

'The Logic of Violence in Africa'

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Introduction

One of the most puzzling phenomena in Africa is that of endemic violence, which cuts across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs.

It is easy to codify manifestations of violence such as pre-colonial raiding, colonial wars of conquest, and nationalist resistance wars, but there are many other forms whose logic is harder to understand, such as terrorism, xenophobia, racist-inspired violence, criminality, rape, torture, and maiming. This paper deploys three conceptual tools to explore the logic of violence in African history from the time of colonial encounters to the present, namely:

- (1) the concept of *coloniality* as advanced by Nelson Maldonado Torres;
- (2) Frantz Fanon's notion of the *damnes* (damned or wretched); and
- (3) Slavoj Žižek's ideas of *subjective*, *objective* and *symbolic violence*.

First and foremost, this paper locates the logic of violence in *coloniality* and its reproduction of African subjectivities, where race was used not only to 'inferiorize' black people into *damnes*, but to deny their very humanity, so as to justify such forms of violence as slavery, colonial conquest, dispossession, imprisonment, rape, and killing. The colonized were defined as inferior and obstacles to modernity (in economic, religious or other terms), in many cases justifying the suspension of normal ethical conventions, and so use of violence, to 'modernize' colonized peoples and places. African nationalism then reproduced colonial violence and authoritarianism, bequeathing it on postcolonial Africa as a mode of governance. Only now the violence was justified in the names of the national unity, security and postcolonial development seen as necessary to secure a postcolonial modernity.

Radical leftist Slovenian philosopher and social critic Žižek (2009) categorizes such violence into three forms. He notes that there is common intellectual concentration on interrogation of visible *subjective violence* that is performed by identifiable agents, with its obvious signals such as criminality, terror, civil unrest, war and international conflict. This according to Žižek 'is just the most visible portion of a triumvirate that also includes two objective kinds of violence', and for this violence to be understood there is need 'to perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts' (Žižek 2009: 1). Behind *subjective violence* there is, then, an 'objective' kind of violence which falls into two further forms.

The first is *symbolic violence* embodied in language and its habitual speech forms. The second type is *systemic violence*, located within economic and political systems. These objective forms of violence exist like the dark matter of physics, and are the motive force of 'what otherwise seem to be "irrational" explosions of subjective violence' (Žižek 2009: 2).

Besides contributing to the categorization of violence, Žižek also suggests using ‘sideways glances’ when studying violence, rather than one direct glance. Sideways glances help in transcending ‘the overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims’ which ‘inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking’ (Žižek 2009: 3). He elaborates that ‘a dispassionate conceptual development of the typology of violence must by definition ignore its traumatic impact’ (Žižek 2009: 3). The challenge facing researchers is to maintain a ‘cold critical analysis’ that is not disturbed by moral outrage.

This paper’s prime concern, however, is not with these concepts in themselves, but about how they might shed light on the logic and pervasiveness of violence in Africa. Hence the psychoanalytical and philosophical work of Frantz Fanon (the *damnes*), and Nelson Maldonado-Torres’ idea of *coloniality*, are applied to understanding the logic of violence within colonized and ex-colonized zones of Africa.

Both of these thinkers situated the logic of violence within *coloniality*. The first part of this paper, therefore, begins by defining the concepts of *coloniality* (and coloniality of being). The second part provides case studies of the Herero of Namibia (who experienced German colonial genocide), Congo under King Leopold II (where violence became a mode of governance), and South Africa’s neo-apartheid. The latter has recreated black townships and informal settlements as locales of a hellish life, mediated by systemic violence on a daily basis, as part of the underworld of coloniality.

Theories of Coloniality and Violence

Coloniality and the creation of a racialised/ethnicised adversarial world

Coloniality is an analytical concept developed by radical Latin American scholars such as Quijano, Mignolo, Escobar and others operating under *The Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Programme* whose main concern was to develop a new understanding of modernity based on colonial difference, and from the perspective of the ex-colonized who experienced its dark side (Escobar 2007: 179-210). According to this approach, *Coloniality* is rooted in colonialism, but also distinct from it.

They define *Colonialism* as an encapsulation of political and economic relations in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which sets up direct colonial administration. *Coloniality* on the other hand, is defined with reference to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, and continues to define culture, labour, relations and knowledge production, well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. As defined by Anibal Quijano, *coloniality* is one of the specific and constitutive elements of the global model of capitalist power that is based on a racial/ethnic classification of the global population. It is rooted in Western modernity and colonial encounters, and today operates on every level and arena of human social existence (Quijano 2000: 1).

Coloniality lies at the centre of the making of the modern/colonial world of yesterday and today, where Europe and America are at the apex of global power hierarchy, and Africa is at the bottom. It unfolded in terms of ‘the voyages of discovery’ that culminated in colonial encounters between Europe and Africa. Western modernity was the source and motive force of expansion of European particularism into universal claims, and these claims were supported by the violence of imperialism and colonialism.

At the social level, *coloniality* was underpinned by: ‘a conception of humanity according to which the global population was differentiated into inferior and superior, irrational and rational, primitive and civilized, traditional and modern’ (Quijano 2000: 3). It was and is shot through by Eurocentrism as a power matrix that encompassed the consistent drive to control labour and its product; nature and its productive resources; gender, its products and the reproduction of the human species; subjectivity and its material products as well as knowledge; and authority and its instruments of coercion, persuasion and violence, which ensured the reproduction of Euro-American-centric dominance over Africa and the rest of the world (Quijano 2000: 3-4).

Coloniality is, therefore, rooted in a particular socio-historical setting that included the formation of racialised subjectivities linked to specific ‘continents’. As articulated by Maldonado 2007: 243) *coloniality* has survived colonialism, and persists in present day and old books, the criteria for academic performance, cultural patterns, ‘common sense’, the image of peoples, and in aspirations and perceptions of self. According to him, human beings as modern subjects live and breathe *coloniality* all the time and every day.

At the centre of *coloniality* was/is race. This formed the foundation of codification and institutionalization of differences between conquerors (white races) and the conquered (black races). The conquerors assumed a superiority complex and assigned inferiority to the colonized. This happened in tandem with the constitution of a new colonial structure of labour control that authorized the exploitative relations of slavery, serfdom, forced labour and other forms that were mediated by violence.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007: 45) described Western thinking that underpinned colonial modernity as ‘an abyssal thinking’, which assumed a chasm-like gap between Western and non-Western societies. This ‘abyssal thinking’ consisted of ‘visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones.’ He further noted that Western ‘abyssal thinking’ was at the root of the making of the colonial zones as the ‘other side of the line’, radically different from the metropolitan zones as ‘this side of the line.’ The colonial zones which included most of what today is described as ex-colonized parts of the world (Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa) made up that ‘other side.’

The metropolitan zones were represented as progressing through ‘social regulation and social emancipation’ whereas the colonial zones were caught-up within the web of ‘appropriation/violence’ (Santos 2007: 46). What obtained in the colonial zones were lawlessness and violence. This point was buttressed by Fanon who experienced colonialism in his native country of Martinique, and also in his second home in Algeria. He wrote that:

The colonial world is a world cut into two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policemen and the soldiers who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. [...] the policemen and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native (Fanon 1963: 29).

While in metropolitan societies truce, peace, and friendship applied to social life; within the colonial zones the law of the strongest, violence and plunder reigned supreme. What assumptions, values, and ideas informed *coloniality* of radical divisions between the metropolitan and colonial zones? The creation of new identities of European, white, coloured, Indian, blacks, natives, Negroes and others was an important foundational component. Linking these new identities that emerged within *coloniality* was a type of social classification that was vertical rather horizontal, depicting and reflecting superior-inferior assumptions that were developed as Western modernity expanded out of Europe into other parts of the world. Social hierarchization of new identities was not only informed by race but also by degrees of humanity attributed to the constructed identities. Maldonado-Torres explains that (2007: 244):

‘The ‘lighter’ one’s skin is, the closer to full humanity one is, and vice versa. As the conquerors took on the role of mapping the world they kept reproducing this vision of things. The whole world was practically seen in the light of this logic. This is the beginning of ‘global coloniality.’

Deployments of theories of scientific racism in the late nineteenth century were informed by well-established racial attitudes of the colonizers with regard to the degrees of humanity across the colonized-colonizer interactions. Philosophically, under *coloniality* the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am) underwent a quick metamorphosis to *ego conquiro* (I conquer, therefore, I am). The ‘right of conquest’ became an important legitimating value that authorized all sorts of violence.

The notion of colonized peoples as barbarians and savages was popularized as colonizers sought to justify their domination, exploitation, and repression of Africans. Maldonado-Torres (2007: 245) articulated that the ideology of barbarity of the colonized was sustained by ‘a radical questioning or permanent suspicion regarding the humanity of the self in question.’ He termed this imperial attitude, the ‘racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic skepticism’ that sustained the superiority of the imperial white being (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 245). It was used to justify the inferiority of the black being under colonialism and is today hidden within structures of global *coloniality* where Westerners have remained at the top of racial hierarchies rooted in colonial modernity.

The racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic skepticism questioned the very humanity of colonized peoples as a deliberate strategy to justify interventions on the life of the colonized, including enslaving and domesticating them like animals. What racist/imperial Manichean skepticism authorized was the dangerous idea of colonial and racial subjects as usable and dispensable beings, since they had no souls and informed the imperial/colonial maxim that was becoming popular—‘Beyond the equator there are no sins’ (Santos 2007: 49-50). Which simply meant that in dealing with non-Westerners/non-Europeans/Black peoples, ethics, laws and other social sanctions that regulated life in Europe and other Western parts of the world had to be suspended and the law of nature including violence, became legitimate.

At another level, the introduction of Western religion in Africa was also based on an imperial attitude that viewed black people as without religion. Such people were not considered to be complete human beings. Ideas of race, religion and empire reinforced each other. When adventurers like Christopher Columbus and colonizers emphasized that the people they encountered had no religion, they were justifying a particular form of violence rooted in the notion of colonized people as empty beings lacking subjectivity and available for indoctrination with Christianity.

Hence imperial wars against Indians, Africans and others were frequently brutal. Genocide, earthed-scotch policies, mutilation of bodies, and rape were a legitimate part of ‘pacification of barbarous tribes.’ Severed heads of African kings and chiefs were taken to Europe as trophies. Human beings like Sarah Baartman of the San-Khoi Khoi people of South Africa were captured, taken to Europe and subjected to demeaning display. Maldonado-Torres elaborates that:

Misanthropic skepticism posits its targets as racialized and sexualized subjects. Once vanquished, they are said to be inherently servants and their bodies come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation, and control. The ethics of the *ego conquiro* ceases to be only a special code of behaviour for periods of war and becomes [...] a standard of conduct that reflects the way things are—a way of things whose naturalization reaches its climax with the use of natural science to validate racism in the nineteenth century [...] Thus, the treatment of vanquished peoples in conditions of war is perceived as legitimate long after war is over (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 248).

Santos (2007: 51) amplifies the centrality of violence and appropriation as the order of life in colonial zones. He elaborates that violence manifested itself even in the realm of knowledge, where indigenous black guides were forcibly used to reveal African secrets and pathways on rivers and indigenous knowledge of biodiversity. There were also prohibitions of use of native languages in public spaces; forcible adoption of Christian names; and destruction of ceremonial sites. Violence extended to the slave trade and forced labour; instrumental use of customary law and authority in indirect rule; pillage of natural resources, displacement of populations; and wars (Santos 2007: 51-52).

Coloniality of being and practices of violence

The concept of *coloniality of being* locates the roots of violence against Africans and other colonized people within the expansion of Western modernity. It captures the central question of the effects of coloniality on lived experiences that were mediated by the master-slave/colonizer-colonized dialectic, where violence was naturalized and routinized as a form of colonial governmentality.

The anarchic and traumatic moment of the constitution of the colonizer and colonized subjectivities within the colonial encounters, created a new type of subject, framed by *the coloniality of being*. To understand this, we turn to Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1968) and its ontology, as further explored by Maldonado-Torres (2007: 242).

What is this *coloniality of being*? It captures not only the depersonalization of black people under colonialism but also the constitution of Africans as racialized subjects whose life was not valued. In the space of the colonized, death was 'no extra-ordinary affair' but 'a constitutive feature of the reality of colonized and racialized subjects' (Maldonado 2007: 251). At the centre of *coloniality of being* is 'blackness' as a defining feature of what Fanon (1968: 110-119) referred to as the *damné* (the condemned of the earth). *Coloniality of being* is meant to capture the hell that descended on the colonized lives and became naturalized and routinized as the African mode of being. Maldonado elaborates on this mode of being as follows:

Hellish existence in the colonial world carries with it both the racial and the gendered aspects of the naturalization of the non-ethics of war. *Indeed, coloniality of Being primarily refers to the normalization of the extraordinary events that take place in war.* While in war there is murder and rape, in the hell of the colonial world murder and rape become day to day occurrences and menaces. 'Killability' and 'rapeability' are inscribed into images of the colonial bodies. Lacking real authority, colonized men are permanently feminized. [...] Blackness in a colonial anti-black world is part of a larger context of meaning in which the non-ethics of war gradually becomes a constitutive part of an alleged normal world (emphasis is in the original source) (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 255).

Colonial modernity was also accompanied by peasantization and proletarianization of Africans as equally violent systems of coloniality. The life of dispossessed Africans who were being forcibly transformed and reconstituted as providers of cheap labour for white owned farms, industries, mines and factories entered another hell in the cities. Cities and urban centres were racially fragmented into two realms. Fanon elaborates that:

The settler's town is a strongly-built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly-lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage-cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. The settler's feet are never visible, except perhaps in the sea; but there you're never close enough to see them. His feet are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly is always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners (Fanon 1963: 30).....
The town belonging to the colonized people [...] is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there; it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire (Fanon 1963: 30).

The next question is: how far can such concepts be applied to help us to understand violence in Africa, and its persistence across the colonial and postcolonial periods? The next section applies these ideas to empirical examples, in order to argue that the phenomenon of violence does indeed have deep roots in colonial encounters and colonial modernity, and can help us to understand how violence migrated from the colonial period into the postcolonial neo-colonized present.

Three Case-Studies:

the Herero War, Belgian Congo, and post-apartheid South African townships

Racist Manichean Misanthropic Skepticism in practice: the German-Herero War, 1904-1907.

The causes and course of the German-Herero War of 1904-1907 are well known. Scholars such as Horst Drechsler (1980); Jon M. Bridgman (1981); Tilman Dowering (1999); Jan-Bart Gewald (1999) and many others have dealt with these issues. That the Germans committed genocide is also beyond dispute, and the German government apologized in 2004 (Anderson 2005: 1155-1189). What is of concern here is how the German-Herero War of 1904-1907 graphically reveals how racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic skepticism was practiced by the Germans on African soil. It demonstrates how the ethics that governed the conduct of war in Europe were suspended when faced with the Herero people of Namibia. Even German national laws governing war were suspended, alongside international laws.

The ill-treatment of the Herero people is here taken as a microcosm of how colonial powers dealt with non-Western and colonized peoples in violation of declarations such as the 1890 Anti-Slavery Conference (Belgium), and the treaty of friendship and protection of 1885 signed between Germany and the Herero people (Anderson 2005: 1158). The ‘war of annihilation’ was supported by many Germans as a legitimate response against Herero who were resisting colonial ill-treatment. The German Colonial League’s Executive Committee released a pamphlet calling for a brutal, swift and harsh response to the Herero uprising rested on a racial profile:

Anyone familiar with the life of African and other less civilized non-white peoples knows that they can assert themselves only by maintaining the supremacy of their race. [...] The swifter and harsher the reprisals taken against rebels, the better the chances of restoring authority (cited in Anderson 2005: 1160).

The appointment of a rabid, racist Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha by the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II as the commander-in-chief of the German forces in Namibia was a clear indicator of the imperial intention to finish-off the Herero as a people. Lieutenant-General von Trotha was an experienced and tested racist. He was well-known for his brutal suppression of African resisters in East Africa, where the Wahehe Uprising had broken out in 1896. He had also participated in the brutal suppression of the Boxer Uprising of 1901 in China (Drechsler 1980: 151). It was Lieutenant-General von Trotha who issued the infamous ‘annihilation order’ on 2 October 1904:

The Herero people will have to leave the country. Otherwise, I shall force them to do so by means of guns [...] Every Herero, whether found armed or unarmed [...] will be shot. I shall not accept any more women and children. I shall drive them back to their people—otherwise I shall order shots to be fired at them. These are my words to the Herero people (cited in Drechsler 1980: 156-157).

In a follow up report to the chief of the German Army General Staff of 4 October 1904, Lieutenant-General von Trotha clearly expressed his intention to exterminate the Herero people:

The crucial question for me is how to bring the war against the Herero to a close ... As I see it, the nation must be destroyed as such ... I ordered the warriors to be court-martialled and hanged and all women and children who sought shelter here to be driven back into the sandveld [the Kalahari Desert] ... To accept women and children who are for the most part sick, poses a grave risk to the force, and to feed them is out of the question. For this reason, I deem it wiser for the entire nation to perish ... This uprising is and remains the beginning of a racial struggle (Excerpt from a Report from Lieutenant-General von Trotha to the Army Chief of Staff, 4 October 1904 cited in Drechsler 1980: 160-161).

The extermination/annihilation order was enthusiastically carried out beginning with public hanging of those Herero people who had been sentenced to death. Other Herero prisoners, including women and children, were forced to watch (Anderson 2005: 1162). Lieutenant-General von Trotha even wrote a letter to Governor Leutwein on 27 October 1904 declaring that: 'The Herero nation must vanish from the face of the earth' (cited in Anderson 2005: 1162). The extermination of the Herero also involved the killing of any Herero found by the German army; and pushing others to the Omahenge Desert to die of hunger and thirst. Those who were not directly killed were taken into concentration camps where they were exposed to severe forced labour, often leading to death. Others became guinea-pigs for medical experiments. In total the Germans are said to have killed 65,000 Herero people out of a population of 80,000 (Drechsler 1980: 214; Anderson 2005: 1166).

Those Germans who expressed opposition to the extermination of the Herero people were concerned about issues other rather than the humanity of the Herero. Their reasons ranged from economic reasons as African cheap labour was wanted for the colonial enterprise; saving the face of Christianity that was founded on humanistic principles; impact of extermination on the status of Germany as a civilized nation; and the likely failure of extermination as a strategy (Drechsler 1980: 163-164). German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II only reluctantly rescinded the termination order, and then belatedly.

Treatment such as that meted out to the Herero did not take place in Namibia only. Wars of conquest and colonial responses to African uprisings more generally were informed by the racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic skepticism that enabled such violence. What varied were the scales of killing. In the extreme case of the Herero people, they were even denied the option of surrendering.

Violence as a colonial mode of governance: King Leopold II and the Congo Free State

The way King Leopold II of Belgium turned Congo into his personal 'massive labour colony', where 'the distinction between the law of persons and the law of things, of both humans and nonhumans' permeated his style of governance is another case of how violence was routinized in colonial Africa (Santos 2007: 52).

To Leopold II, the colonized Congolese people were nothing but providers of cheap labour. The Congo Free State was a special type of colony owned by a single person, the King of Belgium. It was created in 1885 soon after the Berlin Conference that authorized the scramble and partition of Africa among European powers.

King Leopold II's ventures into the Congo were from start to finish a catalogue of chicanery, violence and genocide. In the first place, his company, called Association Internationale Africaine (AIA), disguised its imperial and colonial ambitions and intentions under scientific and philanthropic designs. For instance, he justified his colonial interventions in these words:

Our only program, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration, and we must do this among a population whose degeneration in its inherited conditions it is difficult to measure. The many horrors and atrocities which disgraced humanity give way little by little before our intervention (cited in Religious Tolerance Organization, n.d.).

To acquire Congo, King Leopold II hired Henry Morton Stanley, who cheated African chiefs into signing away their land and power under the guise of treaties of friendship with a people who doubted their humanity in the first place. King Leopold II's takeover of Congo territory set in motion a brutal colonial regime that revealed the core dangers of the racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic skepticism when practiced within a polity with over 30 million people that was a personal property of a single individual.

King Leopold II employed the colonial concept of *terres vacantes* (vacant/empty lands). This was a common strategy to justify land expropriations. His next step was to demarcate Congolese territory into two zones. Of these, the *Free Trade Zone* was to be the domain of Europeans. It was a domain of free entrepreneurial enterprises, private ownership of land, and freedom to buy 10-15 year monopoly leases on anything of value including ivory and rubber. The second zone was the *Domaine Prive* (the exclusive private property of the state, embodied in the person of King Leopold II). The *Domaine Prive* comprised almost two-thirds of the Congo. There was no designated place for indigenous African people except through regroupment into ethnicised labour, providing colonial formations supervised by defeated native authorities (Emerson 1979; Pakenham 1991; Hochschild 1998; Ewans 2003; Olson 2008).

Black Congolese people were expected to provide set quotas of rubber and ivory to state officials. They laboured to produce food for the state. A notorious armed force known as *Force Publique* (FP) worked to enforce rubber quotas. The FP was armed with modern weapons and a bull whip made of hippopotamus hide. Those Congolese who failed to fulfill their quotas had their hands cut, or were tortured or even killed. Such brutality could only happen to those subjectivities that were denied humanity, as it involved cutting of heads and hanging of bodies on village palisades. Severed hands were carried to the white officials as evidence that they were enforcing colonial law on those who failed to provide the needed rubber and ivory (Olson 2008). King Leopold II's violent soldier-merchants killed over 10 million Congolese during his personal rule over the Congo Free State (Hochschild, 1998). The violence also involved kidnapping of women and children to force men to come out to work in rubber plantations, raping of women and burning of entire villages.

The current violence bedeviling the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has its roots in these Leopoldian colonial policies. In the first place, King Leopold II introduced the culture of warlordism that subsisted on terrorization of the population. David Moore (2001: 130-135) made some linkages between 'King Leopold' and 'King Kabila.' On the other hand, Mahmood Mamdani (2011) has traced the present day violence in the eastern part of the DRC to the time of dictatorship of King Leopold II, that created homelands supervised by 'native/black' authorities. The re-organization of

the indigenous population into rigid homelands enabled easy colonial organization for recruitment of cheap and forced labour. This colonial arrangement inaugurated rigid 'ethnic' identities as the basis for recruitment. Recruitment to mines, plantations, civil service, and the army became based on tribal identity. For instance, in the diamond-rich Katanga region with its massive labour immigration, ethnic identities became fragmented into Lunda (considered indigenous), and Luba (migrants from neighbouring Kasai). The Luba were then further sub-categorized into 'Luba-Katanga' (those who moved to Katanga prior to colonialism and were eventually also considered as indigenous) and 'Luba-Kasai' (classified as non-indigenous) (Mamdani 2011).

A colonial policy of 'regroupment' of identities also took place in other parts of DRC, such as Ituri and Kivu. Here the predominantly pastoral Hema were separated from Lendu populations. Each was channelled into its own homeland, or *territoire*, supervised by a native tribal authority known as *chefferie* (Mamdani 2011). The long term impact of this regroupment of identities was twofold. First of all, it meant that Congolese nationalism emerged as a deeply ethnicized phenomenon. Secondly, the question of who was indigenous to particular areas metamorphosed into the present day question of citizenship, a question which is generating violence in the eastern part of the DRC bordering Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The existence of 'Banyarwanda' and 'Banyamulenge' consisting of Hutu, Tutsi and Batwa has heightened the citizenship struggles and violence (Mamdani 2011).

Since the time of Leopold II, those who succeeded him - including Patrice Lumumba, Mobutu Sese Seko, Laurent Kabila and Joseph Kabila - have not managed to deal effectively with the questions of citizenship and identity in the DRC. Colonialism invented indigene versus non-indigene dichotomies that have continued to breed intra-and inter-communal violence in the DRC. Some of the central state interventions politicized citizenship rather than solving the contestations rooted in bifurcation of Congolese. The fluid, migrant labour system added new layers of identities. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) blamed Patrice Lumumba for making the first major political blunder, in trying to solve the Katangese secession through taking sides with one ethnic group in a struggle revolving around 'indigenes' versus 'non-indigenes.' Lumumba deployed the national army that went on to commit atrocities on one ethnic group, exacerbating the problem rather than solving it.

There were other complicated outcomes of the indigene versus non-indigene problems in the DRC, such as Mobutu's Citizenship Decree of 1972 that was prompted by increasing numbers of Hutu migrants running away from massacres in Burundi. The decree extended citizenship to all those who arrived in the DRC in 1959-1960. It provoked immediate protests from Kivu residents who feared increasing numbers of Rwandese and Burundians (Mamdani 2011). The citizenship problem was further complicated by the Nationality Law of 1981 that restricted citizenship to people who could demonstrate an ancestral connection with Congo at the time of the Berlin Conference of 1885 (Mamdani 2011). In short, the violence that is currently haunting the DRC is intermingled with the question of citizenship whose roots are traceable to the time of Leopold II.

Identity politics created warlords who claim to be representing particular regions and particular ethnic groups such as the Mayi-Mayi that claim the status of indigenous people, and the Banyamulenge that are excluded as non-indigenous. What is clear is that the DRC is paying a heavy price in terms of inter-and intra-communal violence that has its deep roots in colonial regroupment schemes that created rigid and antagonistic ethnicities. This reality has led some analysts to doubt whether the DRC really exists as a nation.

Neo-apartheid and systemic violence in South Africa

South Africa can be best described as a 'contact zone'. That is, a space in which peoples of different ethnicities - who were geographically and historically separated - came into contact and established ongoing relations. In this case relations were mediated by conditions of coercion and inequalities that provoked intractable conflicts and violence (Pratt 1992: 6). At the centre of South Africa are ethnicities that have all been struggling to be South African. What being South African means remains a 'state of becoming' and is subject to contestations. The question of who or what is a South African is complicated by rival populisms and claims and counter-claims to nativity and indigeneity.

Blacks, whites, Indians, Coloureds, Chinese and other groups have gone through several historical epochs and contacts, but full assimilation into a stable national identity is still in the making. It is not following the smooth path that the sociological 'assimilation' school of thought projected based on European migrations (Gordon 1964). We cannot, for instance, say that all South African groups are currently in a process of assimilation into the host African society. A claim to nativity and indigeneity by any single ethnic or racial group has the potential to render others stateless. No wonder whites have often contested the claims of blacks to nativity despite the fact that they were the ones who historically called the African people 'natives'.

South Africa's social structure continues to resemble that of a colony permeated by a colonial imaginary where a strong racial/ethnic hierarchy persists. There is no neutral space of migrant incorporation, as white migrants assumed nativity and in the process excluded the indigenous people from the nation. This created what Michael Neocosmos (2006) termed 'native foreigners' and 'foreign natives.'

South Africa is a country characterized by layers of competing and complex identities. The first layer consists of various black ethnic groups that experienced colonial conquest, colonization and apartheid domination. Examples include the Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, San, Khoi Khoi, Suthu and other identities. The second layer consists of 'colonial-racial subjects' who came to South Africa as part of a long imperial/colonial history. Examples include the English, Afrikaners, Indians, Malay, and Chinese. Following the thinking of Ramon Grosfoguel (2008: 608) these groups can be termed 'colonial/racial subjects of empire.' They emerged within the empire and racial/ethnic hierarchies as well as racist discourses were constructed in relation to these subjects as they interacted with indigenous black peoples.

In South Africa, the white colonial-racial subjects succeeded in assuming power and dominated indigenous black people and other non-white subjects like Indians and Coloureds. It is the indigenous black African people that occupied the bottom of the racial/ethnic hierarchy, whereas in metropolitan empires like Britain the indigenous whites were at the top and the colonial-racial subjects the bottom. The other development is that it became impossible for white colonial-racial subjects of the empire to be absorbed by the indigenous black African majority that they despised and dominated. Rather, the indigenous black majority found themselves struggling to be incorporated into the white dominant state and well provisioned white society. It became very difficult for assimilation to take place.

The other layer was that of black immigrants from within the Africa who when they arrived in South Africa had to join the ranks of black indigenous people languishing at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Other racialisation and ethnicisation processes develop such as 'Nigerinization' of West Africans and 'Zimbabweanization' of others. At the bottom of the racial hierarchy were black indigenous South Africans and black immigrants who battled it out for scarce resources. This situation generated what is commonly termed xenophobic violence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009).

What has escaped critical analysis is the fact that South Africa has never been decolonized. In 1910 it gained what can be correctly termed 'colonial independence' (independence without decolonization). Hence the black indigenous people remained dominated and exploited. In 1994, South Africa gained liberal democracy without decolonization. Again the indigenous black population found itself still languishing at the bottom of racial/ethnic hierarchy. Even politicians within the African National Congress (ANC) did not talk about 'independence day' but about 'freedom day.' Whose freedom remains a key question. A few black people were able to take advantage of favourable state policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) to climb up the social and economic ladder into the middle stratum/middle class status. Examples include Cyril Ramaphosa, Patrice Motsepe, Irvin Khoza and others termed the 'black diamonds.' These people were used by dominant white groups to counter accusations of racial discrimination and to hide continuations of racial discrimination.

The reality that continues to generate violence is the enduring colonial/racial hierarchies put in place during successive colonial and apartheid administrations. These remained intact. South Africa is currently at the 'neo-apartheid' period, not 'post-apartheid.' The key feature of neo-apartheid is the economic exclusion of the demographic black majorities and the economic dominance of a demographic white minority. Neo-apartheid is also characterized by featuring black faces at the top of political hierarchy (including the presidency), without any meaningful social change for the majority of black. Neo-apartheid also projects itself in the form of radicalization of criminality, in which the black face remains the symbol of criminality. Even poverty is radicalized in a neo-apartheid situation (Grosfoguel 2008: 615).

Neo-apartheid also manifests itself through segregation of the excluded black poor through urban cartography. This retains the imprint of the colonial urban cartography, which distinguished between the *damne* and civilized zones. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007: 59) termed this situation ‘fascism of social apartheid.’ The South African urban black poor have remained cocooned within black townships and *imikhukhu* (shacks) as zones of Hobbesian state of nature and internal civil strife. Santos concluded that:

As social fascism coexists with liberal democracy, the state of exception coexists with constitutional normalcy, civil society coexists with the state of nature, and indirect rule coexists with rule of law. (Santos 2007: 62).

This is the situation currently obtaining in South Africa, a country with an acclaimed democratic constitution, which has nevertheless maintained the strong racial/ethnic hierarchy constructed by colonialism and apartheid. The politics of compromise did not alter the status quo where white minority races were privileged by the both colonialism and apartheid. Fanon’s depiction of the compromises made between African nationalist leaders and white oppressors still resonates. He described this as a strategy of avoiding a revolution through capturing the African leadership and turning the liberatory movement towards the right, so as to disarm the African people (Fanon 1963: 55).

Conclusion

One of the challenging questions in the study of violence in Africa has been how to explain the continuation of colonial violence into the postcolonial and post-apartheid periods. Why have African nationalist leaders, some of whom were put into power by popular vote, also resorted to violence as a form of governance? Why have different groups of Africans – sometimes self-identifying as races, ethnicities, tribes and sub-groups – so frequently turned to violence? This paper has argued that an understanding of how the imperial period entrenched *coloniality* and *coloniality of being* can help us to understand this continuation of violence across colonial and postcolonial epochs.

Hence Fanon analyzed how colonial violence influenced the colonized to be violent. In the first place he noted that the abused and violated colonized people ‘manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people’ (Fanon 1963: 40). In the second place, he explained that the colonized person’s confrontation with the ‘colonial order of things’ places him/her in ‘a permanent state of tension’ (Fanon 1963: 41). In the third place, Fanon argued that: ‘The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor’ (Fanon 1963: 41).

Fanon also argued that violence used in particular ways during the decolonization struggle ‘does not magically disappear after the ceremony of trooping the national colours.’ He explained the

continuation of violence as informed by ‘cut-throat competition between capitalism and socialism’ (Fanon 1963: 59). But now that socialism is dead and there is no ‘cut-throat’ ideological competition, how is the continuation of violence to be explained with reference to postcolonial Africa? Friedrich Nietzsche (1990: 102) reiterated the Fanonian explanation when he argued that: ‘He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.’ Fanon had this to say about continuation of violence after colonialism:

The atmosphere of violence, after having coloured all the colonial phase, continues to dominate national life, for as we have already said, the Third World is not cut off from the rest. This is why the statesmen of under-developed countries keep up indefinitely the tone of aggressiveness and exasperation in their public speeches which in the normal way ought to have disappeared (Fanon 1963: 60).

The typical example is President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe who has consistently railed against the Western powers while at the same time maintaining a very oppressive and violent regime at home. What is beyond doubt is that colonial authoritarian culture of violence was able to reproduce itself on the African nationalist psyche. The liberation struggles that needed nationalist violence to eject colonial violence further formed a seed bed for future cultures of violence. Those Africans who participated in the armed liberation struggles were taken on a course to ‘gaze’ into a colonial abyss of violence, and fighting the colonial monsters turned some of them into monsters too. No wonder that a leader such as Mugabe, who actively participated and led the liberation struggle, often brags about his party’s ability to unleash violence on its political opponents. Finally, the continuation of violence is one indicator of the continuation of coloniality after the end of colonialism.

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