bad* [...]” if White European South Africans assessed so. The hypothetical behaviour in question would not involve murdering someone but might lead involved people to get “*angry*”. I floated the idea that Black South Africans might not have been at fault in the situation we were discussing. My interlocutor’s answer remained that they had to be doing something bad because “[...] *the South African people* [...]. *They are drinking alcohol. When they are drink [sic] alcohol. So you can [...] say something. [...] He can fight you. [...] Just like that.*”

When asked whether the same could be said about White European South Africans and whether that would explain why they can shoot Black South Africans, Juma replied this.

“Juma: No, I [sic] never seen that. [...]"

In this answer, what the narrator personally witnessed is presented as the only truth. While spatial segregation, among other factors, might have complicated the narrator’s probability to witness a White European South African drunk, it is likely that he has seen Black South Africans who were neither drinking nor fighting. Yet, the focus in the answer seems to be on behaviours that sustain the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other.

Since he had acknowledged that some White European South Africans might conflate into the same identity Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans, I asked Juma how he reconciled those two affirmations (i.e., Black South Africans’ alleged behaviours warranting violence and the fact that he could be mistaken for a Black South African and consequently be exposed to that violence).

“Chris: So why is it that you don't feel bad when Black South Africans are shot?

Juma: [silence]

Chris: Or you don't think [...] that Black South Africans are Black like you, and you could be shot by a White person the same way they get shot by a White person? You don't think about

that? [...]

Juma: No, no. [...] I don't think about that."

As transcribed, Juma reported not thinking about his eligibility to share the same fate as Black South Africans with the same racial identity as him. Such answers suggest an irreconcilable difference between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans; one so deep that it is impossible for the narrator to put himself in Black South Africans' shoes, let alone empathize with them. I asked the question several times, partly to make sure that language had not been a barrier, and admittedly because I was hoping to document some empathy. In the rest of our conversation, I was unsure of how to balance how troubled I was on one end, with my hope to document Juma's unaltered narration of Black South Africans on the other. Juma's position remained the same, which can be read as him not feeling pressured into appeasing me but instead free to reaffirm his stance.

"Juma: Yeah. People from here [...] Is different because. [...] I see this country, this South Africa. [...] People from here. [...] They can do so many things. [...] You see, me...Even the, I don't know. [...] I saw here, even the small [...], a small boy. [...] He is all like[...] 19 years, 18 years, and he's touching the gun. [...]"

This answer includes the racist trope of Black South Africans' alleged inherent criminal behaviour. That trope is also deployed by Black South Africans against foreign Black Africans in South Africa. As such in this story, Black people dehumanize the deficient Black Other, even as they are also perceived as the deficient Black Other. Ultimately, the White supremacist dehumanization of Black people is left unchallenged. This seemingly results in a disavowal of other Black people and the banalization of the violence they can face.

According to Tjamiwa, one of the few Black South African participants, the same rationale is at play in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. It is the confining of Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other that leads Black people themselves (in this case, Black South Africans) to unleash a violence virtually never wielded against anybody else.

"Tjamiwa: [...] But because we're made to believe that we are not the same. You know? So, we are made to hate each other. [...] Because I think what we are doing to Africans, we... we're, we're

not doing to others. (Chris: Mm-hmm) Instead, we see them as, [...] our... I don't know, our bosses. As [...] our superiors. You know what I mean? [...]. You know you can tend to betray your own people. Because now you are on that side, and you think now you are better than your own people. [...]"

This exchange took place, unprompted, at the end of our call. By that point, the conversation had focused on Tjamiwa's understanding of Black South Africans' hostility toward foreign Black Africans. Tjamiwa rooted that hatred in a made-up irreconcilable difference. This explanation strongly evokes the idea of engineered colonial identities. Such an identity erosion is presented as making Black Africans frame one another as eligible for a violence those seen as "[...] bosses. As [...] superiors" are shielded from. That selective wielding of violence possibly outlines a racist capitalist hierarchy wherein anybody but Black Africans is a de facto "boss". By describing how Black Africans might perceive other racial identities as "*superior*", one can infer that Black Africans are narrated as ranking themselves as relatively inferior to "*others*". Such a devaluation is connected to intra-group violence ("*we are made to hate each other. [...] what we are doing to Africans, [...] we're not doing to others.*"). Tjamiwa also stated that Black Africans might feel relatively superior once they are "*on that side*" where one can also dehumanize others, instead of being unilaterally dehumanized. This social mobility is associated with a sense of superiority ("*Because now you are on that side, and you think now you are better than your own people [...]*"), and connected to the tendency to forsake other Black Africans ("*You know you can tend to betray your own people*"). As it is colonial devaluation that fuels the need to claim some superiority and prioritize status over affiliation, the cycle of identity erosion that fuels narcissism and its banalization of violence among Black Africans, can be inferred from this story. Since narcissism here is associated with exerting colonial violence against one's own people, narcissism can be read as being associated with indirect rule. As the deployment of colonial violence by colonized people themselves, indirect rule unsurprisingly can only lead to divisions among colonized people, in this case Black Africans. This cycle transpired in the 79 conversations conducted for this study.

In the next section, I examine how experiencing colonial violence may have influenced participants' narration of Black people and the Black racial identity in this study.

7.4. Black people's self-narration and positioning in a White supremacist paradigm

In this section, I recount participants' narrative approaches when describing the violence experienced by Black Africans regardless of citizenship. Those approaches seemingly adopt four postures: 1. Decoloniality, 2. confirmation bias, 3. fawning and 4. White supremacy. These approaches appear to constitute a spectrum that spreads from talking back (Smith, 1999) to the White supremacist dehumanization of Black people, all the way to upholding it. I first start with the decolonial posture.

In their stories, participants who mobilized a decolonial posture sought to reclaim an identity that did not further White supremacist narratives. As such, they usually never mobilized racial essentialism or implied that race could be understood as a biological concept. They instead framed it as a tool of White supremacist violence. In these stories, White Europeans' privileges would be explicitly challenged and tied to South Africa's history, as well as global racial dynamics. Other forms of supremacy such as capitalism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity were also questioned. These participants' stories included none or very little uncontextualized anti-Black rhetoric and did not legitimize White supremacist hierarchies. Furthermore, their narratives framed Black South Africans' violence within the broader context of White supremacy.

Bongani, Eugene and Barika were participants who mobilized that approach in their narration. As an example, in some of Barika's answers, Black South Africans' violence toward foreign Black Africans was framed within the context of Apartheid. The argumentative progression that "[...] *Within the Apartheid era, because the White person was in charge [...] [Black South Africans] had nothing to say*" and "[...] *maybe that's why they usually like taking matters into their own hands.*" since "*They never had the freedom to do such things back then [...]*", holds a dual purpose. It both denounces the White supremacist Apartheid violence that denied Black South Africans' freedom and it connects Black South Africans' contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans to that same White supremacist violence. This answer consequently does not present violence among Black Africans as inherent to them but rather as a result of White supremacy. Furthermore, in Barika's answers, foreign Black Africans' perceived (in)ability to "[add] to the GDP" was also positioned as fueling the violence they might face in South Africa. These answers thus connected forms of supremacy (White supremacy and capitalism) to violence among Black Africans. They highlighted that in postcolonial societies, colonial violence

manifests in intersecting systems of oppression which are minimally White supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy (hooks 1984/2000; Malherbe, 2022). Unlike the decolonial posture, stories that mobilized the confirmation bias approach (i.e. the tendency to look for evidence that confirm one's beliefs) exclusively blamed Black Africans for any ills recounted. Consequently, Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans would be used to further confirm bias about the specific group of Black Africans discussed. Outrage was particularly highlighted when discussing violence from Black Africans, while anti-Black violence performed by other racial groups was either not discussed or banalized. This translated into stories in which Black Africans were blamed, while everybody else who partook in or condoned violence against Black Africans was seemingly absolved. Alternatively, whenever anti-Black violence was acknowledged as enacted by other racial groups, that violence was usually presented as rooted in specific individuals, not in the group identity. Such a framing was never used with Black South Africans or foreign Black Africans who were usually all painted with the same brush and denied individuality. This narration can be assessed as ultimately reinforcing the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. It also seemingly confirms that the Black racial identity is conceptualized as a group identity. This posture was present across most of the 79 conversations. As an example, when Bini recounted the obstetric violence she survived when giving birth the third time, she contrasted it to her first two births which were overseen by "*an Indian man*". She narrated her third birth as overseen by "[...] *Black people [...] who were [...] angry, things like that.*" and involving an attempted coerced sterilization described in chapter six, section 6.4. Bini then shared that "[...] *To be honest [...]...They did not treat me well with this operation for the last time. [...]*". Although in her narration Bini acknowledged the presence of health professionals she did not present as Black in the same hospital where the obstetric violence took place, in her story only Black health professionals are associated with her abuse. In her recounting, Bini did not explicitly inquire about the complicity of health professionals she did not read as Black South Africans. In keeping with this study's approach to highlight common trends and possible structural dynamics rather than individual traits, this silence is not pointed to characterize the narrator. Instead, it is used to outline structural dynamics. In this case, this silence might indicate how commonly negative traits are unilaterally attributed to Black Africans while the behaviour of members of other racial groups is not questioned. To this point, whenever I would ask participants whether they thought staff they did not read as Black knew about the abuse they reported having experienced from Black South

African staff in institutions such as hospitals, the police, or Home Affairs, virtually all would answer negatively. These answers might point again to the presence of the archetype of the deficient Black Other and the resulting othering of Black South African staff.

Similarly, the fawning posture also indicated some normalization of the confining of some Black people into the archetype of the deficient Black Other. Participants whose stories embody that approach conveyed what could be read as the banalization of Black Africans' mistreatment to the point of seemingly no longer challenging it. What I read between the lines was that if the narrator abided by the dominant group's rules (which are necessarily colonial rules in a postcolonial setting), they could aspire to be spared from colonial White supremacist violence. As such, foreign Black Africans who use that approach were more likely to not make generalizations about Black South Africans in their stories – which stood in contrast with stories that mobilized the confirmation bias posture. In those stories, however, the reported positive treatment and support received from the dominant group was not described. While it might have been quite positivist to expect examples that would illustrate this good rapport, it was confusing to not document particularly unharmed relationships between foreign Black African participants and members of the dominant group, and yet consistently hear that such relationships existed. In their stories, elements that could be read as contributing to colonial violence were seemingly not challenged, possibly to avoid stating anything that could be read as challenging the dominant group. In the context of South Africa, this implies questioning neither Black South Africans (who hold relative power over foreign Black African nationals) nor White European South Africans. This appeared to inform most of Farid's stories as shown in this excerpt in which Farid both affirms that South African institutions respect his rights and also describes being at a standstill administratively.

“Farid: [...] Yes, they do respect actually in South Africa. There is Home Affairs for foreign national [sic] only. And there is a Home Affairs for South African [sic], so [...] they do respect my right[sic]. [...] The only thing [...] delaying is the...The ID. [...] They do respect my rights.

Chris: And so, without an ID, what can you do? [...]

Farid: The ID actually I was, I was there. [...] I was there at Home Affairs. [...] They did explain to me. [...] The, the e-mail to submit our document. [...] They say they will get back to me [...]. But without that ID, I'm struggling. In terms of my account, it's blocked. I can't use my account because my ID is expired.

Chris: So even though you do not have the ID and your account is blocked and you're struggling, you still believe that the institution in charge of giving you that ID respects your rights?

Farid: Ah... how can I answer that?"

"How can I answer that?" might indicate that Farid possibly fears jeopardizing his safety by saying anything that could be read as challenging the dominant group from his own social location, i.e., Black South Africans. Repeating what he had explained seconds earlier might have also created a premise that made it complicated to answer my question - which might have sounded more like an implicit affirmation than a question. Farid could have challenged that implicit assumption, yet he seemingly chose not to. Instead, Farid appeared to have decided against questioning anybody's approach, be it Home Affairs', or mine. This would explain why Farid's affirmation that Home Affairs respects his rights, and my insinuations that – based on his explanation - they might not respect his rights, can both co-exist. Farid, then spontaneously shared the following when asked if he wanted to recount any other story.

"Chris: Alright. Is there anything you haven't shared that you would like to share with me?"

Farid: I'm just emotional right now. [...]

Chris: Why are you emotional?

Farid: Yeah, I've been through a lot in this country. I've been through a lot. I've been through a lot."

Farid went on to recount ordeals his family faced after an outbreak of national collective violence against foreign Black Africans. Such a reaction likely indicates that Farid had initially decided not to discuss those experiences and instead focus on events that had relatively less impact on him and his family. This approach might have aimed to depict a more positive situation than the one he has been experiencing. Such efforts might speak to some fear of retaliation which, as discussed in chapter five section 5.2., appears to be linked to colonial violence and the imperative to not challenge the marginalization of the Black Other. The instinct to not discuss potentially confronting realities even as one experiences them and acknowledges how common they are (Farid did discuss the violence foreign Black Africans commonly face in South Africa), possibly also reveals a premise of tokenism (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990). Accordingly, Farid might have reasoned that shall he conform and not challenge the oppressive status quo, he might be

among the few people who manage to relatively improve their social situation, even as most members of his social group (i.e. foreign Black Africans) remain disenfranchised. This reasoning would further explain Farid's initial silence about his own experiences and his ease to discuss other foreign Black Africans' experiences. Such learned behaviour might lead to compartmentalizing and repressing one's own emotions. This might explain why Farid felt "*emotional*" after discussing not only other foreign Black Africans' realities but also his own.

Emotions would also run high – including on my end - in conversations that mobilized a White supremacist posture. In their stories, participants who used that approach would seize seemingly any opportunity to make White supremacist affirmations and oppose White Europeans' alleged virtues and superiority to Black Africans' alleged inadequacy and inferiority. Despite such affirmations, these stories never included any references about having ever interacted with European people. Instead, conclusions would use movies and what appeared to be a selective approach to the news⁷ as their premise. In their stories, the pronoun "they" was more likely to be used when talking about Black Africans which can be read as distancing oneself from that identity, even if one had identified as Black African too. That posture was present in stories shared by Juma (chapter five, section 5.3.1.) and Gladys (chapter four, section 4.2.) that respectively normalized White homicidal violence against Black Africans, and a revisionist White supremacist history.

Overall, these four postures used to describe Black people and the Black racial identity were not mutually exclusive. On several occasions, a story would start with the mobilization of a specific standpoint which would eventually evolve into a different one. For example, Berenice's storytelling described all Zulu people as violent. In addition to being a racist generalization, this narrative illustrates the confirmation bias approach and the confining of Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. The conversation then evolved into discussing her hopes of resettling in a western country because White Europeans had "*love in their heart*". When presented with the deadly restrictions against Black African migrants in the Mediterranean, Berenice's answers did not question these countries' practices. Instead, the focus was on Black African migrants who were "*going [...] the wrong way*". That narration aligns with the White supremacist posture: Black people are narrated as inadequate and antithetical to White Europeans who are presented as holding what can be read as moral virtues (i.e., "*love in their heart*").

⁷ Any news about racist violence in western countries was either dismissed or participants would report not having heard about it.

Berenice then shared that she could not attempt to reach Europe that way, drawing a line between herself and other Black Africans. She added that she had been trying to reach a United Nations agency but that the line was always busy. That phrasing possibly signals that out of all Black Africans who attempt to resettle in Europe, the narrator positions themselves as among those who can successfully complete that project because they would not go “*the wrong way*”. This assumption is in line with the fawning approach. There is no questioning of the dominant group - in this case European nations and the United Nations agency that acts as their proxies - and their methods. There is instead the belief that should Berenice play by these rules without questioning them, she can successfully obtain what she seeks, i.e., resettling in a European country. This assumption outlines the tokenistic premise of the fawning posture: it posits that only a few in a disenfranchised group (i.e., those who abide by colonial rules) can improve their living conditions.

Since that spectrum predominantly normalizes White supremacy with three out of the four approaches not challenging it, and since both foreign Black African nationals and Black South African nationals could be situated on this spectrum, such a convergence in narration is a reminder that White supremacy exists beyond post-Apartheid South Africa and is structural in postcolonial societies. This convergence might also indicate that structural White supremacy commonly informs the way participants narrate Black people and the Black racial identity.

In the next section I interrogate whether such narrative choices reveal strategies to survive White supremacist abuse. I call this coping mechanism “White supremacy survivor syndrome.”

As mentioned, participants’ stories commonly decried Black Africans’ behaviour, seemingly without contextualizing it. It follows that Black Africans as a collective were often depicted as inadequate. In stories that counted with what I assessed as the most explicit forms of anti-Blackness, Europeans were consistently praised. For example, Gladys narrated European people donating “*old clothes*”⁸ to Black Africans as a commendable act. Interestingly, in narratives that associated help with White Europeans, the focus was on getting basic items for survival such as food, clothing or in one case, money to secure a shelter. Furthermore, in their stories, the same participants also acknowledged the privileges, harm and violence attached to White European settlers in South Africa and other African countries. For example, Gladys mentioned beatings and

⁸ This was Gladys’ initial example when asked to share some alleged positive impacts of colonialism.

the physical violence of colonialism (see chapter four, section 4.2.) When connecting those elements, these narratives might describe being trapped – or held hostage – in a paradigm in which people who have historically marginalized and abused Black Africans, are the same people who are perceived as critical for Black Africans’ survival. From the standpoint of western psychology, that dynamic evokes a trauma bond (Carnes, 2016; Reid et al., 2013). Trauma bonds have been identified several times in this study, both when analyzing historical facts and participants’ stories. The four characteristics of a trauma bond (i.e. identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation) can be identified in dynamics between Black Africans who might see White Europeans as critical for their survival, and White European settlers. If these Black Africans have learned to see themselves from White European settlers’ perspective and confined their identity into the colonial archetype of the Black Other, this would speak to identity erosion. A need to address that alleged inadequacy might consequently surge. To this point, Gladys’ story used a racist trope to describe people from her country prior to colonial contact, which might speak to identity erosion. Her recounting also presented western settlers as having brought literacy and education to her country. This narration framed Black Africans as ontologically inadequate and seemingly only salvageable by White European settlers so long as they did not challenge colonial violence. Such an agreement would amount to false promises and is identifiable in colonial pillages (Rodney, 1972). Gladys herself might have abided by this requirement when she lamented that Black Africans only said “*bad things*” about European colonizers (see chapter four, section 4.2.). As per Gladys’ answers, intermittent reinforcement might be encapsulated in questionable colonial education (Rodney, 1972) and “*old clothes*” donations in contemporary times. Such alleged gestures however do not prevent White European settlers’ devaluation of Black Africans. Gladys’s storytelling acknowledged it when she referred to people brutalized during colonization. Despite this, her narratives only attributed positive traits to western settlers who were assessed as having “*a lot of positivity*”. Such refusal to question people identified as causing harm is worth highlighting. In western psychology, trauma bonds are also characterized by defensive reactions toward those that call out the abuse and essentially challenge the abuser (Bachand & Djak, 2018; Reid et al., 2013). The refusal to be critical of White Europeans’ racist abuse documented in Gladys’, Juma’s and Berenice’s respective stories might illustrate such defensiveness.

When using Africa and Africans as vantage points to look at manifestations of colonial violence, the seemingly banalization of White supremacy might therefore be conceptualized as a trauma

bond between colonized Black Africans and White European settlers. This bond might result from the collective experience of colonial violence. It might as such speak to attempts to survive White supremacist violence in a postcolonial world in which racialized people cannot fully escape it. Within this captivity, some Black Africans might leave White supremacist abuse unchallenged possibly because they associate it with their survival. This potential reasoning would also align with Juma's story. By not challenging the homicidal White supremacist violence exerted against Black South Africans, Juma might assess that he is shielding himself from that violence. It follows that in this context, White European South Africans targeting Black South Africans instead of him or people from his country might be read as contributing to his survival.

Reframing the link between Black Africans and White European settlers as a possible trauma bond and connecting it with the way Black people narrate one another, is key to appreciate the consequences of perpetual cycles of colonial dehumanization. That exercise is also critical to sever this bond and usher in decolonized futures.

In the last section, I share a participant's story in which refusing identity erosion is presented as a premise to challenge White supremacy and colonial violence.

7.5. "I've always rejected the racial classification of the Apartheid regime [...] and so I identified as a Black person": talking back to colonial dehumanization

In this last section, I examine a story shared by Tibane who was among the few participants who did not present race as a biophysiological concept but as a political stance.

"Tibane: I've always rejected the racial classifications of the Apartheid regime and [...] of all colonial past. And, very early in my life [...], I joined the Black consciousness movement and so, I identified as a Black person."

In this excerpt, rejecting the racial classifications of Apartheid does not equate to being silent around race. Instead, it implies rejecting the dehumanization of the Black racial identity. Indeed, "[...] I identified as a Black person" is presented as stemming from joining "[...] the Black consciousness movement[...]" and rejecting "[...] the racial classifications of the Apartheid regime[...]" . This progression could therefore imply that as per the White supremacist racial categories of Apartheid, Tibane would have possibly had the option to claim another racial

identity. Yet, she “[...] *identified as a Black person*”, which aligns with the Black consciousness movement’s approach to unite all racialized people dehumanized by Apartheid under the label “Black” (Cooper & Ratele, 2018). Unlike stories in which colonial violence appeared to have fostered a sense of colonial inadequacy, here, colonial violence seemingly led the narrator to politically mobilize themselves and embraced the most dehumanized identity in a White supremacist paradigm. This political choice amounts to talking back (Smith, 1999) to White supremacist violence by refusing its dehumanizing of Black people. Furthermore, stating that this decision was made “*very early*” underscores that narratives that dehumanize Black people have surrounded the narrator from an early age. It also indicates that one can decide “*very early*” to challenge White supremacy and anti-Blackness. Assessing what led to such an outcome instead of the fostering of colonial inadequacy frequently identified in this thesis, would be a research topic of its own. Nevertheless, Tibane’s answer embodies critical decolonial leadership: it identifies patterns of colonial violence and interrupts it by reframing and rehumanizing Black peoples.

7.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I focused on my third and last secondary question: how do Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals describe the impact of anti-Black racism on their racial identity? I answered this question by examining stories that highlight how colonial violence seemingly fosters some racial essentialism that erodes Black people’s racial identity and positions it as undesirable. I argued that such identity erosion could lead participants to not narrate themselves as having a race while attributing a race to other Black people. I subsequently analyzed stories that indicate that confining other Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other might fuel enmity and the perpetuation of colonial violence among Black peoples, i.e., indirect rule. By connecting these different stories, I suggested that identity erosion caused by colonial violence might foster narcissism which in turn might encourage indirect rule. I then reflected on participants’ narration of their racial identity and relationships with other Black people and identified four postures (decolonial, confirmation bias, fawning and White supremacist). I concluded this chapter with a story that positions the Black racial identity as a deliberate political choice to delegitimize White supremacy.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This research mobilized a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach to analyze Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black African nationals. In chapter one, I provided an overview of western colonialism and its connection with dynamics of whiteness, narcissism, and trauma bonds. I then argued that western colonialism led to the creation of global racist colonial archetypes, including the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. With this premise, I introduced my main research question: what does a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological analysis of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black African nationals reveal about contemporary racial identities and racial relations on the continent? I also introduced three secondary questions respectively focused on the presence in participants' life stories of 1. anti-Black narratives, 2. Malherbe et al. (2021)'s four axes of a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism and, 3. narratives about the impact of anti-Black violence on participants' racial identity. In chapter two, I provided an overview of the interconnectedness of narcissism, identity erosion, trauma bonds and nationalism in South Africa to stress the relevance of interrogating racial identities and racial relations in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. After discussing my methodology in chapter three, in chapters four to seven, I sought to answer my three secondary research questions which correspond to chapter four, chapters five and six, and chapter seven respectively. I provide an overview of each one of those chapters below and a tentative answer to my main research question. I then offer a reflection on the terminology used to describe Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans.

My first secondary question centered on the interwovenness of anti-Black narratives in participants' life stories. Upon analyzing stories of childhood memories, I identified narratives that confine Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. I also identified in participants' stories, revisionist historical affirmations that seemingly simultaneously confine Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other on one end, and attribute to White Europeans the colonial archetype of the standard human that is above questioning, on the other. I put such portrayal in dialogue with Fanon's (1967) framing of the White and Black identities as mutually defining one another ever since the colonial encounter. I then focused on Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans' narrations of one another, and also identified

anti-Black tropes in those. I then focused on Black South Africans' specific targeting of those they read as foreign Black Africans. I outlined in participants' answers the intersecting dynamics of Apartheid, identity erosion, and narcissism, and positioned those as possible underpinning elements. I concluded chapter four with a counternarrative that called on Black people to unlearn the colonial programming (i.e., to reject anti-Black narratives and challenge colonial identity erosion).

In chapters five and six, I sought to answer my secondary research question which analyzed Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans using Malherbe et al. (2021)'s decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism. In chapter five, I identified in participants' stories three dimensions of that framework: 1. the coloniality of Modernity, 2. the racism of zero-point and 3. White normativity. Specifically, I identified the coloniality of Modernity in narratives that outline a racist capitalistic gendered hierarchy that confines at its bottom Black Africans and particularly impoverished Black African women. I outlined the racism of zero-point in stories that recounted the banalization of racist violence against Black people. As for White normativity, I outlined it in stories that positioned White Europeans' comfort and standpoint as universal and above any questioning. I concluded chapter five with stories recounting the interruption of violence against foreign Black Africans. I conceptualized the function of those stories as talking back (Smith, 1999) to colonial violence. I consequently framed them as references of critical decolonial leadership as they offer paths to interrupt the colonial dehumanization of Black Africans.

In chapter six, I sought to identify whether the last dimension of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework (i.e. everyday structural violence) transpired in participants' stories. To do so I focused on participants' recounting of interactions with three institutions (Home Affairs, the police, and public hospitals). I conceptualized such interactions between civilians and government employees as indicators of everyday state-sanctioned (mis)treatment of foreign Black Africans. In those stories I identified what appeared to be a redeployment of the Apartheid violence, which can be illustrative of hauntology (Derrida, 1994; Saleh-Hanna, 2015). I also suggested that since Apartheid violence is colonial violence, such hauntology might speak to a form of indirect rule. As such, I pointed to the possible existence of trauma bonds between White European settlers who abused Black Africans, and Black South Africans who are narrated as perpetuating colonial violence against other Black Africans in contemporary times. I concluded with a story about efforts to interrupt everyday structural violence and framed such efforts as critical decolonial leadership.

In chapter seven, I sought to answer my last secondary question: how do Black South Africans and foreign Black African nationals describe the impact of anti-Black racism on their racial identity? I did so by focusing on participants' narration of race which points to some racial essentialism and the positioning of the Black racial identity as undesirable. I observed that such an understanding of the Black racial identity seemingly led most participants to not explicitly or spontaneously narrate themselves as having a race, while simultaneously attributing a race to other Black people. In participants' stories I also identified a pattern in which confining other Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other ranked at the bottom of the social hierarchy, seemingly fueled Black Africans' violence against one another. I subsequently suggested that by causing a sense of colonial inadequacy and fueling the need to reclaim some colonial superiority, identity erosion caused by colonial violence might contribute to narcissism as defined in this study. To emphasize the crucial role that colonial identity erosion seemingly plays in violence among Black Africans, I analyzed a counternarrative in which resisting colonial identity erosion was narrated as a deliberate political choice to reject White supremacy and embrace Black consciousness instead. Finally, in participants' narration of their racial identity and relationships with other Black people, I identified four postures that appeared to all be responses to White supremacist violence. These were respectively: 1. decolonial, 2. confirmation bias, 3. fawning and 4. White supremacist postures. I suggested that such a spectrum might outline what I labeled a White supremacy survivor syndrome: the different strategies used to survive White supremacy in a postcolonial context where one cannot fully avoid it.

In this last chapter, I attempt to formulate an answer to my main research question. I also reflect on the cyclical nature of colonial violence identified in participants' stories to further highlight the urgency to interrupt such violence. I then reflect on a different terminology to refer to Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. I continue by discussing the methodological contributions of this study, as well as its theoretical contributions and limitations. I conclude with the significance of this study for future decolonial qualitative research.

8.1. The decolonial imperative to reject colonial disfigurement and interrupt colonial violence

In this section, I attempt to connect the different patterns identified in participants' stories to formulate an answer to my main research question. I highlight the transgenerational dimensions of

participants' stories to signal the importance of interrupting the cycle of colonial violence (Smith, 1999) and I identify the rejection of colonial archetypes as a key requirement.

Based on the analysis from chapter four to seven that consistently pointed to the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other, the narration of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans suggests that Black Africans' contemporary racial identities are still rooted in colonialism. These racial identities might consequently both reflect and sustain century-long colonial ambitions to dehumanize Black people. That racist dehumanization was described in great detail in participants' stories, at times along strategies to resist its outcomes. All stories conveyed an acute awareness of the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other, and a few offered a counternarrative to the dehumanizing framing of the Black racial identity. When a counternarrative was offered, the confinement of Black people into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other was both denounced and substituted with a call to reclaim pride in the Black identity. I conceptualized such a posture as talking back (Smith, 1999) to colonial violence.

As for racial relations between Black Africans, based on life stories analyzed for this research, I suggest that these relations are articulated around dynamics of colonial identity erosion, narcissism, trauma bonds with colonial abusers and indirect rule. I imply that colonial disfigurement translates into identity erosion which might lead one to see themselves and other Black people through a White supremacist lens on one end, and foster a sense of inadequacy on the other. Addressing that sense of colonial inadequacy might result in pursuing a sense of colonial superiority, which might ultimately amount to engaging in the perpetuation of colonial violence against Black Africans, i.e., indirect rule. Both narcissism and indirect rule might fuel tokenism (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990), i.e., seeking to improve one's colonial status while the rest of one's social group sits lower in the colonial hierarchy and remains exclusively eligible for colonial violence. As tokenism might come along potential false promises and some desire for colonial validation (i.e., intermittent reinforcement), tokenism might in turn favour the creation of trauma bonds with people in privileged situations. Indeed, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and both the identity erosion and devaluation that would accompany a sense of inadequacy, are all characteristics of trauma bonds. In a (post)colonial setting, those trauma bonds might have been forged with European colonizers or people with some proximity to them. I consequently trace the genealogy of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans

to the broader global phenomenon of western colonialism. The intersecting dynamics of western colonialism, identity erosion, narcissism, trauma bonds, and indirect rule, are represented in the diagram below.

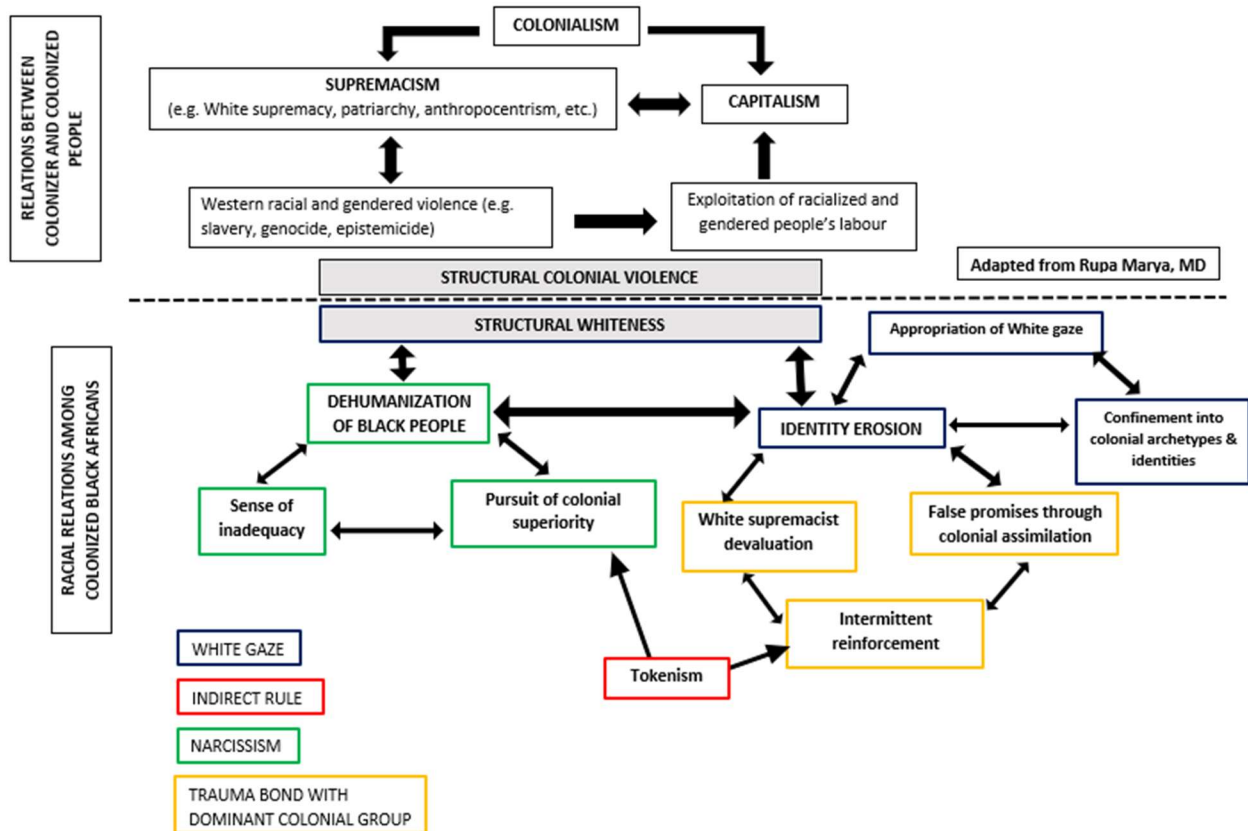


Figure 1: Diagram presenting a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological analysis of racial identities and racial relations in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. This diagram was adapted from Rupa Marya's chart in her "Health and Justice: the Path of liberation through medicine" keynotes (Marya, 2020).

To continue reflecting on western colonial violence's long-lasting consequences on Black Africans' racial identities and racial relations, in the second half of this section, I highlight the transgenerational dimension of stories included in this research. I do so to flag the urgency to interrupt colonial violence by rejecting colonial dehumanization.

In chapter four, I shared stories that recounted experiences of racist mistreatment against participants during their childhood. The same participants also shared stories about racial discrimination experienced during adulthood. In all these situations, regardless of where they were

or who was exerting the violence, participants described being reduced to the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other that is eligible for violence.

In chapter five, stories about institutional violence routinely included children as both witnesses and direct targets. From Home Affairs and its administrative violence to abusive and dismissive police practices, the presence of children never seemed to deter violence in those stories. Instead, exerting violence in front of children could be analyzed as a tactic to further disempower the narrator's by simultaneously negating their rights and their ability to shield their children from violence. Furthermore, stories of abuse in hospitals crystallized the transgenerational nature of colonial violence. Foreign Black Africans' children were narrated as born into the world as their mother faced the intersectional violence of racism, capitalism, and patriarchy (i.e., colonial violence). Participants' stories also described how only minutes into their life, these children themselves were mistreated for being children of "foreigners".

Also speaking to the transgenerational dimension of the dehumanization of Black people, were the connotations associated with the label "Black". In one conversation, "Black" was likened to a slur and this interpretation was hypothesized as being possibly global. Such a hypothesis potentially revealed that the dehumanizing framing of the label "Black" had been maintained for generations in the narrator's environment. Along the same lines, several stories recounted how the label "foreigner" had been used to marginalize narrators during their school years and how it was now used to marginalize their own children at school. Whether with the weaponization of "Black" or "foreigner", these stories indicate that generations of Black Africans might be seeing themselves and one another through a dehumanizing colonial gaze that reduces them to the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other. Identity erosion, whether that implies being narrated as a perpetrator or survivor of colonial violence, ultimately traps in colonial archetypes and racist violence all Black Africans involved. As such, resisting identity erosion and rejecting colonial archetypes could possibly help interrupt the transgenerational cycle of colonial violence outlined in this research.

In the next section I reflect on the terminology commonly used to refer to Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans.

8.2. Rethinking terminology

In chapters five and six, all axes of Malherbe et al. (2021)'s framework of a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychology of antiracism have been identified in foreign Black Africans' retelling of the violence they experience from Black South Africans. As this framework outlines manifestations of racism, such an observation would imply that racism (specifically anti-Black racism) and White supremacy are central to this violence. Therefore, in this section I suggest labeling Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans as "appropriated White supremacist violence".

Based on participants' stories, Black South Africans who engage in violence against foreign Black Africans are more likely to confine foreign Black Africans into a lower social rank. According to western psychology, this tendency aligns with the narcissistic trait of attempting to relatively elevate one's status by decreasing the Other's status (Grapsas et al., 2020). To this point, all accounts from foreign Black Africans described the wielding of a dehumanizing violence that amounted to no concrete gain for Black South Africans and only maintained Black Africans – regardless of their citizenship – cornered in oppression and senseless violence. Furthermore, since that violence evokes almost wound for wound that of the Apartheid, it might be that involved Black South Africans perpetuate western colonial violence to shield themselves from experiencing it. This would amount to shielding themselves from being (mis)treated as the Black Other.

Indeed, according to participants' stories, involved Black South Africans might be perpetuating the Apartheid violence with a frightening precision. From the underpinning ideology (South African citizenship as a claim to dehumanize Black Africans), to the methods (systemic violence ranging from governmental institutions to interpersonal interactions and dehumanizing beliefs about Black Africans) and the targets ("foreigners"), key elements of the Apartheid violence can be situated in Black South Africans' contemporary violence against foreign Black Africans. This pattern consequently evokes indirect rule since such colonial violence takes place without the direct intervention of European colonizers. It also points to connections between colonial identity erosion (i.e., "foreigner" and the colonially engineered "Black South African"), narcissism, and indirect rule - specifically, the perpetuation of Apartheid violence- in participants' stories. Any terminology used to refer to Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans should ideally capture such dynamics.

On the point of terminology, during our conversations, foreign Black African nationals would commonly say “*the time of xenophobia*” or “*I remember the first xenophobia happened in 2008*”, thus labelling “xenophobia” episodes of collective violence against foreign Black Africans. They did so while simultaneously describing in detail what seems more akin to a permanent national state of hostility against them. On one occasion, a member of a South African organization suggested talking about “tribalism” instead of “xenophobia”. Since to this day “tribes” seems to be exclusively used to refer to racialized people¹, that term also points to violence among racialized individuals. Ultimately, what all those reactions indicate is that the colour-silent premise of “xenophobia” can be misleading. Despite this, “xenophobia” is still commonly used to describe what can be qualified as the perpetuation of White supremacist violence by Black Africans who are themselves exposed to that very violence. Although “xenophobia” is theoretically not the most appropriate label to describe a reality that is only applicable to specific foreign nationals in South Africa, as argued in chapter two, “xenophobia” is the only label that would make sense under Apartheid rationale, when the foreigner could only be a Black African. Using “xenophobia” might therefore imply using Apartheid language. Unsurprisingly, adopting uncritically the language of the abuser usually does not serve its targets. As such, when both Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans use such colonial language, it can be argued that they misrepresent their own reality. Furthermore, the case against labeling the violence against foreign Black African nationals “xenophobia” can be made and has been made (Chinweizu, 2005 in Skuy and Verryn, 2008, p. 197; Matsinhe, 2011).

“Negrophobia”, although used in the early stages of this research, can also be problematized as it can be understood as rationalizing hatred against blackness and Black people. “Afrophobia” (Matsinhe, 2011) centers on the African as a phobogenic object (Fanon, 1967), and echoes to some extent the Enlightenment era racist perspective that Africans are only found on the continent of Africa and are all Black. Those assumptions can be questioned; it is unclear that a diasporic Black African who is not a citizen of an African country, or an Amazigh person from northern Africa who is not Black, would be (mis)treated in South Africa the same way foreign Black Africans are.

¹ This label can be conceptualized as racist since it promotes a myth of “primitive [racialized] timelessness.” (Lowe, 2001)

Presenting the African identity as the target of this violence could therefore overlook the plurality of Africans, in addition to once again, placing the blame on the colonial Other.

Given that context, to describe the violence unleashed by some Black South Africans against foreign Black African nationals in post-Apartheid South Africa, it might be more accurate to talk about appropriated White supremacist violence; a violence rooted in White supremacy that Black Africans in South Africa have been experiencing since colonial times and are displacing against those historically placed at the bottom of the South African colonial hierarchy, i.e. Black Africans. Because it does not explicitly mention it, this framing could be read as overlooking the interconnectedness of White supremacy and other systems of western colonial violence such as capitalism and patriarchy. Nevertheless, this study evidenced that using racism and White supremacy as entry points to analyze Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, does lead to identifying these intersecting systems of oppression and their link with the coloniality of Modernity (see chapter five, sections 5.1 and 5.1.1.).

A cursory reading of “appropriated White supremacist violence” in reference to Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans could also result in the decontextualized labelling of Black South Africans as “White supremacists”. Such a reading would imply the dismissal of the word “appropriated”. This adjective is deliberately placed at the beginning of the proposed terminology to emphasize that the violence described is not inherent to Black South Africans but is instead the hauntological (Derrida, 1994) legacy of (post)colonial societies designed to foster coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013) and the dehumanization of Black people.

Overall, while this proposed terminology has its limitations, it can hopefully contribute to highlight the continuous cycle of White supremacy and its intersectional consequences on Black Africans in postcolonial African states. This terminology can also be approached as outlining a potential strategy to destabilize Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, i.e., addressing White supremacy in all its iterations.

In the next section I discuss the methodological contributions of this research.

8.3. Thinking through orality, outside colonial borders: methodological contributions to decolonial qualitative research

In keeping with the ambition to provincialize western references and to position Africa and Africans as privileged vantage points (Malherbe et al., 2021), the data collection deliberately sought to prevent any dependance on bio-logic (Oyewumi, 1997) and emphasized instead orality. As participants could only hear my voice, and I could only hear theirs, visual clues to gauge social markers along the colonial hierarchies of White supremacy, capitalism, and gender, were unavailable. This setting likely contributed to the creation of a space in which participants might have felt less at risk of being judged or dismissed for who they are. This point is particularly important in the context of research conducted with and for marginalized social groups who are dismissed and disenfranchised based on their identity and social status. Also in line with rejecting colonial parameters, the methodology sought to minimize the importance of colonial borders, whether local or international. The entire data collection was conducted remotely, over WhatsApp, Skype, Teams, and phone calls and was successful in reaching participants in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. Such a geographical spread aimed to capture potential regional differences. Yet, the very similar trends present across participants' stories highlighted both the national magnitude of violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa and the ubiquity of dehumanizing narratives against Black Africans in general. At a logistical level, calls were set up to minimize efforts on participants' end. For example, if I was made aware that a participant did not have access to internet, I would give them a regular phone call at no cost to them. This approach acknowledged, normalized, and valued common practices of participants (i.e., communicating by phone and WhatsApp) instead of forcing them into new ones that might have been unfamiliar or uncomfortable. The modalities of the data collection consequently found participants where they were: often in their home and surrounded by their family. This approach might have positively influenced participants' level of comfort.

As hinted earlier, orality was the main epistemology mobilized for the data collection. The requirement to pay attention to the choice of words, responses, cadence, intonation, and silences, added depth to the messages shared during these calls. Furthermore, since there were no visual clues, any implicit understanding was necessarily rooted in shared lived experiences which likely contributed to a sense of proximity. For example, whenever women would discuss racialized and gendered violence, they would occasionally refer to my own identity and inquire whether I knew

what they were referring to. I approached that question as not being about my ability to understand theoretically or intellectually their stories, but rather about my own lived experience as a Black woman. Such reactions indicated the acknowledgement of a shared identity. Geographic distance consequently likely emphasized similarities of collective international lived experiences rooted in colonial violence.

Similarly, all participants regardless of their gender identity would often ask “you know?” to validate that I could follow their rationale. They would take my affirmative answer as a signal to share more stories which ultimately contributed to conversations that lasted an hour on average. Those spontaneous reactions can be understood as indicating that in the absence of visual clues, participants and I had to make sure that we understood each other’s perspectives. This at times implied slowing down the pace of the conversation whenever one party signaled some doubts about their understanding of the other person’s statement. In the occasional conversations that morphed into an opposition of perspectives, the statement “I don’t understand” could have both signaled some refusal to engage with my position just like it could have signaled some actual misunderstanding. I consistently chose to approach it as the latter and would reformulate my statement or question accordingly.

Generally, the focus on orality required participants and I to minimize assumptions and constantly refer to answers and stories shared earlier in the conversation. With the relative safety of anonymity and with their narratives validated, and unconditionally included into the data, participants might have felt relatively comfortable sharing their life stories despite the violence they embodied. This was signaled in participants’ feedback at the end of our call: many reported having shared stories that they usually do not discuss. It is thus possible that for many, the geographical distance between them and I created a protected and protective space in which they were free to share what they wished without fearing retaliations.

Normalizing geographical distance might therefore be a promising approach for decolonial research that seeks to center marginalized populations’ life stories. At a more practical level, geographical distance also translated into a more balanced distribution of power in terms of the logistics of the data collection. Data collection could only take place whenever participants were available to have an hour-long conversation in a space that they deemed safe and at a moment when they had enough energy to engage in such an activity. They also did not have to come meet me or take specific measures other than have access to a phone and internet. Rather than being

imposed a time and place, participants were the ones deciding the parameters of our conversation. Such an outcome is coherent with a decolonial qualitative approach that seeks not to position participants as disempowered “research objects”, but rather as co-constructors of meaning. While I have not communicated my reflections to participants as of the writing of this thesis, I hope to be able to do so by creating remote spaces that defy colonial borders and encourage storytelling.

In line with the approach to reject colonial borders, at no point were participants asked to indicate their citizenship or country of origin. Some participants decided to volunteer that information, however, not systematically documenting these demographics did not have any major impact on the study. Instead, it evidenced the commonalities of experiences of White supremacist violence across colonial borders. Future decolonial research might therefore benefit from examining the importance it gives to colonially engineered borders and citizenships.

Overall, in this research, employing methods that might not be typically mobilized in mainstream research, be it tailored remote interviews, centering orality, and avoiding practices that can re-marginalize participants such as asking about their administrative status or citizenship, positively impacted the data collection. The fact that many participants remained in touch after sharing their stories for close to or over an hour, speaks to the creation of a bond and is possibly another indicator of participants’ comfort during the data collection. Such a methodological approach can therefore be relevant for future qualitative research, particularly with populations who are stigmatized based on their identity, such as is often the case for Black people in a postcolonial White supremacist world.

Finally, a decolonial qualitative approach required me to reflect on how the research impacted me. I chose to interweave my own reflections in the analysis to illustrate that a decolonial posture is incompatible with the compartmentalizing of stories. Although I was documenting participants’ stories, and although I had never worked on this specific phenomenon before, stories recounting the dehumanization of Black people were not new to me. The often explicit and continuous accounts of racist, capitalistic, and gendered violence I received for six months both during scheduled calls and outside of those, made me question my identity and my ethical duty. With close to 80 interviews conducted, I often wondered whether I too had entered the business of hoarding stories of pain (Tuck & Yang, 2023). It was (and remains) unclear what challenging the colonial status quo that dehumanizes Black people look like when one wants to simultaneously remain truthful to participants (rightfully) seeking justice, and challenge western academia’s

common silence on racism. Because this research significantly impacted me, it further delegitimized colonial borders and identities, in this case by blurring the lines between diasporic and continental Africans as well as between researchers and participants. The methodological approach of this study might consequently be relevant for any research that seeks to challenge the colonial status quo.

In the next section I summarize this thesis' contributions to the theorization of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans.

8.4. Outlining ongoing coloniality and its racial violence: contributions to the theorization of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans

By focusing on participants' narratives of Black African identities and violence among Black Africans, this study sought to point out the fundamental role that racial identities and racial relations play in such dynamics. Doing so, the research deliberately aimed to challenge any colour-blindness and colour-silence around Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. This implied interrogating the label "xenophobia" which I did by using as a premise both the literature review presented in chapter two (sections 2.3 and 2.4.) and participants' stories in chapter four (sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2). I concluded that the label "xenophobia" can be analyzed as crystallizing an Apartheid-era White supremacist representation of the Black African "foreigner" who is disqualified from enjoying any rights in South Africa. This analysis thus connected "xenophobia" with colonial ambitions of the South African nation-state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013; Mamdani, 2020). Accordingly, the resulting violence can only be colonial in nature- i.e. White supremacist, capitalistic and gendered, as evidenced in chapters four to seven.

By using race as an entry point to analyze Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans, the entire premise of western colonial violence underpinning this phenomenon was made visible. The analysis consequently went beyond common discourses of economic competition (von Holdt et al., 2011) and scapegoating (Crush and Ramachandran, 2016) to outline the colonial roots of this violence, and as such, its intimate link with Apartheid and White supremacy. Put together, the study contributed to evidencing the contemporary pitfalls of nationalism rooted in colonialism (Fanon, 1963), in addition to outlining the hauntology of Apartheid (see chapter six). As such, although the label is challenged in this study, the analysis ultimately echoed the problematization of South African nationalism that might be inferred from the term "xenophobia".

Analyzing racial identities and racial relations in Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans also contributed to drawing attention to persisting colonial archetypes and colonial identity erosion among Black Africans. When put in dialogue with the critical role of colonially rooted ambitions of the nation-state, the study provided some grounds to challenge identities inherited from colonialism, namely the "foreigner" and "South African" identities.

Using race as an entry point into the exploration of Black South African's violence against foreign Black Africans is an approach seldomly used in research. As such, this study possibly demonstrated that by challenging racial silence, one can still theorize the multiple layers of violence among Black Africans.

Since the contemporary understanding of race in postcolonial societies can be traced back to European scientific racism and the western colonial project, this study also pointed the persistent structural coloniality (Grosfoguel, 2007, Maldonado-Torres, 2007, Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013, Quijano, 2000) that transpires in participants' life stories. Notably, the White gaze that causes identity erosion and frames Black Africans as eligible for racist, capitalistic, and gendered violence, might have crystallized the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Although not new (Du Bois, 1968), this concept of looking at oneself through the eyes of the dominant racial group has rarely been explicitly mentioned in the theorization of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans. Just like breaking the racial silence, this possibly novel angle might help provide a more exhaustive assessment of Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans and help design tailored strategies to interrupt this violence.

In line with the notion of a White gaze, this study approached the confinement of Black Africans into the colonial archetype of the deficient Black Other as a marker of identity erosion. Since colonial identity erosion might lead to devaluation, the pursuit of validation and possible exposure to false promises and intermittent reinforcement, identity erosion was connected to trauma bonds - whose four main characteristics are precisely identity erosion, false promises, intermittent reinforcement, and devaluation. Specifically, the research positioned colonial identity erosion as signaling a possible trauma bond between colonial abusers and colonially abused people. This

research also suggested that colonial identity erosion can fuel narcissism, therefore connecting western colonialism to narcissism and trauma bonds.

By connecting Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans to western colonialism, and by identifying possible trauma bonds and patterns of narcissism in it, the study outlined long-lasting psychological impacts of colonial violence (Fanon 1963, 1967). Furthermore, because in this study trauma bonds lead to western colonizers and their proxies, this study underscored western colonizers' responsibility in the fostering of colonial identity erosion in Black Africans. This study therefore illustrated that focusing on Black Africans to analyze a phenomenon assessed as linked to colonial violence, by no means overlooks or absolves European colonizers. Instead, this approach chose to establish Africa and Africans as preferential vantage points. This choice in and of itself can be seen as decolonial since it challenged eurocentrism and did not approach Africa from a deficit standpoint but rather as a socio-political space from which decolonial leadership can emerge. Indeed, the study highlighted potential ways for Black Africans to interrupt the cycle of colonial violence without depending on European colonial powers or their proxies. The decolonial praxis of resisting colonial identity erosion, was identified in participants' narratives. By underscoring that this strategy is already implemented in Africa, this study did not reduce the continent and its peoples to unresolved issues or deficits (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). It instead emphasized Black Africans' ability to push back against the overwhelming odds of coloniality. Such an analysis might also be relevant for other colonized contexts. This would restress the global relevance of decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological research.

Another contribution of this study is that it conceptualized Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans as an hauntology (Derrida, 1994; Saleh-Hanna, 2015). Evidencing existing parallels between the violence sustained by Black Africans in South Africa nowadays, and the White supremacist violence of Apartheid, is an exercise rarely undertaken in the literature on this phenomenon. By pointing how the legacy of Apartheid remains alive and urgently needs to be interrupted, this study illustrated the relevance of a decolonial framework. It also underscored the relevance of racial liberation when attempting to interrupt violence against foreign Black Africans in South Africa, consequently highlighting again the relevance of examining race in this phenomenon.

As both phenomena are two sides of unresolved White supremacist violence among colonized peoples, this study connected the possible hauntology of Apartheid to indirect rule. Specifically, it positioned South African institutional violence against foreign Black Africans as a critical indicator of these dynamics. Such a framing of institutional violence will be relevant for future decolonial qualitative research.

Furthermore, mobilizing the framing of hauntology in this research has contributed to emphasizing the globality and intersections of long-lasting colonial hegemonies. Although hauntology was initially theorized in relation to Marxism and capitalism (Derrida, 1994), this study illustrated its relevance to analyze repetitive cycles of racist, capitalistic, gendered colonial violence in African societies.

By positioning Black South Africans' violence against foreign Black Africans as one manifestation of colonial White supremacist violence, this study urged to challenge the racist colonial status quo that dehumanizes Black people, including when said status quo is narrated as perpetuated by Black people. The study mobilized four tactics to engage in a decolonial analysis of such colonial violence. First, the study sought to point out the structural nature of White supremacist violence by going beyond individual narratives to establish trends across stories on one end, and by connecting these trends to western colonial violence on the other. Secondly, the study acknowledged the intersection of White supremacy with other systems of oppression rooted in colonialism, namely capitalism and patriarchy. Thirdly, through stories shared, the study sought to evidence how White supremacy disrupts Black communities – for example through revisionist White supremacist history, the normalization of White homicidal violence or the banalization of violence against Black people. Finally, the study sought to emphasize narratives that talk back (Smith, 1999) to colonial violence and rehumanize Black people. That last point is critical to maximize the odds that any analysis of Black Africans' perpetuation of colonial violence simultaneously evidences and destabilizes the colonial status quo.

Overall, this study mobilized a slightly novel understanding of decolonial studies: one that conceptualizes decoloniality as a two-fold process that outlines coloniality at the introspective, interpersonal, and institutional level, and simultaneously highlights potential ways to challenge it using race as an entry point.

In the next section, I discuss some limitations of this study.

8.5. Limitations

Although remote data collection presented some advantages, namely a possible increased sense of anonymity and safety for participants, the lack of in-person interactions might have had some adverse effects. Indeed, the physical distance might have resulted in a feeling of isolation for participants who would have appreciated some in-person interactions following our call. Although I would end calls by attempting to ground participants in the present moment, as well as inviting them to share self-care practices in addition to providing a list of resources (see Appendix 5), some participants might have still felt lonely after our call. An in-person setting would have provided visual clues to assess participants' state, yet, it might not have necessarily prevented similar reactions upon parting ways with participants.

The low participation of Black South Africans also constituted a limitation in this study. As a qualitative study, there was no statistical requirement to meet, and each story was significant in and of itself. However, an increased participation of Black South Africans would have complexified and likely provided alternative interpretations of the dynamics that transpired in participants' stories. Nevertheless, the underrepresentation of Black South Africans can be approached as data. Only one foreign Black African participant out of 76 forwarded the contact of a prospective Black South African participant (who indeed participated in the study). The low representation of Black South Africans might therefore underscore the lack of rapport between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans. It might also point to the fact that foreign Black Africans might avoid mentioning a study like this one to their Black South African acquaintances. If this was the case, that omission would likely serve the purpose of not risking any conflict - which would fit with foreign Black African participants' portrayal of Black South Africans in this study. It is also worth highlighting that some of the organizations I contacted to recruit participants, are led by South African staff (see Appendix 1). The underrepresentation of Black South Africans in the data might consequently point to a discrepancy between formal organizational positioning and staff interest in diving into this topic. Overall, such underrepresentation of Black South African participants might indicate that "xenophobia" is perceived as a topic for foreign Black Africans to speak on instead of Black South Africans. The resulting silence and disengagement can be read as Black South Africans' banalization of the violence that foreign Black Africans face – as was identified in chapters five and six. Such a possibility would further underscore how colonially

engineered identities (i.e., “South Africans” and “foreigners”) divide Black Africans and prevent them from uniting to defend Black Africans’ rights and safety, regardless of citizenship.

Finally, the conceptualization of race used in this study can also be seen as a limitation. Race was framed as rooted in European Modernity and western colonialism since this conceptualization informed European colonial ambitions and the engineering of settler colonial states like South Africa. However, it could have been relevant to consider other framings of race (e.g. non-western or religious framings) in participants’ stories about their racial identity and racial relations with other Black Africans.

In the next section, I reflect on the significance of this study for future research.

8. 6. Decoloniality as the rallying mandate and significance of the study

This study provided practical references to implement qualitative decolonial research both at the methodological and theoretical levels. At a methodological level, this study showed that remote data collection, orality, tailoring the data collection to participants’ availability and generally seeking to think outside colonial borders of citizenship and geographic distance, can facilitate the implementation of the life history approach. The study also constituted an example of positioning both participants and the researcher as co-constructors of meaning by blurring the lines between these two categories.

At a theoretical level, the study outlined a two-fold framing of decolonial studies that both points out coloniality and puts forth strategies to destabilize it. It also demonstrated that by using race as an entry point to analyze Black South Africans’ violence against foreign Black Africans, structural colonial violence that manifests along racist, capitalistic and patriarchal lines could be outlined. The study emphasized a possible cycle that connects colonial identity erosion, trauma bonds, narcissism, and indirect rule - or the hauntology of western colonial hegemonies.

As western colonial violence has been global, the relevance to explore those dynamics applies to any colonized context and goes beyond South Africa. Furthermore, exploring to what extent the dynamics of identity erosion, narcissism, trauma bonds and indirect rule inform conflicts in other postcolonial African contexts, would also be relevant. While the Apartheid regime makes South Africa’s trajectory unique comparatively to other African countries, the realities of White supremacist colonial violence are global. It is therefore conceivable that similar dynamics exist

beyond South Africa and beyond the continent of Africa. In which case, this study provided guidelines to analyze similar dynamics with an Africa(n)-centered decolonial qualitative approach. One takeaway from this research is that colonial dynamics are global by nature and as such cannot be exhaustively theorized in isolation. This framing is critical to challenge any claim that might seek to misrepresent colonial violence as inherent to Black Africans. To this point, this research discussed how identity erosion, narcissism and trauma bonds also possibly informed European settlers' colonial ambitions. Engaging with and deepening reflections about identity erosion and colonial archetypes might thus help reframe representations of both colonized Black Africans and White European settlers. Such an analysis can help approach these identities through the lens of a colonially engineered trauma bond forged in the 15th century CE that must be urgently severed. Resulting academic contributions would add to decolonial and critical race studies, in addition to offering new references to analyze racial dynamics in postcolonial contexts shaped by White supremacist violence. Furthermore, future research could also help reimagine Black Africans' racial identities and racial dynamics outside dynamics of narcissism and trauma bond. Such efforts are critical for any radical decolonial endeavor on the continent and beyond. Indeed, several scholars have pointed out how western colonialism also colonizes the mind, preventing colonized people from thinking of themselves or their society outside colonial boundaries (Fanon, 1967; Smith, 1999). For colonized peoples, it might therefore be a matter of survival to reclaim sovereignty over their identities and social relations to interrupt the cycle of colonial violence. As of the writing of this conclusion (May 2024), war is raging in Sudan (Human Rights Watch, 2024), in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Shola, 2024) and there is an ongoing genocide in Gaza (Al Jazeera, 2024). Decolonial qualitative psychological research might help assess the extent to which colonial identity erosion and the need to reclaim colonial superiority after having been dehumanized by western colonial violence (i.e., narcissism), inform those lethal encounters. Like in this study, decolonial qualitative psychological research could also assess the role that intersectional racial violence might play in these crises and consequently identify a potential path to interrupt these disasters. What is clear and has been further confirmed in this study, is that “[f]or colonized peoples, [...] the cycle of colonialism is just that, a cycle with no end point, no emancipation” (Smith, 2012, p.259). Decolonial scholars consequently have a responsibility to work toward the urgently required interruption of repeating cycles of White supremacist, capitalistic, gendered, colonial violence.

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- **Appendix 1 – List of organizations contacted**
- a. **List of organizations contacted**

Name	Address	Website	Date of first message (by email or Facebook)
PASSOP	3 Hans Strijdom Avenue Lane; Tulbagh Centre Building (Room 413) Cape Town 8001	https://www.passop.co.za/	January 25, 2023
Sonke Gender Justice	1st Floor, Sir Lowry Studios 95 Sir Lowry Road Cape Town Stevensons Building, 3rd floor, 62 Juta Street, Cnr De Beer Street, Braamfontein, 2017, Johannesburg	https://genderjustice.org.za/	January 25, 2023
African Diaspora Forum	4th Floor Star Building 47 Sauer Street Johannesburg	https://adf.org.za/	January 25, 2023
Black Sash	Elta House, 3 Caledonian Road, Mowbray, 7700 Cape Town Street Address: Khotso House, 8th Floor, 62 Marshall Street, Johannesburg 2001 87A Main Road, Walmer, Gqeberha, 6070 Diakonia Centre, 20 Diakonia Street (previously St Andrews Street), Durban, 4001	https://www.blacksash.org.za/	January 30, 2023
June 16 Youth Development Foundation	Johannesburg, South Africa, 2193	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066503025024	January 30, 2023
Sophie A. Kanza Foundation	Not provided	https://www.facebook.com/sophiea.kanzafoundation/about/?ref=page_internal	January 30, 2023
Steve Biko Foundation	01 Zotshie Street, Ginberg, (King William's Town) eQonce, Eastern Cape	https://www.sbf.org.za/home/	January 30, 2023
Kopanang Africa Against Xenophobia	Not provided	https://www.facebook.com/Kopana ngAfrica/	March 1, 2023

b. Letter to organizations' management team (last version – March 2023)

PhD Research: Racial identities and 'Xenophobia' in South Africa

Dear *Name(s) of individual(s)*,

I hope this finds you well.

My name is Christiane (Chris), I am a Cameroonian Canadian trained in public health.

I have worked in advocacy for marginalized populations and anti-racism for about 8 years and I am currently enrolled in a PhD program with the department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town under the supervision of Prof. Boonzaier and Prof. Kessi.

As a Black African woman from the diaspora living in a predominantly White society, I am constantly reminded of the ubiquity of racism.

This has made me curious about how Black African people living in societies where they are the statistical majority understand racism and racial identity.

I wish to conduct research with Black foreign African nationals and Black South African nationals about what is commonly called 'xenophobia' in South Africa.

Specifically, I am hoping to better understand what xenophobia reveals about contemporary racial identities of Black African people.

I am contacting you because [name of organization] has been involved in [organization's approach to denounce xenophobia], and because your email address was provided as the one to use to discuss this research. I was hoping that [name of organization] could act as an entry point to recruit participants for this study.

There would be no financial cost to [name of the organization], however, some time (less than an hour/week on average) would need to be dedicated to this research.

Practically, I am hoping to broadcast the call for participants via [name of the organization] through the method(s) of your preference (e.g. shared on social media, via email lists, word-of-mouth, etc.).

A designated person would then be responsible for advising me by WhatsApp or email whenever prospective participants show interest in the study.

Finally, as this study places the wellbeing of respondents above anything else, I would be grateful if I could discuss with some members of [name of the organization] some best practices you use daily to prevent harm when addressing xenophobia in South Africa.

By supporting this research, [name of the organization] could potentially further increase the number of people it reaches.

The involvement in research that challenges simplistic stigmatizing narratives about xenophobia could also help reaffirm [name of the organization]'s commitment on that matter.

[Name of the organization] would also get access to conclusions from the research. Furthermore, should it be requested, I could also make myself available to discuss practically how these conclusions could be used in [name of the organization] upon finalizing the data analysis.

Please indicate in this form whether [name of the organization] consent to act as an entry point for the recruitment of participants in this study.

I am attaching a Frequently Asked Questions document directed at prospective participants: I invite you to look at it for more detailed information about the research.

I can also share my full research proposal and ethics clearance should anybody at [name of the organization] wish to review those.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I remain available for any questions or concerns you may have.

Best regards,

RESPONSE FORM: PARTICIPATION IN PHD STUDY: Racial identities and ‘xenophobia’ in South Africa

Please indicate below whether you consent to have your organization act as an entry point for the recruitment of participants in this study conducted by Christiane Essombe, PhD Candidate in Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

I. Participation in the study:

1. Please write your full name
2. Please write the name of your organization
3. Please select an answer:
 - I consent to have this organization act as an entry point for the afore-stated study.
 - I do not consent to have this organization act as an entry point for the afore-stated study.

II. Individuals to connect with to discuss next steps

Please indicate who at your organization may be contacted to discuss in detail next steps pertaining to the general call for participants, consent forms and interviews with participants.

4. Name(s) of contact person(s)
5. Telephone number(s)
6. Email address(es)

Your answers have been submitted successfully.

If you have any concerns about the study or would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee, please contact Ms. Rosalind Adams at 021 650 3417 or at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za.

Thank you so much for your time!

c. Example of a follow-up message to clarify the responsibility of the organization

Dear [Name of the contact],

I hope this finds you well.

Thank you so much for your quick response and for providing this information about [organization]'s structure and functioning.

I agree with your suggestion to allow prospective participants to reach out to me themselves, without passing by a designated [organization] member.

The call for participants (attached) already includes my contact information so it could be as simple as sharing this document via [organization]'s communication channels.

Since I am not based in [South African city], however, I do not think it would be ethical to not have a go-to person at [organization] in case of emergency.

Should [organization] agree to engage in this research, it would be reassuring to know that I can contact a [organization] member should I become concerned about a participant's level of distress. In which case, I would be in touch with them, and I would also greatly benefit from someone letting me know that the participant has been seen around and is ok.

I do not anticipate that this could be a frequent need on my end, but I would rather be prepared than caught off guard.

I would be grateful if you could forward the [board of directors] this request (i.e. having a [organization] member's phone number at hand should I need them to confirm that a participant is ok).

Finally – and in keeping with ensuring participants' safety and preventing harm – , thank you for offering to discuss best practices with me.

Please let me know when you would be available for a chat [...].

Thanks again so much for your response.

All the best,

Chris

d. Example of an introductory message to an organization shared via Facebook messenger

Hello,

I hope this finds you well.

My name is Christiane (Chris) and I am currently completing a PhD program in psychology at the UCT. Is there an email address I can use to share with you some information about the research project I am conducting on xenophobia in South Africa and contemporary racial identities of Black African peoples?

I am hoping that [name of the organization] could be involved in it should there be interest and availability to do so.

All the best,

Chris

- Appendix 2 – Poster - Call for participants

**Do you have opinions, experiences, or explanations about
'xenophobia' in South Africa?**

If so, please consider participating in this doctoral study about racial identities and the relationship between Black South Africans and Black foreign African nationals.

We would like to hear from people with the following characteristics:

- Over 18 years old
- Black citizens of other African countries OR Black South African citizens
- Who have spent the last 5 years in South Africa
- Familiar with social dynamics in South Africa, including in townships

If you are **interested in being interviewed for the study, please contact** Christiane (Chris) Essombe by WhatsApp (+1 438 933 1886) or email (nddchr001@myuct.ac.za).

If you have any concerns about the study or would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee, please contact Ms. Rosalind Adams at 021 650 3417 or at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za .

Participation is voluntarily and participants can withdraw at any time.

You will receive further information about the study once you notify Chris of your interest in participating in this research.

Thank you!

- **Appendix 3 – Consent Forms and Frequently Asked Questions**

CONSENT FORM

The survey will take approximately 4 minutes to complete.

This form aims to document your consent to engage as a participant in the aforementioned study.

This form is also available in French, Portuguese and Swahili if needed. Please contact Chris if you would like the form in one of these languages.

1. By electronically signing this form, I confirm that (please tick all options to provide your consent):

☐ Yes, I consent to participating in this study about ‘xenophobia’ and racial identities in South Africa.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw my participation at any time without any consequences.

☐ I understand that there is no financial compensation offered in this study.

☐ I am willing to participate in a recorded 1-on-1 interview during which I will be asked to share personal stories and experiences.

☐ I understand that data will be anonymized to maintain confidentiality and that my real name will not be used unless I request so.

☐ I understand that I will receive contact information of psychosocial providers and resources that I can use should I feel strong emotions during or after the interview.

☐ I know I can reach Christiane, the principal investigator, to ask any questions or share any concerns I may have about this study.

☐ I understand that I can request to receive the study conclusions and I can request a specific acknowledgement of my participation (under my alias or given name) along the general acknowledgement of all participants that will be included in any future publications and in the thesis.

☐ I authorize Christiane, the principal investigator, to contact me in relation to the study.

2. Preferred name

3. Date of birth

4. Gender identity

5. Phone number and/ or email address

6. Signature (please type your name)

Your response has been submitted successfully.

If you have any concerns about the study or would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee, please contact Ms. Rosalind Adams at 021 650 3417 or at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za .

Thank you so much for your time!

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is this study about and who is conducting it?

This research project seeks to explore so-called ‘xenophobia’ in South Africa from a decolonial perspective and identify what it reveals about Black Africans’ racial identities on the continent. The research is led by Chris (she/her), a Cameroonian Canadian PhD candidate studying remotely at the University of Cape Town.

What is meant by ‘race’, ‘Black’ and ‘African’ in this research?

Race: Race is not a biological concept as there is only one human race. Race is a social construction to legitimize European domination.

Black: black with a lowercase ‘b’ refers to the color. Black with a capital ‘B’ refers to people who have experienced global racist phenomena such as slave trades, colonialism and Apartheid.

Africans: In this research, “Africans” refers to people with black skin whose ancestry can only be traced back to the continent of Africa and who have spent most of their life in (post)colonial African states.

What will I be asked to do? First, you will be asked to read and sign the consent form on the next page. You will then be invited to a phone, online or in-person interview of about 60-90 min. In this interview you will be asked to share stories about your understanding of race and ‘xenophobia’.

Interviews are offered in English, French, Portuguese, and Swahili. If you are not fluent in any of this language and would like to participate, please inform Chris at nddchr001@myuct.ac.za so that arrangements can be made.

What about confidentiality?

All data will be anonymized. Raw data will only be accessible to the PhD candidate and her thesis supervisors and will be stored according to the University of Cape Town’s guidelines on research data management.

What’s in it for me?

Participation in this research is not financially compensated and will require you to dedicate some time for an interview. By participating in this study, you will contribute to challenging simplistic narratives about ‘xenophobia’ in South Africa. You will be able to share your lived experiences on your own terms, address any misconceptions, and have your story acknowledged and shared (anonymously) at a local and international level. Your participation will also be critical to help shape services provided by organizations that support Black foreign African nationals and Black South Africans. In other words, by participating you could help influence future services and advocacy efforts for Black foreign African nationals and Black South Africans.

You will receive the final conclusions of this study and if you desire, your participation (under your alias or given name) can be acknowledged in the thesis and/or in any future publication along a general acknowledgement to all participants. For publications, you will also be offered the option to be a co-author. Such an acknowledgement as a contributor or co-author in a doctoral research project can be useful for any academic or advocacy efforts you might undertake.

Finally, you will receive a list of organizations that support foreign African nationals in South Africa as well as psychosocial resources to help alleviate any strong emotions associated with the topics discussed during your interview.

What if I first agree to participate and then change my mind?

You can withdraw from the research at any moment without any consequences. If you decide to withdraw, please inform Chris at nddchr001@myuct.ac.za or (phone number).

What if I have other questions to ask?

Questions are encouraged and welcomed. Please email nddchr001@myuct.ac.za with any questions or requests for accommodation (e.g. translation; closed captions for online interviews, etc.). If you have any concerns about the study or would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee, please contact Ms. Rosalind Adams at 021 650 3417 or at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za.

- **Appendix 4 – Prompt questions for interviews**

1. With which racial label(s) do you most identify with and why?
2. Can you share a childhood memory about when you first learned what it meant to be X?
(with X being the racial identifier(s))
3. Why do you think Black foreign African people are targeted by Operation Dudula? OR
Why do you think Black foreign African people are targeted in South Africa?
4. Are there any personal experiences that you would like to share on that topic?
5. Can you share a story about the impact of xenophobia on your racial identity?

- **Appendix 5 – Some resources to face ‘xenophobia’ and anti-Black racism**
 - **ORGANIZATIONS**

Kopanang Afrika Against Xenophobia (KAAX): A movement of organizations united against xenophobia.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KopanangAfrica>

African Diaspora Workers Network: An activist organization for migrants in South Africa

Facebook page: <https://m.facebook.com/547322882092990/>

Jesuit Refugees Services

Address: 523 Church St, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0083, South Africa

Phone: 012 341 9185

African Coalition of Refugees

A non-profit organization that advocates for the social well-being of refugees in South Africa.

Address: 2nd Floor, Willie Theron Building, Cnr Bosman and Jeff Masemola Street (Jacob Mare), Pretoria, 0001 South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

Phone: 012 752 8976

PASSOP

A community-based, non-profit organization devoted to African LGBTI+ asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants.

Website: <https://www.passop.co.za/about-us>

Phone: 0214182838

Women’s Legal Centre

An African Feminist Legal Centre that advances womxn’s rights and equality through strategic litigation, advocacy and education and training.

Website: <https://wlce.co.za/>

Phone: 021 424 5660

Pride Shelter Trust

A non-profit organization based in Cape Town, aimed at assisting members of the LGBTQI+ community in South Africa during crisis periods in their lives.

Website: <https://www.pridesheltertrust.org.za/>

Phone: (021) 423 2871

Out LGBT well-being

South Africa’s second-oldest LGBT+ organization which provides stigma-free HIV and other health services to gay, bisexual and MSM (men who have sex with men) communities. They also work to eradicate LGBT+ hate crimes and discrimination while assisting and supporting victims with paralegal advice and referrals.

Website: <https://out.org.za/>

Phone: (0)12 430 3272

The Fruit Basket

Based in Johannesburg, Fruit Basket advocates for the rights and freedoms as well as the safety and security of LGBTIQ+ migrants, asylum seekers and refugees living in South Africa.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/everyfruit/>

Phone: +27 (0) 64 215 7577;
+27 (0) 83 791 3351

Triangle Project

Based in Cape Town, Triangle Project is a non-profit human rights organization offering professional services to ensure the full realization of constitutional and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) persons, their partners and families.

Website: <https://triangle.org.za/>

Phone: 021 422 0255 (counselling appointment)
021 712 6699 (helpline)

Xenowatch: A tool to monitor xenophobic discrimination across South Africa. To make a claim please use one of the following channels:

Email: report@xenowatch.ac.za

WhatsApp/Call: +27 (0) 60 794 9882

Website: www.xenowatch.ac.za

Lawyers for Human Rights: Lawyers for Human Rights has a program of walk-in law clinics to provide legal advice and representation and ensure due process for asylum seekers and refugees.

Get in touch with the Refugee & Migrant Rights Program at sharone@lhr.org.za or call the Johannesburg office at 011 339 1960.

Website: <https://www.lhr.org.za/lhr-programmes/refugee-and-migrant-rights-programme/>

Durban Office

Room S104, Diakonia Centre 20th Diakonia Avenue (formerly St. Andrews Street)
Durban 4001

Tel: +27 03 13 01 05 31

Email: petrina@probono.org.za (Projects)

Email: shahista@probono.org.za (Clinics)

Johannesburg Office

Office and Law Clinic: 4th Floor, Heerengracht Building, 87 de Korte Street, Braamfontein

Tel: +27 (0)1 13 39 19 60

Contact people: Marilyn Budow (Marilyn@lhr.org.za) and Florencia Belvedere (florenciab@lhr.org.za)

General Email: joburg@lhr.org.za

Refugee Social Services: provides social services primarily for refugees and asylum seekers in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province.

Email: admin@refugeesocialservices.co.za

Phone: (031) 942 2759

Website: <https://refugeesocialservices.co.za/about/>

Legal Resource Centre: The LRC is South Africa's largest non-profit legal centre. They have four regional offices that offer front-desk legal services and assistance to all people living in South Africa.

Website: www.lrc.org.za/

[Facebook page](#)

Johannesburg Office

15th Floor, Bram Fischer Towers, 20 Albert Street, Marshalltown, Johannesburg

Tel: +27 11 83 69 831

Contact person: Naseema Fakir

General Email: info@lrc.org.za

Cape Town Office

3rd Floor, Greenmarket Place, 54 Shortmarket Street, Cape Town 8001

Tel: +27 21 481 3000

Contact person: William Kerfoot at +27 21 481 3000

Durban Office

N240 Diakonia Centre, 20 Diakonia Avenue, Durban 4001

Tel: +27 31 301 7572

ProBono.Org: ProBono.Org facilitates the provision of free legal services through the volunteerism of private lawyers. It holds weekly Refugee Legal Clinics in Johannesburg and Durban as well as a fortnightly Refugee Legal Clinic in Pietermaritzburg.

Website: www.ProBono.Org.za

Email: info@probono.org.za

Durban Office

Suite 9001 - 9th Floor, Nedbank Building, Durban Club Place (off Anton Lembede Street), Durban, 4001, South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 31 30 16 178

Email: shahista@probono.org.za for the refugee law clinic (weekly clinic on Tuesdays).

Johannesburg Office

Tel: +27 11 33 96 080

Email: info@probono.org.za

Africa Refugee Social Cooperation: The ARSC advocates for the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees.

407 Anton Lembede street, 3rd floor Sangro house No 310 / 61135 Bishop's Gate, 4008, Durban

Phone: +27 73 857 366 / 078 127 4120

Email: info@arsc.org.za

The Nyema Foundation: Durban-based non-profit organization that provides food and clothing.
Phone: +27 72 455 3528 Email: nyemalencie@gmail.com
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Nyemafoundation/>

- THERAPISTS

Racial identity therapists and counsellors in the Western Cape (less than R500/session):
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/counselling/western-cape?category=racial-identity&cost=1>

Racial identity therapists and counsellors in Gauteng (less than R500/session):
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/counselling/gauteng?category=racial-identity&cost=1>

Racial identity therapists in the Eastern Cape (less than R500/session):
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/counselling/eastern-cape?category=racial-identity&cost=1>

Racial identity therapists in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal (less than R500/session):
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/counselling/nl/durban?category=racial-identity&cost=1>

Therapists for trauma in South Africa:
<https://findhelp.co.za/directory/trauma>

- HELPLINES

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group 24-hour helpline: 0800 12 13 14
South African suicide emergency line: 0800 567 567
Lifeline 24-hour helpline: 0861 322 322 or 011 728 1347

- GRIEF SUPPORT

Directory of grief recovery support groups with weekly meetings in South African cities:
<https://www.griefshare.org/countries/za>

- HANDBOOK

Power & Privilege: A handbook for political organizers
This handbook is listed among the resources of the Anti-Racism Network of South Africa and is available at: <https://theedgefund.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/neon-power-and-privilege-intro-guide.pdf>

- SELF-HELP - Resources to lower cortisol levels and navigate racial trauma
(As seen on the [University of North Carolina Wilmington's resources for Black healing](#))

Grounding techniques: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/grounding-techniques>

4-7-8 Breath relaxation exercise: <https://www.cordem.org/globalassets/files/academic-assembly/2017-aa/handouts/day-three/biofeedback-exercises-for-stress-2---fernances-j.pdf>

○ **PODCASTS**

The episodes suggested below are hosted by Black American people for a Black American audience. While some specific events might not resonate with people living outside of the United States, listening to this content might help validate feelings of frustration, anger or hopelessness and broaden one's understanding of anti-Black racism.

How racism impacts your mental health: <https://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com/session-138-how-racism-impacts-your-mental-health/>

Resmaa Menakem: “Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence”: <https://onbeing.org/programs/resmaa-menakem-notice-the-rage-notice-the-silence/>

If you would like some additional online resources in French or Portuguese, please inform Chris at nddchr001@myuct.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



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Telephone (021) 650 3417
Fax No. (021) 650 4104

06 December 2022

Christiane Essombe
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Christiane

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Race and the "infernal circle" of dehumanization: an analysis of South Africa's Negrophobia*. The reference number is PSY2022-048.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Wild'.

Lauren Wild (PhD)
Associate Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee