

Poland, Blackness and Racialisation

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Scholarship in Poland has sought to consider in and out migration. Whilst this body of works engages forcefully with migration, it has yet to fully grapple with global racial discourses and the diverse range of racial identities in Poland. Simultaneously, studies on borders are often reduced to securitisation where the racialised – immigrants, foreigners, and asylum-seekers are often connected to the internal security logic, where racial logic is either ignored or not fully acknowledged. Therefore, the focus often overlooks the ways in which race and racism interact with migration and securitisation in the everyday lived experiences of people racialised as black or brown; and why some may integrate more than others.

Premised on Critical Race Theory, this study maps the figures in the Polish imaginary of European, and examines whether Poland has different, if related, histories of racial thinking and exclusion. In doing so, the study asks how such histories have been conceived, shaped and mediated. Drawing on qualitative data: 25 semi-structured interviews and a focus group (4 people), this study explores various dimensions of the everyday experiences of black and mixed-race people of sub-Saharan African descent living in various cities in Poland. Together, the data focuses on the assessment of race and racialisation within the people's integration into the Polish society. This study's original contribution to knowledge is the demonstration of the globality of racism by taking it away from its original place of formation to elsewhere in the world in an attempt to show that race and racism have not been marginal to the west. They also formed part of the configuration of nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Introduction.....	8
Determining race	9
The etymology of <i>Murzyn</i> (Negro) – its trajectory and transition to black	13
Negro to Black - a trajectory and transition.....	14
‘ <i>Murzyn</i> ’ – a character from culturally distinct land	17
Sub-Saharan Africans – an emerging population in Poland.....	19
The representation of blackness in Poland.....	24
Why Poland and Blackness?.....	26
Methodological reflection – black/mixed-race research in Poland.....	27
Structure and Chapter outlines	30
Chapter 2: The Emergence of Polish Racialised Governmentality	34
Introduction.....	34
Situating Poland in geopolitical colonial projects	38
<i>Lebensraum</i> – the space a state believes is required for its natural expansion	43
Polish Eugenics: racial purity and the fear of mongrelisation.....	45
Colonial practices.....	48
Exteriorising those who are not quite Polish and not quite Christian.....	53
Conclusion	56
Chapter 3: <i>Narodowiec</i> – ‘the national character’	58
Introduction.....	58
Reading nationalism through the nation	58
European nationalism as Polish nationalism	62
‘We want God, We want Clean Blood’.....	65
Interrupting and undermining national category – ‘ <i>where are you from?</i> ’	73
Conclusion	80
Chapter 4: ‘Polish-Centrism’: Making sense of ‘race’ and racism in Poland	82
Introduction.....	82
Setting the Polish-Euro hysteria scenery.....	84
Whiteness as a mechanism that sustains Polishness.....	86
Making sense of ‘race’ and racism in Poland through immigration	90
Being not quite Polish, not quite European	91
‘Not quite being human’ – the halo of blackness	96
Blackness and Polishness.....	99

Conclusion.....	101
Chapter 5: The Racialised: <i>not</i> being Polish, <i>not</i> being white, <i>not</i> being European	104
Introduction.....	104
What is Racialisation?.....	105
Racialisation as a process of exclusion	107
Racialisation – from the perspective of colour in Poland.....	110
The Polish racialised economy: ‘we cannot employ you’.....	113
The racialised politics and media.....	116
The racialised bodies: the power of seeing and unseeing	118
Racialisation and Immigration	122
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 6: Racial Microaggressions in Poland	125
Introduction.....	125
Re-routing ‘everyday racism’ and racial microaggressions.....	127
The excluded and isolated bodies.....	130
The exotified and objectified bodies.....	136
The mistaken bodies.....	138
Black bodies as pathologised bodies.....	140
The denial of multiracial reality	142
Conclusion.....	143
Chapter 7: Attraction and Repulsion – Bedfellows in Racial Desire	145
Introduction.....	145
Attractiveness/Sexuality: contextualising black bodies.....	149
Black body as a body of threat.....	154
Black body as a body of curiosity	162
Absence of enough contact with black bodies.....	166
Conclusion.....	168
Chapter 8: The Polish ethno-racial contract – rerouting <i>The Racial Contract</i>	170
Introduction.....	170
The Racial Contract as a global Contract.....	171
The enactment of Polish ethno-racial Contract.....	174
Rerouting <i>The Racial Contract</i>	180
Conclusion.....	183
Chapter 9: Conclusion: Digesting race and racism in Poland	185
Introduction.....	185

Theoretical contributions to knowledge.....	185
Methodological contributions.....	190
Implications and future directions	190
Bibliography	193
Appendix One: Participants' Information Table	231
Appendix Two: Information Sheets and Consent Forms.....	233
Appendix Three: Research Posters, Confidentiality Agreement, and Ethical Approval	240

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Predominant sub-Saharan African Countries in Poland

Figure 1.2: Citizens of Sub-Saharan Africa locations in Poland

Figure 1.3: Age

Figure 1.4: Gender

Figure 1.5: Immigration Status

Figure 1.6: A UNICEF advertisement at the Warsaw City centre

Figure 1.7: A billboard advertising the new edition of the “Domino Effect” programme

Figure 2.1: Cover of *Sea and Colonies* magazine edited by Jan Debski in the 1930s

Figure 7.1: A representation of blackness in the celebration of ‘Black Friday’, shopping holiday

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

'There's no other explanation to this, still happens to this day, it's because I'm black! From day one, Polish people don't see me as a Polish person, that's a fact!'

(Sophia, mixed-race, female respondent)

I have always thought that no one chooses to be born black or white, it is only after birth that people attribute values to being black or white – it is the values attributed to this shade of colour in Poland that I seek to unpick in this study. To set the context for this thesis, perhaps it is useful to begin with an anecdote. I have been travelling to Poland for almost a decade, at least three times per year, and I have encountered both positive and negative Poland. Growing up in England, as a black male of sub-Saharan African descent, I am acutely aware of my blackness, but never been a victim of anti-black racism possibly because of growing up in diverse communities in London and Manchester where the colour of my skin is, at least, not overtly pronounced apart from occasional black/white casual 'mick-taking'.

It was when I started travelling to Poland that I began to understand what it really means to have a skin that is black. It was a dark side I experienced after watching a football match at a bar in Poland. I had spent time at a few bars in the country and met a number of people that I got on well with. This particular bar was not different, and the atmosphere was great despite screening a football match. It was on our way home that the ugly side of Poland revealed itself, when my Polish friends and I walked into a group of young Poles, all male, all white walking towards us and muttering some racial slurs, not towards my white friends, but the presence of my black body amongst the white faces triggered a trembling of the heart. As the group walked closer, suddenly somebody from the group spat at me. I was transfixed by his action. I did not know what to think or say. I felt inferior as my humanity ceased to exist for a second – I was clearly very upset. My Polish friends were horrified too, but worried about the violence that may follow. This was the moment I realised that, even in the dark, my blackness has nowhere to hide in a white-dominated society. All night, I could not stop thinking about the psychological implication of the situation that I just experienced and that almost completely erased all the positive things that Poland stands for. I can only seek solace in two places — a big shot of *wisniowka* (Cherry Vodka) and Appiah's (1990) understating of racisms as cognitive incapability.

Following the above event, in different situations, I realised how cute and attractive my thick curly hair could be for some Polish people. This made someone to ask my Polish friends: *Czy może dotknąć Twoich włosów, czy one rosna?* (His hair, do they grow or stay the same length forever? Can I touch, please?) – this appeared as something normal for many Polish people. Also, it was at the Guido coal mine underground tour in Zabrze that I met a 60-year-old tour guide who had never met a dark-skinned person. Perhaps I was the first black person to visit Guido coal mine – the man’s eagerness to shake hands and share a shot of Polish vodka certainly seemed to suggest so. In Pszczyna, a town in southern Poland, I was once asked to model for a well-established photographer who, despite 20 years of photography experience, never knew how a dark skin would appear on a photo. In Katowice, many secondary school students were always eager to practice their English language with me, by mimicking an American accent, assuming that I am an African American. It was in the same city, whilst walking down the street, that a Polish man exclaimed: *Gdzie znalazłś tego Murzyna?!* (Where did you find this negro?!). This sort of situation is not at all uncommon in Poland, if you have a dark-skin similar to mine. Whilst all this may appear cumulatively as a form of curiosity or the kind of reactions that occur when encountering the unknown, they have serious implications on the life of people of colour in Poland.

With the above experiences in mind, when it came to choosing my PhD research topic in 2014, it was obvious that *Poland, Blackness and Racialisation* would be an interesting topic. It was through my PhD journey that I later came to understand that my experiences in Poland are not limited to racial microaggressions — ‘subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color’ (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000: 60). Whilst racial microaggressions offer a useful way of understanding prejudice from one individual to another, the work of Carmichael & Hamilton (1967) helps to advance the idea, when they suggested that racial experiences are best understood through an analytic of structural mechanisms that directly or indirectly reproduce racism. This means that those microaggressions that appear random and isolated are mediated through structural and institutional forms of covert/overt racism.

Determining race

It was the above realisation and understanding of racism as a structural and institutional mechanism that prompted a colossal change in my study from straight ethnographic narratives to more decolonial racism study. In effect, a confrontation of, and departure from Eurocentrism – the idea that differences between who is European and who is non-European are due to biological differences (Quijano, 2000: 542). Although hindered by the dearth of literature that engages sufficiently with race and racism in Poland, this ‘thinking in radical exteriority’ (Vallega, 2015: x)

cannot simply mean a transformation of western concepts to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). As Kymlicka (2001: 13) has pointed out the difficulty with such transformation lies particularly in the differences in histories, economic conditions and democratic principles. Histories of race and racism may be different from one country to another, their patterns are globally the same. Unlike other concepts such as nationalism, socialism, and patriotism, the concept of race 'isn't just a word. It is a set of conditions, shifting over time. Never just one thing, it is a way (or really ways) of thinking, a way(s) of living, a disposition' (Goldberg, 2006: 337), often considered sociologically rather than as a product of histories (Puzzo, 1964: 579). It is for this reason that I began to engage in a degree of historical revision by seeking an analytical accuracy whilst remaining racially conscious. I consider historical exercise useful in grappling with 'the historical specificity of race in the modern world' (Hall, 1980: 308; Hall, 2000).

Race historians have a lot to say about its development and its specificity. For example, Ivan Hannaford (1996: 5) has argued that the word "race" entered the western language late, became circulated in the middle of the 16th century, and only acquired its modern meaning in the late 18th century. As a historical product, race then becomes a social phenomenon (Desmond & Mustafa, 2009: 338) that uses a system of categorisation which emerged at the beginning of the 19th century (Gossett, 1963: 3; Bindman, 2002). Although some forms of prejudice existed before the modern time, none of these forms of prejudice resulted in the development of ideologies based on race (Smedley & Smedley, 2012: 13). Also, before the 16th century, the concept of race did not exist. Instead of race, the primary social division in the Middle Ages was between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' without colour-line attached, as Dante Puzzo (1964) affirms:

Racism, thus defined, is a modern conception, for prior to the XVIth century there was virtually nothing in the life and thought of the West that could be described as racist.
(Puzzo, 1964: 579)

The above seems to imply that race, as we know it today, a form of categorisation of human beings has European colonial context in its formation. It appeared in the languages of the Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, Germans, Dutch, and the English peoples (Hannaford, 1996: 5) simply because these European groups established colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas (Smedley & Smedley, 2012: 14). For example, in North America, the group - 'Indian' was created within the context of European colonisation, as indigenous peoples of the Americas were lumped together under a group to be uprooted, exploited and possibly killed (Desmond & Mustafa, 2009). It was through this process of exclusion that whiteness and blackness were invented and positioned opposite each other. Whilst blackness is linked to bondage and inferiority, whiteness is associated

with freedom and superiority. Whiteness expanded during the early years of the 20th century as Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe transformed themselves from “lesser Whites” to, simply, “Whites” (Desmond & Mustafa, 2009: 339). And more recently, the presence of a large number of Central and Eastern European migrants working and living in western Europe, brings into focus the acknowledgement and exhibition of whiteness against non-whites (Fox, 2013: 1881; Fox, Morosanu, & Eszter, 2012). Furthermore, white supremacy was legitimated by racial discourses in the western philosophy, literature, and race science and in the middle of the 20th century, the racial categories known to us today were firmly established (Desmond & Mustafa, 2009: 339). Although the second half of the 20th century brought great changes in the realm of race, the racial system and most especially the subordination of black people that emerged over 300 years still remain with us today.

All this suggests that race provides a silent guide for interaction between superior (White) and inferior (Black) stocks. The most dangerous thing about the interaction, especially in the modern time, is that it sets rules of conduct that may or may not be obvious to everyday people. Based on these assumptions, it is not surprising that the concept of race is a European conception that rests on physical characteristics and the distinction between superior and inferior stocks (Fredrickson, 2002; Baum, 2006; Glasgow, 2009). Therefore, any forms of race theory must begin with or at least include the context of European colonisation and slavery (Golash-Boza, 2016: 131).

The work of Audrey Smedley & Brian Smedley on ‘race as a modern idea’ is particularly useful for an understanding of how racial categories emerged and maintained. They argue that ‘[R]ace is a way of looking at the kaleidoscope of humanity, of dividing it into presumed exclusive units and imposing upon them attributes and futures that conform to a ranking system within the cultures that are defining the races’ (Smedley & Smedley, 2012: 20). Seen in this way, race is a social fabrication (Graves, 2001; Duster, 2003) that continues to define and structure social life experientially, locally, nationally and globally (Winant, 2001: 1). Desmond & Mustafa (2009: 336) take this argument further when they define race as ‘*a symbolic category, based on phenotype or ancestry and constructed according to specific social and historical contexts, that is misrecognized as a natural category.*’ The point that needs to be stressed here is that the above historicity of race is often reduced to western civilisation and its interaction with peoples from other regions of the world. The Polish sense of race is not completely detached from the western conceptualisation of race through which both white and black peoples come to exist.

The argument set out above has demonstrated that somatic and cultural differences seem to play major roles in the way people are classified in a racially/ethnically, homogenous society, especially

in a society that adheres to its culture, tradition and religion. Poland, as part of Central Eastern Europe (CEE), fits the composition of the population of such society where Catholicism, nationalism, and homogeneity appear to serve as catalysts for the systematic exclusion of minority groups. However, in order to understand how these linked mechanisms (Catholicism, nationalism, and homogeneity) serve as processes of exclusion, in the case of a black person, one needs to consider Du Bois' conceptualisation of the veil and Fanon's psychoexistential complex as a wider perspective that underpins the white-black relations. The tension point in the white-black racial dynamic exists within what Fanon (1952) describes as 'a massive psychoexistential complex', a psychological complex that refers to intrapsychic processes of being black, which could be understood through 'the veil'— the Du Boisian concept that describes the darkness of skin as a physical and mental demarcation of difference from whiteness.

The 'problem of the color-line' (Du Bois, 1994[1903]) and 'cultural psychology' (Fanon, 1952) are evident in Polish Catholicism, nationalism, and homogeneity. It is often argued that Polish identity is inconceivable without Catholicism coded as white and European. This leads to a suggestion that Polish people attached great importance to Catholic traditions, literature and Slavic life (Szcypiorski, 1982; Szajkowski, 1983; Stachura, 1999; Spohn, 2003) leading to conclusion that Catholicism has little to do with spirituality, but a sense of social belonging, and national identity (Michlic, 2004: 463). Therefore, the thought of bringing non-Catholic/non-European culture into the Polish sensibilities had created a long and continuous history of exclusion and racialisation that is understandable through the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist movements in Poland. This led to the development of ethnic nationalism that strengthened religious fundamentalism in the large part of CEE where Judaism and Islam are often presented as religions of the outsiders.

The emergence of nationalism was not necessarily a process to move Poland towards a new political direction. As Maria Janion (2011: 10) has pointed out, it was mainly 'a male movement, which dissociates itself from any contamination or deviation', therefore, became a popular reaction against globalisation, multiculturalism and secularism. The notion that people who share a common blood, language, religion, and culture should constitute a nation-state, and be free of foreign ascendancy seems cardinal in Polish nationalism. More than that, Polish nationalism, unlike many other forms of nationalism, has strong racial undertone to its formation simply because of its attachment to whiteness that lacks common-sense understanding of diversity. For many Polish nationalists, nationalism is a necessary process of preservation of 'national Thing', which often leads to tensions between the nation-state and its ethnic minority (Žižek, 1990: 53; 1998: 988). The

unwillingness to redefine genuine Polishness, which requires a process of debate and self-understanding, deconstruction of stagnant Polish beliefs, and an attempt to reinterpret some parts of Polish culture make Polish nationalism an interesting case (Janion, 2011: 4). This leads many scholars to conclude that Polish identity relies partly on parochialism and nationalism (McManus-Czubinska et al., 2003; Galbraith, 2004; Mayblin et al., 2016). The issue here is that all this creates a veil and psychological complexity for anyone who does not fit the definition of the Polish self-conception. Indeed, it was this sense of Polish self-conception, the whiteness of the nation that marked my body out and subjected it to the racialised experiences recounted at the opening of this introductory chapter.

The etymology of *Murzyn* (Negro) – its trajectory and transition to black

The above argument links nicely to the next, that racism in Poland is not just about microaggressions, but it is also institutional – a kind of racialisation that has become established as normal behaviour within a society. I take my cue from Goldberg's (2015a: 255) insistence on 'how state formations or histories, logics of expression and exploitation, are linked, whether casually or symbolically, ideationally or semantically'. In this process, structural racism elevated racial behaviour from a micro level to a macro level. A particular debate in Poland that best illustrates structural racism is the issue related to the Polish term *Murzyn* (translates as Negro) as a way of describing or addressing a black person. It is a term that runs through some of the chapters in this thesis, and it is important that I set out the debate around this word before advancing the argument in other chapters.

The concept of blackness with its ambiguities, challenges and contradictions has been discussed, acclaimed and contested extensively in western Europe and especially in North America. Within the contestation, one quickly finds that there is no single subject that adequately explains the meaning and understanding of blackness. Rather than a specific scholarship, I find an assemblage of topics – slavery; coloniality; post-coloniality and decoloniality; critical race theory; histories of immigration; multiculturalism; transnationalism; subaltern and white studies – as a way of conceptualising blackness. In order to understand various ambiguities that lie within the etymology and the current use of the Polish word *Murzyn* in Poland, it is important to map the trajectory and transitions of 'Negro' to 'Black', in the process, contributing to the current debate on the usage of *Murzyn* in Poland.

Slavery, the conditions in which black people were owned mainly by whites, controlled and forced into hard labour, helped to delineate the movement and displacement of this forcefully scattered

population whose origin lies in a separate geographical location. This comes with coloniality; post-coloniality and then decoloniality that began to interrogate various forms of European colonialism, legacies and knowledge. Essentially, the introduction of critical race theory has been pivotal in the examination of the west in relation to race, law, power and life of people of colour. This has advanced the conceptualisation of blackness, at least, in western Europe and North America, leading to the emergence of contemporary campaigns such ‘#Black Lives Matter’, ‘#Why is My Curriculum White?’, all rethinking and reshaping the perception of black people and their lived experiences. It is important to highlight that this particular narrative is currently missing in Poland, as a result, the conceptualisation of blackness is trapped within the term *Murzyn* ‘Negro’ as currently being used in Poland instead of ‘Black’.

The word negro, adopted from the Spanish and Portuguese, was first recorded in the mid-16th century. It remained the standard term throughout the 17th–19th centuries, even the early 20th century black scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington often referred to black people as negro, as Du Bois once argued that “Negro” was “etymologically and phonetically... much better and more logical than ‘African’ or ‘colored’ or any of the various hyphenated circumlocutions” (Bennett, 1970). However, what needs to be acknowledged, but currently missing in the Polish etymology of negro, is that the connotations of the word have shifted massively since the Black Power movement in the 1960s mainly in North America and later in the United Kingdom, when the term ‘black’ gradually emerged, as negro (together with negress) dropped out of favour, now out of date and even considered offensive in many countries most especially North America and the United Kingdom¹. Nevertheless, leading Polish scholars, among them, Antonia Kloskowska (1994: 218) and Maciej Zabek (2016: 141) take this transition as ‘a total rejection’, without considering the emergence of black social movements in North America, and the roles of the Baptist and Methodist churches as well as the emergence of the ‘new negro’ intelligential in the transformation of negro to black (Louis Gates & Jarret, 2007). From this perspective, sub-Saharan African racial label becomes a critical issue that goes beyond the understanding and its current usage in the Polish society. Importantly, the transition of negro to black is strongly influenced by generations of people of colour, their social conditions and perception of reality.

Negro to Black - a trajectory and transition

Whilst several racial terms have been used throughout the history of black people, the standard preferential term changed from “Colored” in the 19th and early 20th centuries to “Negro”. The

¹ See definition on <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Negro>

term was and still seen as a stronger word, partly due to its association with racial labels such as 'Niggah' and 'Nigger' (Miller, 1937; Bennett, 1970; Litwack, 1979; Branch, 1988). The civil rights and black power movements in the 1960s played an essential role in the change of "Negro" to "Black", and now perhaps the blacks in North America would prefer "African American" (Smith, 1989; 1992: 497).

The transition of the word Negro to Black is almost impossible without recognising its trajectory, ambiguities, challenges and contradictions especially in North America, where the effects of abolition of slavery, the reconstruction, and then the Jim Crow laws were harshly felt by black people. The industrial age of the early 20th century marked a period of exponential development in the diversification of black people in North America. Following the reconstruction period, the mass migration of rural, southern 'negro' to the urban north from 1915 to 1930 played a crucial role in the transformation of the life of negroes (Smith, 1992: 496). Several circumstances encouraged millions of negroes to migrate, the primary reasons were the increased demand for cheap labour in the period between the wars. Racial tensions in the rural south, particularly the rise in lynching forced 'negroes' to migrate. Nonetheless, life was not much better in the northern cities (Mazucci, 2005). The enormous population shift, xenophobic northerners, and the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan exacerbated 'race' riots in the northern cities. For example, riots in Chicago and East St. Louis claimed eighty-five lives and injured many people (Mazucci, 2005: 67). Also, 'race-based' violence culminated in the Red Summer of 1919, during which twenty-six riots broke out in the overpopulated northern cities. Simultaneously, a similar process emerged in the United Kingdom with small communities of colonial origin in the 19th century, all racialised and subject to physical attack, when summoned by capital to reconstitute its relation to the capitalist mode of production by selling labour power for a wage (Miles, 1988: 12).

It was around the same period that Aime Cesaire coined the idea of *Negritude* in the 1930s as a way of drawing attention to the alienated position of black people in history by asserting black identity for blacks around the world (Cesaire, 1983). From a political standpoint, especially in relation to Africa, *Negritude* was an important aspect to the rejection of imperial perception of blacks sparked and fed off subsequent literary movements that were responding to global politics and movements such as the Harlem Renaissance that played a pivotal role in the art and culture of black identity (Kesteloot, 1991).

Responding to the racial oppression and social injustice were negroes 'more bureaucratic, impersonal, formal, and sedate than their counterparts in the South, the established congregations increasingly adapted themselves to the more secular concerns of a new Black middle class.' (Baer

& Singer, 1992: 51). Also, not forgetting the benefits of Baptist and Methodist churches that provided many negroes with imagination, dynamic qualities, and essentially an atmosphere where they may experiment in politics, social reform, and social expression in North America (Fauset, 1975: 107-108; Smith, 1992). Concurrently, in the United Kingdom, it was becoming common that 'blackness' was not just a reference to skin colour, but a common experience of exclusion, and political identity that resisted all forms of exclusion (Brah, 1992: 127-131).

At this point, the use of the word negro with its negative association was gradually dropped as many black organisations started replacing negro, in their names, with black. According to Tom Smith (1992: 502), the uses of black prior to 1965 were references to the black Muslims and were mainly inquiries about 'black power' that gave 'black race a positive sign and white race the mark of guilty malfeasance' (Painter, 2010: 378). This particularly points to activism of Timothy Drew, commonly known as "Noble Drew Ali", a black nationalist recognising that racism is indistinguishably woven into the fabric of Christianity and rejected the terms "Negro," "Black," and "colored," as reference to people of sub-Saharan African descent (Mazucci, 2005: 69). In his view, these are labels introduced and imposed by white people (Fauset, 1975: 47).

Another source for tracking the shifting transition of negro was a massive influence of Malcolm Little, known to many as 'Malcolm X', was an advocate of black rights and arch-critic of white Americans. As early as 1964, Malcolm had developed a self-vision and perception of negro delivered at the Harvard Law School Forum on 16th December 1964 ². According to Malcolm, the concept of negro was an idea developed not by Africans, but forcefully imposed by European imperial powers, starting with the Spanish and Portuguese and later expanded by the British, the Dutch and the French. In his analysis, Malcolm was particularly critical of Georges Cuvier's taxonomy – the classification and categorisation of people into Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. It is a stereotype, particularly about sub-Saharan Africa, that Malcolm argued in his 1965 speech – 'On Afro-American History'

The only ones that they classify as Negroid, are those that they find no evidence that they were ever civilized; then they call them Negroid. But they can't afford to let any black-skinned people who have evidence that they formally occupied a high seat in civilization, they can't afford to let them be called Negroid, so they take them on into the Caucasoid classification (Malcolm X, 1967: 17-18).

This criticism, in particular, emerged from the etymology of the term 'Negro' and its psychological implications on African-Americans who chose to identify with the word. Malcolm inferred that

² See 'Malcolm X Speaks At Harvard Law School', available on <http://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/2015236558/1990-10-22/ed-1/seq-4.pdf>

Georges Cuvier's classificatory system, later accepted and adopted by many white nations, was inconsistent for the following reason: 'If Frenchmen are of France and Germans are of Germany, where is 'Negroland'? I'll tell you: it's in the mind of the white man! . . . You don't call Minnie Minoso [Major League Baseball player] a "Negro," and he's blacker than I am. You call him a Cuban! . . . Nkrumah is an African—a Ghanaian—you don't call him a 'Negro'"³. This raises a similar question in Poland as to why we have Polish-Jew; Polish-German, Polish-Tatars, but a Polish of African descent is either *Murzynek* (Negro) or *Murzynka* (Negress). The disparity in the classification has a lot to do with a long-standing tradition of racialisation, as Malcolm points out:

These are so-called anthropological terms that were put together by anthropologists who were nothing but agents of the colonial powers, and they were purposely given such scientific positions in order that they could come up with definitions that would justify the European domination over the Africans and the Asians. So immediately they invented classifications that would automatically demote these people or put them on a lesser level. All of the Caucasoids are on a high level, the Negroids are kept at a low level. This is just plain trickery that their scientists engage in in order to keep you and me thinking that we never were anything, and therefore he's doing us a favor as he lets us step upward or forward in his particular society or civilization (Malcolm X, 1967: 17-18).

Malcolm's argument is a reminder that the idea of 'race' is only a social construction—not a scientific fact, and that there is a need to decolonise, deconstruct and redefine the imperial classification of people. It is from the arguments such as Malcolm's that blackness began to emerge as a favourable replacement for negro. Not only because of the natural balance it provides to the term white linguistically (Allen, 1990: 71), but mainly because blackness is 'forged to resist a specific racist discourse and imagery which linked notions such as slave, 'Negro' and African with the ideology of 'race' (Miles, 1994: 194).

Admittedly, transferring the trajectory and experiences of black people in the US and the UK into a Polish worldview would not be a straightforward task, simply because the historical configuration of the Polish nation is not exactly the same as the United States' or the United Kingdom's. Nonetheless, the above exercise is a demonstration of how the term negro has moved on mainly in the west and elsewhere in the world, but not in Poland.

'Murzyn' – a character from culturally distinct land

As shown above, the original connotations of the term *Murzyn* are not completely devoid of European imperial links. To be clear, *Murzyn* is not originally Polish. For instance, *Murzyn zrobił*

³ Malcolm X at the Boston University Human Relations Center, February 15, 1960. Lincoln, Black Muslims: 64–65. Minnie Minoso is the Major League Baseball player who broke Chicago's "color barrier" when he signed with the White Sox in 1951.

swoje, murzyn może odejść (Once the Moor/Negro has done his duty, the Moor/Negro can go). It is imperative not to lose sight of the importance of the figure of the Moor/Negro in this Polish statement as an expression of servitude and what it has come to signify in the Polish perception of blackness. From the Middle Ages to the 17th century, Europeans have been using the word Moor to describe ethnic characteristics of any groups as being black, “swarthy,” or “tawny” in skin colour. In *Othello*, Shakespeare’s Moor of Venice, is an example of such description.⁴

In fact, the above Polish expression is not exactly Polish but found its way into the Polish language via Germany. The expression was first used by Friedrich Schiller, a German playwright, to portray the social status of a Moor. One way of understanding the figure of a Moor is through Schiller’s perception. Schiller was an Enlightenment playwright and an admirer of the works of Immanuel Kant⁵, writing at the peak of the Enlightenment’s ‘race problem’, starting with David Hume’s 1742 suspicion of the negroes, and other species of men to be naturally inferior to the whites. It is from this perspective that Kant believed that there was no civilised nation other than whites’ (Bernasconi, 2001). This was followed by dismissal of all the features of black race and in praise of the perfection of the white race. In his classification, the African, and the Hindu appear to be incapable of moral maturity because they lack “talent”, which is a natural gift (Eze, 1997: 115). In other words, Kant attached lack of talent of blacks to natural phenomenon rather than an economic empowerment. His work, ‘Of national characteristics’, remains one of the major works on stereotype of the Enlightenment period that Friedrich Schiller synthesised into his plays.

What needs to be emphasised here is that once such perception and stereotype are built into an understanding of an outsider, it becomes difficult to argue that the term *Murzyn* is a positive word or a Moor/Negro is seen as a good person. The etymology of *Murzyn* – what it stood for and how it had been expressed before and after its transition into the Polish parlance – all points squarely at the biological conceptualisation of race and it is this that makes it difficult to suggest that the term *Murzyn* is neutral or inoffensive.

Also adopting a black identity has not completely changed the perception of black people, as its negative aspects are harshly felt. For example, in Poland, ‘*Murzyn* with racial slurs such as *czarnuch* (nigger), *czarna małpa* (black monkey), or *bambus* (bamboo)’ are negative descriptions of black people (Średziński, 2017: 131; Fox & Mogilnicka, 2019). What is particularly dangerous about this is the interchangeable use of negro and black in Poland. One gets the impression that the use

⁴ For more details, see Moor People available online: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Juan-juan>

⁵ See Philosophical Studies And Classical Drama of Friedrich Schiller available online: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Friedrich-Schiller>

of the term *Murzyn*, especially in case of right-wing media, is a reaction against political correctness. This suggests that the word is used provocatively to describe dark-skinned people from ‘culturally distinct’ land, used to express a disdained position of people of sub-Saharan African descent. For some, *Murzyn* means being exploited, as indicated in the common Polish expression – ‘*Murzyni za grosz*’ (Negroes for the buck), which is often used to express a humiliating situation. It denotes someone inferior, a slave that could be easily subordinated and exploited. All this leads to a suggest ‘that *Murzyn* is not a socially desirable term nowadays’ (Średziński, 2017: 131), as the term does not only describe someone from sub-Saharan African descent, it goes beyond that. It has pejorative ways of describing a disdained identity. However, it needs to be highlighted that the label *Murzyn* is gradually becoming less acceptable in Poland. ‘This might be a sign of a newly acquired understanding of multiracial society or learning certain “rules of civility”’ (Nowicka, 2018: 833). Importantly, the transition is not only an attempt to change racial label by the people of sub-Saharan descent, but to redefine themselves and to gain respect in a society that still perceives them through the inferiority of negroes.

Sub-Saharan Africans – an emerging population in Poland

The history of sub-Saharan African population in Europe stretches back to centuries before and after European trans-Atlantic slavery, colonisation and occupations that eventually paved the way for the modern forceful or voluntary migration. This includes post World War II reconstruction that drew a steady flow of workers from the Caribbean Islands and Africa to many countries in Europe. Britain, in particular, encouraged mass immigration from the countries of the British Empire and Commonwealth, mainly Caribbean and African countries to fill the labour shortages in Britain⁶. In addition, the effect of modern globalisation drawn people from sub-Saharan Africa primarily to seek employment in many parts of Europe with Greece, Italy and Spain serving as gateways into the continent. Alongside the labour migration was a significant influx of refugees from war-torn countries in sub-Saharan Africa seeking political asylum in western Europe (Austria, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). At the same time, students from sub-Saharan Africa are attracted to the educational opportunities that allowed many to travel to Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine) mainly to study. At the time on writing this thesis, European Union (EU) was made up of at least 28 nations,

⁶ ‘Short History of Immigration’ - http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2002/race/short_history_of_immigration.stm
Retrieved 12, June 2018

with a population of over 512 million⁷. People of African descent are estimated at least more than 7 million, with 90% of them in just 12 EU states, mainly in western Europe (Small, 2017). Despite their long presence on the continent, with the emergence of self-identification such as Afro-European, Afropean, and Black, many still identify with the culture of their countries of origin.

The roots of the sub-Saharan African population in Poland, however, could be traced back to the educational migration under the Communist regime. During the colonial era, Communist states in Europe built alliances with democratic and anti-colonial movements, and forged links with trade unions and nationalist organisations (Drew, 2014). In the post-colonial Africa, many new states adopted Communist policies in order to facilitate international alliances and to promote development through education. For example, Moscow-based Communist Universities of the Toliers of the East, in 1920s, began to recruit Africans and African Americans for it programmes that led to the production of the *Negro Workers* edited by George Padmore, a leading Trinidadian Pan-Africanist and Communist. Although Poland until 1989 was a country where a significant number of the population wanted to emigrate, and many found ways to do so despite semi-closed borders (Stola, 2010), nonetheless, many sub-Saharan African students chose Poland as their destination.

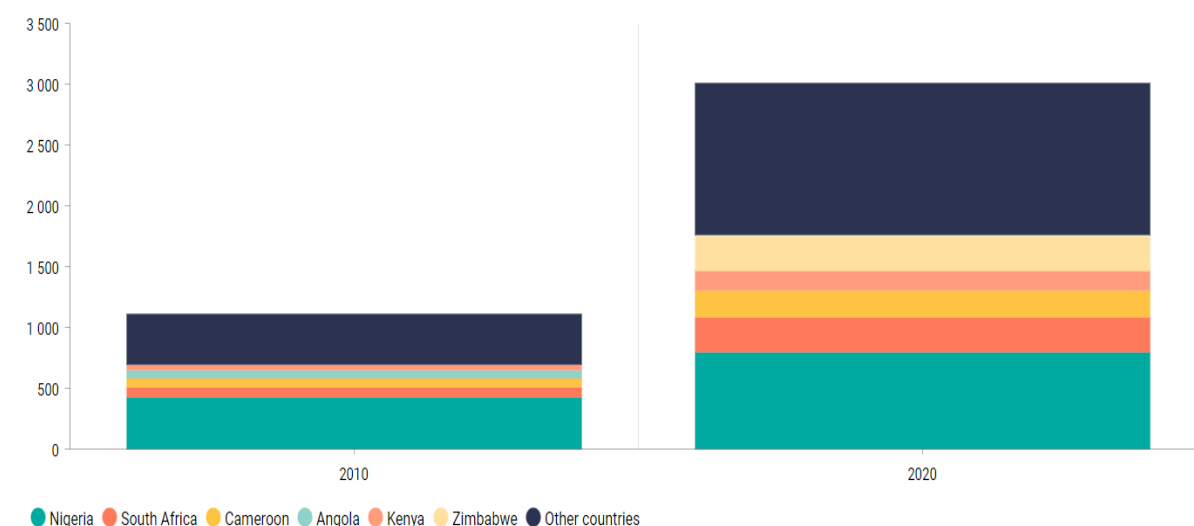
In terms of population, currently, there is no single data that precisely confirms the number of people who are of sub-Saharan African descent in Poland. The existing data prepared by the Polish Central Statistical Office only identifies people by their nationality and not ethnic backgrounds (see Figures 1.1-1.5). Nevertheless, one way of determining the number of the sub-Saharan African population in Poland is by looking at the population through the residence permits in Poland.⁸ Official statistics mentioned 211 African graduates from Polish universities between 1961-1970; almost 400 between 1971-1980; and 725 African graduates were registered between the years 1981-1990 (Chilczuk, 2001). Whilst most of the students returned to Africa after their graduations, a few found their second home in Poland, acquired jobs, set up families, and then becoming pioneers of sub-Saharan African community in Poland (Omolo, 2017: 51-54; Pędziwiatr & Balogun, 2018). The collapse of Communism in 1989 and Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and the post-accession agreements all led to the opening of the Polish borders. This produced not only the largest wave of Polish emigration that was responsible for over 2.5 million Polish citizens living

⁷ See Eurostat 2018 'Key figures on Europe – Statistics Illustrated' - <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9376615/KS-EL-18-101-EN-N.pdf/83c1b958-4c97-4410-b86e-91ac4b729701>

⁸ At the same time, it is worth noting that the total number of black people in Poland may be higher than the data of the Office for Foreigners suggested, as some people do not register their stay in Poland at all, some have already completed process of Polish naturalisation and have acquired Polish citizenship. In addition, Black British, Black French, Black German, Mixed-race Poles and African-Americans, living in Poland are not visible in the current number of people who are of sub-Saharan African descent.

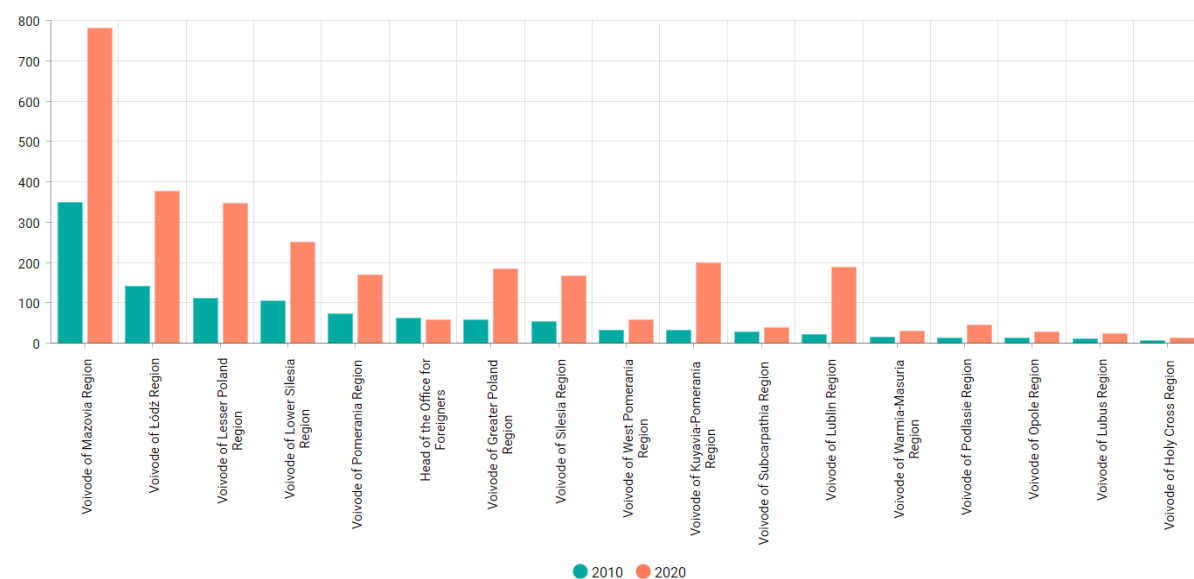
outside the country including, over a million in the UK (Pędziwiatr & Brzozowski, 2018) before Brexit, it also led to an increasing number of immigrants coming to Poland. One of the groups of people that started arriving largely in Poland since 2004, not only as students but also as tourists, diplomats, business-persons, professionals and refugees, have been from sub-Saharan African countries (Pędziwiatr & Balogun, 2018).

Figure 1.1: Predominant sub-Saharan African citizens in Poland



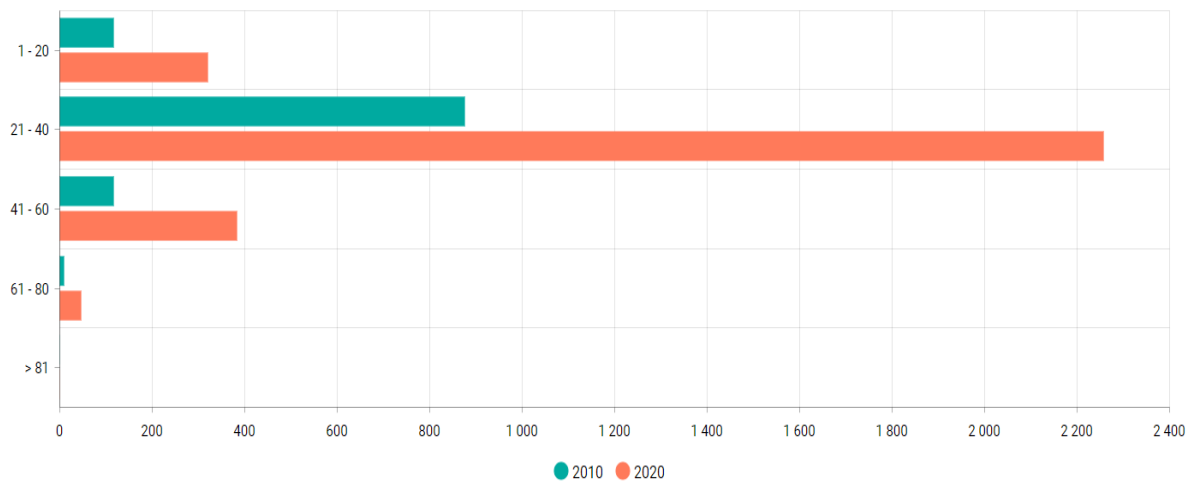
Source: [UDSC](#)

Figure 1.2: Citizens of sub-Saharan Africa locations in Poland



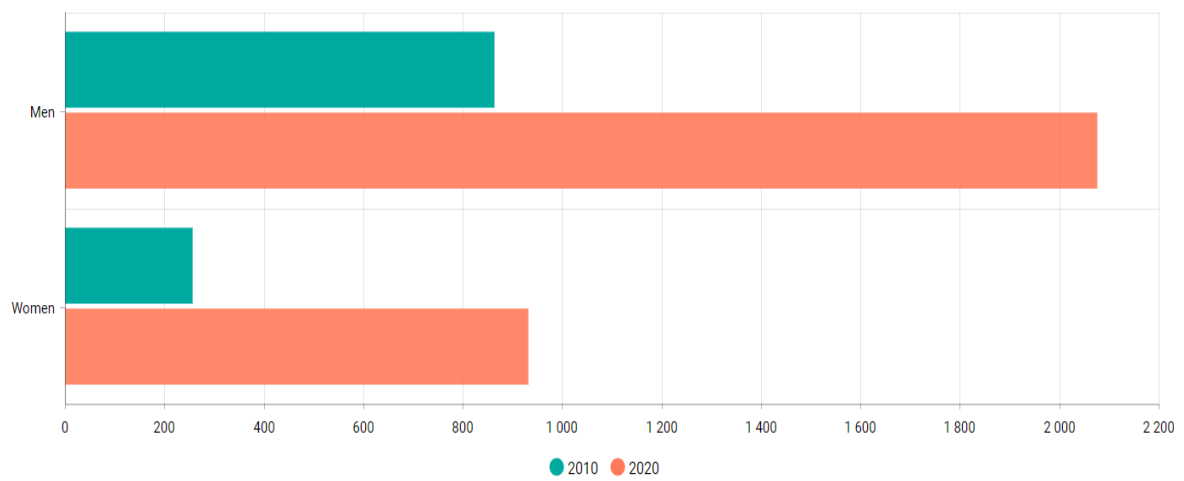
Source: [UDSC](#)

Figure 1.3: Age



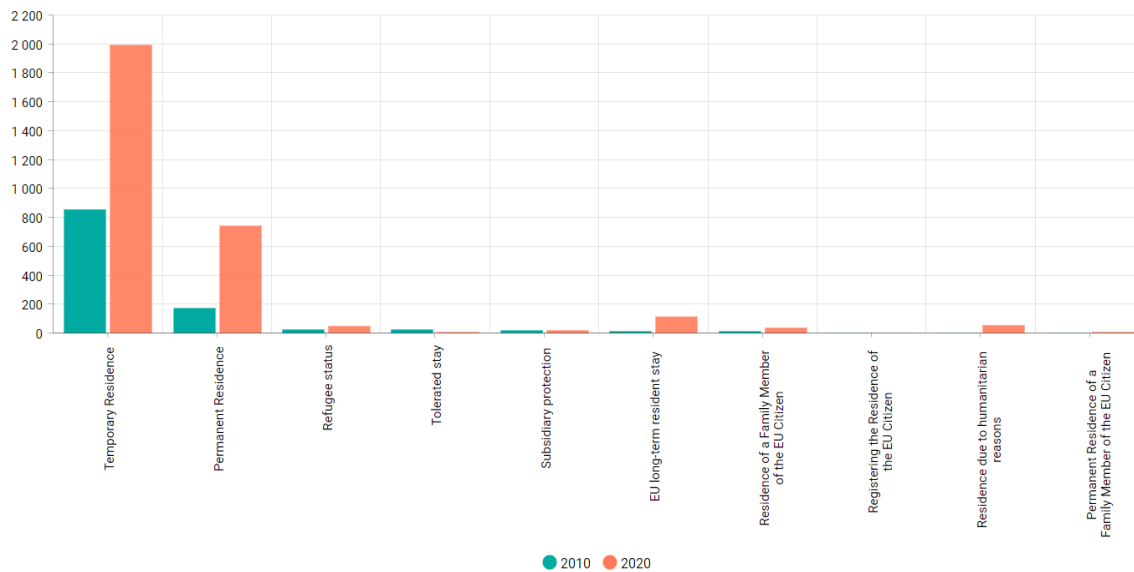
Source: [UDSC](#)

Figure 1.4: Gender



Source: [UDSC](#)

Figure 1.5: Immigration Status



Source: [UDSC](#)

According to the statistics by the Foreign Office registering all the foreign nationals staying in Poland for longer than 3 months, there are currently over 2,500 citizens of sub-Saharan African countries living in Poland. The number of sub-Saharan Africans living in Poland has almost doubled since 2010 when there were slightly over 1,100 of such people in the country. Whilst in 2010 women constituted less than one-fourth of the community, currently women make up over one-fourth of the population, which suggests a slightly higher gender balance (Pędziwiatr & Balogun, 2018). The three major sending countries have not changed as such – Nigeria (54%); South Africa (14%); and Cameroon (14%) making up the major countries of this growing minority. The population is currently made up of young people 21-40 years old and a smaller cohort of 41-60 years old. In terms of their legal status, over 1,300 of the sub-Saharan Africans have only temporary residence permit and a few have permanent residence in Poland. Contrary to the public opinion, very few people from sub-Saharan Africa have refugee status, tolerated stay or subsidiary protection in Poland. The largest concentration of sub-Saharan Africans in Poland is to be found in the capital city, Warsaw; smaller groups live in Krakow and Lodz (UDSC, 2018).

The above demographic information suggests that Polish people, ever than before, now share their resources and public space with black people. On the one hand, this has opened up a process whereby sub-Saharan Africans, often perceived as a rarity in Poland, are especially sensational and attractive to many Poles (Borkowicz, 2015; Zabek, 2016). On the other hand, it has led to several complications which should be understood as a social phenomenon, but often naturally racialised.

The representation of blackness in Poland

Despite the increase in the number of black sub-Saharan Africans currently living in Poland, many Polish people, in Poland, have never had an interaction with someone of sub-Saharan African origin (Ohia, 2016: 148). This is consistent with a survey conducted by Africa Another Way Foundation in 2011 showing that only 15% of all Poles have met a person of sub-Saharan African background in their communities (Duński & Średziński, 2011). As a result, the image of sub-Saharan African people in Poland is binary. On the one hand, they are often associated with students on scholarships with state funding, sportsmen (athletes, footballers, basketball players), foreign celebrities and professionals (doctors, journalists, politicians), and bazaar traders. On the other hand, especially through Polish media attempting to problematise political situations in Africa, black people are seen as representations of hunger, illnesses (especially AIDS and recently EBOLA), natural disasters, exotic elements of travel TV shows that highlight cultural differences between blacks and whites.

Figure 1.6: A UNICEF advertisement at the Warsaw City centre



Source: Fieldwork photo, ©Bolaji Balogun, August 2018.

Following my meeting in Warsaw with Enzo, one of the mixed-race respondents, he was walking to the train station with me when we walked towards a bus stop with an image of an African boy drinking water directly from the tap. Enzo was quick to point out that there was something he forgot to mention during our discussion. He pointed at the bus stop to show me the above image and said that this is one of many ways in which Polish people see Africa and black people. A few days later, I returned to Warsaw to meet another respondent, Johnny, during our discussions, he made references to the same image he had stored on his mobile phone. This is related to a similar image (see fig. 1.7) I saw near the airport in Wroclaw on the day I arrived in Poland for my fieldwork. Throughout my fieldwork, this image as a negative portrayal of Africa was a dominant theme that continuously occurred in most of my interviews. (Fieldwork note, August 2018).

This form of subordination is usually displayed through documentaries and billboards such as the UNICEF campaign for Africa and other billboards that strengthen the discourses on discrimination, black objectification, reproduction of race, racism and the racialisation of people that are not white.

Figure 1.7: A billboard advertising the new edition of the “Domino Effect” programme



Source: Fieldwork photo, ©Bolaji Balogun, April 2018.

A very good example is the “Domino Effect”, a Polish documentary series about extreme places in the world, where Dominika Kulczyk, the richest Polish woman visited for her foundation. Whilst Kulczyk sees “Domino Effect” as a charitable act, the advertisement of her programme

with a half-naked black baby (see *figure 1.7*) is an instance of ‘White saviour’: a form of perpetuation of stereotypes with racial implications on the perception of black people and Africa. ‘White saviour’ reinforces a long-standing paternalistic relationship between Europe and Africa with an assumption that white Europeans always have to come to the needs of black Africans.

Why Poland and Blackness?

Unchallenged discriminatory practices that lead to a poor record on racial equality makes Poland, a leading state within CEE and an emerging player in the European Union, an interesting case for race and racism. It has been suggested that the Polish Police, the state Prosecutors and the Courts’ treatment of many racial discriminatory cases as facetious may be partly responsible for poor racial equality in Poland (Kasprowicz, 2010; Zick, et al., 2011). This may suggest why, in 2010, the European Union Commission referred Poland to the EU Court of Justice for failing to implement, among other anti-discriminatory legislations, EU rules that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race and/or ethnicity (EU Commission, 2010). In the same year, Poland elected its first black Member of Parliament, and only followed by Hungary in 2018.⁹ It was something unusual and still uncommon in CEE, which indicates that although racialisation within CEE may have a similar pattern, there is a shift in the pattern of racialisation in Poland.

Whilst extensive studies have been carried out on Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism in Poland, to date, Anti-Black racism has received little attention (Kloskowska, 1962; 1994; Zabek, 2007; 2009; 2016; Nowicka, 2018) in the literature, and shows a paucity of evidence in this area. My study identifies a small gap in this research area and offers new interpretations of the old ideas. In the process, I identify the need for a body of literature that recognises the effect of contemporary anti-Black racism that could be used to read race, racism, and racialisation in Post-Communist Poland.

Although blackness is often used in different ways to depict Africa, in this study, preconceptions of blackness are studied primarily in relation to the treatment and lived experiences of people of sub-Saharan African descent, who are usually described as dark-skinned people in comparison to other populations in Poland. By seeking an insight into the lived experiences of the people of sub-Saharan African descent in Poland, the central focus of the study is to find the meaning linked to the problem of being black in Poland and the processes that show how black people are dealing with the problem of being a problem (Du Bois, 1994 [1903]).

⁹ See, ‘Hungary’s first black MP aims to ‘destroy prejudice’’, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44414668>

Importantly, the primary objective of this study is to expand the geographical terrain of contemporary race and ethnicity studies. In doing so, it fills a gap in knowledge about non-white ethnic minorities in CEE. There is a need for greater theoretical clarity on key concepts and wider studies that cover essential issues on racism that are often ignored in CEE as part of modernity of race. The modernity of race, its historicity and recentness have been the central focus of 'race critical theory'. By this, I do not only refer to the American critical race theory approach, but largely inclusive of the works of race theorists such as Stuart Hall; Eric Voegelin, Hannah Arendt, Etienne Balibar, Michel Foucault, David Theo Goldberg, Paul Gilroy, Howard Winant, Ivan Hannaford and Barnor Hesse, and many others that analyse the understanding of modernity with focus on history and colonial experience. This research borrows from the critical race approach that emerges from the writings of these race theorists and helps to counter the predominantly held idea about race. It is anticipated that this study would expand on and shed lights on such a neglected area in CEE.

Methodological reflection – black/mixed-race research in Poland

Rather than having a specific chapter that deals with methodology, this section details the methods used to gather the data for this study. From the onset, I knew that the straight ethnographic narratives of this study need to focus squarely on race and racism study. The theoretical framings that position Poland as part of the larger histories of race and racism have significant implications on how this study was designed. Influenced by critical race scholarship, the study was designed to bring black people in Poland into dialogue with the global understanding of race and racism. Following a qualitative approach, this study was conducted from an epistemological framework based on constructivism, that is, meaning reproduced by individuals through the process of social interactions (Elder-Vass, 2012). In this sense, I assume that 'race' is a social construction with no biological foundation but based on various social practices (Fairbanks, 2015). It is through this lens of social practices that I perceived the experienced shared by the research participants.

The discussions presented in this thesis came from an ethnographical study conducted whilst I was in Poland between April 2018 and April 2019 as part of Study Abroad Studentships funded by The Leverhulme Trust. The larger study explores the integration of black and mixed-race people in various cities in Poland, it is the largest qualitative and quantitative study of black people yet conducted in Poland and CEE. Here the discussions focused on interviews with black and mixed-race Polish citizens and residents: 25 semi-structured interviews in *Warsaw*, *Krakow*, *Katowice* and a focus group in *Lodz*, Poland. These locations were selected due to the presence of non-white populations settling in the areas and therefore met the conditions for racial assessment. The study

was originally designed to investigate trans-diasporic black population in Poland. However, on arriving in the country in April 2018, I observed that Poland has no trans-diasporic black population. What existed there was largely black population mainly from sub-Saharan Africa. This realisation shifted the focus of the study in such a way that allowed the study to be more focussed, at least on a particular group (Black people) from a specific background (sub-Saharan Africa). The advantage of this focus helped in making a certain generalisation based on the experience of this group, especially with lived experiences that are related to skin colour.

From the onset, it became clear that I would need to adopt several strategies to recruit specific black people to the project as they were not forthcoming through the open calls for participation (see *Appendix three* for Poster in both English and Polish). First, I relied on snowball sampling (Noy, 2008), I used extended networks and recruited participants from the identified cities who, in turn, identified more individuals that met sampling criteria. Second, I identified participants with the help of professional networks such as Helsinki Foundation, Refugees Welcome Polska, Afryka Connect Foundation, the Somali Foundation and Pentecostal Churches acting as ‘gatekeepers’ (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). The participants recruited through some of these NGOs added valuable insight to the study (Frey & Fontana, 1991).

The main selection criteria used was that each participant identified as a person of sub-Saharan African descent, and a total of 40 participants between the ages of 21–58 participated. Almost all participants were in employment; many were studying towards postgraduate degrees and came from various socio-cultural backgrounds with some participants being children of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Although participants’ social backgrounds and length of residence in Poland varied, difference in skin colour appeared to be a pattern of racialisation experienced by most participants. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, their names have been pseudonymised in this study.

In terms of positionality, I was aware of the sensitivity of the topics that were raised during the interviews and focus group (Espin, 1993; George, 2000). It was obvious that, as marginalised individuals, black people are suspicious of outsiders (Davis, 1997: 320; Dunbar et al., 2002: 291; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Reinhartz & Chase, 2002: 225), as regard, I used self-disclosure during some of the discussions. Openness was an important factor in the quality of the interaction (Chenail, 1995). I recognised the common grounds between myself and the interviewees as people of colour; I shared my personal experience as a black male growing up in England and when I first visited Poland, whilst I remained conscious of issues of bias during the conversations. This allowed the participants to remain open about their daily lives and their opinions about the society they

live in. These special accounts of the participants' lives were 'treated as giving direct access to their personal lived 'experience' (Silverman, 2010: 48).

Each interview, conducted in English, lasted for 60 minutes or more, held at universities, churches and cafes and were audio-taped and later transcribed. Although envisaged as a concern, language was not an issue as all the participants spoke English as first or second language. Using NVivo 12 software, the analysis began with open coding, and involved several close readings that led to the emergence of several themes. To strengthen the understandings of the racialised bodies, I followed up with much more focused readings and further coding that provided the landscape which eventually shaped into more focused scenes of the participants' racialised lives. During the discussions, I employed an ethnographic approach to observe the participants' relationships with the Polish society and recorded the way they described such relationships. The discussions were structured around biographical understanding of migration, settlement in Poland and then talks about being different and what it means to be Black and Polish. However, the understanding of various actions and emotions expressed by the research participants during the interviews and focus group was not immediately available. To make sense of the emotions, I turned to Critical Race Theory (CRT).

CRT as an interpretative tool was essential in the ethnographic process for this study. It has been recognised and widely argued that white-dominated, social science investigations are often viewed from a Eurocentric perspective. This was evident in my study due to the absence of the necessary tools to understand and investigate the lived experiences of the people racialised as non-white (Lewis, 2000; Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Delgado, 1984; Dunbar, 2008; Hylton, 2012; Malagon et al., 2009). It is a particular concern that Eurocentrism cannot investigate itself effectively because it is 'deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices' (Smith, 1999: 2). This is particularly true in Poland, a country that prides itself on its whiteness and Europeanness. It is the failure of the mainstream sociology in Poland to effectively articulate the concern of the minority that makes CRT an essential method that brings the marginalised to the centre of social discourse in order to challenge racialised relations (Bell, 1995; Collins, 1994; Julien & Mercer, 1996; hooks, 1992; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Cook & Dixon, 2013).

Whilst many of the arguments set out by the CRT theorists are predominantly used in the US and the UK, this does not mean that they are not applicable elsewhere (Gillborn, 2008: 1), hence my introduction and application of CRT into racial discourses in Poland. As Guba & Lincoln (1994: 113) explain, the function of critical theory is to critique and transform the social, political, culture, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind. Also, the

emancipation process within critical theory makes CRT an essential part of qualitative research method especially when investigating race and ethnicity (Brah, 1996; Hall, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003). More than that, CRT helps to present stories about discrimination and racialisation from the perspective of black people, in doing so, it demonstrates that the concept of race is a social construct (Parker & Lynn, 2002: 17).

In using CRT as part of this study, I recognised the role of race and racism, especially in many European societies and considered the complicated history of colonialism ‘that has meant that all contemporary social differences are marked by’ (Gunaratnam, 2003: 20). This was evident in the dialogues, stories, chronicles, and participants’ personal testimonies that spotlight their lived experiences in Poland. Following Gunaratnam’s (2003: 110) recommendation, I also recognised how racialised identifications are formed and mediated through their interactions with other forms of social difference. This is similar to the processes and endorsement of race and racism in the US and the UK that often serve as an external influence elsewhere in the world (Parker & Roberts, 2011: 81). CRT as an interpretative tool became more apparent in the analysis of the data after the ethnography. For example, during data analysis, I utilised critical race method to centralise the voices of the participants. Consequently, what I analysed reflected my interpretation derived from the interaction I had with the participants and the data, guided by CRT’s recognition of the roles of race and racism in colonialism and migration.

With the following research questions in mind – *Is being black a problem in Poland? How is the notion of blackness racialised in Poland? What is responsible for the identity problem of the racialised groups in Poland?* – this thesis is structured as follow.

Structure and Chapter outlines

Structurally, this thesis is organised into nine chapters. **Chapter Two**, ‘the Emergence of Polish Racialised Governmentality’, offers a literature review as an essential part of the entire research processes. The chapter departs from the traditional review of literature that looks at just theoretical frameworks. The chapter follows a specific historical perspective that situates Poland in the European colonial context. The essence of this chapter is to demonstrate that the colonisation of Africa was not only limited to the European super power states such as Britain, France, Germany, such action also existed in the imagination of less powerful European states, as will be shown in Poland’s attempt to colonise countries in Africa. The chapter adds to our understanding on how European states, often through the New South ideology, considered sub-Saharan Africans as people who could only assume inferior economic and political positions, as attributed to the

African Americans in the New South (Zimmerman, 2010a). This is a very important chapter that establishes the perceived inferiority of black people, already written into the Polish state formation. The chapters that follow build on the very notion of black inferiority demonstrated in chapter two.

Chapters three – seven introduce my respondents. They address the issues that emerged from the empirical data and engage with theories of race and racism in the analysis of the issues. Therefore, **Chapter Three**, ‘*Narodowiec* – ‘the national character’’, examines how integral is the question of nationalism to Poland. To do this effectively, the chapter discusses *Narodowiec* – ‘the national activism’ within Polish nationalism as part of the banal processes of state reproduction that are largely exploited by the current Polish government. The chapter is much more concerned with racial paradigm within Polish nationalism and how some people, as well as the state, are using the idea of Polish national identity to position themselves opposite of the non-national and non-white other.

Building on the theme of imagination, **Chapter Four**, ‘Polish-Centrism’ – Making sense of ‘race’ and racism in Poland’, maps the figures in the Polish imaginary of European, and examines whether Poland has different, if related, histories of racial thinking and exclusion. The chapter examines how the histories have been conceived, shaped and mediated. Harnessing Du Boisian dialectic of ‘double consciousness’, the chapter demonstrates that the Polish exclusionist logic is embedded within the racial contours of Polish self-conception. In this chapter, I introduce a racial logic which I refer to as ‘Polish-centrism’ – a focus on some aspects of Polish culture to the exclusion of a wider view of the world, and I provide case study examples to illustrate the concept of ‘Polish-centrism’. Within this discourse, the chapter provides an assessment of ‘race’ and racism by analysing the lived experiences of black people who are often portrayed by early Polish classics as non-Europeans and seen by many as ‘not quite Polish’.

Chapter Five, ‘The Racialised: *not* being Polish, *not* being white, *not* being European’, explores the issue of racialisation using the lived experiences of the respondents. In this chapter, I look at critical debates within the field of racialisation and systematically harness some of the processes that are applicable to the respondents in Poland. I provide examples through the everyday experiences of black people to demonstrate that, in Poland, discrimination goes beyond the concept of ‘race’. The chapter shows the role of physiognomic characteristics in the racialisation of many of the research participants whilst still acknowledging both the positive (better-sweet) and negative effects of racialisation.

Chapter Six, ‘Racial Microaggressions in Poland’, introduces the concept of racial microaggressions to a new working environment in order to examine a new way of looking at racism in Poland. It explores everyday experiences of racial microaggression in the lived experiences of migrants and mixed-race Poles of sub-Saharan African heritage. It draws from historical and contemporary examples of racial microaggressions in the US and the UK and various elements of CRT as a well-established technique. In doing so, the chapter provides significant empirical insight into the manifestations and implications of racial microaggressions in Poland. Despite the increase in literature on racial microaggression and its negative effects on black people, the chapter shows, in Poland racial microaggressions are often modulated as trivial and never acknowledged as being racial. This chapter highlights a gap in the understanding of ‘race’ and racism in the country.

In **Chapter Seven**, ‘Attraction and Repulsion – Bedfellows in Racial Desire’, I examine the subject and understanding of a stranger in Poland. The chapter problematises attraction and repulsion as bedfellows in racial desire. Using Georg Simmel’s account of a stranger, the chapter situates the conditions of black men in the Polish society within the Simmelian account of the stranger. In doing so, it utilises rudiments of attractiveness/sexuality by placing the darkness of the skin in the circumstances that highlight its foreignness that could be attractive to some Polish women, but equally repulsive to some Polish men. Drawing on various psychological frameworks, the chapter examines how the behavioural aspect of curiosity could easily be read as being racist in Poland. Many concepts from earlier works on race and racism have been applied to this study. Despite the fact that they are developed elsewhere in Europe or America, they have proved to be useful in the description and analysis of race and racialisation in Poland. However, the findings of Chapters three-seven confirmed the various assertions in the general literature, in doing so, the accounts provided by the participants in these chapters make an active contribution to the global understanding of race and racism.

In **Chapter Eight**, ‘The Polish ethno-racial contract – rerouting *The Racial Contract*’, I return to all previous discussions on race, racism and racialisation. Across all the experiences of racisms, the research participants in this study have tried to explain the contextual specificity of race and racialisation in Poland. The chapter serves as a reflection that provides a better understanding of race and racism in Poland as part of the processes of racial hierarchy. The chapter redirects Charles Mills’ *The Racial Contract* (1997), through the notion of ‘ethno-racial contract’ to highlight the Polish political construction of rights in relation to non-white and non-Polish people. In doing so, the chapter presents an argument that race and racism have not been marginal to the history of the

west, but they also formed part of the configuration of nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Lastly, in the concluding **Chapter Nine**, I look at the original objectives of this thesis; the assessment and demonstration of how the objectives are met with reference to various sections of the thesis.

Chapter 2: The Emergence of Polish Racialised Governmentality

Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to redirect a particular history, to make it visible as a racialised vision. The history that inspires this chapter goes back a long way, and I have been thinking about how to incorporate it into a racial framework. One way of making the history visible is through a global theoretical framework by situating discussions of race and racism in Poland within the European coloniality, in doing so, it challenges the assumptions of Polish polity that is commonly assumed to be raceless. My aim here is to adopt a theoretical method to reveal the inner logic of the Polish racial domination as part of global white supremacy that structures ‘the political system, a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties.’ (Mills, 1997: 3). This chapter is central to other chapters in this thesis, not only because it situates Poland within the European coloniality, but it establishes the perceived inferiority of black people, already written into the Polish state formation. It is this chapter that anchors largely most of the racist conditions that will be discussed in the next chapters.

The history I wish to redirect here is within the establishment of Poland as a modern state. The emergence of modern Poland in the 20th century appears to embody racialised governmentality, the reproduction of conditions of a racist exclusion. As a newly found state in 1918, Poland encouraged national consciousness in many aspects that included Catholicism and substantial national identity. On the one hand, the determination to ensure that the state continued to exist was a major achievement for the Poles. On the other hand, the celebration of such achievement could have meant the resolution of many of the social problems between Poland and its national and ethnic minorities. A new Poland could have invited the contributions of all its citizens and residents and continue to build on the Polish-Lithuanian multi-ethnic modality following its disappearance for 123 years. Instead, modern Poland abandoned the idea of multinationalism, as its elite came up with a very narrow, white, homogeneous catholic state that served to pursue colonial ambitions in parts of Africa and South America. The idea of national and transnational governance is what I want to explore in the Polish colonial projects, therefore, the deployment of the term ‘Racialised Governmentality’ is central to this chapter.

The racialised governmentality analytics deployed here draws on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality not only as a form of regulation associated with the state, but also as a broader set of actions upon other possible actions. Between 1970 and 1984, Foucault delivered thirteen annual lectures at the College de France in Paris. In these lectures, he introduced and explored a domain of study he called ‘governmentality’. Foucault’s governmental theme is a central enquiry into the 20th century history of political ideas, in which he identified ‘government’ as ‘the conduct of conducts’ (Foucault, 2001[1982]: 341). In this way, he defined government in two ways – narrowed (conduct of self) and broader (conduct of others). Importantly, ‘the conduct of conducts’ embodies ‘a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons’ (Gordon, 1991: 2) with the exercise of political control at its heart. It is a specific system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government, Foucault specified:

The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc.; men in their relation to that other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking...(Foucault, 1991: 93).

What Foucault was suggesting here needs to be understood as ‘techniques of power’, or of ‘power/knowledge’, designed to observe, monitor, shape and control the behaviour of individuals situated within a range of social and economic institutions.’ (Gordon, 1991: 3-4). As Foucault later pointed out:

The exercise of power is a ‘conduct of conducts’ and a management of possibilities. Basically, power is [...] a question of ‘government’ [...] cover[ing] not only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action [...] destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern in this sense is to structure the possible field of action of others. (Foucault, 2001[1982]: 341)

Disassembling the term into *govern* and *mentality*, governmentality refers to the governance of a mentality by way of techniques of power (Dean, 2010). The concept of governmentality takes the definition of government, that is, the exercise of an organised political power by a state with the active consent of its people to participate in the governance. It is simply the governing of the self and governing of the other people. To simplify the Foucauldian governmentality, Miller & Rose (1990) suggest *technologies of government* as ‘a domain of strategies, techniques and procedures through which different forces seek to render programmes operable, and by means of which a multitude of connections are established between the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups’ (Rose & Miller, 1992: 281). These governmental aspirations are strategies and manoeuvres that seek to shape the conduct of others in particular directions by

impacting upon their will, their circumstances and their environment. These aspirations are not to be taken for granted because they lay claims to certain knowledge and it is through these claims that the *technologies of government* are deployed (Gordon, 1980). In their extreme form, they encompass ‘complex assemblage of diverse forces – legal, architectural, professional, administrative, financial, judgmental – such that aspects of the decisions and actions of individuals, groups, organizations and populations come to be understood and regulated in relation to authoritative criteria’ (Rose & Miller, 1992: 281). By governing the other, the Foucauldian governmentality becomes extendable to ‘the establishment of the great territorial, administrative and colonial states’ (Foucault, 1991: 87-88) and how these states are governed, the *rationalities* and the *mentality* behind the governance.

Although governmentality speaks directly to the *rationalities* and *technologies of government*, my primary interest is not governmentality. Since the ‘techniques of power’ described above is concerned with people as members of a specific population and the *mentality* and nature of ruling over that population, my focus here departs from governmentality, but centred on a *racialised-mentality* embedded in the act of governing the self and the other. This implies that governmentality was not born of race, rather race was a consequence of governmentality. In other words, the idea of race came from the ‘techniques of power’ to define people in particular ways in order to gain and exercise control over them. Racism and governmentality are connected, the history of governmentality cannot be separated from the history of race because groups are governed differently based on their racialised forms. In this sense, racial oppression is largely, but not exclusively, part of governmentality.

I particularly want to consider how racialised logics interact with governmentality, and to do so effectively, I turn to critical race scholarship. David Goldberg (2002: 4) has argued that *the modern state is the racial state*. It is a suggestion that modern democratic governments bear the mark of foundational classificatory status of ‘race’ in its formation, as ‘[t]he apparatuses and technologies employed by modern states have served variously to fashion, modify, and reify the terms of racial expression, as well as racist exclusions and subjugation’. The role of colonialism may not be obvious in all this, but it is through Hesse (2007) that one comes to grasp the constitution of ‘governmental racialization’ as the backbone of modernity/coloniality of racism and the conception of Europeanness qua whiteness.

This is the point that essentialised ‘Racialised Governmentality’ as part of governmentality because of the ways in which it constructs both its national and transnational projects in a racialised spectrum. It is about ‘the governmental division between *whitened* Europeans and *non-whitened* ‘non-

Europeans' (Hesse, 2004: 24). From this standpoint, 'Racialised governmentality' widely defines processes of management and regulation of racialised non-European bodies within and outside of the colonial states (Hesse, 2000; 2004a; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006: 21), 'more complexly, within 'white governmentality'' (Hesse, 1997: 98).

It is worth playing out the steps of Hesse's 'white governmentality' in a little more detail as a racialised structure of government. What Hesse has formulated in 'white governmentality' is the hegemony of 'whiteness' as the specific ways in which the conduct of a particular group might be directed. The ways in which 'race' becomes problematised within and beyond the state, which entailed the privilege to oversee, interrogate, include/exclude the 'racial other' nationally and transnationally. The approach developed here resonates with analyses of coloniality focusing on socio-symbolic dimensions of inter-group demarcations, on boundary formation, maintenance of significant features of 'us' and 'not-us' under specific interactional, historical, economic and political circumstances (Barth, 1994: 12).

What begins to emerge here is *racialised-mentality* that cannot be reduced to just ordinary conducts of government. Neither can it be limited to overtly racial regimes such as Apartheid South Africa or Jim Crow America that have been reproduced elsewhere in the west. I contend that racialised governmentality has subtler forms that are often silent in Poland and Central Eastern Europe broadly. Consequently, the framing of modern Poland falls short of adequately totalising processes that underpinned nation-building and reassertion projects. This shortcoming leaves unattended raciality entrenched in the making of contemporary Poland as part of the Europeanised/racialised governmentality, as Hesse (2007) points out:

a historical and discursive 'European'/'non-European' colonial process [which] considers the ways in which an established, yet indeterminate geographical Christian entity coalesced as 'Europe', becoming culturally, economically and politically marked white in relation to its designations and marking of a 'non-Europe'. (Hesse 2007: 659)

The argument that I am signalling here is the unarticulated shared assumptions and entitlements upon which Polishness relies, it is racially structured, shaped by the dominant racial formation oriented by racial project defined through whiteness and Europeanness. Ahmed (2012: 182–183) has observed that "The very idea that we are beyond race, that we can see beyond race, or that we are "over race" is how racism is reproduced; it is how racism is *looked over*?. This is evident in Poland and CEE where race and racism are assumed to be absent (Imre, 2005). However, to counter this systematic elision of race in the theoretical discourses of modern Poland, race needs to be rearticulated from 'the formative signifier of *Europeanness*, as a defining logic of race in the process

of *colonially* constituting itself and its designation of *non-Europeanness*, materially, discursively and extra-corporeally' (Hesse 2007, 643–646). This approach allows us to uncover the raciality embedded in the Polish polity. Such an approach is important in our understanding of the concept of race, its universality dates from late 19th century and the early 20th century developments and practices of racial eugenics in which Poland had been involved, but never been implicated as part of the European raciality. From a critical race perspective, contemporary Poland could be theorised as 'an important site of racialized governmentality' (Francis, 2011: 160).

By engaging with the transnational history of Poland, especially during the interwar period, this chapter intends to demonstrate the emergence of Polish governmental racism through the building blocks of colonisation that were not confined solely to European imperial powers. Interwar Poland revealed a state that wanted to be like Italy, France and Germany by following the political-economic logic of race (Zimmerman, 2010: 151; 2010a: 4), as Poland attempted to develop a form of labour control that would ensure that black Africans would work in similar ways as they did during slavery.

To make this case, I set out a broader overview of Polish colonial society and the reasons for its omission within colonial discourses. I will explain the relationship of *lebensraum* to colonialism and again highlight the standard exclusion of the attempted Polish coloniality in *lebensraum* and demonstrate how this connects to the wider discussions on *lebensraum*. Following on from this discussion, I turn to Polish eugenics and colonial practices as parts of the colonial inheritance of racialised governance and modernity of race that manifest themselves in contemporary racisms. In doing so, this chapter addresses hidden racialised logic in the formation of modern Poland and brings the question of raciality into a debate that is often presented as raceless.

Situating Poland in geopolitical colonial projects

Poland will often be introduced in the context of early modern state development, but never considered coloniality as an aspect of state development partly due to geopolitical struggle with Germany and Russia. However, as soon as Poland re-established itself as a modern state, geopolitical idea of coloniality emerged as part of Poland's nation-building. This particular desire raises a fundamental question as to why European states, powerful or less powerful, think they need to have a colony preferably outside Europe as a supplemental nation. It appears as if to have a colony is part of the affirmation of membership of European nations.

Colonisation – a process of establishing foreign control over an indigenous population – has a significant role in the acquisition of space and wealth. Such acquisition of wealth that was primarily

from African and Asian; Central and South American; and the Caribbean labourers served to increase the luxury and authority of powerful European nations (Du Bois, 1915: 709; Williams, 1944). Being the first European state to claim a new territory, on behalf of other European states, the coloniser acquires the rights to the land. These rights mean an exploitation of the colony's resources; forceful or voluntary conversion to Christianity; and extermination of native lives that seems to be fundamental to modernity and parts of the 'principal means of expansion' (Wolfe, 2006: 392). At the heart of its operation, colonial projects utilised the idea of race and the management of those who are branded not quite human, not quite European and not quite Christian. It defines culture, labour, and knowledge production beyond colonial administrations and essentially facilitates the 'Eurocentrifcation of World Capitalism' (Quijano, 2000: 537). The implication, in the most part of the colonised world, is global coloniality – a power structure that is linked to the exploitation and violence that led to the specific control of labour, production and unequal distribution of wealth (Wallerstein, 1974; Tlostanova, 2012: 133). In all of this, 'Race quickly came to mark Europe and its wordly extensions in the colonizing and imperializing societies over the next couple of centuries, especially in the drive to state sovereignty and the subsequent centralizing of the war function under state mandate...' (Goldberg, 2009: 3)

Whenever the concept of natural expansion is discussed, it is almost exclusively reduced to Imperial Russia's domination of less-stately countries in Central and Eastern Europe; the British exploration and colonisation of territories in Africa and Asia; the French settlements in parts of the Caribbean Islands and Africa; the German experimentation in South-West Africa, and the Dutch seaborne competing with the Spanish and Portuguese's expansionism. Studies related to Poland's attempted acquisition of colonial territories outside Europe are rarely discussed. Drawing on the activities of the Polish Colonial Society, this chapter contends that the building blocks of colonisation were not confined solely to European imperial powers. As colonisation forged ahead in the 20th century, Poland seemed to be the country where colonialism played a significant role in both national and transnational politics. Scholarship on Polish colonisation tends to focus primarily on Poland as a colonised state (Kania, 2009) and Poland as a coloniser only in relation to the Eastern Borderlands (Mick, 2014: 127). Poland's attempted acquisition of colonial territories outside Europe, when the 'Scramble for Africa' had already been completed, was only explored but never been examined extensively or adequately theorised. Rather than just asserting this point, it is important to demonstrate its manifestation in the historiography of Polish nation-building.

Following the re-establishment of Poland as a modern state, in 1918, a group of twenty-five Polish men saw colonisation as the first step towards great power status, and established a colonial society

called *Polska Bandera* (Polish Flag) in Poland. The purpose of the organisation was mainly to reveal sea and maritime exploration as Poland's national interest. *Polska Bandera* quickly transformed into the League of Polish Navigation and then to Maritime and River League, later named the Union of Colonial Pioneers. The organisation reached its pinnacle when it adopted its official name – Maritime and Colonial League in 1930 (Hunczak, 1967). Marine exploration may have seemed attractive to many Polish people that supported the Colonial League, its main interest was 'an act of migrationist colonialism reworked into the ideology of *Lebensraum*' (Young, 2001: 2) – a commitment to overseas expansion; acquisition of overseas territories; and subsequently the possession of the territories' resources. Plantations ran collaboratively by the Polish Maritime and Colonial League and the Portuguese imperial administration in Angola set the stage for the Polish colonial society's attempted colonisation in other parts of Africa (Puchalski, 2017). It is within the desire to operate a colonised territory that the Polish racialised governmentality takes shape, it is an affirmation that to be European nation is also to desire a colony outside of Europe as part of the confirmation of being a modern nation.

European expansion accordingly rationalized its global spread in racial terms. Rationalization through race obviously assumed the form of legitimization, of claiming to render this expansion acceptable, even desirable or necessary, to the perpetrators. But it served also effectively to maximize both the grip on power globally – in the colonies or within the European theater of relations – and relatedly the extraction of profit and accumulation of wealth. (Goldberg, 2009: 3)

It was the global colonial spread, commercial interaction, and cultural intertwining that encouraged Poland's adoption and adaptation of racial conceptualisation. Whilst acquisition of overseas territories and subsequently possession of the territories' resources were not originally conceived by the Polish government in the 1930s, the pioneers of the Colonial League (Polish Generals Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer, Kazimierz Sosnkowski and others) had to rely on the generosity of the Polish public that invested in the Fund for Colonial Action. The step towards the acquisition of colonies in Africa was further intensified by various Colonial League's activities in Poland and abroad.

One was the establishment of monthly and quarterly publications (see Figure 2.1) *Morze* and *Polska Na Morzu* (Poland at Sea) and *Sprawy Morskie i Kolonialne* (Maritime Affairs and Colonial) dedicated to issues of maritime, colonisation, migration and sea transportation. These among other publications, were used by the Colonial League for publication of its propaganda, programmes, scientific and literary information based on sea exploration and colonisation. Another was the successful establishment of the Polish colonial society with membership reaching 500,000 individuals and 1,200 units throughout Poland, including 1,000 school societies. In addition,

‘Friends of the Polish Sea’ was established in Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany and the United States (Hunczak, 1967). A third was the purchase of the ‘Indian reserve land’ in Brazil, acquisition of a number of plantations in Liberia, and pioneering trading activities carried out on the west coast of Africa were parts of the processes of establishing settlements outside Europe. This was evident in some unsuccessful trade agreements between Liberia and the Polish Colonial League in the 1930s, when plantations were leased to Polish farmers for a period of 50 years in order to exploit Liberia’s natural resources. The initiative would eventually allow Poland to recruit several African soldiers (Puchalski, 2017: 23), as part of the racialised governmentality. Thus, the *labor of race* developed in the west, its category and its assumptions were employed by the Polish state to rationalise social arrangements of exploitation in Africa. Race, in this instance, was turned into a foundational code (Goldberg, 2009: 4).

It was not too long before the Colonial League ‘started a nationwide campaign to popularize the idea of Polish colonies’ (Hunczak, 1967: 649) and its main target was Africa following in the steps of the British, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese. Writing in one of the League’s editions, Jan Debski, a former Polish Parliamentarian, sets out the Colonial League’s demand:

We Poles, like the Italians, have the right to demand that export markets as well as areas for settlement be opened to us, so that we may obtain raw materials necessary to the national economy under conditions similar to those enjoyed by the colonial states (Debski, 1938)

Kazimierz Jezioranski (1936), an advocate of Polish expansionism, shared a similar view that Poland needed to take advantage of the development of its maritime exploration, which would provide much needed access to resources from the colonised territories in Africa. He argued that having colonies was important to the economy and welfare of the Europeans. In a typical agrarian argument, control and transportation of raw materials from colonised territories in Africa became essential (1936: 15). In another publication by the Colonial League, Kazimierz Sosnkowski (1938) declared that Poland is fighting in the international space for free access to overseas colonies and direct participation in the production and exploitation of raw materials. He strongly demanded colonies for Poland.

It is precisely the above calls for the establishment of colonial states that underpinned Ignacy Moscicki’s government agenda with the possibility of lobbying the League of Nations (United Nations) to consider Poland’s report on the acquisition of colonies. Although the Polish colonial society had expressed special interest in colonising Togo and Cameroon (Hunczak, 1967; 2016:

41), they also hoped to obtain some of the former German colonies in Africa for the following reason:

... since Poland constituted 9 percent of the entire territory of the former German Empire and the Polish population made up 7 percent of the entire population of the Empire, Poland, as a successor state, was entitled to the same proportion of the pre-World War I German colonies (Hunczak, 1967: 651)

The above commentaries carry considerable weight, especially in the reproduction of modernity of race that emerged through the imperial states' exploration of the world, and later to be reproduced by Poland as a successor state. Nonetheless, such commentaries have never been pursued within colonial discourses simply because Poland is often depicted as a victim of the Russo-German imperial gaze that led to the Holocaust.

Figure 2.1: Cover of Sea and Colonies magazine edited by Jan Debski in the 1930s



Source: Jagiellonian Digital Library.

***Lebensraum* – the space a state believes is required for its natural expansion**

I take the above historical overview consciously and understood it through the concept of *lebensraum* – the territory a state believes is needed for its natural development. Whilst the Polish colonial society's attempted acquisition of political control of another state is similar to the exploitation of the state economically, the ambition has never been discussed as part of the European elimination of an inferior culture for the acquisition of *lebensraum*. It is part of many ways in which a racialised governmentality operates as a demarcation of the boundaries of what constitutes a 'Man' (Balibar, 1994: 198). For clarity on the implication of the actions of the Polish

Colonial Society, it is important to read those actions through the German *lebensraum* – some of which predated, and many are around the same time as activities of the Polish Colonial Society in Africa. Pointing to this similar but different ideas help to understand the link between modernity and coloniality.

The concept of *lebensraum* as a well-thought ideology was developed by Friedrich Ratzel in 1869 (Weikart, 2003). For Ratzel, there is no difference between the struggle for space and the human struggle for existence and expansion. Since space is required for human existence, the extermination of an inferior race would create the much-required space for the superior race (Weikart, 2003: 278). *Lebensraum* requires three key elements: *migration* – ‘the behavioral consequence of the need to expand on Lebensraum’; *colonisation* – ‘the effective occupation and exploration of new space by a species’; and *agrarianism* – the notion that ‘successful people were those with effective and stable agricultural systems’ (Smith, 1980: 54). A society without dominant agrarian sensibilities, Ratzel claimed, lacks the required culture for its survival; hence, *lebensraum* requires a strong distinction between a superior and inferior culture.

This process of bio-power is often explored through German Darwinism, which suggests that practices of race science could improve morality in a state (Weikart, 2003: 274), and consequently a superior race would be separated from an inferior one. This makes science relevant ‘under a specific set of political circumstances (imperial expansion, industrialisation and the growth of the nation)’ (Lentin, 2008: 495; Lévi-Strauss, 1975). At the top of the racial hierarchy would be the Aryan race (Haas, 2008). It was an ideology that soon became a reality in South-West Africa and colonial Togo, where the Germans considered the native Herero and Namaqua and Toveers to be inferior races. In order to preserve the *Volk* back in Germany, racial extermination of the native Herero and Namaqua peoples of German South-West Africa (Madley, 2005) and the anthropological examination of heads and feet of Toveer-soldiers by German anthropologists in Berlin became imperative (Zimmerman, 2001). Scientific examination of chests of Herero and Namaqua peoples at the Pathological Institute in Berlin, and Eugen Fischer’s examination of the Bastards, the mixed-race offspring of Dutch men and Namaqua women confirmed the German Darwinistic interest in racial segregation and hierarchy (Haas, 2008). Although systematic separation was important to German Darwinists, racial hierarchy was crucial to Fischer, as he recommended that Africans, Half-Europeans and Half-Africans should be considered inferior to White-Europeans. For Fischer, people of black background could only be protected for European labour and should be exterminated when they are no longer needed (Weikart, 2003: 274).

The advancement of modern science and technology that led to the systematic genetic modernisation, in the large parts of the industrial societies in the 1920s and 1930s, played a major part in the processes of racialisation (Flitner, 2003: 176; Bauman, 2009: 277). This suggests that geopolitical activities in Europe were no longer sufficient for totalitarian control of a state, a process of human manipulation, domination, and exclusion was required through race science (Coma, 1961). The regional superpowers – Germany and Russia – were at the forefront of this system of governmentality, which became visible in Polish politics in 1940. In the same year, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister, declared *lebensraum* as the ultimate reason for Nazi Germany's invasion of other countries and the elimination of the undesirables (Deak, Gross, & Judt, 2000). In this regard, *lebensraum* became part of the Nazi Germany's commitment to the German population when Hitler suggested that 'securing of a people's Lebensraum and thus of its own agricultural class' was part of the National Socialist Party's manifesto (as quoted in Smith, 1980: 62). Hitler linked *lebensraum* – the living space – he thought the German people needed in the east with the extermination of the Jewish population. In his view, both *lebensraum* and the extermination of the Jews formed a single ambition (Mosse, 1978: 204). Creating a perfect state was an essential part of the Nazi nation building, therefore, the separation of *Herrenvolk* (superior race) from *Untermenschen* (inferior race) was a key task for Nazi Germany, which eventually paved the way for 'the Nuremberg racial laws forbidding marriage and sexual relations between Germans and "unfit" groups (Jews, Sinti, Roma, and Africans)' (Haas, 2008: 334).

The above processes cannot be read in isolation, they remained essential in our understanding of the conceptualisation of *lebensraum* that served as a guiding principle for Polish *lebensraum*. It was evident in the exploration of Liberia's sea, land, villages and examination of native lives – would only result in the subjugation of African lives to cater for the welfare of Polish metropole. Whilst victimisation remains crucial in the understanding of the mode of operations of colonial states, in the next sections, I suggest a reading of Polish eugenics and colonial practices as parts of the colonial inheritance of racialised governance that manifest themselves in contemporary racisms (Sayyid, 2004; Hesse, 2004a).

Polish Eugenics: racial purity and the fear of mongrelisation

It is commonly assumed that racism is a problem of core metropolises, not peripheral region such as Central and Eastern Europe. The argument used to legitimate this is that CEE nations are homogenous communities and have no links to colonial projects (Zelený-Atapana, 2016). The denial of racism has always been a myth of Communist and post-Communist CEE. It has been part of the pervasive 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2006) that takes

racism in the west and north America to be the exclusive definition of racisms. In doing so, it conceals the specificity of CEE racism, therefore, the nations of Central and Eastern Europe are imagined to be untouched and not influenced by global racial ideologies (Balogun, 2018). Moreover, selective breeding was often thought to be mainly a western eugenics programme. The west was by no means the only advocate of racial purification, as addressed by several historians and need not be detailed here (see Adams, 1990). I am suggesting, then, that as a widespread European practice, eugenics might be more revealing of the real character of contemporary Poland, its historical deficiencies and normative practices, than the currently dominant notion of racelessness. Rather than just asserting this cardinal point, it is important to demonstrate the roles of eugenics in assertions of the historicity of Communism and Nazism, which attempted to protect desirables against people who did not possess so-called ties of blood to the nation. This is historically locatable in the series of events leading to the creation of modern Poland.

There is a sense of ‘universalization of racism’ (Lentin, 2016) in the history of blood grouping. Since the 19th century, race has been associated with genealogy in order to identify and define ‘people in possession of specific physical and psychological traits..., of a territory of their own with recognised physical borders’ (Turda & Quine, 2018: 71). Poland and other CEE countries have been known to be part of such inquiries (Hoffmann, 1922) through blood identification that provided means of ‘classifying human races as well as insights into the ethnic composition of various modern nations’ (Turda & Quine, 2018: 29). Causal explanations are not simply the aim of these scientific racial inquiries, they often carry deeply exclusive implications. As Lajos Méhely, the Hungarian racial scientist, alluded in 1934 that blood categorisation was compulsory for ‘the strict protection of [our] racial borders’ (Méhely, 1934). A few years later, Petre Panaitescu, a Romanian historian, who spent an extended time at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, declared Romanians, as part of Slavic group, belong to a great race, a race which is forged through the Dacian mythology (Panaitescu, 1940).

The important point here is that racial ideologies have been sustained in CEE – largely through self-identification and the identification of the other people. As was the case in many European countries – Polish psychiatrists were drawn and devoted to eugenics programmes believed to be a ‘common-good’. It was within these programmes that racial classification took shape in Poland especially between 1918 and 1920s when Polish doctors gained power to put into practice the 19th century’s race science (Gawin 2003: 70). Established in 1922, the Polish Eugenics Society (PES) provided supports for eugenicists mainly from the Polish Catholic Doctors’ Union. Genealogy as a concept of biology provided these eugenicists with the idea of a nation and the kind of blood and lineage that constitute the nation. They practiced what they thought was decency by

encouraging 'eugenically superior families'; appealed 'to the Polish authorities to introduce legislations ranging from 'compulsory sterilization' to 'premarital counselling', and access to 'health records', all aimed at reducing the burden of welfare (Gawin, 2007: 73). The question here goes beyond the issue of decency and legislation. In practical terms, legislation was required to warn people of mongrelisation that may result in the production of inferior stocks (Hacker, 2003: 35). This was the preliminary transformation of the Polish populations, that created division between 'person' and racial 'sub-person'.

To be clear, in Poland, the concept of race is understood through blood relations and often used in different contexts. For many, "race" means "nation", "society". The same idea is simultaneously used as "a human community" (Gawin, 2003: 131). Also, 'culture' has increasingly replaced 'race' strongly tied to family and national identity. This terminological shift allows culture to appear as the most essential deterministic structure that individuals are born into (Balibar, 2007). The shift has long been identified by Frantz Fanon (1969: 32.) as 'Cultural Racism', and Pierre-André Taguieff (2001) called it 'Differential Racism'. For example, in Poland, Henryk Nusbaum, a close associate of Roman Dmowski of the National Democratic Party, viewed race as:

...collective, real body of the nation, a body that is the subsoil for all the qualities taken together, the virtues and vices of a human community that, ethnographically, and most importantly linguistically, constitutes that which we term a nation. (Wesołowski, 1918: 5).

Other ideas of race were employed to describe the characteristic physical and mental qualities related to heredity. Concern about 'inferior' people featured largely in the work of many Polish eugenicists but must be understood as a resonance of Nazi "Gemeinschaftsfremde" (aliens to the community) and "Volksschädlinge" (pests harmful to the nation). This allusion to Nazism cannot be reduced to extreme individuals in Poland, it was generally viewed as positive action aimed at increasing the overall quality of the national identity which covertly implies a 'race'. It was evident in the work of Kazimierz Dabrowski, a prominent Polish psychiatrist, who once considered the relationship between physical and mental constitution with outside influences (Dabrowski, 1933: 60). Indeed, it was not extremist minorities but rather a former member of parliament and advocate of Polish eugenics, Zofia Golińska, noting that "The nation is an organization based on biogenetic community and on the community of civilization" (Daszyńska-Golińska, 1927: 15). This statement dubiously suggests that it is biological, not cultural, factors that determine a nation, its development and its decline. Believe in biofluids such as blood from the parents' bodies that mixed with their children's bodies played a certain role in the process. In the case of 'crossbreeding', however, inherited traits were believed to be unpredictable, therefore, genetic diversity was highly discouraged. These racist views were not far from being attitudes of a few individuals, as

Magdalena Gawin (2003; 2007a; 2011) has broadly detailed, they formed symptomatic notion in the Polish public that children from mixed marriages are susceptible to physical degeneration. Therefore, it was necessary to eliminate degenerate individuals in order to ensure the victory of “eugenistic types” (Gawin, 2003: 47). Essentially, all these ideas appeared to have taken off from Artur de Gobineau’s legitimising racism and scientific race theory, as a confirmation of ‘universalization of racism’.

What these particular episodes in the Polish history demonstrate is the obstinate development of racial thinking and must be understood as a form of monolithic Europeanisation ‘inherently bound to reproduction, and is thus produced, naturalized and essentialized’ (Lentin, 2016: 44). What bears witness to these histories of racial purification, especially in contemporary Poland, is what I will later unpick in the empirical chapters. In doing so, the myth of non-racist Communist and post-Communist Poland is dismantled.

Colonial practices

In this section, I focus on further implications of the Polish eugenics’ practices and the colonial ambition as parts of the colonial inheritance of racialised governance and modernity of race that manifest themselves in contemporary racisms. The Spanish and Portuguese’s exploration of seas and unknown territories in the 15th century encouraged Britain, France, and Germany to colonise countries in Africa and the Caribbean Islands, predominantly through the exploitation of raw materials and new markets (Williams, 1944: 51-84; Young, 2001). The achievement of these imperial powers in the ‘implanting of settlements on a distant territory’ (Said, 1993: 9) invigorated Poland’s colonial ambition in the 20th century.

Scholarship on Poland’s colonial ambition is often reduced to Polonisation, a soft conversion of non-Poles to Polish ways of life, complex relationships with its ethnic minorities, and complications of the Eastern Borderlands. Whilst Polonisation demonstrates an aspect of expansionism, Poland’s attempt to colonise countries in Africa in the 1930s received limited theoretical attention in the literature. This is not just an oversight; it is a reflection of literature in the field over the past decade (Piotrowski, 1989; Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2012; Mayblin, Piekut, & Valentine, 2016). The reason for this could be attributed to the understanding of colonisation in Polish context often reduced to western imperial activities in Africa and South America. Also, the effect of the Holocaust, the mass extermination of Jews and non-Jews by the Nazis, and the Communist propaganda blaming the west for its connection with the Second World War genocides, all clouded and then reduced the understanding of colonisation to the activities of

imperial powers. These were, undoubtedly, crucial events that often-portrayed Poland as a victimised territory. Nonetheless, these events overshadowed Poland's colonial interest outside Europe. Although colonial ambition was already noticeable in Stefan Rogozinski's exploration of Africa in 1882 (Zielinski, 1933: 35), the ambition was actively engaged in the 1930s.

It seems clear that practices of coloniality were at the heart of Polish colonial projects. Colonial practices, as parts of processes of colonialism, were based on exploration of space and expropriation of land with cheap labour as its aim. It is the strong desire for cheap labour that informed the coloniser's forceful labour that ensures that the indigenous workers work harder than those in the European metropole (Pels, 1997: 173). Poland's attempted colonisation in Liberia was not different because '... the Poles imagined a global system that would make colonial resources available to second-tier European powers like theirs. At the same time, however, they distanced Poland from the Western powers and claimed to act on behalf of supplicant Africans' (Puchalski, 2017: 1096). This, then, situated Poland within the modernity of race that governs through the mentality of racialised governmentality. Barnor Hesse (2007) exemplifies the problem identified here where he writes:

These normalized race relations were actually constituted through the colonial designations of *Europeanness* and *non-Europeanness*, in various assemblages of social, economic, ecological, historical and corporeal life. On this account the biologisation of the colonially constituted 'European'/'non-European' distinction and its territorialization on to diverse human bodies is but one historical symptom and political formation of race through modernity (Hesse, 2007: 646).

Poland's engagement with coloniality parallels an acquisition of territories, which comes with a privilege that allows the imperial powers to go to any land where the opportunity presents itself and behave as they wish. This would include occupying the territory, acquiring its control, and subsequently exploiting its resources. On the other hand, the colonised, predominantly, person of colour is confined to those parts of the world where life is historically, economically, and politically difficult. Du Bois (1915: 712) says it is all part of the processes of keeping the Negro in his place, which would prevent him from taking control of things. Rex (1973) reads this as a larger process where the histories of colonisation, racism and migration become closely entangled.

Conversely, what is being advocated by the Polish colonial society is the power to establish a form of settler colonialism especially in Liberia, as experimented by Germany in South-West Africa and colonial Togo. Such bio-power would de-populate the inhabitants of the colonised territories through the establishment of superiority over the colonies. The process would require the possibility of military involvement and typically employ racist language as its tool, as demonstrated

by the British, French, Dutch, German, Spanish and Portuguese. Annexation of resources which would include the sale and use of slaves, trade in cotton and oil, and taxes on colonial subjects would be at the heart of the Polish Colonial League (Puchalski, 2017: 23). Essentially, what the Polish colonial society tried to achieve was a rework of New South ideology¹⁰ that would extract the raw materials and 'native' labour force and pave the way for unequal trade networks and markets (Zimmerman, 2010: 132-133).

Several critiques of the discourses of colonialism have helped to identify the way the racialised/colonised Other is constituted within the European colonial thoughts. Said's *Orientalism* (1985) has been a persistent critic of the way in which 'knowledge' constructed through the Otherness that informed European perception of the non-European Other. Timothy Mitchell (2000: 100) recommends a useful way of reading Polish colonial attempt as a 'political gaze', with coloniality at its heart. More than that, the author has argued, it is based on 'a distance, a space of separation, a relationship of curiosity, that made it possible to see something as "a case" a self-contained object whose "problems" could be measured, analysed and addressed by a form of knowledge that appears to stand outside the object and grasp it in its entirety'. Comaroff (1998: 341) describes the process as a work-in-progress, an intention, a phantasm-to-be-made-real, but never fully actualised. This implies that the idea to colonise another state, in Abrams' (1988: 75) view, is 'an ideological project', 'an imaginative construction', 'the distinctive collective *misrepresentation* of capitalist societies'. Consequently, the Polish expansionism could be seen as 'an 'enterprise' just like a factory' (Comaroff, 1998: 322-324). Coloniality implies power. Using the language of occupation, Pickerill & Krinsky (2012: 281) see the process not simply as an act of 'sit-ins' but as a way of exercising power, the use of powerful language as a way of claiming available spaces and resources. Hesse & Sayyid (2006) conceptualise coloniality in terms of the European re-ordering, authorising and re-allocation of global resources without considering the political and social consequences of such re-allocation.

Stoler (1995) called into question such process of articulation of modes of production, and unequal transaction between the coloniser and the colonised. In her view, colonies are workshops of the modern states where the manufacture of economic desire, the raw materials and agricultural produce that can be bought and sold; and the construction of non-Europeans as the "Other" are

¹⁰ Andrew Zimmerman (2010) presents 'German-Tuskegee colonial model' as a blue-print for German-controlled Togo during the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. The model was based on the idea of the New South in the United States that sought to control the newly emancipated Negro workers. By harnessing the transnational history of Germany's attempt to promote cotton cultivation in Togo, Zimmerman links this to the 'Negro Question' in the United States, the 'Polonisation' debate in Germany, and the colonisation of Africa. A similar model was employed in Poland in the attempted colonisation of Liberia in the 1930s.

produced. In order for the projects to be effective, implementation of regulations with a spirit of legality at the centre of its operation is crucial. It creates an opportunity for a language of legality that criminalises the 'native' cultural practices that are considered uncivilised, primitive, and run counter to European modernity. The legal and administrative mechanisms, whose functioning is rationally close to the performance of a machine (Webber, 1968: 1394), derived from the collaboration of various institutions to create a smooth transition for, and to protect projects of European expansion (Stoler, 1985).

Since an administrative system is required in the *management, regulation and conduction* of the affairs of the colony, the coloniser is entangled in several paradoxes that include the transformation of non-European peoples to 'civilised peoples'. This leads Fanon (1952) to interrogate the Eurocentric concept of the universal 'Man' in *Black Skin, White Masks*. In this perspective, to be a Man is to be in the position of power and to speak and reason for the Less-Man. The implication is that the Black Man is not-yet Man, although a Man, he is only a Black Man. In European social and political contexts, the colonised cannot be 'Man' because 'his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and imposed itself on him' (Fanon: 1952: 83). The consequence of this position is ontological because the colonised is viewed as a Man who is not capable of reasoning for himself and not able to run his own affairs. For Fanon, the significance of the Black Man's position is racial as well as cultural because it is based on the mode of representation that indicates who is allowed to speak and who is not, who speaks for whom and on what terms.

Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), has attempted to show how profitable was the colonial project that many European states play game of sleeping beauty:

The Third World does not mean to organize a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe. What it expects from those who for centuries have kept it in slavery is that they will help it to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere once and for all ... This huge task, which consists of reintroducing mankind into the world, the whole of mankind, will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realize that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our common masters where colonial questions were concerned. To achieve this, the European peoples must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty (1963: 106).

I read Fanon's proposition as saying that there is now a need for the redistribution of the wealth of the world which would then help to rehabilitate mankind. Instead, what we had in the 20th century was some less influential European state such as Poland attempting to re-create the idea

of colony. Fanon's proposition speaks directly to the heart of the history of Poland that is partly history of coloniality and immigration. It is, indeed, the idea of Europe as a dominating force that encouraged Poland a colonised state to attempt colonisation of non-European state. When Robert Bartlett (1993) wrote about Europe being a region and an idea, he was not referring just to the west. Europe is a frontier, a civilised/superior/progressive territory and throughout its history, the idea of 'non-European' constitutes outsides (Pagden, 2002), consisting of 'representations of embodied assemblages (i.e. 'races'), consisting of various elements, objects, designs, practices, bodies, discourses and so on.' (Hesse, 2007: 656). The concept of whiteness, patriarchal, and European constitutes a dominant visual representation of Europe, Christianity in particular, provides a generic identity and territorial sense for Europe. Therefore, bringing the notion of non-European, Islam or black into Europe, has sustained the understanding of Otherness and Europeanness (Hesse, 2007: 647-648).

Homi Bhabha (1994: 341) situates such interpretation within 'the framing of the white man as universal, normative...' Such normalisation, Bhambra (2014) emphasises, exposes colonial structures that are embedded with exclusion and hierarchy in the name of universalism. Reading the concept of a universal 'Man' through Fanon, Comaroff (1998: 329) notes that it is an attempt to deal with heterogeneity by naturalising ethnic difference and promoting racial inequality. Since the colonised is not yet a 'Man', black man as a 'native' is never seen as a citizen, he is always a subject or citizen in the making. In Goldberg's (2002: 106) words, the 'inferior could never qualify for citizenship'. Even in the postcolonial era and following his migration and settlement in Europe, the black man, as part of postcolonial ethnic minorities, is often situated at the edge of the world-economy, only seen as someone 'in but not of Europe' (Hall, 2002) whose presence interposes the hierarchical division of the world into Europeanness and non-Europeanness (Hesse & Sayyid, 2008).

Evaluating the perception of the black Man in Poland is a challenge raised by Maciej Zabek (2009: 68-70). He argues that the distinction between 'Whites' and 'Blacks' is entrenched in a Polish culture that perceives black Man through the prism of 'race' rather than 'citizen', and uses dark-skin colour as the basis for the ethnic identity of all black people. The most important example is the term *murzyn* (Negro), used as a reference to all people of colour irrespective of their ethnicity or nationality, rendering blackness to a representation of exploitation based on racial logics that uphold a colour-line distinction. This implies that the 'Other' is seen and labelled in ways that have been shaped by another culture and consider the extent in which the ways of thinking are informed by stereotypes that describe black Man as foreign in a permanent way. To be foreign is to be a

stranger, coloured Man as a stranger, in Poland, may evoke distaste, desire to avoid him, but could also encourage some forms of fascination (Zabek, 2009: 72).

All of this cannot be reduced to their political and colonial forms, but demonstrates the responsibilities of colonial states as racial states because of their operation through racialised governmentality, as Goldberg (2002: 108) points out: ‘racial states emerged materially out of, as they were elaborated in response to, the “challenges” of colonial rule’. In this regard, Poland’s colonial projects would require a deeply structural position that produces an effect of racially shaped societies, groups and situations by placing restrictions, privileges and exclusions on the mode of production.

The point that I have been signalling all along has been rightly captured by Charles Mills (1997) in the following assessment of the benefit of colonialism from which Poland, one way or another, has benefitted:

Overall, then, colonialism “lies at the heart” of the rise of Europe. The economic unit of analysis needs to be Europe as a whole...But through trade and financial exchange, others launched on the capitalist path, [and] profited. Internal national rivalries continued, of course, but this common identity based on the trans-continental exploitation of the non-European world would in many cases be politically crucial, generating a sense of Europe as a cosmopolitan entity engaged in a common enterprise, underwritten by race. (Mills, 1997: 35)

In practical terms, the implication of the above common European enterprise is significantly racial. Hence, if the British, French, Dutch, German, Spanish and Portuguese’s colonial legacies could be provocatively described as a *racist world order*, Poland’s colonial project, although not fully realised, is not far-fetched of similar description because the conditions created by the European imperial powers gave rise to the manoeuvring of the less powerful European states.

Exteriorising those who are not quite Polish and not quite Christian

All observations offered thus far have focused on colonisation and its consequences. In this section, I turn to an account of race-construction as historical and contemporary processes developed by the Polish political structures to establish divisions within contemporary Poland. The operations of the modern state tend to focus primarily on the state’s projects and practices, social conditions and institutions, and enforcement of rules and regulations that include state-sponsored inclusion and exclusion culture. From this perspective, the modern state is conceived as racially constructed territory, acts and governs so. This implies that the modern state is only less racial than the Third Reich, Apartheid South Africa or Segregated America because the conditions

created by these racist regimes gave rise to the operationalisation of race and racism in contemporary modern states (Goldberg, 2002: 7). This is made possible by the changeability of race and racism that move and transform from the grass-root arrangements to national contexts to regional specificity as historic legacies of the Enlightenment and the European expansion (Mosse, 1978: 1-16; Hesse, 2004: 22).

Whilst theory of exclusion has taken different processes of investigation such as Isaac's (2004, 2006) Classical racism; Cesaire (1955), Fanon (1952), Blauner (1972) and Hall's (1980) colonial dimensions of race and racism; Balibar & Wallerstein (1991) and Bauman's (1989) Eurocentric tradition; Stoler's (1995) racial selves; Dikotter's (1998) Race Culture; Gilroy's (2000) ideology of sameness; and Hesse's (2004; 2004a) "*contaminant* of modernity", David Goldberg (2002) is concerned about the role of the modern state in racial dynamics and the limiting of racial states to extreme cases such as the Third Reich, Apartheid South Africa and Segregated America. Reading contemporary racisms in this way shifts attention away from other states, such as Poland, that are also racial in their policies and practices that tend to reproduce conditions of racist exclusion.

The above account by Goldberg is about state's management of the population. The complexity of this account of the state is neither the same as the Base and Superstructure of the civil society (Marx, 1977) nor is it about the autonomous power of the state (Mann, 1984). It is mainly about the modern state's arrangements, historical legacies, and obsession with demographic mobility, the reproduction of national identity, and the protection of "national thing" through the vocalisation of race (Goldberg, 2002; 2006; 2009a: 1271). This implies that the concept of race is an integral part of the development and organisation of the modern state and many of the state's projects are consciously informed by race, hence racialised governmentality, empowered by the European 'Renaissance', the European 'Reformation' and the European 'overseas discoveries' (Hesse, 2007: 647). It is precisely what Hesse & Sayyid (2006: 17) called 'European coloniality', it is much more about Europeaness and non-Europeaness. 'European coloniality' gives preferences to white populations over non-white populations, and citizenship policies that are fashioned in many ways that show the modern state as *the* main institution that includes and excludes on racial terms.

Race, in this regard, in partial homage to Michel Foucault (2003), is a technology of human division by the state. Through the articulation of its homogeneity, the Polish state denies its heterogeneity and organises its society hierarchically in many ways that include racist exclusion. A good example is the construction of Polish people as White, Polish and Catholic and many people who do not fit such description are systematically excluded from the same definition. This logic was empowered by the establishment of the modern Polish state, in the 20th century, which gave rise

to racial projects that conceived the state as the territory for mainly settled Polish people asserting their histories, cultures and traditions. This racial arrangement was achieved in two different ways – the creation of Polish homogeneity as a denial of its heterogeneous past, and contemporary Polish state bureaucratic immigration policies.

First, following the Polish independence, the Eastern Borderlands became a territory of geopolitical tension, especially during the Volynia Massacres (1943-1944). Whilst the eastern territories were lost, Poland moved westwards where the western and northern regions were incorporated into Poland as the Recovered Territories. Polish people living in the former Polish territories in the eastern countries were repatriated to interior Poland and the Recovered Territories in parallel with German repatriations in the same area (Mayblin, Piekut, & Valentine, 2016: 66). Consequently, the borderlands were never considered to be ethnically Polish due to their non-Polish population as evident in the discrimination and marginalisation of the people who are often described as “culturally inferior, incapable of state building and in need of someone who would lead them towards European civilisation, progress and modernity” (Mick, 2014: 128). Following the horrors and challenges of the Second World War, the Polish state embarked on a plan to create a state for mainly Polish people, which was aided by the Nazis’ elimination of the Jewish population. In addition, the religion of the Tatars, Islam in particular, is imagined as contrary to Polish national identity (Zamoyski, 1993). Tatars’ link to Polishness becomes problematic when their religious identity is emphasised, hence, the exclusion of the Tatar population. Accordingly, assimilation became essential in the socio-cultural norms of contemporary Poland, strengthened by the homogenisation of the Polish national identity as a collective memory (Copsey, 2008).

Second, the racialisation of non-white people perceived as ‘third country national’ through asylum and immigration controls is designed to divide people along racial lines. This serves as an indication of a population that is unequal, and the demonstration of the state’s post-communist racial and ethnic hostility, establishing its self-professed European superiority through an assertion that presumes Europeans to be White and Christian. These are attempts from the modern Polish state to reinforce and maintain its homogeneous identity based on the presumption that the state is never heterogeneous. It is simply a repression of heterogeneity as racial arrangement that contradicts the historicity of the early Polish state that was never homogeneous. After all, it was a system of heterogeneity that earned the *Rzeczpospolita* (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) a recognition, in the 16th and 17th centuries, as the most serene republic that protected many Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, and a large population of Jews and Muslim Tatars.

Taken together, the creation of an artificial homogeneous Polish state through the racial configuration of the internal and external, and exclusion of the 'Other' demonstrates the state's fascination with racial differentiation and how the internal is racially demarcated. It is symbolised by the state's over-emphasising control over those within and outside the state. By doing so, the state decides who is allowed within and outside its borders through constitutions, border controls, bureaucracy and governmental technologies such as categorisations (Klaus, 2017: 525). The reason for this may be related to the state's attempt to maintain its discipline, power and privilege and at the same time expressing the fear that its century-long independence could be destabilised by the 'unruly' populations. According to Falguni Sheth (2009: 39), these populations are identified as 'enemies, evil others, and those who are 'fundamentally not one of us''. In Klaus' (2017) assessment, the populations are mainly immigrants. However, given the main objective of the Polish state is essentially to control, in the process, it decides who must live and who must die. Such distinction leads to the separation of groups within a population and the categorisation of a certain group as superior and others as inferior. This is the point where racialised governmentality interferes with the operation of the state, with an assumption that the elimination of an inferior population is something that will make life healthier, purer and subsequently better.

Conclusion

A core argument made here has been the shaped racialised power relations, marked by an unnamed privilege: whiteness. It should be clear by now that what is meant by whiteness is not only about skin colour or any biologically based characteristic, but a structurally advantaged position (race privilege), a standpoint from which white people view themselves, others and society, and a set of generally unmarked cultural practices (Frankenberg, 1993: 1). In this sense, whiteness generates 'norms, ways of understanding history, ways of thinking about self and other, and even ways of thinking about the notion of culture itself' (Frankenberg, 1993: 231).

Thinking through whiteness, I have attempted to situate Poland in a colonial context, through the activities of the not well-known Polish colonial society and its attempt to follow the colonial trajectory created by Imperial states such as Britain, France, Russia, Spain, Portugal and Germany. I have looked at the problematisation of the German *Lebensraum* – the space a state believes is required for its natural expansion. Whilst eugenicist idea is often seen as a practice found in the mode of operations of powerful European nations, this chapter has demonstrated that eugenic practice was an essential part of the operations of less powerful European states such as Poland.

The construction, labelling and manipulation of ethnic minorities are essential parts of Polish governance as the state stands for its civilised values, morality and importantly a superior Catholic identity, which is the driving force for stately domination. All this may appear as accidental categorisation of peoples, but it is part of the state's policies that prioritised Polish people over the 'Other'. In its policies, the Polish state sought to interiorise, Christianise and civilise diverse groups of Jews, Muslims and people from borderlands living within the state. Although categorising these groups may seem vital for state formation and to ensure loyalty, religious conversion, and assimilation into Polish ways of life, the processes of this categorisation involved the construction of a wide range of markers that include race, religion, lifestyles and languages.

In essence, the genealogy of the modern state is closely related to the history of racial formation. Poland's attempted colonisation is easily understood through New South ideology that considered black Africans as people who could only implement hard labour such as land cultivation and assume inferior economic and political positions, as attributed to the African-Americans in the New South (Zimmerman, 2010; 2010a). Such project would lead to the prioritisation of European lives over Africans' with economic and racial implications. This chapter has shown how the effect of the attempted colonisation is often overlooked, hence its limited appearance in postcolonial theoretical discourses that recognise colonial legacies in contemporary narratives of *enslavement*, *colonialism*, and *genocide*.

Lastly, this chapter has problematised race, coloniality and the Polish state anew by arguing that the notion of colonisation can no longer be reduced to European imperial powers, but also extended to the less powerful European states. The details of Poland's colonial ambition may seem superficial to include the country in the same colonial rank as the British, the French, and the German. Nevertheless, the ambitions and actions of the Polish colonial society, as this chapter has aimed to highlight, revealed the colonial inheritance of racialised governance and postcolonial conditions that manifest themselves in contemporary racisms. The legacies of such actions are easily reduced to contemporary Polish system of governmentality, legality, materiality, and civility that I set to explore in the next empirical chapters.

Chapter 3: *Narodowiec* – ‘the national character’

Introduction

The issue that I want to explore in this chapter is that of Polish nationalism and how it has impacted upon an identity that is presumed not national to Poland. Much like race, nationalism has extensive meaning that is intrinsic to the configuration of Poland and its identity. Nation has obstinately remained as almost structural and ideological features of contemporary society through which a network of apparatuses and daily practices are reproduced. The mediation and reproduction of such everyday life, to a large extent, are shaped by some forms of nationalistic activism. It is from this position that I come to read *Narodowiec* as nationalistic activism that combines patriotism and national duty or ‘a belief in national exceptionalism’ (Fredrickson, 1997: 50). It is a national character within which individuals are instituted as *homo nationalis*, *homo oeconomicus*, *politicus*, *religious* (Balibar, 1991: 93), making nationalism appear as a primordial idea that is linked to blood, national identity and to the eternality of life. Nonetheless, the history of nationalism is never fixed, like race, it is only a continuous process of state formation culturally, politically and economically. It is against this backdrop that this chapter explores how black bodies may or may not be impacted upon by nationalist activism in Poland, which to an extent, shaped experiences of racism in the country.

This chapter does two things. First, it looks at the debates on ‘nation’ and the emergence of ‘nationalism’, followed by the ways in which the historicity of Poland shaped the lives of foreigners in which the everyday experiences of black people are a distinctive part. Secondly, whilst still focusing on contemporary nationalism in Poland, I am particularly interested in how the presence of black bodies, perceived to be different within the nation, interrupts the identity category of the Polish nation. In doing so, I look at black bodies which are perceived as ‘different’ but sound ‘the same’ as Polish, often the case with black and mixed-race Poles. The aim here is to show what happens to nationalism when interrupted, disoriented and undermined by a body that is considered not national to Poland. Throughout this chapter, I draw on my ethnographic work in Poland to highlight the significance attached to Polish national identity.

Reading nationalism through the nation

In the *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1991) proposes a definition of a nation as an imagined political community that places restriction on its membership because ‘[t]he most

messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible...' (Anderson, 1991: 7). In his definition, Anderson notes that whilst inequality and political exploitation may appear as serious concerns, for many nationalists, the commitment to the existence of the nation is conceived as a deeper comradeship. It is the kind of comradeship that makes so many people, 'not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings' (Anderson, 1991: 7). Reading the nation through Anderson's imaginary 'comradeship', Handler (1988: 6-8) recognises the boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity encompassing the diversity of a nation. He argues that a nation is delimited by the inviolability of its borders; capability to reproduce and by the virtue of its uninterruptedness, at least for a while, the nation becomes homogeneous. For Handler, it is this sense of illusion that 'obscures important objective differences among group members' (Handler, 1988: 8).

Ernest Gellner's (1983) voice in this debate is particularly refreshing when he attempts to separate the nation from the state. These two institutions are often used interchangeably and, in many cases, together (nation-state), in doing so, Gellner recognises that we are losing the fundamental meanings of these separate but linked institutions. For Gellner, nation and state are not exactly the same – a state could be considered as an organised political community under a government; often sovereign state, body politic, commonwealth or *res publica* whose functions are predominately administrative. However, a nation is a body of social group integrated by some ties such as 'a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group - or at least of its core constituents; a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it. It is a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.' (Hroch, 1996: 78-97). Gellner contends that it is the idea of a nation – Nationalism – that holds the assumption that both state and nation are destined for each other, and 'that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy.' (Gellner, 1983: 7). As such, nationalism has emerged from the rudiments of commonality of descent, history, culture and essentially a common or an imagined destination. This may explain why 'nationalism' is sometimes referred to as a political movement that seeks to exercise state power and justifying such actions through nationalistic arguments (Breuilly, 1985: 3). It is a suggestion that political spirituality is at the heart of nationalism. In a sense, nationalism embraces the primordial assumption that is linked to the ancestral greatness and such greatness must never be forgotten, but remain celebrated in many aspects of ordinary life, even if it requires the exclusion of the Other (Renan, 1996: 52).

The above accounts of the nation are supportive of Anthony Smith's (1995) account of a nation. Smith (1995) begins his argument by noting that nationalists are not the main architects of the nation, but as political architects, nationalists rediscovered and reinterpreted the ethnic past through the regeneration of the community. Whilst recognising the importance of language, history and culture in the production of a nation, Smith (1995: 13) argues that nationalists and their followers have put together these various ingredients of the nation in order 'to suit the changing tastes and needs of different elites and generations'. Rather than accepting these various ingredients of the nation as a fact that is primordially national, Smith (1995: 15) declares that they are only employed to give dignity, authority and make difficult changes acceptable to the common people. From this perspective, nationalism is used as a tool to seize the heart of the common people by seeking to create a nation-state through which the political administration could be questioned, contested, and altered in order to achieve some difficult political manoeuvring.

What seems to be absent in the above accounts of the nation is the idea of nation-building as a racialised process and nationalism as a racial project. One way to begin unpacking the racialised structure identified here is to understand modern nation as a 'formation' and its national identity, not an attribute that people are born with, 'but are formed and transformed within discourses and other systems of representation' (Hall, 2017: 137). The histories of modern nations are complex histories that are shaped by internal differences maintained through cultural power. This makes modern nation a geographical site where meanings and identifications are constructed through past and present events that come to represent a united narrative as the shared experiences – griefs, genealogies of family, blood, long period of settlement in an area, disasters, and triumphs – that nationalists position themselves within, and later defined as their natural belonging (Hall, 2017). This is perhaps what underpins Benedict Anderson's understanding of national identity as an 'imagined community' 'based on invention to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation' (Anderson, 1991: 6). Nonetheless, the fabrications are presented as natural, original, and essential national identity has always been constructed across differences through social class, ethnicity and most especially racialised histories. It is a confirmation that the national identity that the nationalists seek to claim is never fixed. As Hall (2017: 143-144) observes: 'Most of our modern nation-states are cultural hybrids—they are mongrelized and diasporized beyond repair...' What is particularly interesting here is that the ideas of biological differentiation are being used to present an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified community. Such moves are made through the construction and defending of images of a nation in an attempt to consolidate its homogeneity (Gilroy, 1990a).

A specific way in which an imaginary definition of the nation is consolidated and reproduced is through Banal Nationalism – the modern nation self-rediscovery, reinterpretation and reproduction. In *Banal Nationalism* (1995), Billig notes that the notion of nationalism can no longer be understood in its traditional sense, that is, the attachment of nationalistic attitudes to the nationalists; activities of some far-right or neo-Nazis groups. Billig stretches the understanding of nationalism to things that the modern state does subtly to produce and reproduce itself within and beyond the boundaries of the state. For Billig, the state's actions in the reproduction processes may be hidden or not make obvious. Also, the banality of state nationalism is often warm-hearted, good-natured, affectionate, often agreeable with good-humoured, tender, soft-hearted, compassionate, considerate and, for the most part, liberal. But they are firm and widespread conditions that confirm, affirm and re-affirm and remind citizens and non-citizens of the essence of the state:

For this reason, the term **banal nationalism** is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced.... these habits are not removed from everyday life, ... Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is endemic condition (Billig, 2015: 6).

Whilst many of the state's actions may appear harmless that make them banal, Billig stresses that these are subtle, often racialised weapons ready to be used in battle, and the national populations mainly the common people appear to support its deployment. In essence, the nature of state nationalism may appear weak and not obvious, therefore, unexamined and unchallenged, but it is a kind of nationalism that is largely powerful and dangerous (Wade, 2014). What Billig has formulated is simply a construction of reality that includes the division of people into 'us' and 'them' (Triandafyllidou, 1998; Jaskulowski, 2016; 2018; 2019; Strømsø, 2018). This may be why Balibar (1991a: 39) says: 'Every historical racism is both institutional and sociological'. Institutional in terms of state official racial projects and sociological in terms of ordinary people reproducing the state line. 'The fact that citizens' thoughts and loyalties are organised in terms of nationhood is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is part of the processes of banality that makes almost everyone 'a nationalist' and makes it difficult for nationals to think in non-national ways. The essential idea of Billig's *Banal Nationalism* is the continuous 'flagging' and 'reminding' of nationhood and it is through this that the state is produced and reproduced to the exclusion of the Other.

It is not surprising that banal nationalism has been interpreted in different ways in different geographical locations due to its series of far-reaching political effect. For example, Paasi (1996) has identified the connections between 'hot' and banal nationalism in his study of celebrations of

Independence Day in Finland. Similar to Poland, it is a form of nationalism that is rooted in mobilising memories around 'hot' geopolitical moments such as war and national liberation. Culcasi (2016), whilst mapping the study of Jordanian identity, examines the relationship between banal and 'hot' nationalism in Jordan and highlighting the connections between these categories. A similar study was carried out in Qatar and United Arab Emirate, where Koch (2016) shows the national holidays as a form of civic nationalism used by the state as a process of exclusion of non-citizens. It is within this ritual and state paraphernalia of elimination that I situate *Narodowiec* as a national character that is integral to Poland. From this perspective, nationalism becomes a systematic process of reproduction and questioning of identity and diversity. It is against this backdrop that the lived experiences of the research participants in this study suggest a clash of representation that is largely shaped by a racialised identity that is assumed not integral to Poland.

European nationalism as Polish nationalism

It is important to draw broader examples from continental Europe. There is a sense in which nationalism reproduces itself through whiteness and Europeanness, as Goldberg (2009) has pointed out that being European is predicated on being seen as white:

The taboo of racial characterization, and the at least official avoidance of racial expression or categorization, reinforce the long historical presumption of Europe as the home of whiteness and Christianity. It follows that any person of color or non-Christian (at least genealogically) in Europe presumptively is not of Europe, not European, doesn't (properly or fully) ever belong. Just as, historically, anyone whose ancestry was considered to emanate from elsewhere was deemed non-European (Goldberg, 2009: 179-180).

Equating Europe with whiteness is not only evident in the Polish national identity, historically, but whiteness has also been at the heart of various national identities in Europe and has manifested itself in various ways. What is particularly important here is that whiteness has a parallel effect in the west as a consequence of the universalisation of racism. It is a confirmation that the development of whiteness has a wider European effect. For example, in the UK, Byrne (2007) has shown how whiteness is employed as a default category that does not permit integration of non-white Other due to the fear of losing the English identity. It is an idea that is premised on the influx of too many people referred to as immigrants. In considering what whiteness means in the French context, Beaman (2019) has argued that salience of whiteness is part of the processes through which different individuals are marked and categorised. In Germany, Muller (2011) has identified a clear distinction between who is German and who is not, based on race and ethnicity that are factored through whiteness. In the Netherlands, Alba & Foner (2015) have shown that schools are often described as black or white based on the number of students who are from

migrant backgrounds, regardless of their origin. In Switzerland, non-white people are assumed to be non-Swiss, this suggests that being white and being Swiss are predicated on being European. In all of this way, simultaneously, blackness is perceived as an identity that is incompatible with European and Swiss national identity (Cretton, 2018). What seems to be emerging here is a kind of whiteness that is inscribed around meanings of race. The meaning of whiteness, in the present context, is understood in terms of activities that tend to protect white interest, in doing so, it serves as a racial project in which white nationalism derives its political meaning especially in relation to non-white groups within a racial hierarchy (Gallagher & Twine, 2017: 1599). What seems particularly interesting is the European wide connection to the exclusion of the non-European Other. According to the above exploration of nation, nationalism in Poland and Europe serves to distinguish between the national category and the Other. The danger is that this homogenising logic does not seem to recognise or accept difference.

In considering what whiteness as well as nationalism means in the Polish context, I draw on the following account shared by Joseph, a mixed-race Polish respondent. During a discussion with Joseph, he drew attention to how the current Polish government, Polish nationalists and extremists came together to organise Poland's Independence Day march in 2018. It was a site where the state elite walked side by side with Poland's extremist organisations such as Stronnictwo Narodowe (National Party), Młodzież Wszechpolska (All Polish Youth), and ONR (National Radical Camp). This is an instance of political culture deemed to be a central factor in exacerbating, if not causing the experiences of racism in Poland.

This government is the racist government, yes, yes, many politicians from this government don't even respect other person, if you're Jew, if you've different sexual orientation, if you've different colour of skin, this government is using this for the argument to fight for Poland. This is a complete mistake. This government is not interested in fighting racism or many other bad situations, this government approved this [racism] (Joseph, mixed-race, male).

What we see here is a picture in which interpersonal racisms are not abstract but occur in a context of structural and state racisms. It is an instance of a situation where 'Race and nation, racism and nationalism run together' (Goldberg, 2009: 6) as Zeta (black, female) recalled a Polish politician saying that 'Poland is for the Poles'. It is a way of excluding those racialised as black and/or other. Sharing this analysis, Joseph believed that Poland's extremist organisations were drawn together by conservatism and viewed the state's support of these organisations as a way of transforming and negotiating Polishness through the encouragement of nationalism. Joseph connected the state's silence on nationalist activities to racism. Reflecting the accounts of all of the study's participants, Joseph's account conveyed a sense that it is the political and ideological climate in

Poland - often driven by state actors - that led to such ubiquitous experiences of racism for black/mixed-race people in Poland. It was from these same quarters, that racism was denied:

...when someone from the government said that oh, in Poland we don't have racism. I thought OK, but you're white, you're not black, you don't experience this. In every dangerous situation, I wait for occasions when I can say that white people don't feel or see racism in Poland. Rather than just say that there's no racism in Poland. (Joseph, mixed-race, male).

The mythology about racism not existing in Poland and CEE broadly was a pervasive one that seems to be tied to the image of Poland as a racially homogenous nation, devoid of (problems of) race (Imre, 2005). However, as Danni (mixed-race, male) reminds us, 'people may not be interested in it because 'they choose not to see it''. As Goldberg (2015) and Joseph-Salisbury (2018) have shown, it is perhaps through deniability that racisms endure. Putting all this into a specific context, Jaskulowski (2019) argues that Polish nationalism could be understood through the ideology of the current Polish right-wing government (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS). Such ideology, Majewski (2013) adds, is an attempt to transform, negotiate and challenge the hegemonic meanings based on a group's needs and interests to the exclusion of the non-Polish Other. Joseph's concern needs to be considered from a point of view of 'institutional implications', which according to Hall (1983) are 'those particular sections of political leadership which have chosen to make statements about race and which have made a deep political investment in the topic of race...' (Hall, 1983: 269-270).

The concern raised in the conversation with Joseph is not a new phenomenon in Poland, it is a long-standing tradition within the Polish state configuration mediated through the re-articulation of the interwar processes of radicalisation, racialisation and nationalism. It has only been invigorated by the current Polish government and promoted by the ONR, a far-right political movement that declared:

A member of the Polish Nation is anyone who feels like being Polish, feels attached to Polish tradition and history, and is recognized by the national community as a countryman. Condemning biological racism, we postulate the preservation of the state of ethnic homogeneity, which is conducive to maintaining social peace and stability of the state.¹¹

The above excerpt should be about social conditions but constructed as an issue about social groups (dominant and dominated) where whiteness and Europeaness take precedence over other identifications. The idea relies on the assumption of 'one nation', drawing on the myth, history and memories of the past that cannot navigate the future. Also, the emphasis on the Polish tradition and the preservation of the ethnic homogeneity allows nation and race to fuse, where

¹¹ For National Radical Camp ideological declaration, see <https://www.onr.com.pl/deklaracja-ideowa/>

nationalism and racism become entangled that to speak of the nation is to speak in racially exclusive terms. What matters here is not just when and why people think and talk in nationalistic terms, but what the national signifies to them and their Polish communities are predicted on whiteness and Europeaness (Bonikowski, 2016). In this sense, following Gilroy's (1990: 270-271) logic, Blackness and Polishness are constructed as incompatible because to speak of Polish people is to speak of people who are *white*.

The maintenance of Polish homogeneity is often viewed as a process of preventing fragmentation as a mechanism for peace and stability. The problem with this argument, however, is that peace and stability, in this instance, are treated as a racial issue rather than social conditions. The configuration of modern Poland appears to be intrinsic to nationalist activism and the presumed Polish identity which is based on the assemblage of homogeneity that is racially, religiously and culturally Polish. The idea that homogeneity serves as an antidote for instability cannot be straightforward because it is becoming more and more difficult to disaggregate the configuration of Poland from nationalism, consequently, such configuration is becoming problematic. This is why the question of nationalism is at the heart of the concern raised by Joseph because Poland, for a long time, has been the site of production and promotion of political nationalism (Wandycz, 1971; Wereszycki, 1971; Holzer, 1977; Gross, 2000; MacMaster, 2001; Michlic, 2004). It is a confirmation that 'the present is bound to the singular imprint of the past' (Balibar, 1991a: 41).

'We want God, We want Clean Blood'

It is worth playing out Billig's (1995) understanding of nationalism further in order to identify its racialised contours. For Billig, banal nationalism has dual processes to it. On the one hand, the state performs its 'subtle gestures' of reminding people of its essence. On the other hand, Billig notes, what is even more banal is the assumption that the citizens go about their daily lives without noticing the banality of the state. In reality, people carry with them a piece of psychological machinery called 'a national identity' that is based on the racialised primordial ties. To be a national is to be situated physically, legally, socially, and emotionally within a nation, but not always pronounced. However, when 'the crisis occurs; the president calls; bells ring; the citizens answer; and the patriotic identity is connected' (Billig, 2015: 7-9), it awakens and embraces all forgotten reminders of the importance of the state and unleashes the boundaries between the nationals and the racialised Other. This form of nationalism, as I have hinted, is very specific to Poland and evident in its recent national celebration.

On the 11 November each year, Poles commemorate their country regaining independence in 1918 when Poland reappeared on the map of Europe. Poles have celebrated Independence Day in various ways over the years, but not primarily through participating in the Independence Day march. However, in 2010, the march attracted mainly nationalists and football fans known for xenophobic and at times violent activities. From then on, the Polish Independence Day march started pulling in crowds that resulted in 20,000 people participating in the march in 2011. In the next six years, the number of participants continued to grow, culminating in a sea of 60,000 people in 2017, united under the slogan: “We Want God”¹². Although not all the people that participated in the march were far-right extremists, there is a sense in which ordinary Poles were willing to join a march organised by members of two far-right groups, ONR (National Radical Camp) and Młodzież Wszechpolska (All Polish Youth), that take their ideologies from the fascist groups in the 1930s Poland (Balogun & Narkowicz, 2017). They perceive themselves as patriots inspired by aggressive or militant Catholicism with an urge to create white Europe and Poland. In their words, ‘Europe will be white or uninhabited’.¹³

Homi Bhabha (1990: 1) has described nation as a system of cultural signification that reproduces itself through political thoughts. To tease out the subtle contours of raciality unfolding through the above march of Independence that was considered raceless, it is important to view it as an expression of political thoughts with racial contours. The call for God and clean blood symbolises the typical “nationalist practice” assuming ‘first, an image of a national space; secondly, an image of the nationalist himself or herself as master of this national space and thirdly, an image of the “ethnic/racial other” as a mere object within this space’ (Hage, 2003: 28). Many of the activities that unfolded during the march were, as Bilge (2013: 167) puts it – ‘a government of others operating through racialized rationalities and technologies...deploy multiple idioms of racism’. This was evident in contemporary Polish accounts of foreigners threatening and attempting to breach the borders and unsettling what is assumed to be authentic Polish culture and society. These accounts, expressed through various forms of nationalism, do not only reinforce a feeling of their specific otherness, they also reinforce the otherness of black and non-white identities (Bhopal, 2018: 10). Consequently, black and brown identities become threatening elements in the ways in which the nation includes and excludes, which outline state production and reproduction and

¹² See The Guardian (2017) ‘White Europe’: 60,000 nationalists march on Poland’s independence day’

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/12/white-europe-60000-nationalists-march-on-polands-independence-day>

¹³ See OKO press - <https://oko.press/marszu-niepodleglosci-szlo-wielu-rasistow-neofaszystow-policja-reagowala-apelujemy-przesylajcie-zdjecia-filmy-potwierdzajace-lamanie-prawa/>

inclusion and exclusion processes. Sophia, mixed-race Polish respondent, recounted her experience of Poland's Independence Day march in 2017:

The march for the Independence Day wasn't like this when I was a child. Even though things have changed from that time, the march was ridiculous – the banners they carry and the people who say that's not what I'm walking for, but that's what you're working behind...I remember 7 years ago walking in that March with my Mum and my brother, it was normal. It was when this issue about immigrants started that people think – *we don't want immigrants here*, but rather than saying it, they march behind it. Also, I don't believe this is the only way to celebrate the Independence Day, why was it so aggressive, shouldn't be a happy celebration, what are Arab people got to do with our Independence Day? (Sophia, mixed-race, female).

The point stressed by Sophia has been a major discussion among scholars working within the areas of nationalism, observing that it is within such event that extreme reproduction of national category occurs where citizens are 'reminded of their national place in a world of nations' (Billig, 2015: 8). It is part of many ways 'to get people to think of themselves—to formulate their identities and their interests—as members of that nation, rather than as members of some other collectivity' (Brubaker, 2004: 117-118). Drilling deeper into how nationalism penetrates the thought of everyday people, Fox & Miller-Idriss (2008: 539) argue that 'nationhood is not (only) lurking in the crevices of the unconscious, furtively informing talk without becoming the subject of talk; it is simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people giving concrete expression to their understandings of the nation'. This is reflective of Sophia's understanding of the recent Poland's march of Independence as a missionary and political task to reinterpret and rediscover Poland, as Smith (1995: 16) argues: 'if this is how we were, and that is how we must understand things, then this is what we now must do'.

Recent migration from the Middle East and Africa – whilst most of the people arriving in Europe were not attempting to reach Poland – was used divisively by the Polish state, through the state-sponsored TV, to exacerbate the number of migrants in Poland in the past couple of years (Pędzwiatr, 2015). The conditions for this intensification are embedded in the banal, sometimes hot nationalistic machinery created by the state using language such as 'we', 'our', 'us' and 'here' to signify the nation (Billig, 1995: 105). It is a distinction between 'native' and 'foreign', where those in the second category have always been excluded from the ideas of Polishness, as evident in the following account provided by Kenneth (black, male):

the way they are communicating their positions on this[immigration], they are like even very aggressive, saying that immigrants don't need to be here in Poland, but in Germany, France and other countries...

Kenneth believed the implication of the government's stance on immigration led some to call for 'White Europe' and asserted the need for 'Clean Blood'¹⁴. Indeed, 'nationalist ideology', as argued by Billig (1995: 37), 'operates to make people forget that their world has been historically constructed. Thus, nationalism is the ideology by which the world of nations has come to seem the natural world – as if there could not possibly be a world without nations.' There are two cardinal points that need highlighting here. First, it is important to note how the discourses of race and nation are never really disconnected because the constitution of the nation, the categorisation of people into Polish and non-Polish, and the organisation of nationalism into individual political movements all inevitably have racist underlying. From this perspective, nationalism, if not the only cause of racism, would be at least the determining conditions - the economic and psychological explanations, the sense of personal identity and collective belonging - that produce racism (Balibar, 1991a: 37). Second, the call for 'Clean Blood' is a call for purity of race as proclaimed by the organisers of Poland's march of Independence – who identified as race-separatists – is a key mechanism in promoting hierarchy among people. In this racist logic, whiteness is placed closer to God, implying the higher status and purity of whiteness. As such, the main slogan of the Independence March – 'We want God' – should be understood as a desire to purify the nation of all sorts of impure others and return to the past. This is particularly problematic for Joseph, the respondent introduced previously, who perceived the idea of purification as a direct attack on his identity as a mixed-race Pole:

This is crazy, this is new fascism, sending invitation to fascist from Italy using symbol of fascism and saying that they're not fascist, but if someone asks about a black person in Poland, the official line is a black person cannot be Polish, the previous government did not do much about racism, the current government approves racism. (Joseph, mixed-race, male)

A good number of studies have pointed to the issue raised by Joseph as the manners in which the ideas of the nation and national identity are dovetailed is one of the major problems of nationalism (Bauman, 1992; Canovan, 1996; Brubaker, 1996; Calhoun, 1997; Thompson, 2001). Bauman (1992: 675), for example, has raised a concern about how the modern state uses nationalism for the 'primitive accumulation' of power that could be 'inclusivist' and 'exclusivists' and often feature in national projects. This leads Bauman to understand nationalism as partly racism of the intellectuals and partly racism of the masses because the masses are products of nationalism. Contextualising 'social action' and 'human agency' is crucial to the understanding of nationalism and national

¹⁴ See The Wall Street Journal, 'Polish Nationalist Youth March Draws Thousands in Capital', <https://www.wsj.com/articles/polish-nationalist-youth-march-draws-thousands-in-capital-1510429006>

identity. The specific task here, for Thompson (2001: 18-19), is how the national identity is constructed and maintained through human social interaction that could be extremely racial. Hence, the problem with Polish nationalism is not only a political one, but also an identity one because of its inability to locate the Other in its common-sense lexicon, hence the suggestion of purification.

The idea of purification has a layer of complexity that cannot be reduced to politics, it is a complexity that Gilroy reflects upon in *Against Race* (2000). The idea of purification is deep-seated within the notion that difference threatens, contaminates and dilutes purities. Therefore, mixture of different people of which Joseph is a product is seen as something that must be guarded against. Joseph's situation goes deeper than just difference because different people are feared, suspicious or considered strange. However, to be 'half-different and partially familiar' is exactly where Joseph's predicament lies because mixedness is indicative of a primordial betrayal (Gilroy, 2000: 105). What many nationalist projects fail to realise is that difference could be found within and between a single identity as Joseph later pointed out that '99.9% of my contact is with white people... but I don't think about my skin colour' (Joseph, mixed-race, male). Perhaps, it is this perception of self as (neither white nor black) that informs Joseph's rejection of nationalists' idea of identity that must be racially, culturally and religiously homogeneous.

Furthermore, the Polish call for clean blood needs to be read as 'bottom-up nationalism' (Jaskulowski, 2019: 55) as part of formal 'national' events. According to Thompson (2001: 19), these events are 'emotionally-laden with direct reference to 'the nation'', in which national identity serves as a common-sense lens. It is a kind of lens that is built on fear. It is within the element of fear that Beck (1992) introduces the 'formation of social bonds' when conflict arises. In his argument, he observes that the formation of social bonds is often associated with and often informed by some sort of intersectionality - 'differences and inequalities of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age and so on' (1992: 99). This helps to understand the above situation as that of fear and one way of managing such fear is through the 'formation of social bonds' as a form of membership. It is precisely this structure of nationalistic membership that underpins racial crisis within Polish identity because 'By seeking to circumscribe the common essence of nationals, racism thus inevitably becomes involved in the obsessional quest for a core of authenticity that cannot be found, it shrinks the category of nationality and disestablishes the historical nation' (Balibar, 1991a: 60).

The logic of 'clean blood' manifests itself in another, but a similar situation that attempts to bring things under control through the elimination of any forms of otherness (Young, 1990: 98). In this

instance, it was within working-class struggle. Johnny, a black, male respondent, was originally from Kenya, but moved to Poland as a new expat in Warsaw, he found himself in a steam of Polish working-class protesting against immigration:

I unknowingly walked into a group who are not in support of immigrants. This is something I really hate and really pained me and I was hurt by this, I was new in the country, I was scared, ... I notice there were some guys when they saw me they started shouting all sort of things about immigrants, but I never understood... But they started mocking me, mimicking monkey and 'monkeying me', basically doing sound like a monkey, knowing that I don't understand what was going on, these guys started doing some sign language mimicking monkey, looking at me and chanting some words. Then it hits me, that's a racist thing, you know. (Johnny, black, male)

Skey (2009: 335) has observed that class protests, organised by non-state organisations, are often 'designed to serve distinct sections of the population who are (often) constituted on the basis of different, sometimes conflicting, (national) identities, which may or may not be aligned with a state'. It is one of the ways in which non-state actors and institutions are sometime, if not often, responsible for the key mechanism of official representations that reproduce the state at the expense of the racialised Other (Brubaker, 2004; Penrose, 2011).

Johnny sees himself as a working-class individual just like many Polish people that were protesting against immigrants in their country, therefore, his narrative needs to be considered from the standpoint of racial polemics of white working-class agenda. Whilst I acknowledge the caution in any attempt to adopt the British working-class crisis on issues of working-class in Poland, there are conditions that are pointing to a similar phenomenon, especially when it comes to race and working-class culture. One of those conditions is the growth of the current populist political forms which appeal to national sentiment, as seen above, has narrowed the concern of the working-class people (Gilroy, 1992: 28). It is an indication that racism plays an active role in the articulation of political, cultural and economic elements into a complex and contradictory unity.

The works of John Rex (1970) and Paul Gilroy (1987) are major points of reference in racial discourse, especially when it comes to looking at race from social class relations. This perspective slightly departs from the construction of race as state issue, but more to do with social construction, identity formation and what it means to be black/immigrant. Rex (1970) sees all this through the lens of class that creates structural conditions whereby social reality are constructed racially. In Britain, for example, Rex & Tomlinson (1979) have observed that immigrant populations do not share the affluent privilege-positions enjoyed by their white counterpart because these were part of rights won through white working-class movement where the issues of immigration and rights of the immigrants were hardly considered within the working-class struggle.

...the minorities were systematically at a disadvantage compared with white peers and that, instead of identifying with working class culture, community and politics, they formed their own organisations and became effectively a separate underprivileged class (Rex & Tomlinson, 1979: 275).

In a similar way, the concerns of the Polish Jews and other minorities were not seriously considered within the *Solidarnosc* (Solidarity Movement), the first Polish working-class labour union. Whilst *Solidarnosc* gave rise to a broader, non-violent, anti-communist movements with millions of members with more or less similar agenda and requests, the concerns of the minorities or Jewish workers and their children were either never imagined or located outside the *Solidarnosc* negotiations. It is the junction where the question of race and class-othering comes into the institutionalised definitions of nationhood and nationality in Poland.

For Gilroy (1992), it is about collectivism, coordination and solidarity where black political movement has never been included. I take Gilroy developed this position from John Rex's (1970) complaint about the absence of immigrant concerns within the white working-class movement, hence, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, where in the conclusion to the book, Gilroy (1992: 238) quotes a young black man speaking after the Handsworth riots about black unemployment and being '*regarded as third class citizens*'. The concern here is the lack of collective identities in class relations, instead what we have is a situation where blackness is positioned opposite of the working-class categories (Gilroy, 1992; Solomos & Back, 1996).

Recalling Johnny's account of class exclusion in Poland, his experience provides a specific explanation about racism in the country, not so much about the few people at the top, but more about the articulation of racism by many people at the bottom of the society. It is for this reason that I read Johnny's experience as a form of racialised nationalism – the identification of racialised others within the working-class struggle (Virdee, 2019: 21). Racism, in this case, served as device through which Polish working-class came 'to live in an imaginary way, their relations to the real, material conditions of their existence' (Hall, 1980: 334). The conditions that put Johnny in a situation where he felt excluded provides an insight into how a class is made and given value through race. It shows how different classes become attributed to a value that enables a particular culture to be deployed as a resource and as a form of property (Skeggs, 1997). This confirms that class works through other categorisations that are largely structured and reproduced by means of 'race' (Gilroy, 1992: 29; Skeggs, 2004).

Reading working-class struggle in this way, Johnny's narrative should be problematised in three ways. First is the racialisation of 'the working-class' as white, whilst those racialised as minorities

and immigrants are denied the working-class status. Second, it constructs the Polish working-class as privileging their racial interests above the class struggle. This results in the glorification of nationalist activism. Third, it normalises racism in both discourse and practice by presenting it as popular demand, in doing so, it reinforces the idea of race that is evident in some anti-social behaviours in Poland.

Racism, in this regard, is partly sustained by the defensive institutions of the working-class people (Hall, 1983: 271). This invalidates the Marxist idea about class struggle as a way of combating racism. In Johnny's case, I extend the civic characters to the racist characters because a protest should be a protest, and not be deployed in racist terms. The danger of racist characters appears as a symbolic reminder for the citizens not to forget their national identity of which Johnny's presence assumed to be a threat. This is constantly emphasised in different ways through the state's heraldic devices and citizens' symbolic gesture and objects that may appear overtly or covertly racist, as part of 'programme of unification and a postulate of homogeneity' (Bauman, 1992: 683; Brunn, 2011).

The racism experienced by Johnny was not just the way the state is implicated by non-state actors and institutions as assumed by Brubaker (2004) and Penrose (2011), it is a confirmation of the mainstream state as a place ridden with discrimination, racism and exclusion (Antonsich, 2018a: 4). In fact, reading the mainstream state through Goldberg (2002), one quickly realises how the modern state has always imagined itself racially through the creation of certain conditions that assume varied racially comprehended characters in different sociospecific environment. In drawing attention to the state in racial terms, Goldberg (1993; 2002: 6) notes that racist articulation is integral to the emergence, propagation, and reproduction of world systems, from which the modern Polish state could not be exempted, especially in relation to the ways in which heterogeneity is perceived as a threat to homogeneity. This logic works through the reproduction of the national identity, the state population and importantly securitisation of migration has a prominent place in the logic of race because migration is often seen as a factor that weakens national identity and homogeneity. This silent point has been articulated by scholars working within the area of state securitisation. For example, in his assessment of European securitisation of migration, Jef Huysmans (2000) observes:

'Migration' and related labels such as 'foreigner' and 'asylum- seeker' are politically powerful signifiers in contemporary Europe. They have a capacity to connect the internal security logic to the big political questions of cultural and racial identity, challenges to the welfare state, and the legitimacy of the post-war political order. (Huysmans, 2000: 761).

In a discussion on the impact of securitisation on immigration debates, Ole Wæver (2000: 252-523) has argued that securitisation uses the ‘grammar of security’, the ‘social capital’, highlighting how securitising speakers use evidence of a threat of migration. In doing so, securitisation frames political debates in terms of existential threat (Huysmans, 2006). Providing links between securitisation and migration, Andrew Neal (2009) shows the danger of linking terrorism, security, migration and borders by European institutions. Securitisation, to a significant degree, focuses more on the external threat often assumed to be perpetuated by non-European Other. Consequently, the non-European Other is written into the securitisation laws that marked the body of the other as one which needs to be securitised at all times. Consequently, securitisation emerged as a ‘political anatomy’, a new form of ‘mechanics of power’ that defines institutional inclusion or exclusion of bodies (Foucault, 1991a: 138). It is from this standpoint that ‘immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees are framed as a security problem’ (Huysmans, 2000: 757; Doty, 1996; Ugur, 1995), in which Johnny an expat in Warsaw was a victim. Whilst there were other non-black immigrants present in Johnny’s situation, it is important to point out that, it was Johnny’s identity as a black body that excluded him from the working-class fabric of the Polish society and presented him as a threat.

Interrupting and undermining national category – ‘*where are you from?*’

To clarify my argument here, it is important to set out partly what this section intends to do. So far, this chapter has demonstrated the nature of Polish nationalism and how the nation reproduces itself has been largely explored through Smith (1991); Billig (1995); and Balibar (1991a). My concern here is not so much about the national but the racial paradigm within the national reproduction. Therefore, the discussion that follows is much more concerned with how some people use the idea of Polish national identity to position themselves opposite the people who are perceived to be non-national and non-white Other. Consequently, such social action is partly responsible for the ongoing perpetuation of the reality of the Polish nation (Thompson, 2001) that renders certain black bodies out of space (Puar, 2008).

Following Marco Antonsich (2018: 3), in this section, I am particularly interested in how a body considered to be different, within the nation, appears as an interruption of the identity category that is peculiar to Poland. In other words, the section is much more concerned with the boundaries of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’ by focusing on the bodies which are perceived as “different” but sound “the same” as Polish, often the case with black and mixed-race Poles. Similar to Antonsich (2018), I draw on the notion of troubling. I situate troubling within the encounter of strangeness which occurs when the assumed national identity is interrupted, disoriented and undermined. It is for

this reason that it becomes important to interrogate, as I have attempted above, the naturalised knowledge associated with a nation as an identity category. This is the category through which one is “seen” as national’ (Antonsich, 2018: 452; Ozkirimli, 2003).

This is an experience from being a child, being told that I speak good Polish, calling me *Murzyn* [negro], all this contributed to me being kind of being disconnected with Polishness in some ways and not being able to call myself Polish. I can’t just say I’m Polish, the question – ‘*where are you from?*’ – always comes into this and then when they understand that my father was Cameroonian, then ‘*you can’t be Polish*’. (Sophia, mixed-race, female)

Gilroy’s definition of the new racism helps to unpack the pattern of raciality observed above:

The new racism is primarily concerned with mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. It specifies who may legitimately belong to the national community and simultaneously advances reasons for the segregation or banishment of those whose ‘origin, sentiment, or citizenship’ assigns them elsewhere. (Gilroy, 1992: 45)

The question – *where are you from?* is not specific to people from an immigrant background in Poland. It has been articulated through various means in France and in the Netherlands (Ersanilli & Saharso, 2011), a similar effect has been observed in the lived experiences of British Muslims in Britain (Phillips, 2006; Hussain & Bagguley, 2013), who experience exclusion at the national level (Isakjee, 2016). In the above quotation, Sophia spoke about her frustration and at times anger about the Polish society not accepting her as Polish, even though she felt and identified as one. Sophia is a popular figure among children of migrants in Poland. Besides her TV appearance on a famous talent show, Sophia is a backup singer for one of the famous singers in the Polish music industry. Despite Sophia’s Polish background, the question – ‘*where are you from?*’ – always comes into the context because of her half Cameroonian background. Antonsich (2018) has suggested that the question – ‘*where are you from?*’ operates through the body and has a racial element to it. It is a way of mapping faces onto a specific national space through an assumption that our skin colours and our faces are direct links to our national and racial identities. For Sophia, someone with ‘black face and traits’ to be Polish, to behave in Polish ways, and to speak Polish fluently would appear as strange-same body that surprises many white Polish people. The same experience was narrated by Julius who is half Polish, half Kenyan:

...in the restaurants I notice people would never talk straight to me in Polish, they usually start in English, and even when you talked back to them in Polish, they’ll continue talking to you in English...sometimes I remind them that I’m Polish and speak Polish and they’ll continue speaking in English to me, in the beginning it was Ok and later becoming frustrating...(Julius, mixed-race, male).

What is beginning to emerge in both Sophia and Julius' accounts is a kind of disruption of people's common-sense knowledge of what they know, which includes an assumption of a sort of 'somatic norm' attached to the nation (Puwar, 2004: 1). People are often overwhelmed by what they see and what they hear. If this argument is taken further, then listening attentively cannot take place because it has been overtaken by a racialised knowledge of the nation, which assumes Poland and Polish people to be exclusively white and Polish, therefore, it appears abnormal for a non-white person to speak Polish fluently. Both Sophia and Julius' everyday experiences pinpointed the junction where 'disruption of a nation reproduced through the banality of supposedly unmarked bodies' (Antonsich, 2018: 454), when what was perceived as a Polish culture is perforated by some black holes. It is in the lived experiences of mainly mixed-race Poles where strangeness and sameness co-exist in a body, as such, the encounter is not only troubling for the society, but equally for 'recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite bodies*' (Bhabha, 1994: 126). It is precisely on the rhetoric of not quite Polish, mediated through the reproduction of Polishness, that the presence of stranger interrupts, disorients and undermines national category.

The co-existence of difference and sameness, outsider-insider (Bannerji, 2000), especially in the case of mixed-race, forms a potential for another identity query: "who are we?" that forces a reflection on the inner contradictions of a nation defined in ethno-racial terms' (Antonsich, 2018: 455). Essentially, the troubling question – '*where are you from?*' – is not only an indication of place, but also a suggestion of belonging elsewhere (Gilroy, 1992). The question is better understood through the national imaginary assumption that skin colour holds 'the truth' of one's national and racial identity (Ahmed, 2000: 13). Bulmer & Solomos (1998: 827) link this to the way of seeing a nation 'as a symbolic community' that accounts for power to generate a sense of identity and allegiance. This is confirmed by Jaskulowski's (2019) empirical research among white Polish people where some of his respondents considered national identity to be fixed, unchangeable and linked to biological factors such as birth or blood, as Hugo, a white Pole, explained, 'if Polish blood flows in their veins [referring to non-white Poles]... If it didn't I wouldn't rather call them [Poles]... even if they had Polish citizenship... maybe, but after a long time, maybe then they could be considered as Poles' (Jaskulowski, 2019: 65). Nonetheless, the idea of a symbolic community is only an imaginary one that is contextualised through the everyday understanding of who is Polish and who is not. By not being Polish, one is assigned a slot: a status of an immigrant, as a different identity, a centred identity. The classic question – '*where are you from?*' – is one of the commonly asked questions that slots Sophia and Julius, though Polish, into the status of an immigrant. The concept of an immigrant is particularly a problematic one and requires a better explanation here.

Immigration is a status, it is a temporary position and, in some ways, never fixed, often fluid because, as Hall (1987: 45) points out ‘the instant one learns to be ‘an immigrant’, one recognizes one can’t be an immigrant any longer: it isn’t a tenable place to be’. I take my cue from Hall’s (1987) insistence on the fluidity of the status of an immigrant as an identity that is not permanent. Rather than just asserting this argument, it is important to demonstrate it. For example, if person A migrated to a country 10 years ago and person B migrated to the same country 10 months ago, migration is a commonality between these two persons. However, their immigration status, to some extent, would not be the same because person A must have gone through some forms of voluntary or imposed acculturation or assimilation; must have acquired conditions of discovery and some forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that are grounded in the culture of the host nation. Subsequently, person A’s state of being an immigrant has changed and perhaps completely different. Also, for this person, the concept of home has shifted, perhaps ‘there is no ‘home’ to go back to’ (Hall, 1987: 44), but only exists in the memory, the home is here and now. It is from this standpoint that I come to read immigration as a status of sojourning, a temporary stay, a brief period of residence that is not fixed. This observation points at the idea that the state of being an immigrant, in day-to-day reality, is not permanent, not unalterable and above all, not wholly defined by exclusion (Hall, 1987).

Having gone through all the crucial political processes that constitute someone as a native, I ask, at what point is person A no longer an immigrant? The trouble with the common-sense understanding of the concept of immigration is that the status is a life-time position or blood related. The reason for this is because person A is presumed guilty of a primordially national crime for not being grounded ancestrally as the most legitimacy. Renan (1996: 52) says, this part of being a national is the assumed ‘essential conditions for being a people’. This contributes directly to the treatments described above by Sophia and Julius whose fathers are immigrants, but the status later becomes extendable to the children. This was evident in an account provided by Kenneth, Angola-born, Polish citizen:

Right now...I feel like a Polish person, I don’t see most of the things an immigrant will see at the beginning when they just arrived. When I first came here I was 16 years old, I was going to high school, most of my friends were Polish at the start, although I was going an international school, it was different, most students have already travelled and lived in other countries. (Kenneth, black, male)

Kenneth has lived more than half of his life in Poland and relatively known for appearing in an advertisement on TV in Poland and Romania. He claimed to have a well-extended network in Poland, and associated Warsaw with the ‘emotional connotation associated with belonging as

feeling at home in a place' (Antonsich, 2010: 646). For Kenneth, Warsaw provides a sense of place (Hay, 1998: 25; Mackenzie, 2004: 124), and place of identity (Cuba & Hummon, 1993: 126). Similar to Maya, another respondent, who has travelled to many countries for an extended period of time but believed that there is no other place like home in Poland. However, she is perceived as an outsider by Polish people. 'It's never easy to feel at home here because people haven't made me to feel like I'm home here', said Maya (Mixed-race, female).

The occasional racial 'everyday encounters' (Amin, 2002) or some forms of 'everyday life micro-publics' (Valentine, 2008) make it insufficient for both Kenneth and Maya to generate a real sense of connectedness to Poland. For example, Kenneth once experienced a situation where he was compared to Simon Moi, a black man known in Poland for infesting his Polish girlfriends with HIV. Kenneth believed that this connection is possible 'because we're both black', hence, Kenneth's claim to Polishness is detached by a string of blackness. In a similar situation, influenced by the assumption that Kenneth's presence in Poland is an interruption that undermines the national category, Kenneth spoke about an escalated dialogue between him and a white Polish man:

PM: (Polish Man) (*politely*) 'What are you doing here?'

Kenneth: (*smiling*) 'I work here'

PM: (*started getting aggressive*) 'go back to Africa, what a fuck are you doing here?!'

In many cases, forms of racism were more explicit, more shocking and more impactful than that which constitutes an ordinary aggression, more explicit interpersonal racisms are often tied up with Afriphobia, as shown in the above dialogue. Consider another example from Danni:

I was on a bus, even late in the night, at the bus stop there was a strange man who was asking me weird questions. Obviously he had a problem with the colour of my skin and then my bus came and I got on the bus and the fellow followed me and started staring at me and was saying things like: 'get a fuck out of here, go back to Africa, get on the tree, find bananas etc.' (Danni, mixed-race, male).

What we see here is that Danni's interpellation as black mediates the particular forms of racism, he is subject to anti-black racism. Danni is followed and harassed by a man when using public transport. Despite his Polish origin, he is told to 'go back to Africa', in this case, Danni is situated as an outsider who does not belong in Poland. As his interlocutor sought to police the boundaries of Polish nationhood, Danni is told to 'get a fuck out of here'. In the eyes of his interlocutor, Danni seems to appear as a threat to the imagined (heterogeneous) whiteness of Poland, as the interlocutor invoked heinous racial stereotypes in which – through reference to 'trees' and 'bananas' – Danni was compared to a monkey or chimpanzee. The slippage between Africa and

‘trees’ and ‘bananas’ – reflecting representations of Africa as a homogenous ‘jungle’ - is revealing of the levels of Afriphobia underpinning the tirade of Danni’s interlocutor. This was underscored by several of the participants’ recollections of being called ‘monkey’.

Some of the understanding of this lie in the Polish territorial context, where national identity and belonging are often mediated through people’s national affiliations (Antonsich, 2018a). It is a reflection that ethnicity, civility and specific history have been significant factors in the establishment of many Central Eastern European modern states (Jaskulowski, 2010; Tishkov, 2000: 647). Roger Brubaker (1996: 7) has argued that it is not enough to seek just historical understanding of Eastern European states, but such understanding must include the category “nation” – the ways it has come to structure perceptions, inform thought, organise discourse and political actions. According to Brubaker (1994), Eastern European nations are imagined as nations with institutionalised definitions of nationhood and nationality. What is meant here is the territorial organisation of politics and administration, and the essential classification of people:

In such cases, at least some of the ethnic groups composing the population (besides the dominant ethnic or national group) understand themselves, or are understood by others, as belonging to distinct nations, nationalities, or national groups. (Brubaker, 1994: 49-52).

For example, in Poland, ethnicity is conceived as a shared descent or biological factors such as genetics and physiological features. Civility referred to the belief in the constitution of the Polish Republic as a sovereign state or territory, and historical culture presents and reinforces the notion of Polish people ‘as a group connected by a common, distinct and clearly distinguishable culture and history’ (Jaskulowski, 2019: 59). However, it is through Stefan Nowak’s (1981) concept of ‘sociological vacuum’ that one comes to grasp the Polish exclusion of the non-Polish Other. In formulating his idea, Nowak relies on the question of values defined as the standards that explain how Polish people should behave, the pattern of relations that should prevail among the people and their institutions as well as the ability to determine whether those relations are proper or improper, desirable or undesirable. It is through this judgement that individuals decide the kind of world they want to live in, and consequently sets the standards to evaluate and judge the outside world (Nowak, 1981: 45). Expanding his argument, Nowak notices that these values not only exist in people’s minds but determine their satisfaction with their own lives and the lives of other people outside their immediate lives. In the conceptualisation of the sociological vacuum, Nowak observes a deep sense of banality in Polishness when he suggests that Poles may hold different views on a particular issue, but they often have similar views on many other issues. Rarely would their encounter array them in confrontation over differing. In conceiving these values, Nowak (1981) believes that Poles have a particular allegiance to specific groups:

Given that Poles are like other people, it may be assumed that the self stands first in this order...the family ranks next highest with practically everyone. In all social groups and generations this institution can be regarded as a kind of extension of the self. Next after the family... came friends, from close friends to the extended circle of classmates at school and colleagues at the work place... the next most important group to a Pole is the Polish nation as a whole. This is in line with the stereotype of Polish patriotism, which proves to be more nearly valid than might have been expected. (Nowak, 1981: 51)

Nowak argues that Polish self-conception must be viewed from identification with primary groups such as families, friends and the nation. It is through the concentration on just family, friend and nation that Nowak identifies a social vacuum between the level of primary groups and the Other groups within and outside the Polish society. In the adoration of the trio (family, friend and nation), Polish people give less attention to other intermediate groups namely the outsiders.

Series of political strategies which include immigration, economic relations and colonial history are encoded in these situations (Solomos & Back, 1996). A good detail of these situations has been presented in Michael Banton's *Race Relations* where he identifies institutionalised contact, acculturation, domination and paternalism as key issues of 'race relations problematic' (Banton, 1991). Many of the issues raised by Banton (1967; 1991) have a further explanation in the constitution of ethnic groups, it is an issue taken on by Fredrik Barth (1969). In doing so, Barth observes that the social activities of different ethnic groups constitute the way they are formed in which several symbols and markers are attached to a particular group. This suggests that ethnic groups are made, as Barth (1969: 14) puts it, they are 'organisational vessel'. I extend this meaning to some sorts of operation, corporation, institution, just like a conglomerate, an association, a society of network of people with shared concerns that guard their specific actions. Reading the Central Eastern European nations through the lens of distinction and differentiation is the point where Poland is implicated in the crisis of identity as revealed in the experiences shared by Kenneth and Maya. They were constructed within 'an internal-external dialectic' (Jenkins, 2008: 66) as an attempt to integrate the internal regulation of autonomy and the external constraint of the Other.

Martin Bulmer & John Solomos (1998: 827) in 're-thinking ethnic and racial studies' explored this further by asking how the modern nation is imagined, and questioned the representation strategies used to construct common-sense views of national belonging. One cannot deny the idea of Europeanness as a shared sense of belonging, in which racial and ethnic categorisations have been debated and contested. This leads to the naturalisation of both race and ethnicity, often presented in Poland as if they are natural categories without the consideration of the fact that their boundaries are never fixed, and their membership is often contested and claimed (Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 2000).

Furthermore, the question of racism in Poland is partly racial and largely a territorial issue. Similar to the issues raised by Ford (1992) and Wrench & Solomos (1993), within the production of category of nation, Eastern European nations, Poland in particular, are represented by the establishment of new racist political movements. In Poland, intense official debate about the kind of policies pursued to deal with non-existing large migration from the Middle East and Africa contribute negatively to the political, as well as social rights of people such as Sophia, Julius, Kenneth and Maya perceived to be outsiders in Poland; it is a phenomenon that Bulmer & Solomos had already envisaged in the late 1990s:

The rise of extreme right-wing and neo-fascist movements and parties has resulted in the development of new forms of racist politics and in the articulation of popular racism and violence against migrant communities. At the same time we have seen a noticeable rise in anti-Semitism in both Western and Eastern Europe, evident in both physical and symbolic threats to Jewish communities. In this environment it is perhaps not surprising that questions about immigration and race have assumed a new importance, both politically and socially, helping to construct an environment in which the future of both settled migrant communities and new groups of migrants and refugees is very much at the heart of public debate (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998: 823-824).

Immigration and race rely on a cluster of inclusionary and exclusionary logics that reproduce national category. Particularly in Poland where the state finds itself trapped between the EU Maastricht agreement and its nationalist values that attempt to reproduce a national narrative that is originally Polish. Whilst such narrative may appear as a welcoming gesture of sovereignty, it also serves as a process in which a nation is produced and reproduced and comes with the exclusion of those who are seen as not quite Polish. This is a point stressed by Edensor (2002: 12) when he talks about a nation represented and reproduced in ordinary through repetitive daily practices. It is the accumulation of the familiar repetition of some specific actions that draw people and places together into a common space called nation. At the same time, it is within that racialised space that the phenomenon of inclusionary and exclusionary logic is manufactured and naturalised. The point that I am driving at here is largely the idea of Europe that excludes those historically categorised as non-European, as not being white. In a simple term – ‘You are here but don’t (really or fully) belong. Your sojourn is temporary, so don’t grow too comfortable’ (Goldberg, 1990: 167).

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to problematise the ways in which the concept of nation and nationalism in Poland still constitutes a major way in which some Polish people articulate themselves. The problem with such articulation is the way a racialised body is caught in the crossfire between the old conception of identity and a new one ‘as a kind of counter to the old

discourses of nationalism or national identity' (Hall, 1987: 46). For many citizens, the idea of a nation is something that only exists without concrete meaning attached to it. It is only functional – the running of schools, hospitals, transportation, infrastructure, the operation of the government, lacking in originality or authenticity, and for the most parts, boring. In Poland, perhaps in CEE broadly, many citizens take the 'national' to heart. Either on the right or left, many seem to have a duty that is related to or characteristics of or common to a whole nation – 'the national character' which in many ways may slip unnoticeably and sometimes unintentionally into what I called *Narodowiec* – nationalist activism that combines patriotism and national duty.

This chapter has demonstrated how *Narodowiec* has functional personality patterns that appear as closed and inward-looking (Antonsich, 2018a: 1), is a common phenomenon among everyday people in the Polish society, as confirmed in some of the experiences shared by some participants in this study. The connectivity of *Narodowiec* with national duty gives an assumption that every Pole must conform with the prescribed norms of their society that seem undetachable from nationalism. Seen in this way, *Narodowiec*, for many Poles, is a desire that one wishes to erase but leaves it there. This is achieved through deep knowledge of an identity that is assumed to be national and often linked to the glory of heroic past history. This chapter has shown that, in Poland, everyday nationalism is found in different ways that make some people believe that they are integral part of the nation. Within the everyday Polish life set out above, someone with 'black traits' is not expected to be present, as pointed out by Sophia, 'they [white Poles] don't think that a Polish person can be black'. The implication of such racial paradigm is not limited to a distinction between the national 'we' and the others, but seen as disruption and undermining of the category of nation.

Chapter 4: ‘Polish-Centrism’: Making sense of ‘race’ and racism in Poland

Introduction

Whilst scholarship has sought to consider migration in Poland, there has been a lack of engagement with the ways in which ‘race’ and racism interact with migration. In this chapter, I map the figures in the Polish imaginary of European, and examine whether Poland has different, if related, histories of racial thinking and exclusion. I ask how such histories have been conceived, shaped and mediated. To examine this, I focus on the analysis of ‘race’ and racism in the assessment of the lived experiences of sub-Saharan African immigrants and their children (black/mixed-race) who are often portrayed by early Polish classics as non-Europeans and seen by some as ‘not quite Polish’. Harnessing the Du Boisian dialectic of ‘double consciousness’, this chapter provides an X-ray vision into the racial contours of Polish self-conception. I call this logic ‘Polish-centrism’ – a focus on some aspects of Polish culture to the exclusion of a wider view of the world. It is within this logic that I examine what it means to be black and Polish in Poland.

Whilst many Polish citizens have benefited immensely from the freedom of movement, employment, and retire anywhere in other European Union countries (Coniglio & Brzozowski, 2016), in Poland, immigrants from the Middle East and Africa have very different experiences. The processes of differentiation experienced by immigrants are informed by intensive racialisation that resonates forcefully with restrictive immigration systems (Hollifield, 2000), increasing visibility of chauvinistic organisations (Klaus et al., 2018), and resistance from the public due to fears of globalisation and terrorism (Hellwig & Sinno, 2017). These essential markers of racialisation are often defined from within, from a shared sense of national-commonality, through the distinction and differentiation of a nation that excludes people that are considered not quite like ‘us’. The same markers are understandable through ‘everyday racism’ (Essed, 2002) and the ‘construction of otherness’ (Haldrup et al., 2006).

In certain circumstances, reactions towards immigrants, at a micro level, are prejudiced by religious orientations (Taylor & Merino, 2011; Pędziwiatr, 2018). Sides & Citrin (2007) relate this to ‘symbolic predisposition’ such as cultural preferences as a specific factor. Gans (2017) has pinpointed political alignments as a driving force towards state racialisation of immigrants. Nevertheless, these factors are most likely to be higher in Central and Eastern Europe due to the residue of Communism, the manipulation of rule of law and poor economic conditions. All this

strengthens the representation of non-white immigrants as *another type* of identity that is assumed deeply contradictory to the national identity, tending to replace national identity, and forcing itself to become ‘nationalized’ (Balibar, 1991: 95).

The above assertions have been articulated elsewhere, especially in the United States (Roediger, 1991; Omi & Winant, 2015) and in the United Kingdom (Banton, 1967; Miles, 1982). With a few exceptions (Zabek, 2009; Nowicka, 2018), much of the scholarship conducted in Poland and other CEE countries are not engaging sufficiently with racism. Hence, a shortage of explanations in the scholarship on ‘race’ and racism in the country. Little is known about the racialisation of black/mixed-race people in the country due to a narrow construction of whiteness and the assumption that Poland never had connection with colonisation, hence the denial of the existence of ‘race’ and racism in the country (Balogun, 2018). Colonialism, by contrast, Goldberg (1990: 155) points out, is considered an event outside of Europe, therefore assumed to have had little or no effect in the making of European nation-states. In Poland, the denial of race as socially, politically, and indeed morally relevant, as Goldberg (1990: 162) later confirmed, has an overriding focus on antisemitism as almost the only manifestation of racism; and thereafter the delinking of the Polish political histories of colonialism and racism.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the racialisation of immigrants from sub-Saharan African descent and their children (black/mixed-race) either born or brought up in Poland. In doing so, the chapter adds to the global understandings of ‘race’ and racism, and expands the geographical terrain of contemporary race and ethnicity studies especially in Poland – a country that is assumed to be untouched by global racial implications. To this end, I plan to follow an exclusionist logic I call ‘Polish-centrism’ – a focus on some aspects of Polish culture to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; the process regards Polishness as the essential, embedded with several racial rudiments. Although classic exclusionist logic figures largely in the discussion that follows, my interest is not primarily to interpret the logic. I only revive it through ‘Polish-centrism’ in order to spotlight the racial structure of the Polish institutions that are often assumed raceless. Nonetheless, it needs to be said that not all Poles believe in ‘Polish-centrism’, many are genuinely open to difference and challenge the racist assertions in Polish society. Therefore, my goal is not to show that all Polish people are racists, but to elaborate on ‘race’ and racism as part of the conditions that paved the way for the marginalisation of black/mixed-race people seen as part of Poland’s ‘unruly’ populations (Kymlicka, 2018: 535).

Before diving into the excavation of the empirical materials, the chapter first sets out a long-standing Polish/European exclusionist logic that continues to manifest itself in contemporary

Poland. This is mediated through an aspect of Polish Catholicism that is based on religiosity and civility to the exclusion of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. Then, the chapter turns to the usage of whiteness as a nested identity to discuss the representation of black/mixed-race people who are often seen as not quite Polish and European. Lastly, in trying to make sense of what it means to be black in Poland, this chapter introduces the lived experiences of black/mixed-race people, articulated through the Du Boisian dialectic of ‘double consciousness’.

Setting the Polish-Euro hysteria scenery

The framework used in this study relies on two major scholarly approaches – Polish Catholicism as a form of civility and whiteness as a nested identity that sustains Polishness. The theorisation of these two linked mechanisms leads to what I call ‘Polish-centrism’. The representation of Catholicism as a sense of national belonging implies a group of people linked by a common ‘blood’, culture and religion, and a shared sense of solidarity (Smith, 1997). One way of maintaining such solidarity is through Christian nationalism that has manifested in the recent hysteria about Muslims in the UK where Britain First, an ultranationalist organisation, presented itself as ‘Christian patrol’ against Muslims in the country.¹⁵ In France, there was an emphasis on the nation’s ‘Christian roots’ during the 2017 French Presidential Elections.¹⁶ In Germany, the rise of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)’s ‘traditional Christian values’¹⁷ has become central to the European populist structure with a strong anti-immigration stance. In the Netherlands, the Pim Fortuyn List party continue to mélange anti-multiculturalism, anti-immigration and anti-Islam, and in Hungary, Viktor Orbán took a strong stance on the role of Christianity in preserving Hungary against migration.¹⁸ In Poland, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) feel they must defend the country against the secularisation of the proliferation of Islam through migration, adding to the significant rise in explicit anti-immigration sentiments in Europe (Krzyżanowska & Krzyżanowski, 2018: 615). Since elected in 2015, PiS have encouraged the glorification of national symbols leading to several online stores (see Ultrapatriot.pl and Polscypatrioci.pl) encouraging ultra-nationalistic projects and producing branded materials for nationalist-sympathisers and right-wing organisations such as Stronnictwo Narodowe (National Party), Młodzież Wszechpolska (All Polish Youth), and ONR (National Radical Camp). The branded materials produced by these organisations often appear

¹⁵ For tension between Britain First and the Muslim community in the UK, see <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/639742/Tensions-stoked-Britain-First-Christian-patrol-Muslims-Luton>

¹⁶ Details available on <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/nicolas-sarkozy-on-france-s-christian-roots-in-a-speech-at-the-lateran-church-of-saint-john-in-rome>

¹⁷ See <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/alternative-for-germany-the-anti-immigration-party-even-scarier-than-donald-trump-a6930536.html>

¹⁸ See <https://visegradpost.com/en/2017/09/20/viktor-orban-christianity-and-identity-versus-western-liberalism/>

publicly on cars and banners, accompanied by slogans such as ‘Poland for Poles’, ‘Great Poland’ or ‘Death to the Enemies of the Fatherland’ (Ciesla, 2016). From this period onward, xenophobic, racist and Islamophobic views became acceptable from Polish politicians and aspirants of political offices, they produced anti-immigration posters and participated in demonstrations, most notably the campaign ‘against the Islamisation of Poland and Europe’ (Pędziwiatr, 2015). What is particularly important in all of this is the Polish public mood that seemed to agree with the Polish government’s stance on migration. For example, more than half of the Polish people surveyed by CBOS in 2017 were adamant that Poland should not accept refugees from countries in the Middle East or North Africa; whilst 40% of the respondents agreed that Poland should serve as a temporary place for refugees and be returned to their countries of origin after. Only 4% of the survey participants favoured permanent resettlement of refugees in Poland. In the survey, there was an indication that a higher proportion of respondents – almost two-thirds – were against relocating to Poland Middle Eastern and Northern African refugees already in the European Union. Only 28% of the survey participants think that Poland should share the responsibility with other EU countries by accepting some of the refugees (CBOS, 2017). There is a sense of historical amnesia in all of this, where no one seems to point to thousands of Polish asylum seekers passing through camps in Austria and Germany to seek refuge elsewhere in Europe, Canada, the United States and in some countries in Africa (Latif Dahir, 2019)¹⁹. This part of Polish history suddenly becomes irrelevant and inappropriate in contemporary Poland.

The above Polish-Euro hysteria cannot be reduced to just religiosity and ultra-nationalistic projects; they are part of the reproductive logic of Euro-racism which ensures that ‘those ‘racially non-European’ are never nor can ever *be* European’ (Goldberg, 2006: 354). From this standpoint, the hysteria collectively becomes a justification for the exclusion of certain social groups and, in doing so, it reinforces boundaries between ‘the self’ and the ‘contaminated other’ (Ngai, 2005; Patel & Connelly, 2019: 5) whose life ‘paradoxically, remains under the direct and suffocating control of the state’ (Tyler, 2013: 68). This homogenised way of thinking assisted the consolidation of a new definition of ‘race’ and difference in Poland, mediated through a concern over whether non-European migrants could be assimilated into European culture. As such, some Poles would prefer immigrants from countries within CEE due to the language, cultural and civilisational connections (Brubaker, 2017: 1209).

¹⁹ Also, see ‘When the Polish were refugees in Africa’, available on <https://www.dw.com/en/when-the-polish-were-refugees-in-africa/a-49029649>

Whiteness as a mechanism that sustains Polishness

In order to have a deeper understanding of whiteness and how it serves as a mechanism that sustains Polishness, it is important to make the distinction between whiteness and white people and the role of whiteness in a system of exclusion (Hylton, 2009). In a simple term, whiteness is not a thing but a process (Frankenberg, 1993), therefore, the responsibility falls on people described as white – often individuals who, because of skin colour, hair texture, nose shape, culture, language, consider themselves to be white (Leonardo, 2004: 137). Furthermore, these characteristics of being white are often attached to privileges of which the non-white Other is denied. It is more than that, in everyday ‘areas of our lives’, Johnson (1999: 1) has pointed out that ‘whiteness is privileged, normalized, deified and raceless’. Therefore, it is worth considering how normality and privileges work within power relations between blacks and whites in Poland and elsewhere in the world..

I must stress that my understanding of whiteness has no biological link. I understand whiteness as a process that is based on social construction through which ‘white people’ appear normal, visible but represented as invisible. This suggests that whiteness, in everyday life, often appears common and takes for granted the presence of non-white Other. Steven Garner (2007: 47) has argued that it is the universality and dominant status of whiteness that has resulted in its signification as normativity. From this standpoint, the dominant discourse which constructs whiteness and white people as normal concurrently represents the Other as abnormal, strange and out of place (Yancy, 2017). It is the consequences of being normal that commonly mark ‘white’ as invisible and unproblematic where blackness emerges as the ‘priori object for debate where ‘race’ and racism are concerned’ (Hylton, 2009: 65). In this sense, the omnipresence of ‘white = normal’ becomes the ‘default, unmarked, normative position’ (Carrington, 2008: 427).

White ethnocentrism has been suggested by several scholars as an important aspect of the operation of whiteness as ‘normal’ (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1997 [1988]; Dyer, 1997; Eriksen, 1997; Garner, 2007). It is important to point out that this body of works focused largely on white ethnocentrism in contemporary western democracies. Nonetheless, white ethnocentrism in Central and Eastern Europe refers to the same or similar standards and values, derived from white European histories and epistemologies that ignore other cultural or lived experiences. Dyer (1997: 3), for example, has pointed to the notion of race that has never been applied to white people because the group has always been categorised as human. From this standpoint, whiteness is assumed to be the most ‘natural’ and pure. To be clear, pureness in whiteness has multiple meanings – to be pure is to be uncontaminated, unmixed, unalloyed, and untainted. Pureness also

serves to convey whiteness as a flawless and perfect identity which creates the conditions for white invisibility. This suggests that the absence of reference to whiteness in the everyday language of white people, particularly in Poland where whiteness ‘appears to be both everywhere and nowhere, simultaneously a pervasive normative presence and an invisible, largely undiscussed absence’ (Bonnett, 1996: 97- 98)

In the assessment of ‘whiteness as invisible’, Eriksen (1997: 4) has observed that the white ethnic majority are no less ‘ethnic’, nor racialised to any lesser degree, than any ethnic minorities. This leads to an argument that the inability of white people to see themselves as ‘ethnic’ produces the idea that white people are normal individuals, whilst non-white Other is racialised and ethnicised. Therefore, in the minds of white folks, white people are unexotic, non-ethnic and cultureless (Perry, 2001). Again, all this still points at the holiness of whiteness where the non-white Other becomes easily identifiable through his/her collective identities that make him/her visible within the white dominion. Feagin (2010) has suggested that white people become uncomfortable whenever ‘whiteness as process’ is disrupted. This may include asking white people to acknowledge that they are ‘ethnic’, and that whiteness has played a dominant role in politics, science, history, philosophy, and knowledge production often influenced by epistemologies of ignorance and/or Eurocentrism (Mills, 2007; Bonilla-Silva & Baiocchi, 2008). It is this cardinal point that exposes systems of white supremacy. Ruth Frankenberg (1993) has demonstrated how whiteness is directly linked to a societal position of power that perceived white as invisible and then serves as a privilege. To be white then is a privilege that is not apparent to people racialised as white, but most importantly many white people find it difficult to acknowledge the privileges of being white (Garner, 2007).

White privilege does not exist on its own; it is closely related to the notion of white supremacy as Leonardo (2004) points out:

...critical look at white privilege ... must be complemented by an equally rigorous examination of white supremacy, or the analysis of white racial domination. This is a necessary departure because, although the two processes are related, the conditions of white supremacy make white privilege possible. (Leonardo, 2004: 137)

The supremacy of whiteness cannot be understood in its narrow terms, it needs to be viewed from a concrete perspective as a feature of contemporary politics. This aspect of white supremacy has little to do with anti-black racism, but the overarching structure of racist domination and oppression because ‘the individuals who occupy and dominate these positions cannot see themselves as racial beings, taking advantage of the privileges of whiteness’ (King, 2000: 15).

Consequently, white supremacy as a system has been allowed to flourish because white people refuse to accept that their whiteness privileges them, and their actions and decisions are influenced unconsciously by the desire to defend, preserve and protect their own interest.

Several other studies have provided good understandings of the supremacy of whiteness. For example, Hesse (2007: 656) understands white supremacy as cultural racialisation that defines the ways in which colonial meanings are assigned in terms of language, territory, history and religion. Garner (2006) has noted that whiteness is given supreme symbol and political meanings when the subjects are blacks and such imagination shaped the way non-white people are represented. Whiteness, in this regard, appears to be a property of white people. The ways in which whiteness functions as a property is a challenge taken on by Cheryl Harris (1993). In doing so, she defines property, not in a narrow sense – a physical thing that one owns – but the right to the possession, use, or disposal of something. As such, the understanding of whiteness as a property should be viewed as a power that provides more than basic protection, liberties, and immunities. Whiteness allows the owner to take advantage of the possession and such advantage would include a whole host of prerogatives and privileges. Historically, this concept of property entwined with the concept of slavery. Since the entire project of slavery was based on racial identity, lack of freedom, and enormous restriction placed on and over-exploitation of black people (Morgan, 1975), it becomes important to be white, be racialised as white and possess the property of being white as whiteness is often portrayed as property of free human beings (Roediger, 1991).

In the case of Poland, many Eastern European groups who are now regarded as white were not considered white a few decades ago (Bonnett, 1998), but currently benefiting from the notion of whiteness as a racialised and European characteristic. This was made possible by the institutional conditions that rewarded the abilities of euro-ethnics, in the process, paved the way for an expansion of the notion of whiteness that allowed Eastern European immigrants and their children to secure white status (Harrison, 1995). In thinking about whiteness as contingent, Satzewich (2000: 276) has noticed that whiteness is often not considered from its monolithic and permanent forms. In this way, whiteness is seen as a category and identity that is historically, geographically, and socially contingent and made up of various gradations and meanings. This blind spot in the understanding of whiteness has also been highlighted by Anoop Nayak (2006):

[w]hiteness is not homogenous but fractured by the myriad ethnic practices of Russian Jews, Poles, Italians or Irish people (to say nothing of the individual ways they may 'live' ethnicity). (Nayak, 2006: 417)

The above suggests a global/European approach to whiteness as I observed in my ethnography of race in contemporary Poland, it seems difficult to isolate whiteness from the global view that sustained black-white interaction (Nayak, 2003). This observation warns against what may appear as ‘Americanisation’ of race-relations elsewhere in the world, but an understanding of whiteness must be contingent as an exploration of local practices, representations, and of policies around race and racism. This is a call that has been responded to by Fox & Mogilnicka (2019) in their assessment of how white Central and Eastern European migrants in the United Kingdom used whiteness to negotiate their belonging in the British society. In the process, these migrants used ‘racism to insert themselves more favourably into Britain’s racialized status hierarchies’ (Fox & Mogilnicka, 2019: 1). Whiteness and Europeanness played central roles in such negotiation.

Whilst many scholars writing about race and racism in Poland often reduce the discourse to civil and ethnic contradictions without a special focus on the operations of whiteness, in this section, I refer to the exposition from the black/white racial line. It is in Fanon (1952) that we find the strongest presence of physical and psychological properties of whiteness in relation to black bodies, ‘For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man’. (Fanon, 1952: 82-83). Perhaps, it is helpful here to use whiteness as a departure point to investigate further the effects of lived experience of racism, which, as the empirical materials would reveal later, is often assimilated into the domain of everyday speech, interaction, and the implications of being non-white. As set out above, contemporary research on whiteness has attempted to understand how whites view themselves in relation to black people, how they define race and the way they perceive racism and white privilege. Therefore, ‘To speak of whiteness is, I think, to assign everyone a place in the relations of racism’ and the way it has shaped white people’s daily experiences (Frankenberg, 1993: 6). Sara Ahmed’s perspective on the topic is particularly appealing here when she suggests that whiteness should ‘be about attending to forms of white racism and white privilege that are not undone, and may even be repeated and intensified, through declarations of whiteness, or through the recognition of privilege as privilege’ (Ahmed, 2004: 58). This implies that whiteness is not just a matter of skin-colour, but practices and imaginaries.

Correspondingly, Polishness is conceptualised around whiteness. It is a kind of identity that is based on the notion of stacking together, fitting one into another, and a notion of sameness. It is often said that contemporary Poland is the most homogeneous country in Europe (Barnett, 1958), with at least 96% of the population being white, Polish-Catholic (Davies, 1984). This implies that Polishness and whiteness are one conceptualised identity. Polishness is unimaginable without understanding the representation of the mechanism that sustains it. The representation of people

implies a representation of bodies. Polishness as an embodiment of whiteness is more than just a representation of bodies, but also the representation of all that seems not quite white (Tlostanova, 2012).

To this end, I suggest a reading of whiteness as a representation of the black/mixed-race people who are often seen as not quite Polish and not quite European. Whiteness, in this sense, appears as a socially constructed phenomenon that maintains itself in various exclusionary contexts that have no exemption in Poland. The specificity of the reading identified here has a particular pattern of global white supremacy as a system that confers power and privileges on those who are racialised as white and denies those racialised as black or brown of the same privileges. It is the construction of whiteness as hegemonic and normal that rendered the participants in this study outside the imaginations of Polishness. In the eyes of their white interlocutors, most of the participants represent bodies that are out of place. What then has 'race' and racism meant in Poland, how are they different from the rest of Europe? If Poland has different, if related, histories of racial thinking and exclusion, how have they been conceived, structured and mediated?

Making sense of 'race' and racism in Poland through immigration

Until now, I have considered the influences of Catholicism and whiteness on the racialisation of the 'Other'. In this section, I try to make sense of 'race' and racism in Poland from the perspective of the 'unruly' population – mainly the populations of African descent who are sometimes identified as threats to European purity. Whilst recent migration from the Middle East and Africa added an accelerant to the conditions of exclusion and allowed racism to flourish in Poland, it did not create 'race' and racism in Poland. The conditions were already embedded in the long-standing representation of people seen as the 'Other'. This includes an account of race-construction as historical processes developed by the Polish state, the histories of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim racism and Romaphobia. These ethnic Polish minorities are made visible as non-white or non-European (De Genova, 2016: 88; 2018) through the preservation of Polish homogeneity as a way of maintaining stability in the state. This is what I call 'Polish-centrism'. Before moving on to the empirical materials, it is worthwhile pausing over 'Polish-centrism' as a racial logic that is factored through whiteness and Europeanness.

'Polish-centrism' is not the same as Polonization, the forceful imposition of Polish culture on non-Polish populations. Quite the opposite: 'Polish-centrism' focuses strictly on Polish worldview, civilisation and most especially identity. Whiteness and Europeanness provide the mechanism that sustains 'Polish-centrism'. A good understanding of 'Polish-centrism' cannot be reduced to culture

and ethnicity – they only make it harder to observe how the idea of race has penetrated the configuration of the Polish nation. A better understanding of the concept must begin with its connection with whiteness and Europeanness in which ethnicity offers a unique window of silent racial undertone. Conversely, the Polish concept of ethnicity is narrowed to those who share certain inborn phenotypes, mainly the whiteness of skin-colour linked to a common ancestry and the attitude of superiority toward the non-white Other. It is this conception of Otherness that puts into question the presence of non-white citizens and residents because they are assumed not to be biologically integral to the Polish nation. Racial thinking has a significant influence on the Polish conception of ethnicity and the configuration of the nation that overlap the reproduction of “people”, “nation”, “tribe” and “race” (Turda & Quine, 2018: 58). Yet, broadly denying the fact that its public is touched by the idea of race that has a global impact on black/white relations. In this sense, ‘Polish-centrism’ has a deeper dynamic than Catholic religiosity, but focuses much more on the national identity that is intrinsic to the formation of the identity of Europe, the assemblage between modernity and colonialism as a central component of what it means to be European (Sayyid, 2018).

Where ‘Polish-centrism’ has most to offer is, in practice, the reproduction of race as a biological category. In doing so, it places Poland and other Central and Eastern European nations alongside the powerful European nations in the history of racial practices. There is a moment of historical resonance in all of this. Consider, for instance, Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński’s exploration of Africa in 1880, followed by the Polish Colonial Society’s call for much needed access to resources from the colonised territories in Africa in late 1920s (Du Bois, 1915; Balogun, 2018).

Being not quite Polish, not quite European

Whilst literature on race and ethnicity in Poland is growing, it has yet to fully grapple with the diverse range of racial identities in Poland. It is for this reason that I respond to calls to expand Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS), a field that, to date, has disproportionately focused on the United States, and secondarily on ‘Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom’ (Small & King O’Riain, 2014: xiii). Drawing on my ethnography with some mixed-race people in Poland, I provide an empirical insight into the lives of a population that are notably absent from academic literature. Whilst this absence is at least partially attributable to the relatively small size of Poland’s mixed-race population, evidence that more and more people globally are identifying as mixed-race (Small & King O’Riain, 2014) means that the lack of academic attention is becoming increasingly problematic. The significance of this inattention is heightened when we consider Poland’s notable demographic shifts since EU accession, and the subsequent religious/racial tensions and concerns

that have arisen (Pędziwiatr, 2018; Krzyżanowska & Krzyżanowski, 2018). Yet, migration scholarship in Poland and CEE continues to default to the reproduction of the nation state, the ethnic categories and the religious community. In doing so, migration scholarship in the region is yet to fully grapple with ‘how the history of ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ or ‘nationalism’ in a particular place shapes how these words are used and what they ultimately capture’ (Levitt, 2012: 494). My intention here is not to generalise the issues raised by the participants in this study. I am interested in an aspect of Critical Race Theory as a well-established technique that offers counter-hegemonic narratives (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015) that help to pinpoint instances of ‘Polish-centrism’.

Under the hegemonic gaze of white Poles, the mixed-race people I interviewed were clear that, in Poland, they are primarily racialised as black and foreign. As Enzo puts it:

It seems that you have to just be black or white (nothing in between) ... I’m half-white and half-black, but for white Polish people, I’m just black, I can’t be white! (Enzo, mixed-race, male)

Demonstrating Enzo’s sense of double consciousness (Du Bois 1994 [1903]) – that is, his ability to see himself through the eyes of white Polish citizens – this account is reflective of the experiences of the mixed-race participants in the study. Enzo’s account is reminiscent of findings from research in majority white contexts. In the US and the UK, for example, many mixed-race people feel that they are interpellated as black (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018a); that is, as akin to their monoracial black peers. Rather than an expansive definition of blackness, however, this interpellation represents a flattening of identities that threatens to erase mixed-race identities (‘nothing in between’) as Enzo suggested. Also, consider, Danni, a mixed-race Pole, who grew up in Poland in an area with no black families. During the discussion, the following dialogue between Danni and his interlocutor was Danni’s first recalled racist experience as a teenager:

PM (Polish man): ‘hey, hey look your niggas friend is here... so where are you from?’
 DI (Danni): ‘... I’m ... from Poland’
 PM: ‘where are you from in Poland’
 DI: ‘Olsztyn’
 PM: (*removed his Red and White hat with Polish eagle*) ‘what colour is this?’
 DI: ‘Red’
 PM: (*Interjected*): ‘No, no, what colour is the eagle?’
 DI: ‘White’
 PM: ‘Exactly! We don’t want you here!’

Danni is from both Polish and Kenyan backgrounds, he perceived whiteness as an exclusionary logic used as a device to define him as not truly Polish based on the construction of skin colour as mixed-race Pole who is neither black nor white. In Poland, cases such as Danni’s are often reduced

to an ‘individual acts of bigotry’ (Hodges, 2016: 1). But must be understood as an instance of ‘racisms without racism’ (Goldberg, 2018: 1715) where the ‘individualization of wrongdoing, its localization as a personal and so private expression of preferences, erases institutional racism as a conceptual possibility’. The maintenance of such distinction is through the racialisation of space perpetuated by white power. What seems to have occurred in Danni’s situation is the power of whiteness to darken the non-white other and whitening of the self (Fox, 2013: 1881). Such advantage gives Danni’s interlocutor a sense of self-identification that was channelled through the acknowledgement and exhibition of whiteness. Beginning with a common microaggression (‘where are you from?’, which is to say: *you are not from here*), Danni’s interlocutor feels confident and comfortable enough to confront Danni with explicit racism. Drawing upon the Polish eagle as a symbol of the nation, this interlocutor presents Poland as a white nation and Danni’s black body as outside of that nation (Balogun, 2019). As he invokes a ‘we’ (presumably (white) Poland), the interlocutor shows a sense of entitlement to speak for his white peers, and an assumption that his view is commonplace. Examples of anti-black racism abound in the participants’ accounts, and it is clear that – as Joseph-Salisbury (2019) has shown to be the case in the UK and the US – this is the main mode of racist articulation facing black/mixed-race people in Poland. Observation of whiteness in Danni’s case has a particular traumatic pain and ‘rituals of terror and torture’ (hooks, 1992: 342) that attempted to deny Enzo and Danni of their Polishness and Europeanness. At this junction, they both felt that they had to ‘choose’ their racialised background (black) in terms of self-identification.

The obsession with whiteness is attributable to the absence of colour difference in many, if not all, CEE countries (McDowell et al., 2007: 14). This may explain why Sophia is seen as ‘not quite Polish’:

...they don’t think that a Polish person can be black. If you ask anybody on the street — who’s a Polish person to you...Who’s a Polish person?, how would you describe a Polish person? They would say a Polish person is a white person. They just don’t see me as much Polish as they are...this is the crazy part of everything for me... (Sophia, mixed-race, female)

Polishness is often seen through the universal religion - Catholicism, but Sophia’s account confirms that the identity is narrowed by racial-line, as she marshalled her shared origins to question the rejection she experienced as a mixed-race Pole. Sophia’s experience is suggestive of the fact that Polishness is taken for granted to the negligence of its racialised imagination that assumes ‘the real Pole’ to be white. During the discussion, Sophia recalled an important point that led to the above excerpt. It was a point around Polish national identity, as well as nationalism, has

been at the heart of public debates. Such debates, Sophia believed, contribute to the expansion of a nation beyond its borders and reinforce a sense of identity and internal bonds against non-white people in Poland. There was a moment of historical reflection in Sophia's account that she believed holds the Polish nation together following the struggle to re-establish itself as a nation. From this standpoint, Polish patriotism and national identity 'organise people's sense of belonging to a nation-state and locate the ultimate source of political legitimacy in the nation' (Jaskulowski et al., 2018: 78). This history is deeply personal to Sophia, as she struggled to communicate her identity as being black and Polish because someone with 'black physiognomies', like Sophia, is not expected to be Polish or even speak Polish fluently. In her view, many white Poles have a feeling of visceral attachment to the nation, as well as the imagination of the faces that reside in the nation.

The notion that some Poles have a primitive attachment to the nation and a fixed imaginary of Poland led both Danni and Sophia to believe, on the one hand, that a sense of common identity of whiteness is embedded in Polishness. On the other hand, for these respondents, too many Polish people give recognition to the mapping of faces onto a specific national space through an assumption that their skin colour is a direct link to their national and racial identities (Ahmed, 2000: 13). This sense of Polishness leaves Danni and Sophia disconnected with their identity as Polish. Enzo, a mixed-race Pole with Polish mother and Ivorian father, offered commentary in a similar mood. During the discussion with Enzo, he reflected on his early encounters with racialisation that made him feel that most white Polish people do not see him the way they see other white Poles:

I feel like I belong to this society but never fully accepted.... some people accept that I'm just Enzo, a Polish guy, but I also know that most people when they look at me, the first thing they think is that I'm a foreigner, that I'm not Polish. It's like everyday struggle, when I go to the shop, when I'm in a restaurant, I talk to people and 90% of them would start talking to me in English because they never see me as a Pole. (Enzo, mixed-race, male)

Enzo has lived in Poland all his life; hence his first language is Polish, but he speaks English in a typical Polish accent. However, Enzo believed that most white Poles often think of him as someone born elsewhere, brought to Poland and was able to speak Polish fluently without a foreign accent. In his view, he is often seen as an outsider, often a way of 'final assigning of values to real or imagined differences...' (Memmi, 1968: 185). During the discussions with Danni, Sophia and Enzo, it was apparent that they are not attempting to prove their Polishness because they know they are Polish. Rather, their accounts appear as a reaction against an erasure by white gaze and unwillingness to attribute limits to their identity as they perceived the predominance of whiteness as a manifestation of a broader institution of exclusion. Nonetheless, despite Danni,

Sophia and Enzo's Polish origin, their identities as both Polish and African are never free from discursive constraints of power that are inseparable from racial and social contexts (Hall, 1996: 17). These mixed-race respondents born or brought in Poland are historically defined as black due to *one drop rule* – the notion 'that a single Black ancestor confers a Black status upon an individual. It is suggestive that being white is a pure status that could not withstand contamination' (Lewis, 2016: 506-507). Such contexts often, if not always, presented mixed-race individuals as fragmented beings who are somehow less than a whole people (Mengel, 2001: 101).

The following two accounts from Sophia and Joseph, respectively, show how a sense of whiteness could impact on non-white families, and mixed-race people in particular ways.

I remember one summer we went on holiday somewhere in Poland and I was walking to buy ice cream and a Polish guy started a conversation with me about which one of my parents is a monkey and stuff like that... [Also] I had an interview when I was in the 'Voice Poland' – I was asked about some African stuff and other things related to that side, but [some of] the [public] comments [after] the interview are racist comments 'that my father is a monkey, and that I will never be Polish'...they called my mum a bitch for being with a black man - this was really hard for me, it was a difficult time for me and I can tell it broke me in some ways, but I stood up from this and felt there's nothing else these people could take from me (Sophia, mixed-race, female).

Notice that, in this account, the dehumanising 'monkey' discourse is prevalent again. Although the black father is the primary target, there are also implications for the white mother (Dalmage, 2000). As a white Polish woman, Sophia's mother is held responsible for the reproduction of the (racial) purity of the nation. Her transgression sees her become 'a bitch for being with a black man'. More vividly, she is constructed as having engaged with acts of bestiality with a 'monkey'. The mixed-race child, therefore, is framed as a consequence of this illegitimate, immoral and unnatural relationship (Zabek, 2016). As Sophia conveys, this was 'really hard' and actually 'broke [her] in some ways'. Interpersonal racism has a real effect on its subjects. Contrary to Lamont et al.'s (2016: 19) 'management of the self' by staying silent during racist incidents, many of the respondents in this study saw this strategy of withdrawal as an act of subordination, Sophia displays her sense of agency and resistance as she 'stood up' against her interlocutors.

The cumulative impact of Polish racism was starkly demonstrated by Joseph who, in the following account, discusses his relationship with his white mother:

Polish society doesn't respect a white woman with a black kid. It was the reason why there was [a] strange situation between me and my mother because she felt a lot of pressure that she can't deal with me any further... why is it that she didn't love me? Why is it that I didn't feel any love from her? Now I know the reason was because she was under big

pressure from the society because of me, and when [ever] she comes back home, she's frustrated, angry about me (Joseph, mixed-race, male).

There is no escaping from the impacts of racism on Joseph's life. The discourses that surround 'a white woman with a black kid' (as discussed above) encroach upon the mixed-race family and create something of a rift between Joseph and his mother. Joseph is clear from the outset that this is not a natural consequence of a mixed-race family (as stereotypes have too often suggested) but is a consequence of 'a lot of pressure' from 'Polish society'. This pressure had an impact upon the wellbeing of Joseph's mother (who is 'frustrated and angry') and this rebounds onto Joseph through their relationship in which he feels that she did not love him. Here, it needs to be emphasised that the problem is not with mixed-race families, many of whom find ways to withstand societal pressures, but with societies underpinned by forms of anti-blackness that pathologise and stigmatise mixed-race relationships and families. Across all the experiences of racism, especially with the mixed-race participants, they accepted their representation as people 'Born in, but not of, the society. Being here, but not belonging. Being seen but always only as a Du Boisian problem' (Goldberg, 1990: 167). It is a demonstration of the contextual specificity of race and racism in Poland.

'Not quite being human' – the halo of blackness

Whilst the lived experiences of the above mixed-race Poles show several instances of 'Polish-centrism', a process that racialised them as non-white; non-Polish; black and foreign; it is through a similar logic that immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are perceived through the prism of Enlightenment civilisations (Amin, 2001: 281). As non-white bodies, Charles Mills (1997: 51) has observed that they carry 'a halo of blackness around' which makes some white people uncomfortable. Whilst I have hinted at some of the aspects of the 'halo of blackness' throughout this thesis, in this section, I show its impacts on black Africans living in Poland. Take for example, Jona (black male) from Nigeria explained the uneasiness with, on the one hand, wanting to give the best impression as a black African living in Poland to counter the common stereotypes of African people. On the other hand, he described 'Being black, here [Poland], seems like you're representing all black people...and stereotypes of Africa' as complicated. This resulted in Jona having to "dance" – a process 'through which individual blacks are required to show that the ghetto stereotypes do not apply to them' (Anderson, 2015: 13). In effect, Jona had to perform to be accepted. Given the precarious status assigned to blackness globally, Jona believed that black people in Poland cannot be exempted from an analytical lens of the stigma of place (Tyler & Slater, 2018: 739). He related his lived experience to an instance of racism as 'a preeminent form of stigma'

influenced by immigration debates and politics that provide Polish people with an institutionalised sense of reproducing their ‘national belonging’ (Hage, 1998). The form of racism Jona referred to is mediated through contemporary Polish knowledge about black people drawn from Polish media where this particular group, if not the main focus, is often a secondary stereotypical subject of humour that allows a racist view to appear as something palatable (Hall et al., 1978; van Dijk; 2015). To be clear, social media in Poland often focused on non-Polish and non-whites, especially black Africans as ‘cowards’ who did not want to fight for their countries of origin and did want to work but live on benefit. Countries in western Europe often serve as a reference point for many Polish people as Aaden explained:

The main problem here may not be the people but the Polish media and some people in the government are telling a lot of bullshit about immigrants - *‘they’re terrorists and that they don’t want to work, they often say they don’t want immigrants here and look at what’s going on in England, we don’t want the coloured people’*. (Aaden, black, male)

The ‘halo of blackness’ through the representation of Africa is also evident in the testimonies provided by Thelma (black, female) who had been living in Poland for over 4 years, studying medicine:

I think they have a preconceived notion of what an African person should be like..., but when they see you, and have a conversation with your intelligence, they kind of take a second look. (Thelma, black, female)

What Thelma identified as ‘second look’ could be read as a surprise that disrupts the preconceived notion of Africa and its people as uncivilised, the civility that came from Eurocentrism, but made visible through the ‘halo of blackness’, as confirmed by Nafissah, another black, female respondent, who highlighted the constant attention she received in Poland, but also believed that, in some cases, the attention was driven more by curiosity than hostility. Nafissah stressed that she experienced a lot of staring - but, ‘I don’t mind from time to time, as many Polish people have never seen black people before.’ Both Thelma and Nafissah, like many other sub-Saharan Africans, are seen as a rarity in Poland (Pędziwiatr & Balogun, 2018: 85-88) and this could also trigger a range of negative responses, including derogatory putdowns (Pierce, 1970). For example, Cédric (black, male) described a distressing incident where he was targeted by a Polish gang in the public:

... I was going to the cinema with my Polish friends and as we approached the entrance, a group of Polish boys, about five of them, started shouting ‘Ebola!, Ebola!, Ebola!’ [referring to the outbreak of Ebola, a killer virus, in West Africa] and pointing at me. I was very upset and didn’t understand why these boys singled me out. (Cédric, black, male)

In the above excerpt emerged an account of blackness and Polishness – where skin colour and national identity appear as part of several themes that portray some of the respondents as not quite human. Cédric's lived experience signified the point of dehumanisation as a signal of the 'halo of blackness', he believed this is the point that underpins the representation of many black people in Poland. It defines the ways in which colonial/postcolonial logic is deployed in terms of language, territory, and history. This particular case suggests that the question of 'race' and racism in Poland is not only a question of skin-color ... '[It] is a historical category, a political category, a cultural category' (Hall, 2000a: 149) that is already fixed in the global purity/impurity of 'race', premised on the ideology that highlights 'sanity' and 'purity' where mixture appears 'impure' (Gordon, 2018: 7). Joshua (black, male) had lived in Poland almost all his adult life, he described his observations of how the colour of his skin is important to some Polish people and its traumatic impact:

I remember older ladies coming up to me in the street with a handkerchief trying to wipe-off my skin colour. I looked in the mirror several times and wondered why this had happened to me. I regretted that I was born with such skin colour. Twice, at ten and thirteen, I tried to commit suicide... (Joshua, black, male)

Indeed, physiognomic features play an essential role in racialised difference. Whatever the specificities and peculiarities of Joshua's remarks, his experience comes from being part of a broader discourse on whiteness as a mechanism that sustains 'Polish-centrism' from which Joshua's black body is marked as a non-natural entity, therefore, needs to be confiscated or erased (Yancy, 2017; Balogun, 2019).

Collectively, the above lived experiences are not devoid of historical contexts of racial domination that reflected a broader backdrop of Africa's historic marginalisation and its continued representation as a subordinate continent. What seems apparent in the aforementioned excerpts is the European interpretation of Africa, 'Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of "human nature." Or, when it is, its things and attributes are generally of lesser value, little importance, and poor quality (Mbembe, 2001: 1). This is the point where racism interferes with the public because many of the contents described by the respondents strongly appeal biologically to human phenotypes, the identification of specific human features purposely for racial connotation as a social, political and historical process (Winant, 2000: 172). Therefore, the questions of 'race' and racism in Poland are connected to and evident in the histories of migration, foreignness, and being of a particular immigrant background.

Blackness and Polishness

To uncover the broader implications of the discussed lived experiences, I want to bring the concept of Polish-centrism into a conversation with the Du Boisian dialectic — ‘double consciousness’ — a sociological concept that has a normative quality that captures the dual character of unrecognised minority (Meer, 2019: 51). In this dialectic, Du Bois (1994[1903]) discusses the strange meaning of being black in a white society as two separate but entwined forms of consciousness. Du Bois frames issues of ‘race’ and racism as hostile and at the same time inter-reliant, linked to micro and macro dimensions of life. It operates both at personal and institutional levels to express the clash, elimination, and isolation. Du Bois refers to, among other contradictions, the somatic, phenotypic, and physical relationship with body as key factors that drive racialisation. Du Bois’ dialectic is partly premised on self-recognition as a form of cultural recognition which sees one’s cultural identity in connection with the cultural identities of the dominant group. It is the lack of acknowledgement of such recognition that implies the invisibility of a minority group. This is an aspect of racialisation that Du Bois describes as the veil – ‘a one-way mirror, with the minority seeing the majority through the glass, whilst the latter sees only their own reflection (of mastery or dominance) as the former remain behind the mirror.’ (Meer, 2019: 53).

In keeping with Du Bois’s ‘Doubleness’ as a hyphenated identity, narratives such as Danni, Sophia and Enzo’s seek to affirm both their Polish and African identities as situations that are ‘rooted in and routed through the special stress that grows with the effort involved in trying to face (at least) two ways at once’ (Gilroy, 1993: 3). On the one hand, they are not looking to Africanise Poland because they know that Poland has a lot to offer. On the other hand, they are not prepared to change for the sake of ‘Polish-centrism’ because they are acutely aware of the essence of blackness to their humanity. They simply wish it is possible for them to be both black and Polish, without being spat upon by the Polish society. In the Du Boisian 1994[1903]) dialectic:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, ... two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1994: 2 [1903])

Indeed, I can suggest that some of the contradictions identified above are evident in the early Polish literary sources such as Henryk Sienkiewicz’s *W pustyni i w puszczy* (In Desert and Wilderness); Alfred Szklarski’s *Tomek na Czarnym Lądzie* (Tomek on the Dark Continent); Julian Tuwim’s popular poem ‘Murzynek Bambo’; and the popular Polish Communist TV cartoon — *Lolek i Bolek - Na stokach Kilimandżaro* (Lolek and Bolek - On the slopes of Kilimanjaro). Many of

my respondents believe that these are first major literary sources where Polish kids would learn about black people, often used as ‘props for the breakup of one petty European mind’ (Achebe, 1978: 9). They provide the Polish world with a rationale to perceive the Negro as ‘something exotic’, not quite human, not European, through the reproduction of narratives that fixed Africa as a dark continent and its inhabitants as an uncivilised population:

Most popular stereotypes of a traditional kind are: 1. Happy-go-lucky Negro, lazy, dirty and cheerful, naively satisfied with his backwardness, ignorance and subordinated social position; 2. Uncle Tom type: honest and pious Negro, full of moral candour, but “knowing his place” and loyal to his master even if ill-treated by him; 3. A savage, cruel and aggressive Negro, a cannibal of the African jungle and an individual with criminal instincts, a potential sexual offender in a modern city. (Kloskowska, 1962: 193)

Conversely, all this presents the Polish population with images of ‘a Negro’ as a completely different ‘race’, if not species, an unaccustomed social phenomenon that informed the attitude of rejection, dislike, curiosity, sympathy or even ‘primitive egocentrism’ towards blackness. The participants in this study felt that the racisms they experienced were simultaneously deniable and overt. In the following account, Maya locates this issue in popular and political discourse:

...one of the differences [compared to other contexts] is how racism is manifested in Poland. It’s more open and related to media, politicians and academics [who] could be openly racist in Poland and not being punished or prosecuted for being openly racist. Also, the political system especially with the current ruling party. On the basic level, is the language when people use racist slur thinking that it is ok without reflecting on it. Even saying that they’re not racist but hmmm blah blah, blah. Unlike in the UK where people would try not to use racist language and be politically correct, in Poland people are not politically correct (Maya, mixed-race, female).

Whilst the ‘post-racial’ turn suggests that racism is becoming deniable in a number of contexts (Goldberg 2015), for Maya there is a particularity to that deniability in the Polish context. Racism in Poland, she argues, does not have to hide behind a veneer of political correctness. Instead, it is ‘more open’; ‘in Poland people are not politically correct’ in their racisms. Maya’s account seems to imply that the circulation of racisms in media, political, and academic spheres is symptom and cause of a culture of explicit and open racism. Two caveats bear stating here. Firstly, there is evidence of explicit interpersonal racisms in the UK context (to which Maya refers), and secondly, my intention here is not to make normative assumptions about overt vs covert racisms, but rather to map the particular forms that racisms take in Poland.

Participants generally echoed Maya’s sense that racisms proliferated openly in popular and political spheres. This was deemed to be one of the reasons that, as Maya observed, ‘racist language’ was used so openly, it is an affirmation that race and racism are not marginal events: they are central

to everyday practices in Poland. For example, Danni, the participant introduced previously, referred to a particular literary culture in Poland and felt that this cultural reference had an impact upon not only his own lived experience, but also the wider culture of racialisation of black people in Poland:

...when I see kids...I think 'Murzynek bambo' strengthened their stereotype. When I see kids, on the bus, they don't know...they tend to say to their mum 'oh, oh, oh, look, look, look Murzynek bambo' and mothers just respond: oh ok, yeah, yeah murzynek bambo w afryce mieszka (Negro Bambo lives in Africa). I think something is really wrong here, that's the stereotype with kids, really, really bad thing.... parents don't seem to know or correct the kids because for parents, Murzynek bambo was part of their own education as kids (Danni, mixed-race, male).

Danni's account conveys that children in Poland are exposed to anti-black stereotypes from a young age, through popular culture. As Enzo put it, 'this is the first thing many Polish kids would learn about black people'. Danni pinpoints this as a causal factor in his experiences. His recall of a child on the bus saying 'look Murzynek bambo', the Polish equivalent of Sambo, echoes Fanon's experience of being hailed by a young white boy ('look a negro') on a train in France. It is a confirmation that white supremacy takes on a similar form across time and space. However, through the particular reference to black people as 'bamboo-sque' character, we see that anti-black racism manifests in contextually specific Polish ways. It was partly as a consequence of this account that many of the participants lamented the way in which terms like *Murzyn* (Negro) circulated freely without challenge. Similarly, popular culture was also blamed for a negative portrayal of Africa, as Enzo explains:

Most Polish people think that Africa is still some kind of wooden huts and where people walk naked. Everything most Polish people know about Africa is from TV and internet, what television is showing is creating the image of Africa. (Enzo, mixed-race, male)

The implication here is that, as blackness and Polishness are seen as incompatible identities, mixed-race Poles are interpellated as black Africans. The stigmatisation of Africa, therefore, leads to stigmatisation of black/mixed-race people in Poland.

Conclusion

Whilst whiteness plays a crucial role in the determination of the common identity and consequently who should possess certain rights and who should not, this chapter has highlighted that, in Poland, the construction of otherness is closely knitted into the prominence of whiteness. It is part of the conceptualisation I call 'Polish-centrism' – the everyday practices that constantly reproduce the

differences between ‘them’ and ‘us’. Such differences are made possible by the processes of normalisation and naturalisation of hierarchies that allow racist views to flourish.

This chapter has aimed to highlight that the question of ‘race’ and racism in Poland is easily accessible from the vantage point of problems of national identity and state’s projects that are often presented as majority projects. They are articulated in relation to migration and ethnic minorities’ issues and seem to be against immigrants and citizens of immigrant backgrounds. This was overtly demonstrated during Poland’s Independence March in 2017/2018 that was given significant support by the state representatives and the state media whilst dismissing evidence of racism. The national question thus endorses itself as a variety of profoundly racialised projects of anti-immigrant nativism, from which there is no exception for the native-born Polish children of immigrants, labelled indefinitely as ‘foreigners’.

In this chapter, I have brought the theoretical weight of Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) to bear on studies of race and racism in Poland. In so doing, I developed a more nuanced picture of race and racism in Poland. I have shown that, as in other majority white contexts, mixed-race people are often interpellated as black. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, mixed-race people in Poland are subject to a plethora of interpersonal anti-black racisms ranging from the explicit to the more implicit and microaggressive. Wrapped up with this anti-black racism is the construction of Poland as a homogenously white nation. This acts to render black/mixed-race people outside of the imagined body politic of the nation. Thus, black/mixed-race people in Poland report being seen as foreign outsiders. This is a nativist form of erasure that was often noted to be upsetting. Finally, as well as discourses of blackness and foreignness, I have shown that there are particular forms of racism that are predicated on mixed-race identities, and pathologies surrounding mixed-race families. Such findings, I argue, disrupt the homogenisation of black/white mixed-race and black populations and call for a greater attentiveness to the diversity among Poland’s non-white populations. As Poland’s non-white, and particularly its mixed-race population continues to grow, this is something I argue will become increasingly important.

By taking into account the racialisation of black/mixed-race people in Poland, this chapter has made three main claims: (a) that Catholicism, a symbol of Polish hospitality and solidarity, has failed to find a common ground between Europeanness and non-Europeanness in Poland; (b) that the portrayal of non-whites as exotic Other often leads to their representation as people who are not quite human, not quite European, not quite white, therefore, they cannot be ‘one of us’; (c) that the ways in which group identities are formed, especially in a homogeneous state, and the

concept of 'who we are' both serve as a preconception of people that do not look like us. All of these claims are mediated through the racial logic I call 'Polish-centrism'.

Chapter 5: The Racialised: *not* being Polish, *not* being white, *not* being European

Introduction

This chapter focuses on racialisation. In examining both the ethnographic and structural materials that inform this chapter, I am not trying to make racialisation to do too much work. Rather, I perceive ethnography as an illustration of the structural even when some of the research respondents may not see it in that way. It is this perception that guides the discussion and the analysis that I am about to unpack in this chapter.

The earliest evidence of racialisation is locatable in the representation of the people of sub-Saharan Africa by the European travellers and explorers. When European travellers returned from their exploration of Africa, they presented details of populations they had encountered, the description of such populations placed emphasis on the cultural and physical differences observed in the encountered populations (Miles & Brown, 2003). The description of these people uncritically took up the literature and narratives about the African Other as ‘blacks’, ‘savages’, and ‘barbarians’, with a lower capacity of intellect (Miles & Brown, 2003). Subsequently, the contemporary European understanding of Africa and its people is solely derived from written accounts of the early European travellers.

The categorisation of people into binary groups – whites and blacks – historically stemmed from the representations of the Other, conceptualised through the *experienced* Other and the *imagined* Other (Miles & Brown, 2003). This was particularly evident in the early European travellers’ encounters with the presumed Other usually groups with different skin colour ranging from darkish brown to black, that later came to be a depiction of people in Africa (Miles & Brown, 2003). The encounter and interaction with the African populations would later be evident in their enslavement and colonisation by the European nations. Racialisation is intrinsic to the construction of the European subject. Using different ways of representation, Europeans often represent the other as European fantasy of exoticness, strange and foreign (Fanon, 1968; Pieterse, 2002). It is a kind of representation that has been advanced in the discourse on ‘race’ and nation-state.

Studies on migration in Poland often focus on in-out migration in the country. What is often largely ignored is the complexities of racialisation in the configuration and negotiation of racial identity in the country. Perhaps, the consensus that Poland is strictly homogeneous state clouds the possibility that identity is never fixed in time or place (Hall, 2009). Also, whilst racialisation emphasises a process that could be utilised in the discourse about race and racism (Rattansi, 2005), 'it is not always clear what the race in racialisation refers to' (Murji & Solomos, 2005a: 4). Studying the lived experiences of sub-Saharan African immigrants in Poland provides an opportunity to explore the racialisation processes during a time when European boundaries are undergoing migration transformation massively influenced by the 2015-2016 EU migrant crisis.

This chapter focuses on racialisation as an essential area of 'race' through which, for centuries, the ways of life of the people of Africa are gazed through Eurocentrism. In this chapter, I examine how the long tradition of racialisation of Africa is projected onto the people of colour in Poland. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates how such representation puts immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and their children, either born or brought up in Poland, in a condition where their links to Polishness, if not disconnected, are fragmented through the processes of racialisation.

What is Racialisation?

The racialisation process may appear as a new phenomenon, but several studies have shown that racialisation is not a modern concept, it is a long-existing European gaze at non-white, non-European Other, mainly people of the Middle East and African backgrounds. It is a weapon that is often deployed through European perception of the cultures, as well as the behaviour of the people from the Middle East and Africa. Both Arthur Keith (1930; 1937) and Arnold Toynbee (1918; 1948) recognise the importance of racialisation and de-racialisation as essential processes of nation building but take distinctive views on them. Starting with an exploration of the existence of a primordial 'tribal feeling', Keith (1931) notes that 'tribal feeling' – sentiment towards one's kind – is deeply ingrained in human nature that dictates our likes and dislikes. Such a feeling comes with prejudices and instinctive tendencies. The willingness to accept or reject certain people, for Keith, has a lot to do 'with passions and desires', linked to an essential part of the great scheme of human evolution which produces 'ever better and higher races of mankind' (Keith, 1973: 26).

Advancing his argument, Keith notes that key patterns of prejudice – 'various forms of prejudice', which include, '*personal prejudice*', '*local prejudice*', '*national prejudice*' and above all '*racial prejudice*' – allow human beings to make better judgement in the processes of inclusion and exclusion (Keith, 1973: 35).

This antipathy or race prejudice Nature has implanted within you for her own ends –the improvement of Mankind through racial differentiation. Race prejudice, I believe, works for the ultimate good of mankind and must be given a recognised place in all our efforts to obtain natural justice for the world. (Keith, 1973: 48)

In his view, without a primordial ‘tribal feeling’ that encompasses ‘various forms of prejudice’, human beings would make a poor judgement on who should and should not be part of their ‘race’ or nation. From this standpoint, Keith sees ‘various forms of prejudice’ as a form of racialisation of the Other and de-racialisation of Europeans as one essential process that is attainable through a long period of eugenics project – the cultural and social movements closely linked to ideologies of ‘race’, nation-building, and sexual intercourse. Interconnecting population control, social hygiene, and the welfare state, through the process of separation and elimination. Eugenics was viewed as a progressivism concept that would produce a diseased free society leading to the need to produce a racially pure society (Dikotter, 1998). According to Keith (1931), the processes of de-racialisation must be limited to the Europeans and not extended to the whole world.

Thus I come deliberately to the opinion that race prejudice has to be given a recognised place in our modern civilisation have asked you to count the price you must pay for a ‘deracialized world’ [my emphasis]. In turn you may demand of me whether I have reckoned the cost of maintaining our racialized world. Yes, I have. . . Without competition Mankind can never progress; the price of progress is competition’ (Keith, 1931: 48).

Keith’s (1930; 1937) view, from a perspective of the survival of the fittest, is the ability to adapt and progress at the expense of the Other, hence, eugenics becomes an essential device in the operationalisation of Keith’s racialisation.

Whilst Keith’s (1930; 1937) ideas were popular in the European state formations, especially in the 1930s with the emergences of Nazism in Germany and widespread Fascism in other parts of Europe, Arnold Toynbee (1918; 1948) sees Keith’s racial ideas as ‘some more telling nonsense’ (Toynbee 1948: 52) and argues for a more rational position. He notes that Keith’s (1930; 1937) ideas have no place in the modern world as the purpose of his notion of “racialization” was mainly ‘a division between those inside and those outside the civilised pale’ which raised a fundamental ‘race-feeling’ question. For Toynbee (1948), the de-racialisation of Europe and racialisation of the rest of the world as a progressive way of improvement has two flaws. First, such an idea only limits human civilisation because it concentrates mainly on one part of the world (Europe), hence, the second, the rest of the world is regressive.

Unsurprisingly, Arthur Keith’s views, whilst evident in the processes of modern states formation, have been widely criticised and rejected by contemporary scholars of race – Michael Banton (1988: 110-111) notes that Keith’s genetics and ‘various forms of prejudice’ have no sociological logic.

Since Keith sees nation and ‘race’ as a single entity, Elazar Barkan (1992: 46-47) takes the view that Keith’s idea would only form ‘part of the evolutionary machinery which safeguards the purity of race’, and both Rohit Barot & John Bird (2001: 606) concur that the consequences would be ‘the maintenance of racial inequalities’. Despite the wide criticism of Arthur Keith’s views especially within academia, everyday people still understand and use ‘race’ biologically, hence Keith’s (1973: 35) ‘various forms of prejudice’, - ‘*personal prejudice*’, ‘*local prejudice*’, ‘*national prejudice*’ and ‘*racial prejudice*’ – are still very much alive. I further this by noting that the process involved in the prejudice paradigm is *racialisation* as a process at the heart of the narrative shared by many of the respondents and extendable to other non-white Poles, born or brought up in Poland where their links to Polishness are fractured through the process of racialisation.

Racialisation as a process of exclusion

Following Keith’s (1930; 1937) and Toynbee’s (1918; 1948) opposing arguments on the use of racialisation, sociologists – Fanon (1968); Reeves (1983); Smith (1989); Goldberg (1992); Small (1994); Winant (1994); Malik (1996); Barot & Bird (2001); Murji & Solomos (2005); Garner (2009); Fox, et al. (2012); and Gans (2017) – have used racialisation in different ways that give the concept a range of contemporary meanings and associations. Whilst these works provide different ways of utilising the concept of racialisation, a persistent debate has been whether ‘race’ should be disconnected from study of racism. Some contend that the disconnection would invalidate the original understanding of racism and its biological determinism. From this stance, racialisation stems from the ideology of ‘race’ that is linked to individual differences, social and personal capabilities, leading to the inferiorisation of a weak race. In the words of a leading advocate of this approach, ‘...race is a legitimate concept for sociological analysis because social actors treat it as a real basis for social differentiation and organise their lives and exclusionary practices in terms of it’ (Mason, 1994: 843). This assertion is based on the idea that biological determinism plays a pivotal role in determining abilities and rights attached to group membership, in turn, structured people’s access to a resource. Therefore, ‘race’ matters. Others have argued that the issue with racism is not precisely about ‘race’, connecting race with racism would only result in the reproduction of biological concept that no longer has validity in contemporary time. According to this perspective, the issue here is racialisation not ‘race’. Robert Miles, is the major influence here, supported Michael Banton (1987) through the recognition of the invalidity of biological determinism.

Given the amount of attention racialisation has attracted, the process has taken different shapes in different definitions mainly used in two ways - *thin and thick* senses (Hochman, 2018). This helps

to widen the understanding as well as utilisation of racialisation. For example, a *thin* sense of racialisation applies when a group is characterised as a ‘race’, that is, a biological category. A *thick* sense applies ‘where the concept tells us something about how racialized groups are being understood, and so has content’ (Hochman, 2018: 3). Whilst I think both definitions provide a compelling understanding of the process of racialisation, there is a sense in which I find a *thick* sense of racialisation much more persuasive and much more advanced. A *thick* sense of racialisation speaks to a process that tells us exactly the methods involved in the racialisation of a group. This helps in setting racialisation aside from ‘race’ because ‘race’ and ‘racialisation’ are not the same. Whilst racial formation forms ‘races’, racialisation forms racialised groups, as Jorge Garcia (2003) correctly points out ‘racialization is something that is *done* to a group, *by* some social agent, *at* a certain time, *for* a given period, *in* and *through* various processes, and *relative to* a particular social context’ (Garcia, 2003: 285). This is supportive of Laura Gómez’s (2012: 236) argument that racialisation is ‘the social process by which a racial group comes to exist’. Similarly, Sally Haslanger (2012: 236) tells us that a ‘group G is *racialized* relative to context C’. In addition, Voegelin’s scheme of ‘body ideas’ – ‘any symbol which integrates a group into a substantial whole through the assertion that its members are of common origin’ (Voegelin, 1940: 286) – gives prominence to the process of racialisation. Therefore ‘one must ask what differences are considered in the process and how they are perceived or imagined. Are the perceived differences phenotypical or behavioural or both? And do the perceived differences vary by the kinds of populations targeted for racialization?’ (Gans, 2017: 343).

To unpack these loaded questions, first, it is important to understand the concept of biological ‘race’ even though it was never valid. A better understanding rests on how the 15th century Spain’s racial difference between human beings took shape in the Spanish inquisition when the idea of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) (Rattansi, 2007: 16) was employed as a justification for the mass expulsion of Jews and Muslims (Lentin, 2018). They were seen as “*raza*” biological different from the mainstream Spanish population, defined according to the purity of blood (Nirenberg, 2009). This idea was built upon, in the late 18th century, by Immanuel Kant’s colour-coded races as ‘noble blonde’, ‘copper red’, ‘black’, and ‘olive-yellow’ (Kant, 1777; Bernasconi, 2001).

It is unmistakable that such categorisation, though modified over time, still applies today. From the standpoint of racialisation of the Jews, Hannah Arendt (1951); Leon Poliakov (1991) and Bernard Lazare (1995) have significant things to say about the complex and subtle historical processes that culminated the slippery of Jews from being a religious group to a racial group through anti-Semitism. Also, Muslims – this particular group, of course, not considered a ‘race’ – has now acquired meaning beyond religion because international terrorism is now associated with

their religion since the beginning of the recent terrorist activities around the world. The definition of terrorism has shifted in so many ways that now appears in the ways many Muslims are perceived, and then ‘partially racialized’ (Blum, 2002).

However, it is through Sayyid (2018: 421) and Meer & Modood (2019) that one comes to understand that the racialisation of Muslims goes deeper than just international terrorism, it is also a postcolonial question that is crucial to any understanding of the role of Islamophobia as part of the perception of the racialised Muslims. Whilst rejecting the biological inferences, Sayyid (2018: 421) and Meer & Modood (2019) draw a connection between race, religion and European empires as an indication of how the history of racialisation turns a faith group, Muslims in particular, into a race. The treatment of Muslims by European empires ‘clearly has a religious *and* cultural dimension but, equally clearly, bares a phenotypical component’ (Meer & Modood, 2019: 22). This would include the representation of Islam as a racialised, barbaric culture (Said, 1985) that is in need of ‘saving’ by the enlightened Europeans (Abu-Lughod, 2002).

To frame this in a term borrowed from Zia-Ebrahimi (2018), the racialisation of Jews and Muslims is ‘conspiratorial racialization’ – that is the grouping together of a ‘target population into a unified, coherent and recognizable pack, instinctively acting in unison, and thus sharing fundamental racial characteristics’ (2018: 331). Perhaps, it is partly this historical implication of ‘race’ that reinforces the perceived differences phenotypical and behavioural notions that underpin racialisation of the Muslim and Jewish appearances as akin to the idea of wearing a ‘second skin’ as an example of ‘postcolonial disjunctures’ of racism (Mirza, 2013).

The debate here is whether ‘race’ that is phenotypical and behavioural is a valid concept of racialisation. Miles (1989: 72) sees the use of biological ‘race’ as the reproduction of racial science which has no validity in the understanding of racism, hence, such an idea ‘should be explicitly and consistently confined to the dustbin of analytically useless terms’. Through this, Gilroy (1998: 843) recognises that ‘biology was only one of many possible ways of addressing this relationship with ourselves’. Bluntly put by Gilroy (1998: 845) ‘... scientific and biological, historical and cultural, rational and irrational, skin, bone and even blood are no longer primary referents of racial discourse’. Miles’ major stance is his opposition to the sociology of race. The believe that the focus should be on racism which operates through the process of accumulation of capital (Miles, 1982; 1986). In *Racism and Migrant Labour*, he focuses on the system of labour in Britain and Europe, where he found objective status and human actions in terms of accumulation of wealth as main concerns. For Miles (1984) race has an effect that is identifiable within economic conditions that create contradictions in which he identifies racialisation:

...on the one hand the need of the capitalist world economy for mobility of human beings, and on the other, the drawing of territorial boundaries and the construction of citizenship as a legal category which sets boundaries for human mobility (Miles, 1988: 438).

Both Roediger (1991) and Ignatiev (1995) documented in some detail the 19th and early 20th centuries American immigration and labour relations regimes. In doing so, they presented racialisation as an economic construct played a significant role in shaping the perception of the first generation Irish, Southern and Eastern Europeans in the US. Their studies showed how whiteness was initially denied to the Irish and Italians immigrants, often excluded socially and economically from the Anglo-American elite. One way of understanding the system of exclusion is through a racialised economy that perceived Irish and Italians as non-whites, this group of European immigrants had to experience American immigration regimes and acquire a substantial amount of wealth to be accepted as 'whites'. Importantly, once these groups became 'white', they, in turn, used whiteness as leverage against blacks to improve both their material and immigration status (Ignatiev, 1995: 98). Perhaps it is useful to think about race, not just in terms of colour differentiation, but unfamiliar processes of the modern state's functions and governance (Goldberg, 2000; Foucault, 2003) within which racialisation operates.

Racialisation is often assumed to be a western concept that is located in the operations of western modernity. Whenever this concept is deployed, it sometimes refers to an action by the dominant against the dominated, which portrays racialisation as an instrument of modernity, that serves the state with its bio-politics, classification and governance functions (Nayak, 2005; Garner, 2009). This implies that the modern definition, interpretation and use of colour and physiognomies play a major role in the definition of race, which is linked to privileging that is located in the management and manipulation of colour and physiognomies in the operation of modernity. The modern system of separation and categorisation allows racism to be read through modern politics, suggesting that racialisation – the attribution of racial identities to a group or relationship – is even political. This means that racialisation is something that could be read from both black and white experiences; therefore, modern racialisation is not only colour-based, but an intervention between human beings based on differences in class structure, domination and subordination (Miles, 1989: 6-7). This leads to an assumption that the concept of racism is essentially modern (Winant, 2000: 172; 2006).

Racialisation – from the perspective of colour in Poland

Other countries have done more with the concept of racialisation as *racial signification*, for instance, British (Miles, 1989; Banton, 1991; Murji & Solomos, 2005) and American (Winant, 1994; Blum, 2010; Gans, 2017) scholars have unloaded the concept almost completely. I follow this literature

to understand racialisation not merely in terms of the effect of ‘race’, but as a social process that is evident in economic, political and globalisation processes that brought with them the movement of people. It is this form of migration, especially in Poland, that demonstrates ‘distinct processes of nationalization’ (Miles, 1994: 193) that put the racialised bodies in a state where they represent a ‘moment in the transmission of code and information’ (Gilroy, 2000: 36). In this regard, racialisation has a special place in Poland because it assigns ‘racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice, or group’ (Winant, 1994: 59; Omi & Winant, 2015: 111) that are now beginning to emerge in the country.

Here is what I mean by “race”: a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (so-called phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for the purposes of *racial signification* [my emphasis] is always and necessarily a social and historical process. There is no biological basis for distinguishing human groups along the lines of “race” (Winant, 2001: 317).

Here, I focus on racialisation as a process of racial signification in Poland. Drawing on my empirical data in the country, the previously unclassified relationship and social practices emerged with evident of both phenotypical and behavioural notions contribute to racialisation in Poland. This was revealed in the account provided by Sophia:

The best term is immigrant, whenever you see immigrants, they’re always for you. This happened to me and my mixed-race friends when we took part in a video of our friend. This was the time of the highest level of debate about immigration in Poland, and when this video was released and reviewed by Polish newspapers, we were referred to as immigrants, yet we’re Polish - the singer is Polish, the dancers are Polish, I’m Polish. There’s no single person in the video who’s an immigrant. (Sophia, mixed-race, female)

The above observation points squarely at the heart of racialisation that must be understood as a process of othering, and distinctiveness being a potential for permanent mistreatment. In this process, physiognomic differences are used as a particular device because the racialised cannot easily change their physiognomies (Gans, 2017: 351). It is an implication that racialisation and immigration are a linked mechanism that demonises refugees, migrants and others as people not belonging to a national identity. Sophia and her friend’s experiences did not begin with them, the process generally begins with the arrival of new immigrants, voluntary or involuntary, who are perceived as different and undeserving (Gans, 2017: 321). Subsequently, the process typically increased racialisation, or the re-racialisation of populations who had been integrated into or grounded in the national body (Loftsdóttir, Smith, & Hipfl, 2018: 8). It is the racialisation of the immigration debate in Poland that was extended to Sophia and her friends as mixed-race Poles, but “otherizers” (Gans, 2017: 352). In this case, the Polish media and perhaps a section of the

public retain the ability to prevent or limit Sophia and her friends' social assimilation into the mainstream Polish society.

Conversely, racialisation is readable through everyday interactions where 'racial boundaries are formed and renegotiated' (Lewis, 2003: 283). It is within the formation of racial boundaries and its negotiation that racial identities are assigned to individuals and then to racial categories which are mapped onto groups who are either included or excluded from social institutions. From this perspective, racialisation is all about the assignment of bodies to racial categories, and the association of symbols, attributes, and qualities to those categories (Lewis, 2003: 283). In a simple term, racialisation is not natural, but a social process that emerges through social encounters and interactions.

Relating the above back to the narrative shared by Sophia, her experience appeared to be grounded in processes that involved out-group's activities and representation, defined by an in-group, influenced by the prevailing debate at the given period (Garcia, 2003). It seems clear that Sophia and her friends are racialised through the context of immigration (Haslanger, 2012). All this suggests that the concept of racialisation attaches racial meaning to individuals, sub-populations and social phenomenon, making what could be subtle and fluid into a fixed category (Silverstein, 2005). It applies broadly to groups, to individuals, to social structures, and to a range of other phenomena (Hochman, 2018: 3). Perceived difference, not necessarily 'race', seems to be a key element that racialisation builds on. Similarly, racialisation from an individual perspective is reflective of the account provided by Danni in the following conversation with his white Polish professor:

...in my first class at the university, my professor shouted my name, but of course, he couldn't pronounce my last name which is Kenyan. But I answered: *Tak, Jestem* (Yes, it's me) and he responded, 'oh your Polish is very good'. I hate it when people say that to me, and I often told them yours too. (Danni, mixed-race, male)

Of course, such 'compliments' reveal a racialised set of meta-communications (Sue, 2010) of which Danni is acutely aware. In these incidents, there are at least three interlinked meta-communications worth observing: Polish is not the first language of black/mixed-race people; black/mixed-race people are not (and cannot be) Polish; Poland is a white nation. Notice how the quotidian 'seemingly innocuous' racialisation is tied to ideological assumptions about the Polish nation: race and nation are intertwined in ways that threaten to exclude black/mixed-race people from the Polish nation. Racialisation does not occur in a vacuum but are symptomatic of (and therefore indicative of) structural racisms. Racialised as a foreigner because of his Kenyan surname and non-white physiognomies, Danni's professor did not expect him to be able to speak fluently in Polish

as the language is assumed to be limited to people of Central Eastern European descent racialised as white. Also, in terms of sexuality, the behavioural patterns of some Polish women towards sub-Saharan African men are punctured with racialisation where the dark-skinned male is regarded as the physiognomic metaphor for masculinity (Kovel, 1984) hence Jona was racialised as ‘the mandingo type’

I was shopping in the Mall and two young Polish girls, about 14-15 years old, walked up to me and asked if I have a big dick and they ran away as soon as I looked up. This is just an example of stereotype at that age, thinking that African men have big dick. (Jona, black, male).

To add a clarity to the above examples of racialisation, it seems that many characterised black males, regardless of demography, have some sort of gaze upon them. Danni, although mixed-race, is more Polish than African, if not as Polish as his professor. But the assumption of non-whiteness informed his racialisation as being a foreigner. In the case of Jona, a similar technique was at play, where Jona’s dark skin was mis-read as part of the characteristics of being ‘a mandingo’. His personal attributes were perceived by the Polish girls psychologically because of his darkness, therefore, being tall and handsome has a psychological reflection of his dark body (Hall, 1995: 39). In both cases, physiognomic metaphor (Kovel, 1984) appears to be the first order of abstraction, race is a second order of abstraction, and it is physiognomic differences which are used as role signs (Banton, 1979). This is supportive of an argument that racialisation ‘is most often applied to populations and groups, whose characteristics, practices and activities are explained by racially causal explanations, often racist.’ (Gans, 2017: 342).

The Polish racialised economy: ‘we cannot employ you’

It is through Stuart Hall (1997) that we get a reminder of the exact role of race as the ‘floating signifier’ that constantly takes on new forms which include the racialised economy. What Miles (1982; 1984; 1986) and others have been talking about sits within colonial context in which commerce, nation and racial identity, capitalism and globalisation form some sort of system. It is with the desire to acquire wealth that certain people are included and excluded based on, among other things, racial conditions in which citizenship and legality play a crucial role. Race, from this perspective, is an economic construct. It is within the theorisation of economy of desire that the idea of racialisation emerged as one of those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities (Miles, 1989: 75). This is a recognition that racialisation is not fixed to a black-white binary (Garner, 2007: 258), hence the definition of the concept should cover specific mechanisms that are outside of black–white paradigm because

individuals within groups (both white and black) could also racialise themselves (Miles & Brown, 2003; Gonzalez-Sobrinho & Goss, 2018).

Racialisation is about *process* in which race becomes meaningful in a particular social context. One way of validating the process is through the operations of neoliberalism as a complex concept that refers to the systematic privileging of a 'free market' as a process of managing the movement of people, as well as capital, goods and services. From this standpoint, it is easy to read neoliberalism as a 'common good' (Bhopal, 2018: 1). Such 'common good' would include small instances of 'model minorities' (Gans, 2017: 347) as an indication of diversity of inclusiveness. Heidi Mirza (2018) has argued that in the commodified global industry, the challenge for many institutions is to move beyond the equalities discourse where institutional diversity is seen as 'good business sense' achieved through neoliberalism 'targeting' the bodies of raced and gendered 'others' to 'get them in the door'. (2018: 176). However, there is a racial undertone in all this as the diversity does not cut across the board and only appears as a business model that may make the institutions appealing whilst still excluding many bodies that are racialised.

David Goldberg (2009) knows how neoliberalism works within racial paradigm. It is a process he refers to as 'racially driven neoliberalisms' (2009: viii); they are instances of how 'policy making within a neoliberal context works to protect whiteness and disadvantage those from black and minority ethnic groups.' (Bhopal, 2018: 1). A good example of this would be the European Union's employment regulations which required that every job should be offered first to anyone who possesses EU citizenship (mainly people racialised as white). In this way, disparity is created between Europeanness and non-Europeanness which are tied to privileges and opportunities imposed by the dominant powers and global economic institutions upon marginalised economies and societies which are predominately non-white postcolonial states (Goldberg, 2009: 16). The trouble with this is that the larger part of world's wealth is situated in Europe, then it becomes difficult or almost impossible for non-white/non-Europeans to access such wealth without European citizenship. Reading racialisation through Steve Garner (2007; 2009) gives a clearer understanding of racialisation as a theorisation of economy of desire through social practices. In his assessment of the EU regulations in the UK, Garner (2009) points out the structural disadvantage faced by non-EU nationals through the process of racialisation:

Non-EU nationals are subject to more stringent visa regimes and immigration controls. They are required to provide higher standards of proof of identity and solvency, and since the enlargement of the EU, they compete at a structural disadvantage with new A8 migrants in Ireland, Sweden and the UK, and in the future, will compete in the other EU member-states (Garner, 2009: 29).

In this way, race becomes a factor in the way social resources are allocated, that is, racialised (Garner, 2009: 19). This is an aspect of racialisation that speaks directly to the heart of power because the group that has access to resources also has control over those resources and from that point can decide who should possess part of the resources and its direction of travelling.

At this junction, I want to suggest that any attempts to understand racialised economy in Poland, must begin with or at least give recognition to the idea of racial formation – ‘*an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines*’ (Omi & Winant, 1995: 125). The following story by Eldami, one of the respondents, is a tale of racial formation as an obstacle in the Polish labour market. But often reflected in some of the respondents’ inability to articulate their racial identity and their denial of having encountered racism through the economic institution. Even though many were aware of being mistreated but felt reluctant to attribute the situation to racialisation. For example, Eldami claimed not to have been mistreated in Poland because of his race: ‘To be honest with you, I think it’s like any other country, if you don’t speak the language, you’ll be treated like not one of them’ (Eldami, black, male). He attributed his mistreatment to inability to speak in Polish. Whilst language may play a role in the processes of racialisation (McDonnell & de Lourenço, 2009), later in the discussion with Eldami, he noted that when he first arrived in Poland he had encountered a strange situation seemingly related to being black:

...about 4 years ago, me and one of my friends, also black, went to an agency looking for job and the lady at the office asked for my residence permit and I produced it, then she said – ‘we cannot employ you’. She didn’t give us any particular reason, just refused to take our applications. For me, that was ignorance, she didn’t know what she was doing... I felt really bad, especially if someone has a residence card with right to work in the country and then someone said no, that means that person isn’t competent. (Eldami, black, male)

Eldami failed to acknowledge the role of race in the above situation that served as an obstacle from him getting a job. He puts the refusal down to ignorance and incompetence showed by the Polish lady at the job agency. However, what the lady did not explain to Eldami was revealed in an interview with Abel, another respondent who has been living in Poland for 12 years. Abel was invited for a job interview in Warsaw, and quickly found that he would not be employed due to the following reason:

...it was because of the colour of your skin. I had been to an interview and after the interview, I met one of the staff members who told me that no matter how well I did in the interview, they’re not going to employ me. She added that they only did the interview exercise to comply with the rules of European Union, just to show that they interviewed people from different backgrounds, but they knew that they’re not going to give you the job. (Abel, male, black)

Both Eldami's and Abel's situations resurfaced in a discussion with Mary, a PhD student from Nigeria. Issues related to residence or work permit play a role in the racialisation of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Mary (Black, female) believed that 'many Polish companies do not know how to employ you'. This is because they are not sure of processes of residence status, legal status and how to apply for a work permit for foreigners. According to Mary, 'They do not understand the migration laws and policies that give right of employment to foreigners and because they're not used to employing or hiring foreigners.' This infers that many companies would rather stay in the comfort of employing a Pole or someone with a Polish or European passport. Mary added that many companies do this to avoid anything related to government and public institutions because of Polish bureaucratic procedures. The discussions with Eldami, Abel and Mary were supportive of the argument that automatic racialisation occurs with an 'immigrant' identity, related to either physiognomic features or immigration status or both (McDonnell & de Lourenço, 2009).

It is important to emphasise that race is only a tool in both Eldami and Abel's racialisation, but an effective tool because of its visual distinction. The main concern here is the ideology of racism that works through the racialised economy which identifies differences between groups (Miles, 1989: 75; 1993) and makes race much more sophisticated and complex. Here, the focus is on social relations between whites and non-white where biological characteristics often played pivotal roles that have a social impact upon the various ethnic groups externally and internally (Hall, 1995). The point that I have been trying to make here is that the key issue about racialisation is not exactly biology, but a representation, portrayal and ascription of positive or negative qualities to specific people irrespective of their physiognomic characteristics. Importantly, the behavioural pattern in the processes of racialisation suggests that race alone cannot account for social relations, there is indeed another way of looking at social relations, a way in which the ideology of race is not completely neglected, but serves as a 'floating signifier' (Hall, 1997).

The racialised politics and media

Studies that explore racialisation often pinpoint the racialisers (*politicians, academics, state officials*) and the racialised (*minority groups, refugees, immigrants*), as such, racialisation could be read through the actions of state elite (Ben-Tovim et. al., 1986). In the introduction to *Elite Discourse and Racism*, Teun van Dijk (1993) seeks to explain racism as not just a phenomenon that exists in the streets nor is it exclusively an ordinary white folks' reaction in a social relation. By focusing on the role of the elite in the reproduction of racism, Van Dijk argues that much of the subtle and indirect acts of racialisation are mainly 'top-down' and often preformulated by various elite and their discourses

(1993: 2). He writes, 'Popular racism and its practices and discourse are often based on, exacerbated, or legitimated by such elite discourse and racism' (van Dijk, 2012: 17).

Diane's story exemplified an aspect of racialisation that is situated within the discourses of Polish media and political elite. Diane migrated from Nigeria to Poland, as a student; she struggled to accept the representation of her country by the Polish media:

The media has portrayed this part of the world [Africa] in a bad way. Whenever you see images of Africa, it is always with a poor child drinking directly from the tap. The media portrays black people as poor. This is why many people say to me - *you're very courageous to leave your village to come here*, as if travelling is new to African people. If you walk about here now, the picture of black people is not great. (Diane, black, female)

Diane's complaint is at the heart of racialisation as the representation of the Other, the 'images of Africa'. Whilst she accepted that there is poverty in Africa, she equally rejected the representation of the entire continent as a place in poverty, which gives Polish society a wrong impression that all black people are poor and cannot afford travelling outside their continent. The role of the social media in shaping racial images has been a particular focus here. Hall et al (1978) and van Dijk (1991) have looked at how media reproduces the question of the minorities as a threat to integration and inclusion. Perhaps this is what Hall et. al. (1978) and Teun van Dijk (1983; 1984; 1985; 1987; 1991; 2015) meant when they wrote profusely about the effect of media representation that could have a discriminatory effect in the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices against the minorities.

Diane's story is not an unfamiliar account of racial logic in Poland that unfolds in the representation of people of colour in the country. Racialisation is multifaced. Processes of racialisation cannot be reduced to a single source – whilst news outlets, television programmes and other aspects of media often reproduce the state narrative of racialisation in many ways that institutionalised racialisation, some of the states' policies are set as reaction to immigration and managing 'race relations' (Miles, 1982). Ohia (2016: 147) has argued that the racialised Polish politics and media has to do with an obsession with Polish self-perception and not only have profound influence on ordinary Poles, leading Polish politicians, journalists and academics being responsible for racialisation of the Other (van Dijk, 1993; 1997; Wodak & van Dijk, 2000; Law, 2002; Wodak, et. al., 2009) through the processes that highlight the importance of Polishness. This often occurs in the public debates on immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers where they are used interchangeably, in the process, the out-group is often problematised and marginalised as culturally alien (Augoustinos & Every, 2007: 129). For example, in Poland and elsewhere in Europe, the EU migration crisis in 2015-2016 was accompanied by bifurcated compassionate reactions and anti-

immigrant populists' racist claims. It was also the moment when the concepts of refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant slide into each other in public discourse across Europe, and often associated with 'the emergence and mobilization of racist ideologies' (Loftsdóttir, Smith, & Hipfl, 2018: 7). This racialised process works through the mechanism of economy and politics as elements of racialisation, where politicians play on fears of newcomers (Gans, 2017: 344). A very good example of this could be found in a speech by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, a leading Polish politician, who played on biological fears of particular newcomer-migrants from the Middle East and Africa racialised as transmitters of infectious diseases (Cienski, 2015). It is a reminder of Powellism, as a British political force in the late 1960s and 1970s, similarly, Kaczynskism is an appeal to linking immigration to broader fears about the future of the Polish society. Both Powellism and Kaczynskism are instances of pandering to 'the fears and concerns of the 'white majority' (Solomos, 2018: 5) leading to the racialisation and victimisation of the minority.

All of this has a further explanation in a broader analysis of racialisation. McDonnell & de Lourenço (2009: 239) shed light on the process of racialisation, through which the migrants are seen, defined and related to as 'a sub-population in which they have no 'organic' membership'. In this regard, the use of biology has been extensively demonstrated, where it becomes an explanation for the marginalisation of the groups through the power of politics that is embedded in the language of nationalism as a "new" racism or "cultural racism" (Balibar, 1991b; Abu-Lughod, 2002; Bunzl, 2005; Harrison 2002: 150; Loftsdóttir, Smith, & Hipfl, 2018). Importantly, the language of nationalism offers an ideology of superiority, and the glamour of whiteness (Gilroy, 1999: 188). All this leads to political racialisation as a process that may involve exclusion from citizenship privileges, and racial preconceptions built into some individuals and state programmes with strong criteria that, in principle, exclude the racialised (Gans, 2017: 343). From this perspective, the idea of race makes it difficult to differentiate between social divisions and structure of discrimination.

The racialised bodies: the power of seeing and unseeing

Invisibility/hypervisibility is an important aspect of being black in a white-dominated society such as Poland and sometimes contributes to how black bodies are racialised. Black bodies often unconsciously racialised, however, the black woman's body, in particular, comes into view when conceptions of sexual subjection are discussed (Mowatt et al., 2013). Perhaps this may be why both Collins (2004) and Crenshaw (1995) have argued that black women's realities are more than an issue of patriarchy but exist within intersecting oppressions of racism and sexism. This appeared to be the case in a conversation with Wanda, a female respondent:

...it feels like there's this general history. There was a time when we went to club, it was a Friday night and people were drunk and there was a guy who said that *we had monkey bum-bum*, and then that's negative, even when it's positive, I think it's very different how Europeans see black men versus women, they have this very fetishness for black women, they call you all sort, it's like you belong to a different species... (Wanda, mixed-race, female)

Wanda's experience typified invisibility/hypervisibility through the personification of the black women's bodies as stereotyped bodies of abnormality (Newton et al., 2012). Wanda was not alone in this situation, Ashima, another female respondent shared a similar experience:

...most of the time, I feel sexually harassed, maybe not physical, some of the [Polish] men here, the way they treat us black girls...I think they take advantage because we're black, there were Polish women around, why didn't they do anything like that with them, because I'm black, they take advantage, they think it's ok to harass us and do anything that they like. (Ashima, black, female)

There is more to the above accounts provided by Wanda and Ashima. Historically, black bodies have been considered strange and seen from the prism of fetishness. The consideration given to the bodies of black women here needs to be construed from a standpoint of grotesque, animalistic, and unnatural (Carroll, 2000; Gilman, 1985). Both Wanda and Ashima found themselves in a state of invisibility/hypervisibility where they had to deal with the oppression that arises from being black in a white-supremacist culture, on the one hand, and the oppression that arises from being female in a male-supremacist culture, on the other hand (Nelson, 1993: 81). To understand what Wanda and Ashima were talking about, Henderson (1996) recommends hypervisibility and race in conjunction with gendered body politics as a way of viewing the racialised body of black women. This makes the black women bodies visible and hypersexual (Miller-Young, 2010), and it is the process that situates them in a representation that presents them as non-European and non-standard (Wyatt, 1992). They are often represented with abnormal body shape, 'large buttocks, genitalia, and breasts, as amusing, inferior, and oversexed' (Mowatt et al., 2013: 650; Young, 1997). Similar to their male counterpart, sexual conception is the moment when the bodies of black women are hypervisible, hence, the racialisation of Wanda's '*monkey bum-bum*'.

Race, in this regard, although not a natural process, is saturated with power to include and exclude (Hall, 1980; 1986; 1986a). This leads to an understanding that racialisation holds a powerful feeling of belonging and not belonging, the feeling of neither here nor there (McDonnell & de Lourenço, 2009: 247). This analysis resonates forcefully with the narratives shared by many of the respondents. It is supportive of a particular experience shared by Enzo who did not consider his

white Polish friends as racists, but during football matches, Enzo often gets racialised as Emmanuel Olisadebe²⁰, an African born, Polish football player:

I remember that most Polish people were like: ‘of course, he’s not Polish, he has played for the Polish team and he should go’ and whenever I play football with my friends, I had to be ‘Olisadebe’, not by choice, but because I’ve no other option. (Enzo, mixed-race, male).

Enzo does not identify as black because he is mixed-race, but permanently racialised as black due to one-drop rule that disqualifies him from being white (Lewis, 2016; Davis, 1991). In this context, Enzo was racialised as ‘Olisadebe’ – ‘They made me ‘Olisadebe’, it’s the same way they’re making me a black person and *Murzyn*²¹ [negro]. This form of rejection allows Enzo to think of himself as closer to white since blackness is regarded as a common stereotype closely associated with inferiority. This may explain why some respondents disassociated themselves from such a category. In Gómez’s (2012: 236) ontological understanding of racialisation, being racialised as ‘Olisadebe’ (black) is the social process by which Enzo comes to exist and becomes visible, at least, during football matches. Miles (1988) contextualises such experience within the power of signification:

There is only a process of signification in the course of which the idea of ‘race’ is employed to interpret the presence and behaviour of others, a conceptual process which can guide subsequent action and reaction. This complex of signification and action, where it occurs systematically over periods of time, has structural consequences. This complex can be referred to as a process of racialisation, a concept which refers to the social construction but also refers to patterns of action and reaction consequent upon the signification. Within this process, the ideology of racism plays a central role by offering criteria upon which signification can occur, attributing negative correlates to all those possessing the real or alleged criteria, and legitimating consequent discriminatory behaviour or consequences (Miles, 1988: 9).

Zeta, another respondent, demonstrated the feeling of being neither here nor there through the invisibility of her being ‘coloured’ rather than being ‘black’. This is made possible by the fluidity of racialisation processes that do not operate uniformly across time and space. As Lewis (2003: 297) correctly points out: ‘The way people get categorized varies from setting to setting’. At the time of the interview, Zeta, who viewed herself as coloured in South Africa, had been in Poland for almost a year and racialised as black in the country:

...coming here and being called black, for me, it’s like...So, in South Africa, if you’re mixed-race you’re coloured. I came here, and people called me black because your skin is dark then you’re black and so that’s was an adjustment for me. Growing up in South Africa and

²⁰ See ‘Emmanuel Olisadebe: The talented immigrant who enriched a footballing nation’, Available online: <https://thesefootballtimes.co/2016/11/16/emmanuel-olisadebe-the-immigrant-who-enriched-a-footballing-nation/>

²¹ *Murzyn*, currently a controversial term used to describe a black person in Poland. For some Poles, the term has no negative connotations. For others, including the people of colour, *Murzyn* is socially undesirable because the term does not only describe someone from sub-Saharan African descent, but also a way of describing a disdained identity. Such description occurs through the process of racialisation.

knowing what I know about colour and coming here I have to adjust to the difference, I just accept being black and it's something I've got to get used to. (Zeta, mixed-race, female)

Zeta's experience has a long-existing racial differentiation depending on situation and place. She was shocked to see that in South Africa there are several racial categories that sometimes dictate people's social hierarchy, in Poland, you are either black or white. It is the absence of nothing in-between that, indeed, displaces Zeta. Having accepted that she would have to be black in Poland, Zeta struggles to abandon 'colour' as what she has always known as her racial identity in South Africa. In some ways, 'her identity feels alien to her in the context of the ethno-racial hierarchy' (McDonnell & de Lourenço, 2009: 246). Similarly, one of Danni's (mixed-race, male) experiences represents a consciousness about racialisation as well as stereotype of invisibility/hypervisibility regardless of how long they have lived in Poland: 'It's funny that when I go back to Kenya people called me *Mzungu* (white) and in Poland I'm black'. Danni finds racialisation particularly frustrating – 'I don't like it when they come with an assumption that 'he's black, he got to be like this, or he's white, he's got to be like that or he's Polish, therefore, he's got to be like this...the stereotype is black'. In his narrative, Danni was reflective about 'a representational process of defining the Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically' (Miles, 1989: 75). Danni claimed that individuals have strengths and shortcomings, these are common things in everybody, and they occur in everyday life, but should not be defined based on what people look like or where they are from. Whilst Danni acknowledged differences in people, the aspect of being racialised is what he found particularly frustrating. The point that Danni and other respondents have been making is simplified by the notion that two people of different 'race' could have a positive or negative relation that is not racial (Cox, 1948), therefore, it is the signification, not 'race' that is at the heart of many of the treatment of the respondents, where 'a biological element is always present' (Winant, 2004: 53-54).

Another way in which the black body comes into view is being heard speaking in fluent Polish which springs surprises, hence, the hypervisibility that is troubling as already highlighted elsewhere in this thesis. Some of the respondents described invisibility/hypervisibility in a similar way, almost all of the mixed-race respondents had a narrative about their presumed migrant status and their ability to speak Polish fluently. Nonetheless, Joseph's case stands out in terms of the surprise of being black and speaking Polish fluently. The disconnection between being black and speaking Polish, I argue, emerges within the context and processes of racialisation as Polish is imagined as a language of white people. In other words, it is when Joseph starts to speak in Polish to white Polish people that the invisibility/hypervisibility tension occurs to a black body:

...they often asked, *Oh, you're Polish?* Many times, I've heard people saying *Oh you speak Polish very good!* Many times, I tried to explain that, of course, I speak Polish very good because I

was born in Poland, but people would look at me and say OoooK! But you know the view – what this person sees and hears are not connecting in his head. (Joseph, mixed-race, male)

Joseph's experience of invisibility/hypervisibility tension is a powerful one. He claimed not to be seen or alive until he opens his mouth and speaks in fluent Polish. This is the time he does not only become visible, but hypervisible because the shock of seeing a non-white person speaking Polish interrupts people's everyday experience. Thelma's experience confirmed another case of the racialised body through invisibility/hypervisibility:

... in my class, only three of us are black. I was seen as a black girl from Africa, the other black girl was seen as a black from America, and a guy from the UK, seen as a black guy, but from the UK. It often played out, the way people related to me as an African, from Africa (Thelma, black, female).

Thelma was caught up in a web of racialisation through invisibility/hypervisibility. Root (2000: 631-632) has observed that racialisation also occurs at the individual level, depending on time and place. McDonnell & de Lourenço (2009) have examined context of racialisation related to some particular migrants, arguing that 'For newcomers and anyone with an accent, the first boundary to belonging that they must negotiate is the imposition of immigrant status and a foreigner identity. Acceptance or disavowal of the label 'immigrant' and the more pejorative 'foreigner' is linked to the process of racialization' (2009: 245). Whilst some of the above labels are problematic and account for racialisation, it is worth emphasising that, in Poland, it is the distinctiveness of the physiognomies of black people that conveys the extensiveness of their racialisation. For instance, most mixed-race Poles have similar, if not the same accent as white Poles, but it is the distinctiveness of their skin colour that imposes immigrant status or foreign identity on them and through which they are racialised.

Racialisation and Immigration

To bring all the issues illustrated above into a focus, I turn to a number of studies that highlight racialisation and immigration as a global circumstance that has a significant impact on the racialised bodies of black people. Drawing on an extensive range of sources, H. R. Isaacs (1967) has pinpointed the collapse of power systems, the emergence of new power structure and political and economic change as the social phenomenon that drives racialisation. He provides an in-depth analysis on how racial mythologies built around skin colour were used during the acquisition of empires and slave trade, and shows its relevance to contemporary times. He argues that racial mythologies created 'habits of mastery' between white and non-white people, as well as in the culture and economy of any society. In his view, there is an unambiguous relationship between the western perpetuation of white privilege and Central Eastern Europe upholding of Communist

ideology. He suggests that too many non-white generations are products of long history of subjection to whites, and highlights the need to break such an internalised process that appears 'among all shades of men who attached values to "lightness" and "darkness" of skin in almost every culture and place' (Isaacs, 1967: 362).

Racialised bodies are more or less held down by an ideology of domination. In an analysis of culture and domination, Richard Brown (1993: 660) found that cultural differences serve as a process of judgment and compulsion that allows a group of people to dominate another group. These cultural differences are highlighted in the classification and stratification between societies and civilisations. Whilst some civilisations are classified as civilised, many are depicted as primitive, such as Spartans versus Persians, Christians versus Muslims, civilised versus primitive, modern versus traditional, Western versus Oriental, and White versus Black. Such stratification helps to create a justification for hierarchy in order to establish domination; as a result, cultural differences are turned into a fixed and unchangeable form of opposition.

Studying cultural differences as part of the operation of the state is a challenge taken on by Deborah Root (1989). In doing so, she suggests that the state creates its authority through 'various institutions and precepts, these categories come to be naturalized and made to appear as absolute, 'true' entities' (Root, 1989: 6). In addition, identification of differences where the dominated group is subject to constant supervision by the dominator was part of the precepts of the state. Collectively, all this outlines a critical role for associations, continuous practices, and adhered culture as dynamics that demonstrate differences in people.

In view of all that has been discussed so far, it really does not matter whether Poland has or has not been involved in colonial projects that play a huge role in contemporary racism. The point that I have been signposting here is much more about global circumstances – power and economic transformation; white/racial ideology of domination; and national culture – created the condition that sustains the racialisation of black people in Poland.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on racialisation and its effect. I defined racialisation as a concept that is easily applicable to groups, individuals, social structures, and other phenomena (Hochman, 2018). Whilst the conceptualisation of 'race' seems to be the central focus of many scholars working within the field of 'race' and racism, racialisation has become an essential part of critical race theory used as a process to understand racial meaning attached to a situation that may be racial or not. Racialisation goes beyond the colour binary, the use of the concept has shaped the ways scholars understand how, for example, European Jews and Muslims understood as racial

groups through postcoloniality, immigration, culture, religion and then terrorism. Therefore, racialisation affords social scientists the theoretical manoeuvres to understand 'race' and power beyond a particular social context and social time (Gonzalez-Sobrinho & Goss, 2018: 3-4). Focusing on groups, individuals, social structures of racialisation, I demonstrated through the lived experiences of black people in Poland that discrimination goes beyond the concept of 'race'. Discrimination could be read through racialisation, a preconceived idea that projects and represents many of the research participants in this study, as well as many migrants in a way that they do not see themselves, hence created fragmentation in their connection to Polishness. This chapter has attempted to show racialisation as a process 'set up to distinguish us from them' (Anzaldúa, 1987); by attaching racial meaning to blackness in Poland, and at the same time provoked responses from the racialised. Whilst many of the respondents in this study recognised the inevitability of racialisation, very few refused to acknowledge or deny their encounters with racialisation. In doing so, they become conscious of the process of racialisation and its effects of exclusion.

Chapter 6: Racial Microaggressions in Poland

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have hinted at various instances of racial microaggression. In the present chapter, I focus mainly on the mechanisms of racial microaggression and elaborate on their operations in Poland. Despite the increase in literature on racial microaggression and its negative effects on black people, I argue that racial microaggression is often modulated as trivial and never acknowledged as being racial in Poland. This creates a gap in the understanding of 'race' and racism in the country. To bridge this gap, I draw from historical and contemporary examples of racial microaggressions in the US and the UK where many black and minority ethnic groups are still marginalised at different levels of society in which white identities predominate (Bhopal, 2018). I provide often neglected but significant empirical insight into the manifestations and implications of racial microaggressions in the everyday experiences of black people in Poland. In this discussion, I am interested in various elements of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a well-established theory that is useful in the analysis of the lived experiences shared by the respondents. This chapter endorses both CRT and Sue (2003; 2004; 2010), and Sue et al's (2007; 2008) broader thesis on racial microaggressions. In doing so, the chapter demonstrates that racial microaggression, as a recent phenomenon, cannot be generated without essential theories of race and racism. I aim to contribute to this area of research through the exploration of racial microaggression in the lived experiences of immigrants and mixed-race Poles of sub-Saharan African heritage in Poland.

Achille is one of the research participants in this study, originally from DR Congo, currently living in Poland. His lived experience of racism is my point of departure. It is an account that demonstrates how an individual with discredited identity takes on the responsibility of managing interaction to prevent discomfort whilst preserving his sense of self-integrity (Goffman, 1986). Achille has been living in Poland for almost 2 years; and works for an IT organisation as a language support customer service specialist, speaking French, Russian and English. Achille's experience of discredited identity occurred when he went to buy a winter jacket at one of Poland's popular fashion stores. Whilst in store, Achille purchased a winter jacket costs 79 PLN (£16), a pant costs 200 PLN (£40) and paid for both items using his bank card without any issue. After leaving the store, Achille realised that the store attendant forgot to remove one of the security tags for the jacket, and in order not to damage his lovely jacket by trying to remove the tag, Achille returned to the store to get the tag removed safely.

Arriving at the store, a white Polish store attendant recognised and remembered serving Achille and was prepared to remove the tag upon provision of receipt as proof of purchase. However, the transaction was interrupted by a male colleague who assumed that the clothing might have been stolen. Whilst waiting for the security tag to be removed, Achille observed a Polish customer who had returned to the same check-out to have a cloth exchanged for another one – the exchange was completed seamlessly. Achille's request had to be escalated to a manager who concurred that the jacket might have been stolen therefore called the Police. At this point, Achille began to wonder why the Police had to be involved in a genuine business transaction.

...I had a feeling that this is the start of a problem. I said in my mind: "*Oh my God, this is start of a problem, this is a big problem*" In my mind, I said to myself, "*this is a problem because I'm black, I'm from Congo*" To be in this situation in Poland, I know that these guys don't believe me, this is a problem for me. "*Oh my God, why is this?*" ...this happened because I'm black, I'm from Africa...just because I'm black. (Achille, black, male)

According to Achille, when the Police arrived, they listened to the store manager reporting fraud and without further enquiry from Achille, he was arrested and handcuffed. As a regular customer in the store and often attended the gym in the same building, Achille was reduced 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one' (Goffman, 1986: 12). 'It felt like being arrested in front of the house where everyone knows me, or at least they recognise my face. I've never stolen anything, I've never fooled anyone', Achille protested.

There are a number of theoretical angles from which Achille's discredited identity could be considered. When I interviewed Achille, he insisted his experience was not just a case of theft, it was particularly loaded with racial microaggression. This experience of racial microaggression is not an anomaly, as the empirical data would reveal, it is part of the logic that underpins the representation of people from sub-Saharan African heritage living in Poland.

Several studies have identified racial microaggressions as verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward the people of colour. They are often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms; and they are based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent. They cumulatively take a psychological and physiological toll on the people identified as non-white (Kohli & Solorzano 2012; Perez Huber & Cueva 2012; Solorzano & Perez Huber 2012). Whilst racial microaggression, for many, may appear as a subtle process that goes unnoticed, Perez Huber & Solorzano (2015: 301-302) have observed that the process is not micro as it seems. In their view, 'it is the structural and systemic forms of racism that operate in everyday racist acts'. This suggests that racial microaggression as a process is already embedded in the social structure, but only reproduced through the articulation of aggressions that are racialised.

Often viewed as an individual's experience, yet racial microaggressions are largely systemic, institutional and ideological. As pointed out by Chester Pierce, the black medic, who identified the need for a new theoretical concept that would help to understand the framing of race and racism through what he called 'offensive mechanisms':

To be black...today means to be socially minimized. For each day blacks are victims of white 'offensive mechanisms' which are designed to reduce, dilute, atomize, and encase the hapless into his 'place.' The incessant lesson the black must hear is that he is insignificant and irrelevant. (Pierce, 1969: 303)

Given that the concept of race is based on a distorted understanding of human differences, racial microaggressions are based on stereotype of people's social status and largely their social behaviours that are informed by the concept of race. Nonetheless, contemporary racisms are never easy to identify and challenge because they are often covert, subtle, and sometimes appear unintentional (Dovidio et al., 2002). In some cases, perpetrators are unaware of the intrinsic racist nature of their actions unconsciously expressed through deep-seated prejudices, which are performed to reproduce and maintain both racial and social hierarchy. This form of social hierarchy does not exist in a vacuum, meta-communications are at its heart. It is partly for this reason that the 'psychology of racism needs to take seriously people's lived experiences of race relations' which is currently lacking in Poland. This involves an 'empirical focus on social life in ordinary contexts in which everyday practices are structured around 'race' (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005: 446). Despite the richness of literature on racial microaggression, there remains a misunderstanding of the phenomenon in Poland. In an attempt to comprehend the racial complexities that run through Achille's account, I rely on the studies of 'everyday racism' (Essed, 1991) and racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1969; Sue 2010). Using the lived experiences of black/mixed-race people in Poland, this chapter provides specific practice of everyday racism as a form of racial microaggression.

Re-routing 'everyday racism' and racial microaggressions

Many studies have attempted to provide explanations of everyday racism that function in various settings (Lamont & Mizrahi, 2012) that include public spaces (Feagin, 1991), private or workplaces and could occur in its overt or covert form. As Essed (1991: 2) has argued, everyday racism 'connects structural forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life. It links ideological dimensions of racism in terms of daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life'. A particular way in which 'everyday racism' manifests itself in Poland is through racial microaggression, although not seen so. A good understanding of the concept of race is needed in order to examine the ways in which

microaggressions work in the Polish society. Sue (2003; 2004; 2010), and Sue et al's (2007; 2008) offered an important window into racial microaggression which is congruent with everyday verbal talks and actions. The meta-communication identified here could exist in three ways: *Microassaults*, *Microinsult*, and *Microinvalidations*. According to Sue (2010), *Microassaults* 'are conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit racial, gender, or sexual orientation biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are communicated to marginalized groups through environmental cues, verbalizations, or behaviors' (Sue, 2010: 28). This form of microaggression is easily identifiable in the Polish society as it is related to outright name-calling. Sue (2010) characterises *Microinsult* as communications that convey insensitivity and demeaning of a person's racial identity. Such communications often occur in non-verbal communications that signal subtle snubs, and sometimes, unobvious to the perpetrator. Lastly, Sue (2010: 28) talks about *Microinvalidations* as a process through which many white people negate or invalidate the psychological thoughts, feelings, and reality of black lives. It is the lack of recognition or the refusal to accept the traumatic experience of racism experienced by black people. In all of this, it becomes obvious that racial microaggression does not exist on its own, it is an aspect of psychology that is mediated through the early conceptualisation of race; the categorisation of people and later 'a social order structured by forms of inequality—economic, political, and cultural—that are organized, to a significant degree, by race' (Omi, 2001: 254). In this instance, critical race studies help to pinpoint a number of different disciplines — cultural studies, sociology and philosophy — that operate with race as a central prism of analysis (Mills, 2000: 447-448).

In Poland, there is no shortage of racial microaggressions, yet racial microaggressions are not considered racist in the Polish society, therefore, subtle misconceptions about the lived experiences of black people have become normalised. One reason for this is because, for Poles, someone could only be a racist when directly involved in a 'violent encounter' with a person of another 'race' (Nowicka, 2018: 834). The second reason is because of the dearth of critical race discourse in Poland. Essentially, racial microaggressions could only be generated where critical race theory (CRT) is well-grounded. In other words, the whole notion of racial microaggressions is constructed through critical race theory, therefore, in order to engage with the topics of racial microaggressions in Poland, it is important to acknowledge the importance of CRT as an approach in this chapter. This approach has the potential, especially in Poland, to amplify the notion of "social construction" of 'race and races'; that race and races are not fixed; have no biological reality; but are categories that are invented in order to manipulate a population (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001: 7). In exploring this, the work of Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw (1993) within CRT as a theoretical framework provides an understanding of racial microaggression as derogatory speeches and

actions by the dominant groups, identifying and unmasking the origins and effects of such speeches on the minority groups.

Cornel West (1993) has suggested that ‘race matters’ because of its significance in the lives of millions of people. But it is through Stuart Hall that one comes to grasp how race becomes significant. Hall (1967) recommends the acknowledgement of race as a collective concept. It is not just one thing; it is everything and many other things connected to relationships between groups of people rather than individuals. Hall (1967) argues that it is within a relationship as a form of communication or exchange between people that ‘the whole body of stereotyped attitudes and beliefs which lie between one group and another’ come to exist. This implies that racism is not just a case of an individual, but rather a collective relation found in cultural and political practices of a given society. Hall expands this argument through the coinage of the phrase – “cultural politics” – to show how both cultural and political practices are entangled as a racialised system (Hall, 1967, cited in Lewis, 2000a: 194-195).

Furthermore, because the mode of communication is never static but always changing, Hall (1986) maintains that racism too has never had a fixed essential form. It is continually changing, modified, and reconstructed because it is connected to everyday cultural and political practices through which people communicate. What is particularly interesting in the reading of racism through Stuart Hall is the significant recognition of the ways in which general features of racism are transformed by the specificity of the contexts in which they become active (Hall, 1986: 23). Adding some clarity to this argument, he notes ‘that “racism”, if not exclusively an ideological phenomenon, has critical ideological dimensions’ (Hall, 1986: 26). This suggests that the historicity and ideologies of racism in the west, may or may not follow a similar context in CEE and this is precisely why I focus on racial microaggression in Poland as a different working environment where the conceptualisation of racial microaggression has never been tested and where race is always assumed to be ‘absent present’ (Lentin, 2016a; Mirza, 2015).

The above overview of race provides a tool to identify often subtle acts of racism that emerge in everyday conversations and interactions in the Polish society. In addition, it provides a framework that demonstrates how everyday racist events are systemically, institutionally and ideologically mediated. Similar to many racial microaggression researchers in the US and a few in the UK, I borrow from and extend the conceptual history of racial microaggressions in mapping out Polish racial microaggressions, a phenomenon that has been largely ignored in the post-communist Poland.

The excluded and isolated bodies

In this section, I discuss mixed-race bodies as excluded and isolated bodies in the everyday Polish life. This study's focus on Poland is particularly important, not only because it is different from other studies on racial microaggression, but mainly because Poland has a different 'race relation', which is almost different from the western racial contract (Mills, 1997). This suggests that the post-racial conjunction is incomplete, and it is for this reason that the conceptualisations of racial microaggression, as well as CRT, are put into a new environment such as Poland with a different kind of context where racial microaggression may work in similar or dissimilar ways as in the US or the UK. As would be demonstrated in the following empirical data, discussions with the research participants revealed instances of racial microaggression, which ranged from isolation through exclusion, that is, not being seen as a real member of the Polish society to exoticisation by the public and close friends. Mistaken identity; Pathologising of identity and Denial of racial reality and experiences are other themes that emerged in the everyday examples of racial microaggression in Poland.

It has been argued that racial and ethnic categories are made and remade through struggle. In this sense, racial category is accorded social significance. But also have some consequences for those who are included within, or excluded from, a particular racial identity (Solomos & Back, 1996: xiv). Take for example, the following account of exclusion:

I don't have a choice, I don't ...we don't get a choice. If you're called black by white people, then you're black. Even though I'm 50/50, I can't tell you I'm white. I just don't get the opportunity. (Sophia, mixed-race, female)

Exclusion and isolation are microaggressions that occur when people of colour are made to feel excluded or isolated based on their non-white identity. The theme of exclusion and isolation was strongly exemplified mainly by the mixed-race respondents born and brought in Poland, but historically defined as black (Lewis, 2016: 506-507; Khanna, 2010). The denial of Sophia's mixed heritage is an idea that is already well established at least in the US and the UK. Whiteness as pureness is also a major idea in Poland. Sharing lived experiences that made them feel that they are not 'really Polish', some of the respondents recalled accounts of racial differentiation when they felt that they often had to 'choose' their other racial (mainly Black) background in terms of self-identification. Unlike elsewhere in Europe where many black people shared hyphenated identities, such concept does not exist in Poland, at least not at the moment. As evident in the above excerpt, Sophia, a mixed-race Pole, with white mother and black Cameroonian father, often felt that she could only be black, despite her mixed heritage. Having lived in Poland all her life, Sophia drew on white ethnic and racial symbols, not to identify as white, but rather to highlight

her white origin in order to identify as 'biracial' (Khanna, 2010; 2011: 1049) - feeling that she belongs to both groups equally (Noels et al., 2010: 753-754). For Sophia, a feeling of being both Polish and Cameroonian, is a kind of human identity that is not restrictive, but inclusive.

The issue here is about the problems of identity. In exploring this, it is useful to draw on Paul Gilroy's important work in which he argues that:

We are constantly informed that to share an identity is to be bonded on the most fundamental levels: national, "racial", ethnic, regional, and local. Identity is always bounded and particular. It marks out the divisions and subsets in our social lives and helps to define the boundaries between our uneven, local attempts to make sense of the world. (Gilroy, 2000: 98)

Gilroy identifies 'the formation of the perilous pronoun "we" and to reckon with the patterns of inclusion and exclusion that it cannot help creating' (Gilroy, 2000: 99). It informs the critical reflection upon who we are (Polish) and what we want (to remain exclusively white) that is at the heart of patterns of inclusion and exclusion experienced by Sophia. It is, indeed, the problem of "we", the fact that 'Nobody ever speaks of a human identity' (Gilroy, 2000: 98), but an exclusive Polish identity that leads to Sophia's disconnection with Polishness, consequently, like many mixed-race Poles, she prefers to pass as black. At first glance, this may appear easy; on a closer inspection, however, Sophia's disconnection with Polishness forms a backdrop through which the phenomenon of passing could be understood from the perspective of exclusion in Poland (Sundstrom, 2016: 24; Khanna & Johnson, 2010).

Stuart Hall's intervention in this discussion is particularly remarkable and essential to the identity formation in Poland: As a matter of fact, blackness has always been an unstable identity spiritually, culturally and politically (Hall, 1987: 45). This points squarely at the interview with another mixed-race respondent, Julius, also raised in Poland. A situation of exclusion arose when he expressed discontentment with his white professors compelling him to write his undergraduate medical exams²² in a different room away from his white Polish peers:

The first exam I went for, they told me, no, no, no, you're not writing it up here, you're going to write it downstairs with foreigners ...they thought they were doing this to help me... they can't choose a Polish person because he's not a foreigner, I couldn't understand that ...I was losing it because of this... (Julius, mixed-race, male)

In order to make sense of the significance of Julius' case, it is important to pay attention to the multiple structural mechanisms that occur here. First, often presented as a space beyond racial

²² It is important to note that medical schools at Polish Universities often have two versions – Polish and English due to the high number of English-speaking foreign students that study medicine in Poland. It is also for this reason that the examinations are conducted differently.

inequality, Julius' case typifies an instance of academic institution as a place deeply implicated in the perpetuation of the conditions that give rise to racial microaggressions (Henry, 1994; Stockdill & Danico 2012; Turney et al, 2002; Mirza, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019a). Julius is from both Polish and Kenyan backgrounds. He graduated from one of the best universities in Poland and explained that he had no document that identifies him as a foreigner. He was particularly upset about the university's exam arrangement, not only because his professors were putting him in the same room as foreigners to write his exams, but the situation was never reviewed or changed following his complaint. The only reason for this, according to Julius, was his picture as a mixed-race person and his Kenyan surname put him down as a foreigner. Conversely, Julius' experience situated him within 'racial and cultural hierarchy of minority inferiority' (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012: 441). This speaks to the heart of Hall's (1987) argument about black body not always been present in Poland, never learned and never constructed, as Julius' experience demonstrated, black body is seen not as a body, but the other body that is situated outside the main body.

Second, Julius' case could be understood through the general experience of mixed-race people. Research shows that mixed-race people, to some extent, have control over their identity, blessed with 'second sight' – being inside the white world and outside of it at the same time (Du Bois, 2004). Scholars working within critical mixed-race study have used several factors associated with identity – culture, gender, class, phenotype, religion and socialisation – to explore the physical attractiveness of mixed-race groups as 'anglicized versions of colored peoples', at the same time considered 'exotic' (Nakashima, 1992). Perhaps, this is what leads both Rockquemore (1999) and Song (2003) to suggest that mixed-race people are capable of choosing 'sides' and shifting positions depending on a situation. Whilst some identify as black only (Rockquemore, 1999), others identify as white (Rockquemore & Arend, 2003). Some do not even consider themselves black or white but prefer to incorporate both blackness and whiteness into a single, but unique category of "biracial" (Rockquemore' 1999: 202; Khanna, 2011: 1049). This group perceives itself as people who cannot be understood in a single form but be read from a hybridity perspective (Bhabha, 1994) – one who insists on the recognition of both heritages. For others, according to Song (2003), identity does not have to be associated with racial group membership.

The above may be true in many countries especially in the US and the UK. In Poland, however, many, if not all mixed-race people identify as 'black'. Whilst many recognise and accept being Polish and African, and being brought up mainly by Polish mothers, mixed-race Poles have no luxury of choosing or shifting sides. In Poland, it was Maciej Zabek (2009) that first noticed that Africans, either born or brought up in Poland or long-time residents, are generally not seen through the lens of nationality or citizenship, but perceived through the prism of "race," due to a

difference in skin colour (Zabek, 2009: 68). This implies that Polish–African relationship is largely related to being racialised as “whites” or “blacks”. Albert Memmi (1968) gives credence to this perspective when he locates white supremacy again at the heart of this differentiation, where real and imagined racial differences emerged. Harris (1964) has observed that a social concept known as hypodescent is largely responsible for the exclusion experienced by many of my mixed-race respondents. This occurs when ‘an individual who has a lineal ancestor, maternal or paternal, who is or was a member of a subordinate group, is likewise a member of the subordinate group.’ (Harris, 1964: 108). What is important for the current discussion is that hypodescent has within it an assumption that racially ambiguous people are more likely to be racialised as black and “socially subordinate” to white (Peery & Bodenhausen, 2008: 976-977). It is this subordinate position that determines the race, as well as the exclusion of both Sophia and Julius as Polish (Lewis, 2015: 506).

Thirdly, there is a lot enveloped in the account provided by Julius, especially in relation to racial microaggression being subtle – ‘they thought they were doing this to help...’ This situation may be understood through the idea of race that precedes racial microaggression. The fact that Julius, as a non-white person, being told that he will be writing his exam with the foreigners may not be intentionally racial. Also, Julius’ white professors may not be aware of the impact and implications of such action on Julius. Such ignorance needs to be read as ‘*racialized* moral psychology’, where whites act in racist ways whilst thinking of themselves as acting morally (Mills, 1997: 93). However, theorising racism from such a moral perspective, which sees racism only as a problem of “bad” individuals, is unproductive (Lentin, 2018). George Yancy (2015) has reminded us that we cannot only label acts committed by openly racists as racist because such ontology would fail to probe white normative practices, as well as systems of whiteness that reproduce themselves (Alcoff, 1996; Tate & Page, 2018). Therefore, Julius’ experience cannot be situated within an individual experience, but ‘assumptions of mainstream epistemology’ (Mills, 2007: 16), as correctly set out by Alvin Goldman (1999):

It often focuses on some sort of group entity . . . and examines the spread of information or misinformation across that group’s membership. Rather than concentrate on a single knower...it addresses the distribution of knowledge or error within the larger social cluster.... More precisely, it is concerned with both knowledge and its contraries: *error* (false belief) and *ignorance* (the absence of true belief). (Goldman, 1999: 4-5)

One way to understand the social paths in Julius’ case is through the micro-institutional everyday practices that reproduce race and racism within an organisation (Mirza, 2018). It reveals how certain ‘black bodies’, such as Julius’, were perceived as ‘space invaders’ when they do not represent the ‘racial somatic norm’ within an institution (Puwar 2004; Mirza, 2018: 178). Nirmal Puwar (2004; 2004a) explaining how the culture of exclusion operates within an institution, she argues it is

through the naturalisation and recognition of white bodies as belonging within these spaces, ‘while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually), circumscribed as being ‘out of place’” (Puwar 2004a: 8).

The fourth way of viewing Julius’ situation is through unconscious bias. Although a phenomenon not well-grounded in Poland, it is often seen psychologically as quick judgements and assessment without realising it. Often interpreted as unconsciousness, and not racist. Unconscious bias is predominantly within institutions (Tate & Page, 2018: 142). Various assessments of unconscious bias have revealed that institutional approaches to unconscious bias is inevitable, and that it is ingrained in everyone. For example, in the UK, Wood et al. (2009) have observed that job applicants with assumed British names are more likely to be shortlisted for jobs interviews. Also, Green et al. (2007) notice that doctors are more likely to prescribe effective drugs to white patients rather than black patients. Therefore, institutions, especially universities, as seen in the UK, put unconscious bias down to ‘brains making incredibly quick judgements and assessments of people and situations without us realising’. This is based on the assumption that our biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. We may not even be aware of these views and opinions or be aware of their full impact and implications (ECU, 2017).

Taken together, racism, from this standpoint, is a technique of behaviour (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). If racism is a technique of behaviour, I ask what knowledge might inform such behaviour? It is my contention that unconscious biases do not exist in a vacuum, the institutionalisation of unconscious bias is only an alibi for white supremacy (Tate & Page, 2018: 146). Similarly, Julius’ situation needs to be understood from a systemic standpoint, which grounds our understanding in the history of European colonialism (Pierce et al., 1978: 66; Lentin, 2018). A useful way of looking at this is how the subtleness of Julius’ situation diverts attention away from whiteness; the colonality of power and most essentially the assumption that Poland has never been involved in colonial projects – often clouds racial discourses in Poland. Whilst it is true that Poland may have a different racial contract (Mills, 1997); it is imperative to state that the colonial enterprise as well as racial contract as ‘intrinsic to the formation of the identity of Europe, because the assemblage between modernity and colonialism is a central component of what it means to be European’ (Sayyid, 2018: 421). This suggests that colonality is pernicious because many nations whether colonised or colonisers were touched by the machinations of European empire that led to the representation of European whiteness as a sign of superiority that is persistence in everyday racism (Tate & Bagguley, 2017: 289).

By superiority of whiteness or ‘white supremacy’, I do not mean just the state-approved far-right organisations such as the Polish Młodzież Wszechpolska (All Polish Youth), and ONR (National Radical Camp) or the self-conscious racist individuals, as this concept may be misconstrued in Poland. To frame this in terms borrowed from Ansley (1997) ‘I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings’ (Ansley, 1997: 592). Many people in Poland may find it difficult to comprehend and then accept the notion of white supremacy due to the assumption that Poland is homogeneously white, therefore, the idea of racial supremacy does not exist in the country. I argue that it is precisely because of the Polish homogeneity that many Polish people only see ‘White-World’; as the ‘world’ and only ‘world’ (Gillborn, 2006: 319), its whiteness is invisible to them because of the racialised nature of public life is so deeply ingrained in whiteness that it has become normalised, unnoticed, and taken for granted. Once the processes of whiteness are ingrained in the public life, it becomes, whether consciously or unconsciously, a condition where the white subjects are centralised and normalised structurally and culturally at the expense of people racialised as non-white.

This is where Charles Mills’ ‘White Ignorance’ (2007: 20) becomes essential in Julius’ case. What is worth pinning down here is that the idea of white ignorance – a non-knowing, that is not contingent, but in which race – white racism and/or white racial domination and their ramifications – plays a crucial causal role. This means that the social epistemology that marked Julius as a foreigner needs to be located in its specificity – as a member of certain social groups, within a specified social milieu, in a society at a particular time period – where in the case of Poland racial critique does not even exist (Mill, 2007: 15). Relating to this globally, one quickly finds that white ignorance is not only a Polish phenomenon, but it is also a long-existing phenomenon between people racialised as white or black. For example, Du Bois, as a child growing up in New England and realising that he was different from the others, drew attention to white ignorance that shut him out from the white world by a vast veil (Du Bois, 1994: 4[1903]). Similarly, Ralph Ellison evokes the same ignorance in his classic *Invisible Man* (1995: 3) where he notes: ‘When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me’. Ellison believed that such way of perception is made possible through ‘the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality’. It is the same racialized social epistemology (Mills, 1997: 18) and

‘maintaining whiteness through ignorance’ (Tate & Page, 2018: 143) that construct Julius as non-white, therefore must be a foreigner.

The exotified and objectified bodies

...there was a Polish girl opposite my flat often asked about my traditions and cultures in my country, the kind of food we eat, and when we got to know each other very well, she started asking me strange questions, but they’re questions deep within her like ‘*do all blacks have big penis?*’ ‘*Are there lions on the street in your country?*’ ‘*What types of buildings are there in your country?*’ (Mikey, black, male)

At first glance, the above conversation between Mikey and his interlocutor may appear as some sort of icebreaker between two people who are trying to know each other and should be read so. However, Mikey did not view the conversation as an icebreaker, but more of questions asked to open a petty European mind, as he noted that they are deeply probing questions that often reveal some inhibitions or tension within the Polish psyche, based on the exoticisation of Africa and objectification of its people. Exoticisation and objectification as microaggressions occur when people of colour are made to feel dehumanised or treated as an object. During the interviews, some respondents recalled experiences of *exoticisation and objectification*, where they were constantly being asked strange questions, experiencing close up examination and in some circumstances assumed to possess some sexual capabilities. Although there were moments when the Polish fascination may appear as some kind of admiration, they also appeared as instances of objectification where such experiences made the respondents feel like their ‘race’ was always put on display. Similar to the finding by Nadal et. al. (2013) in the US, respondents shared instances where white Poles wanted to date or touch them because of their ‘exotic’ features, as Zilma confirmed:

...there are problems, strange problems. I don’t know how to explain this, the way they act, the way they wink at you. I experienced two awkward situations related to this – a girl was sitting with her boyfriend and I was passing in front of them and she was winking at me. It was really strange for me, and the second situation was in the street with another girl walking with her boyfriend and, as I was walking past them, she quickly but lightly tapped my arm. (Zilma, black, male)

If one wishes to explore racial situation psychoanalytically based on individual consciousness, Fanon (1952: 123) recommends, considerable attention must be given to sexual phenomenon and perhaps the imagination of ‘a Mandingo sexual encounter’ (Mercer, 1994). Both Mikey and Zilma’s experiences need to be understood from the perspective of dark-skin and the idea of black masculinity. Hall (1995) has argued that the dark-skinned males could easily become the object of rape fantasy in which they may appear as a dominant sexual beast that some white females may have been seduced by it (1995: 52-53). In this case, the idea of black masculinity is not only

racialised (Young, 1996), but the belief that race and sexuality are biological categories never completely disappeared (Stein, 2015: 2).

Speaking about perpetuation of exoticisation and objectification, Zilma also recalled an interaction in which his interlocutor drew upon the ideology of objectification related to his hair: ‘...when I was growing my afro hair and was curly, this old woman just came over to me and touching my hair as if I wasn’t there, at the same time speaking in Polish which I didn’t understand’. In his account, Zilma connected his afro hair to one of those ethnic symbols that make one feels ‘unique’, ‘interesting’ or ‘standout’. For Zilma, this is an ‘easy and intermittent ways’ to express his symbolic ethnicity through a pride in a tradition that could be felt without being fused into everyday behaviour (Gans 1979: 8-9).

Thinking through ethnic symbols, many black scholars (Mama, 1995; Weekes, 1997; Collins, 2004) seek to explain the importance attached to having ‘good hair’ for people of colour. For example, Kobena Mercer (1994a: 101) argues that hair is one of the ‘most visible stigmata of blackness, second only to skin’. Sundstrom (2016) affirms that, for people of colour, hair is positioned within the discourses of fascination, mystery and importantly the black exoticism (hooks, 1992a; Yancy, 2008), and Ifekwunigwe (1999) takes the position that black hair carries racial, cultural, social-political undertones. Ingrid Banks (2000) analyses how talking about hair reveals black women’s ideas about race, gender, sexuality, beauty, and power leading to their consciousness within the mainstream culture. It is this understanding of the importance of hair that Tate (2005: 138) recognises when she argues that ‘to name oneself, is at one and the same time to locate oneself politically, socially, intellectually, philosophically, culturally, ‘racially’ and emotionally’, without being exotified and objectified. Reading Zilma’s experience through Suki Ali (2003: 81), it becomes clear that hair ‘is a powerful statement of allegiance to... Blackness’. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the attractive elements of the black hair, several other studies (MacLin & Malpass, 2001; Khanna & Johnson, 2010; Khanna, 2011) have demonstrated how, on a daily basis, black bodies are interrupted, impacted upon and in some ways violated through their hair. For example, Diane (black, female) revealed that ‘Being with a black girl for them [white Poles] is something exotic, it’s like showing people *‘hey I’ve a black girl’*. She added, ‘when I met few boys the first thing they asked was *‘can we have a picture?’*. It’s like a kind of souvenir for them’. Enzo (mixed-race, male) shared a similar experience of how he felt about some of his white colleagues who treated him differently because he is ‘black’. According to Enzo, ‘they just wanted to have black friend and post photo on Instagram. I can tell the kind of people they are’. For Julius, (mixed-race, male): ‘It’s like being a tourist everyday as long as you’re here’.

In the above dialogues, there is a sense in which the white gaze appears to be a burden on the racialised bodies, as first highlighted by Fanon (1952). Taking a lead from Said (1978), it is through the prism of *Orientalism* (1978) that Mikey's culture and existence are seen as exotic, in some ways backward, 'un-European'. The essence of being an orient in the Polish psyche was strongly captured by Julius' feeling about being seen as a tourist in his own country. This not only put a racialised body out of place, but subject it to 'a process of 'confiscation'' (Yancy, 2008a: 843) whilst the white gaze elides any responsibility for holding the black body captive. It is a perception that is inherited through poisonous assumptions and bodily perceptual practices called "white gaze" that perceived Zilma and Diane's black bodies differently (Yancy, 2013). This is one of many instances in which 'Polish gaze', inherited through 'white gaze' appears as a burden; a frustration; and an unspoken longing for invisibility expressed by many of the respondents.

The mistaken bodies

Assumption of monoracial or mistaken identity as microaggression occurs when a person of colour is assumed or mistaken to be of a different racial group, commonly non-white group. Mistaken identity was endorsed by all the mixed-race respondents introduced above. The feeling of not belonging or mistaken of identity is not new and not specific to Poland, it is part of a global repertoire of how racism is reproduced. This shares sentiment from previous study (Nadal et. al, 2013: 192) where, in the public places such as bus stops, bars, galleries and often in restaurants, white Polish people would speak to mixed-race Poles in different languages particularly non-Polish, assuming that they cannot be Polish, therefore, cannot speak Polish. This gives mixed-race Poles a feeling that most white Polish people do not see them the way they see other white Poles.

Patricia Williams (1991: 74) has argued that, as a black person, one could easily 'lose a piece of yourself' when navigating the traumatic everyday selfhood journey 'into the heart of whiteness'. Julius' experience of mistake of identity typified Williams' argument when he was having a conversation with a professor of sociology who told Julius: *'you know but I would never say you're black, I would say you're Arab'*, and then asked Julius if he would like to talk to a psychiatrist about his complaint about being treated like a foreigner. As a newly qualified medical doctor, Julius also shared another element of mistake of identity by his white colleagues:

I was once going to assist some Polish doctors during surgery and heard one doctor calling another one to tell him that a refugee [referring to Julius] came in here. I ended up in a surgery room with them... (Julius, mixed-race, male).

In Poland, faces come with what David Goldberg (2001: 7) describes as 'geo-phenotypes', the assigning of phenotypes to a geographical origin, with nativism seen as the 'intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign...connections' (Higham, 1955: 4). Nativism, to

a significant degree, is based on nationalistic ideology that justifies the fear ‘that some influence originating abroad threaten[s] the very life of the nation from within’. More than that, it is the power of nativism, as De Genova (2005: 60) affirms, that defends the national identity from perceived threats of the foreigner within and creates the distinction between native-ness and foreign-ness that is at the core of exclusion experienced by many mixed-race Poles. The sense of ‘geo-phenotypes’ (Goldberg, 2001) and ‘nativism’ (Higham, 1955: 4; Sanchez, 1997; Perez Huber et. al., 2008) thus provide a critical view on how perceived racial differences constructs many of the respondents as ‘non-native’ to Poland, therefore, not belonging to a ‘Polish identity’ that has historically been cemented to social constructions of whiteness (Saito, 1997; De Genova, 2005). For Sophia, it is always about the language – ‘*Oh you speak good Polish*’. Sophia did not know why a fellow Polish person would give her such ‘compliment’; she thought it was because she speaks Polish exceptionally well, but later related this to her skin colour [mixed-race] and ‘I realised this is why I get this question’ (Sophia, mixed race, female). Sophia, again, talked about how people, including close friends, would make racist jokes; often used for comedy or to ‘entertain others’ (Pierce et. al, 1978: 62-88) or banters about her physiognomic features such as skin colour and hair:

There were times when I walked on the street here, people will point at me, people will call me *Murzyn* [negro] next to group of people and they will laugh at me, that was my experience ...it’s like they’re trying to break you. I’m not saying that it’s kind of conspiracy, but you just notice that they’re just trying to break you, break your spirit and put you in one place...people will joke about my colour...like *if we turn off the light...if we throw something in your hair*... They’re just daft jokes. (Sophia, mixed race, female)

For Sophia, these supposed ‘jokes’ are not funny or benign. However, the apparent innocuousness means that there is a difficulty in challenging these racialised jokes. Such experiences were commonplace amongst the research participants and, as Sophia shows, many found ways in which to respond to microaggressions. A common microaggression reported by all of the Black mixed-race participants, was that of being ‘complimented’ on their grasp of the Polish language. Recall Sophia’s suggestion earlier that it is important for Polish people to say ‘they can’t be Polish’. Here we see that microaggressions act to police the borders of Polishness, to keep in place the image of a white Poland. However, just as Sophia spoke of finding ways to speak back, Danni also shows an ability to exercise agency as he tells them, ‘yours too’. Other participants spoke of being stared at constantly, and being subject to, for example, stereotypes about their sexual prowess. Whilst in some instances this was deemed to be advantageous, ultimately participants were left with an abiding feeling that white Polish people were often only attracted to them due to racialised stereotypes: the perpetuated feeling of outsider-ness. Consistent with wider research on

microaggressions, it was clear that for black/mixed-race people in Poland, microaggressions are not innocuous or insignificant but, given their ubiquity, pose a threat to their wellbeing.

Black bodies as pathologised bodies

The experience of microaggression that is pathologising occurs when people of colour's identity or lived experiences are viewed as psychologically abnormal. Sue et. al. (2007: 282) describe pathologising as communication styles that are in many ways confirming that the styles of communication by the dominant/white culture are the most ideal. According to Sue and his colleagues (2007), pathologising black experiences usually occur through the presentation of a black person as someone confrontational, or with personality disorder. Reading pathology as a form of stereotype, I extend the understanding of pathology to stereotype based on the perception of Africa and negative connotations attached to blackness. This would include expression of perceived criminality and intellectual inferiority (Nadal et. al, 2013: 192) that evoked fear and suspicion of people of colour (Fox, 2013: 1878).

The experience of pathologising was a major conversation in the narratives shared by Amil and Ezera (both black, male, from the focus group), when they went shopping. Amil explained that they wanted to take a lift and there was an old Polish lady in front of them, she got into the lift and they got in behind her. However, as soon as the old lady realised that she was in the presence of two black male, according to Ezera, 'the old lady looked at us and stepped out of the lift and then turned around and looked at us again, spoke some words in Polish and walked away'. Both Amil and Ezera perceived a sense of discomfort on the lady's face. Judith Butler (1993) has observed that the visual field plays a significant role in the question of race through the reproduction of a 'circuit of paranoia' that marks the black body as a body of danger against the purity of whites. This process in itself, 'is a racial formation, an episteme, hegemonic and forceful' (Butler, 1993: 17) that helps to understand the situation described by Amil and Ezera. George Yancy's (2017: 17-50) account as a black man in a lift with a white woman shows the understanding of the black man as a monster, an experience similar to Amil and Ezera's. Despite Amil and Ezera's harmless actions, in the white lady's racialised worldview, they remained an instance of black monster. Reading Butler (1993) through Yancy's (2017) conceptualisation of the black monster stereotype, I extend Amil and Ezera's situation to white believe of "Blackness is evil, not to be trusted, and guilty as such." (Yancy, 2017: 19). Seen 'through the distorting Black imago' (Yancy, 2008a: 848), Amil and Ezera's situation has layers of racial complexity. Within the interstitial space (lift) of 'a racially saturated field of visibility' (Butler, 1993: 15), both Amil and Ezera's experiences demonstrated one of those instances where racism is grounded in a historically racialised view,

through which the old lady saw blackness as an object of suspicion, judged guilty a priori (Yancy, 2008a: 845). The judgement, according to Gooding-Williams, (1993: 158), came from ‘a Black male body ‘supersaturated with meaning, as they have been relentlessly subjected to characterization by newspapers, newscasters, popular film, television programming, public officials, policy pundits and other agents of representation’. Within the same context of the lift, emerges the white woman’s consciousness of the meaning of blackness, such meaning possesses all that is foreign to her; that is, a meaning that is capable of triggering phobia and ambivalence. Yancy (2008: 852) says it is ‘enlarging symbolic order of ‘Blackness as evil’, was a diagnosis that Fanon (1952: 151) already identified when he wrote about the presence of blackness as ‘a phobogenic’ and, ‘a stimulus to anxiety’. Whilst recounting this racialised fear and suspicion of people of colour (Fox, 2013; Fox & Mogilnicka, 2017), Amil also described many other anxieties white Poles exhibit in the presence of black people:

Even kids, sometimes they do the same thing, for example, we were walking in the street and noticed some kids started whispering to their mum in Polish while pointing and looking at us... (Amil, black, male).

Nafisa (black, female) reported the same experience whenever she tried to use an automated cash machine, ‘I noticed people behind me often looked at me as if I’m unable to operate the machine because I’m black’. In this incident, Nafisa’s racialisation comes from the stereotype of black people often portrayed generally as having ‘less command of technology’ (Pierce et. al, 1978: 62-88).

However, it was through Achille (the respondent introduced at the opening of this chapter) that one sees the cumulative effect of racialised fear and suspicion of black bodies. Achille’s account needs to be theorised from a perspective in which the black body is reduced to instances of whites’ imagination of the blacks. This is clearly identifiable in Elijah Anderson’s (2011; 2012; 2015) iconic ghetto phenomenon:

In the absence of routine social contact between blacks and whites, stereotypes can rule perceptions, creating a situation that estranges blacks. In these circumstances, almost any unknown black person can experience social distance, especially a young black male— not because of his merit as a person but because of the color of his skin and what black skin has come to mean as others in the white space associate it with the iconic ghetto (Anderson, 2015: 13).

According to Yancy (2008), the above construction of black bodies evolves from complex social and historical whites’ self-construction through complex acts of defamation of black bodies. For example, black bodies are being known as troubled and troubling for white society because of inherent criminality (Tate, 2016). Whilst not many Poles have contact with black bodies on a daily

basis, this does not mean that Poles have never encountered black bodies. In Poland, black bodies are often encountered via racialised crime through western, mainly the US, television shows. Both Dixon & Linz (2000) provide an analysis of a random sample of local television news programming to assess representations of blacks and whites in the US. In doing so, they reveal that black people are more likely to be portrayed as lawbreakers and whites are significantly more likely to be portrayed as law defenders on television news. Also, Entman (1992) found that violent crimes committed by blacks received substantial coverage of news stories. This leads Oliver, Jackson, Moses, & Dangerfield (2004: 89) to suggest that ‘people’s prototypes of criminal suspects are not simply more likely to be African American, but are also likely to have facial features (e.g., skin tone, noses, mouths) that are more closely associated with Afrocentric rather than Eurocentric phenotypes’. All this supports contemporary white stereotypes of black as a body saturated with crime (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997: 380), and formed part of the presumption from which Achille’s accusers must have drawn their conclusion that he is a criminal. From this perspective of perceived black criminality, I extend Achille’s experience to the assumed black inherent criminality, in Poland, often consumed through the public media that represents the black bodies with supersaturated meanings (Gooding-Williams, 1993: 158).

When Du Bois (1994: 9[1903]) wrote ‘the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line’, perhaps he was not thinking about Polish-African relations. But he knew that the condition created around the idea of being racialised black would always put people of colour in situations where they are often suspects.

The denial of multiracial reality

Denial of multiracial reality is a form of racial microaggression that occurs when people of colour’s lived experiences are invalidated by whites. Also, known as ‘Get Over It!’. The theme of denial of multiracial reality was exemplified by respondents who were often told by others, mainly whites, to “get over it” and not to be too sensitive about race. This is something that resonates strongly in the lived experience shared by Sophia:

... before I started reacting to this, people often say that it’s just a joke and not become too sensitive to it, but I have learnt to do so. It was for these reasons I have eliminated some people from my life...I hate it when people come up to me and say racist stuff and pretend that nothing has happened... it’s often about my skin-tone, music and basketball. (Sophia, mixed race, female)

Sophia explained that during the history class in her high school days, she had no voice when it comes to topics on slavery, not only because she was the only black person in the class, but whenever she raised any extensive issues around the topic, she often got told that she is too

sensitive or exaggerating the situation or should distance herself from the topic. One way of contextualising Sophia's isolated situation is through Sue's (2010) understanding of *microinvalidation* as an area of microaggressions that 'exclude, negate, or nullify' the lived experiences of the people of colour (2010: 37). Because microinvalidation is a way of invalidating and eliminating black reality, it is part of a larger machinery that validates and reproduces white superiority (Solorzano, 1998; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015: 313). Experiences with microinvalidations should be understood, psychologically as damaging things said to people of colour in daily conversation. They are often a dismissal of lived experiences as either not true or irrelevant. Sophia's experience of microinvalidations, as a Polish example, is not completely departed from the western instances of the phenomenon as they often follow the same pattern of dismissal of lived experiences of people of colour.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a brief history of the conceptual development of racial microaggression, according to its theorists. This history has provided me with a significant opportunity to build my work in Poland on the conceptual foundations created by these theorists. I have also learnt that theorising microaggressions from a CRT perspective helped to illuminate the experiences of people of colour in Poland, as in the US and the UK, where they face similar challenges that demonstrate systemic, institutional and most importantly ideological forms of racism. In this chapter, I take a CRT approach to evaluate the manifestation of race and racism, as they emerge subtly in dominant white places of teaching and working environment. By interrogating the micro-institutional practices that maintain patterns of racist exclusion in higher education, this chapter illuminates what Heidi Mirza (2018) called 'racialised institutional 'flashpoints'', are moments when Black and Minority Ethnic students come up against systemic institutional and racialised discrimination (Mirza, 2018: 187).

Although the chapter has only focussed on racial microaggressions, it is important to acknowledge other areas of microaggressions such as gender, sexual orientation, and disability microaggressions equally have detrimental effects on black people who are women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and individuals with disabilities (Sue, 2010; Platt & Lenzen, 2013). The overarching experiences of the respondents discussed in this chapter are premised on the impact of white visualisation of black bodies, it is a form of visualisation that implicates the darkness of the skin as a site of non-white presence, pollution and contempt (Tate, 2016). All of this sits within the conceptualisation of race and racism, but only evolved through different forms of microaggression. The major implications of racial microaggressions are not reducible to its effects on the victim,

they also prevent white people from perceiving a different racial reality. It is such complexity of contemporary racism that leads to an understanding that race and racism are never silenced but moved to 'less formal domains for the most part, embedded in structures, without being explicitly named, where it is more difficult to identify, more ambivalently related to, more ambiguous' (Goldberg, 2010: 90).

Chapter 7: Attraction and Repulsion – Bedfellows in Racial Desire

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have set out the understanding of race and racism in Poland. In this chapter, I want to examine whether black bodies are perceived as attractive in Poland and in what ways and under what circumstances are they also found repulsive? The chapter begins by looking briefly at the notion of the stranger, using Georg Simmel's account of the stranger. In doing so, the chapter explores some aspects of black/mixed-race men's relationships with (white) Polish women and the broader Polish society, arguing that the ontology of blackness in Poland is understandable when contextualised within the constitution of strangeness, a phenomenon associated with those who do not authentically belong to a group assumed to be native. In its more radical manifestation, the native group often assumed to consist of white, European population. The main goal of this chapter is to situate blackness within the narrative of the stranger who is the racial and cultural Other excluded or marginalised from the 'in-group' or 'host society' (Marotta, 2012: 586). In the analysis of the empirical data, the chapter identifies and focusses on *Attractiveness/Sexuality*; *Threat*; *Curiosity*; and *Absence of contact* all related to the conceptualisation of black bodies as strange bodies in Poland.

Since the publication of Simmel's influential seminal essay, 'The Stranger', there has been a massive shift in the understanding of a stranger. In his essay, Georg Simmel provides a broader analysis of a stranger as one who is both an insider as well as being an outsider in a cross-cultural world. Reading the experiences of the stranger in contemporary terms typified by globalisation, 'multiculturalism' (Modood, 2005) and 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007), it seems 'strangeness is no longer a temporary condition to be overcome, but a way of life' (Harman, 1988: 44). The social, economic and cultural conditions of globalisation, 'multiculturalism' and 'super-diversity' have led to the emergence of a new type of stranger that is defined less by its cultural difference and more by its mobility and multiple identities. Nonetheless, the notion of a stranger still, to a degree, relies on a distinction between who are the 'locals' and who are the strangers (Beck, 1996: 386).

Reading the stranger phenomenologically, Alfred Schutz (1944) notes that the stranger is one who struggles with assimilation and accommodation because he or she does not share the worldview of the native group. It is precisely this clash of worldviews that makes the stranger 'essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to members

of the approached group' (Schutz, 1944: 502). The strangeness, subsequently, becomes restriction and search for freedom caused by the loss of self-security, disorientation and directionless (Muller, 1987). Perhaps, this is what makes Kristeva (1991) to read strangeness as a notion within the self, a personal deep sense of being, as distinct from institutionalised racialisation or the historical, cultural and racial differentiation. Datta (2009) takes issues with such argument as there is an aspect of strangeness that is mediated through 'associations with those perceived in positions of power within the hierarchies of race and ethnicity' (2009: 355).

What seems clear is that there are a series of theoretical discourses within the composition of the stranger and what appears persistence in the debate is that none of these theoretical discourses could define the stranger in its entirety. Therefore, situating the experience of a black-stranger in the post-communist Polish society would be an emergence of a new type of stranger, at least, not one imagined by Harman (1988), but more of a stranger imagined by Beck's (1996) distinction between who are the 'locals' and who are not, and Datta's (2009) racial hierarchies. To a very large extent, I take seriously the implication of Schutz's (1944) construction of a stranger as a person who is questionable at all times.

Whilst the aforementioned studies illustrate how Simmelian dialectics of the stranger could be contextualised in multiple ways, within Simmel's phenomenon of the stranger, 'distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near' (Simmel, 1950: 402). This suggests that, to a degree, the stranger is not actually a stranger. Although there is a social distance between the stranger and his host-community, Simmel identifies commonalities between them. The idea of being a stranger and being closed to the host-community resonates with one of the research participants, Aaden (black, male), when he talked about proximity and distance in the Polish society '... if they don't know you, they'll keep their distance. If they know you, they're very good with you Polish people are like this, they can stand by your side when you need help.' Aaden's experience suggests that a stranger is close both physically and in an abstract sense because he shares some common characteristics with his host-community. For instance, they may share a similar social and occupational identity, or a common public/working space. The stranger is seen every day, he performs the same daily routine similar to his host-community, therefore, he is no longer strange to his host-community. These universal features, Simmel suggests, 'extend beyond him or us and connect us only because they connect a great many people' (1950: 406).

All observations offered so far have focused on generic conceptualisation of the stranger. In the following section, I turn to accounts of race-construction of the stranger in contemporary Poland. Whilst there is an element of truth in Simmel's understanding of the shared universal feature that connects many people, I want to look at strangeness from a few perspectives related to being black in a white dominated society. A good way to start unpacking this is through the lens of stigmatisation. As it will be revealed in the empirical sections, what kept reoccurring in the discussions with almost all the participants in this study was stigma, as lived experiences of individuals who are barred from full social acceptance.

Social psychological research has long considered how individuals are stigmatised. Their focus has been the ways in which dominant groups negatively judge minority groups (Oyserman & Swim, 2001). The judgement, often emotional, is based on prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes about a variety of social groups and the effects of these stereotypes on the groups (Crocker & Major, 1989). The most common and noticeable examples have been the negative stereotypes about black people (Brigham, 1974; Hartsough & Fontana, 1970; Karlins, Coffman, & Walters, 1969); and women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968).

One of the most widely cited works on stigma was Erving Goffman's was *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* where Goffman offers a definition of stigma as 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting' (1986: 2). Goffman writes about the interaction between normal and stigmatised persons. He argues that these interactions occur at various levels that include – look, glance, comments and name-calling. He notes that it is through these social interactions that an individual 'learns and incorporates the stand-point of the normal', and it is through the same interactions that individuals come to understand how they are likely to be placed in a stigmatised or non-stigmatised group (Goffman, 1986: 32). For Goffman, stigma does not exist in a vacuum, 'Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of these categories' (1986: 2). This powerful statement pinpoints the emergence of race and racism, perhaps not as an individual personality because no one is born a racist. However, social interactions and societies make people racists. It is a confirmation that a racist project is part of nation-building. What is particularly interest about Goffman's arguments on stigma is his focus on social interaction defined as 'social situations ... in which two or more individuals are physically in one another's response presence' (Goffman, 1982: 2). Interactional spaces such as 'a local bar, a small shop floor, a domestic kitchen...factories, airports, hospitals, and public thoroughfares' (1982: 4) serve as a perfect setting for Goffman's observation of stigma.

Stigma, Goffman (1986) observes, draws together all sort of ‘stigma figures’, such as ‘a cripple’, ‘a prostitute’, ‘a homosexual’, ‘a Negro’, ‘a Jew’ (Goffman, 1986). In drawing together of these figures, Goffman recognises the white male norm as the ‘general identity values’ that cast ‘shadow on the encounters encountered everywhere in daily living’ of the stigmatised figures (1986: 129). Drilling deeper into the figures and the character of the stigmatised, Goffman points at the racial figures such as the ‘educated northern Negro’ (p. 44) who finds themselves mistaken for a Southern Negro, ‘urban lower class Negroes’ (Goffman, 1986: 44); ‘black-skinned Negroes who have never passed publicly’ (1986: 74); ‘the light-skinned Negro’ who ‘can never be sure what the attitude of a new acquaintance will be’ (1986: 14). Goffman argues that all these characters are ‘all likely on occasion to find themselves functioning as stigmatized individuals’ (1986: 146). Goffman has a lot to say about stigma and in doing so, he made important claims in the *Stigma* – first, that stigma is ‘generated in social contexts’ (1986: 138); second, that people learn to manage the effects of being socially stigmatised, through strategies of identity management, such as passing and concealment; third, that stigmatisation is historically specific in its formation. Lastly, and the most essential, that stigma serves ‘as a means of formal social control’ (1986: 139). In effect, Goffman transformed stigma into ‘a remarkable organizing concept’ (Hacking, 2004: 18).

Whilst all the above works on stigmatisation, including Goffman’s addressed issues around stigma and the character of the stigmatised, they hardly consider the way in which stigmatisation bear on race and cultural repertoires (Lamont & Mizrachi, 2012). This is the challenge that Imogen Tyler (2018) takes on through the black ontology. Reading Goffman’s *Stigma* through the lens of ‘Black Sociology’, Tyler (2018) seeks to develop historical understandings of stigma by showing how being black in the United States in 1960 was to be ‘smeared with the stigma of racial subordination. She argues that by putting black bodies in white-only spaces, black people sought to become ‘the studied humiliations’ (2018: 746) organised through ‘racial terrorism’ (Davis, 2004: 496). In rethinking and re-routing Goffman, Tyler (2018) questions Goffman’s silence on racisms that were unfolding all around him, but not fully reflecting or engaging with them in his works:

The account of stigma which emerges through this Black genealogy of stigma thinking challenges the individualism of psychological approaches to social problems, exposes the limits of Goffman’s white normative perspective, and troubles ‘race neutral’ forms of interactional analysis. (Tyler, 2018: 761).

What I am going to draw attention to in the next section is the people’s struggles against the social structures that produce them as ‘markedly inferior’ (Du Bois, 1916: 86), not fully engaged with by the society is an instance of what Du Bois described as the ‘National Stigma’ of racism (Du Bois, 1916: 86). In doing so, my argument departs from Goffman’s and other psychological analysis of

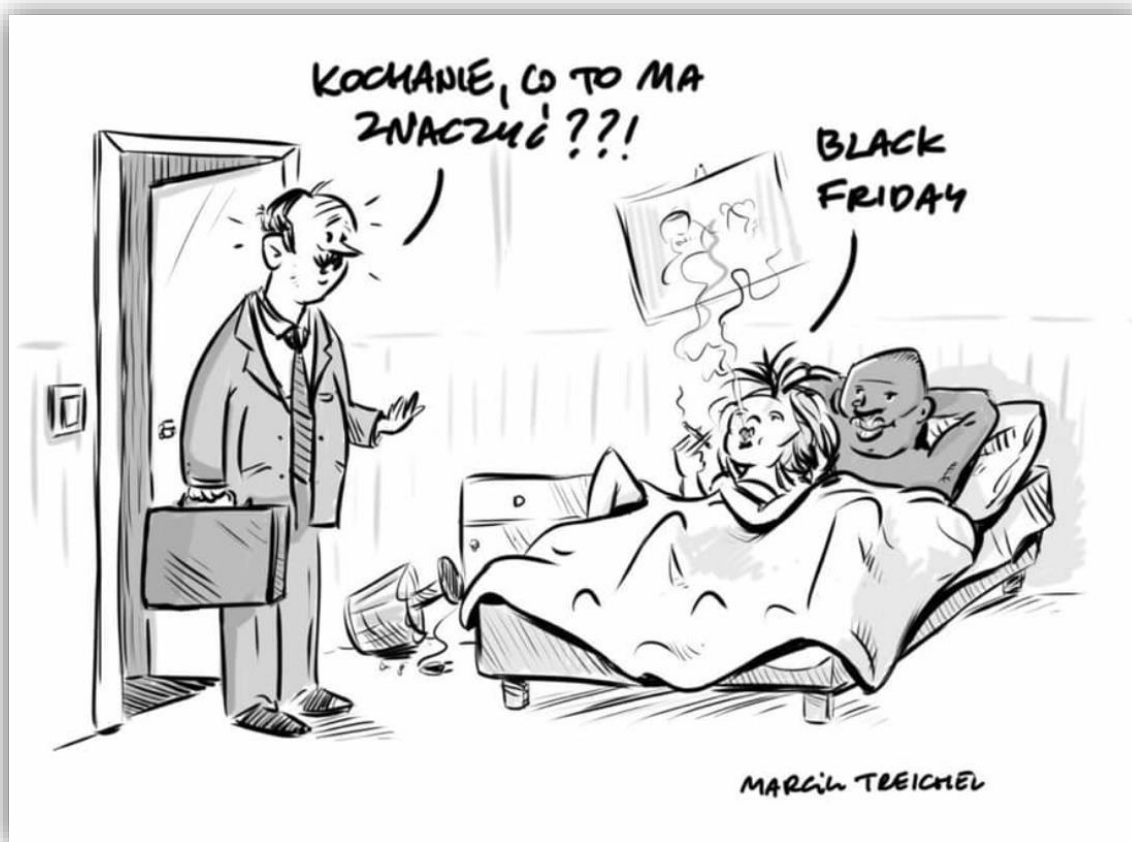
stigma. Rather, I read the experiences of this study's participants through Tyler's (2018) lens of 'Black Sociology' – the framework that brings 'racism to the front and centre of sociological understandings of stigma' and 'transforms existing understandings of stigma'. (Tyler, 2018: 748).

Attractiveness/Sexuality: contextualising black bodies

Contextualising Simmelian stranger in terms of love or desirable relationship could be conflictual in Poland, as Rudolf Otto notices, 'That which frightens me also attracts me' (1968: 43), implying that looking at black men from the perspective of a stranger could bring both distasteful and fascinating experiences for Polish women. This already implies a black man as a problematic object of desire (Mercer, 1991). Generally, love-relationship could be a complicated process. Being in a relationship with someone outside one's own culture is not only complicated but perceived as dangerous because strangers 'bring the outside into the inside' and could be chaotic (Bauman, 1990: 146). The chaos Bauman (1990: 146) recognises here is an assumption of disruption to an established order of things. The charge of suspicion of chaos results in ambivalent attitudes towards the black man-stranger, and such attitudes could range from fascination to dislike, that is, being seen as a stranger and being attractive at the same time (Zabek, 2016). For some Polish women, this group of men are 'fantastic', 'alluring', but also causes fear and anxiety (Otto, 1968: 9-11). Hence, the ambivalence means uncertainty which is felt as discomfort that carries with it a sense of danger (Bauman, 1990).

On the one hand, the ambivalence has opened up a process whereby the black man-stranger has managed to navigate his ways around the Polish society. On the other hand, it has led to several complications which could be understood as a social phenomenon, but often racialised based on long-held Polish/European racialisation of black bodies. It is this ambivalence, the mixture of positive and negative feeling towards blackness, that Bauman (1990: 146) understands as the brutal exposure of fragility of a most secure of separations. Seen from this perspective, black man as a stranger, usually of different 'race', or 'culture' is seen as someone different, foreign and from abroad, therefore he is a 'new-thing', a paradigm of attraction and repulsion – bedfellows in racial desire.

Figure 7.1: A representation of blackness in the celebration of 'Black Friday', shopping holiday



Source: Marcin Treichel

The black man, although different, is perceived as mysterious and therefore attractive to many. With the help of already established racialised images of black men, in western Europe, as being physical, strong, masculine, with natural ability to dance better than white men, some Polish women, as Zabek (2016: 139) assumes are 'ready to do anything to pick up an African'. This assumption is endorsed by Borkowicz (2015):

Negroes were especially sensational. Africans from the Congo, Nigeria, Gabon, and many other colonial countries were in seventh heaven. In their own countries they were second-category citizens treated by the Europeans with contempt, whereas in the capital of Poland they not only created quite a stir and were handing out autographs, but the beautiful white women wanted to date them as well. Some Warsaw dodgers even covered their faces and hands with black paste pretending to be Negroes (Borkowicz, 2015, cited in Średziński, 2017: 132).²³

²³ It needs to be mentioned that the incident described by Borkowicz (2015) mainly occurred in the 80s and early 90s in Poland.

Some of my discussions with the sub-Saharan African men often began with some aspects of erotic Occidentalism, as a fantasy about white women as being ‘erotic, careless, and constantly sex-starved’ (Khosravi, 2009: 607). However, there is more to this in the relationships between Polish women and sub-Saharan African men. In many ways, Polish women often act as ‘Culture Brokers’²⁴ ‘principally one who “bridges gaps” (cultural differences) (Jezewski, 1990: 497-498) between sub-Saharan Africans and the complicated Polish society. In the process, these Polish cultural brokers help sub-Saharan African students, refugees, athletes and other immigrants to adapt to their new environment. Relating this to my empirical data, Harry, one of the respondents, is an ex-professional footballer, who has lived in Poland for 16 years. He admitted that without the support of his Polish wife, he would have moved to another country:

... despite the fact that I came here as a professional footballer, without a Polish woman, I don’t know where I would be today. Maybe I would have left Poland. After speaking to a woman [now his Polish wife] who accepted me for who I am and can see the future with me. She believed in something she never sees.... Even though the difference in skin-colour is there, but they never see you in that way, many of them will stand-up and fight for you. These are things I’ve seen and experienced, if a Polish woman likes you, she’ll go to the moon for you. The reason why many black men are still in Poland is because of the assistance from mainly Polish women, this is why I’m here today, if not for them, I would have been elsewhere. It is because of this kind of people that I feel like staying here and do good things for Poland as a Polish citizen. (Harry, black, male)

Harry claimed that his football career ended due to discrimination and racism he faced from mainly men, including players from his own team. As an activist now campaigning against racism in Poland, Harry uses his experience to highlight the problem faced by many black men and how they often have to draw on support from Polish women who would ‘go to the moon for you’ and it is for this reason that Harry, now a Polish citizen, perhaps acquired through his wife, would like to stay in Poland to ‘do good things for Poland as a Polish citizen’. In Harry’s lived experience, race plays a minor role in a relationship between black men and Polish women who are prepared for marriage commitment. Whilst this may be Harry’s experience, elsewhere race is often a bone of contention when it comes to interracial relationship in Poland (Zabek, 2016).

Harry is not alone in the view that some Polish women transcend race, Achille (black, male) shared a similar sentiment during one of the interviews: ‘The Polish woman is the most important person, I think, in the world. Really! ...In Poland, ...the women are so good’. When Achille talked about

²⁴ Cultural brokering is the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change. Although Jezewski (1990) and Jezewski & Sotnik (2001: 25) use this concept within Nursing & Health care setting, cultural broking is equally applicable in situations where foreign individuals find themselves in a not readily accessible cultural milieu.

Polish women being good, he was not referring to all Polish women, but many Polish women that assisted him during his problems. He went on to say:

...if I'll have 5 Polish friends, I'll have 4 girls, if I'll have 10 friends, I'll have 9 girls, if I'll have 100 Polish friends, I'll have 90 or 99 girls, not [because of] sex, we're not in relationship, they're just friends, but they helped me, they helped me (Achille, black, male).

Both Harry and Achille echoed Gołębiowska's (2009) remarks that women are usually found to display higher levels of favourable attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic, racial, religious or sexual minorities and express more approval for their full participation in the society. As Gołębiowska (2009) points out, Polish women are more supportive than men of the rights for immigrants, and appear more open towards diversity, more supportive and inclusive. They are most likely to appear conscious of human and civil rights, more sympathetic towards people who have been victims of exclusion. This finding is reminiscent of other various studies on attractiveness and race. For example, Lewis (2012) found that when Asian, Black and White faces were rated by white British women, they found black male faces most attractive. Burke et al. (2013) reported that the perception of masculinity plays a crucial role in black men's attractiveness, and Wade et al. (2004) confirmed that black faces were perceived as the most masculine, dominant and strong. Stepanova & Strube (2018) drew on a slightly similar conclusion in their study that showed mixed-race faces as the most attractive; followed by black faces and then white faces perceived as the least attractive. In doing so, they provided 'additional evidence to support the assertion that Black male faces are universally perceived as more attractive than White faces' (Elena et al, 2018: 15). Taken together, whilst race, that is the difference in skin-colour, plays important role in the level of attractiveness in white women, black men are strongly desired by white women due to the darkness of their skin and physical appearance. The reason for this has been attributed to sexual dimorphism in skin colour (Madrigal & Kelly, 2006; van den Berghe & Frost, 1986). Whilst the above argument may be correct, there is a sense in which white Polish people are only attracted to blackness due to racialised stereotypes that reinforced otherness.

Harry and Achille's comments about Polish women need to be considered consciously, especially where sex-talk is involved, usually carries more weight when black men talk about social interaction with white women and vice versa. As Dion et al. (1972: 285) point out, 'A person's physical appearance, along with his sexual identity is the personal characteristic most obvious and accessible to others in social interaction'. It is within this context of social interaction that the desiring of black men as opposite sex is being defined based on the masculinity of the body and darkness of the skin (Lloyd, 2003). This observation may explain why some Polish women find many black men attractive. On the flip side, it is equally within the same discourse of social interaction that

the stereotype of black men emerges, as explored by Tunzvi (1994) who claimed to have had first-hand experience with sub-Saharan African men:

It is widely believed that a black man's sexual needs are greater than a white man's. Basing on my experience, I can only confirm this opinion... Sometimes I get the impression that they are like animals. It is difficult for me to say whether their sexual needs are greater than ours, or whether we only pretend to have everything under control. In any case, they externalise them more than we do (Tunzvi, 1994: 67-68).

Tunzvi's (1994) assessment of black men's sexuality is not only animalistic but contextualised racially. Alluding to race-science, she argues that black men from sub-Saharan Africa are biologically and sexually different from white European men assumed to have less sexual desires. Rather than seeing sexual interaction as 'a whole web of discourse' (Foucault, 1998: 26) that includes women's exploration of their erotic capital (Hakim, 2010; 2011), Tunzvi (1994) reduces sub-Saharan African men's sexuality to just being black. All that needs to be shown here is that wherever one finds black men talking about attractiveness in relation to Polish women, such discourses are often reduced to 'sex-race phantasm' (Mercer, 1991: 194), as if black men are not capable of expressing gentle emotion, admiration and fragility as seen in the cases of Harry and Achille. It seems to have become conventional wisdom that only white men could express such qualities.

Whilst I think Tunzvi's (1994) analysis of black men is compelling, I share with Hakim (2010: 500) the view that sex appeal is about personality and style, femininity or masculinity, a way of being in the world, a characteristic of social interaction, but often mediated through stereotype when it comes to black men. Fanon (1952: 160) deployed the term 'negro-phobogenesis' to describe the point where the personality of black men disappears or not recognised, 'but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is turned into a penis. He *is* a penis' (Fanon, 1952: 131). Fanon's aim here is to remind us that such description could stimulate a white girl, but at the same time causes horror and lust as some forms of ambivalence asserted by Tunzvi (1994) and reproduced in the wider Polish society. The reduction of black man to penis is a long-existing perception based on the European assumption that 'Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of the penis, then it is the sexual potency' (Fanon, 1952: 131), hence the Polish stereotype of black men as people with raging hormones, cruel and aggressive, a potential sex offender in a modern city (Kloskowska, 1962: 193). In this instance, the concept of race science continues to structure the domain of Polish social life.

Kobena Mercer (1991: 187) furthers this by noting that the process involved in the stereotype of black male is an ideology of reproduction of "colonial fantas[ies]" that "look" and "fix" the black subject in its place as an object of fear for white men and object of fear and fantasies for white

women. The origin of this, according to Mercer (1991), could be found in the classical Greek nude sculptures that serve as ‘the standard’ for good, true and all that is beautiful. ‘In the Enlightenment aesthetics’, Mercer (1991: 192) observes, ‘the Negro was none of these’.

It is very probable that the myth that black men have higher stamina and lengthy in the pant evokes the feeling of ‘admiration and fear’ that Patricia Hill Collins (2004) links to the media representation of black masculinity through the hip-hop culture, often racialised ‘primarily as bodies ruled by brute strength and natural instincts, characteristics that allegedly fostered deviant behaviors of promiscuity and violence’ (Collins, 2004: 152). This equally contributes to the drive for some white Polish women seeking out black men resulted in the ‘negative stereotypes about the nature of black masculinity’ that hooks (2004: x) talks about as an overdetermined identity fashioned for black masculinity and allowed some black males to attach importance to such racialised identity. Both Collins and hooks’ idea on the nature of black men’s masculinity resonates with the following explanation by one of the respondents:

The attractiveness is based on many things – being different, being exotic and just pure likeness because this is something they’re not used to see on a daily basis, they mainly see black men on TV and there’s a connotation, you could say it’s a negative/positive connotation, that black men are endowed [indicating sexually] and when Polish women come across one in real-life, they’re like *Ob W'hao!* It’s something they’re not used to and willing to explore. Also, I could say that they genuinely like black men. (Cedric, black, male)

It is within the above narrative by Cedric that the representation of a black body as ‘a new thing’ emerged, not grounded in the Polish society, and rarely seen on the TV with various connotations. The idea of representing such ‘a new thing’, that is also not European, will ‘*W'hao*’ some people and threaten many in the Polish society. It is to this that I now turn.

Black body as a body of threat

Whilst the shared every day routines highlight some similarities between the black man and his host-Polish community, Simmel warns that these ties do not run deeper because ‘with the stranger one has only certain more general qualities in common, whereas the relation with organically connected persons is based on similarity of just those specific traits which differentiate them from the merely universal’ (1950: 405). A black body, as a strange body, is not organically connected to the Polish society, in Simmelian sense, it is assumed that he is ‘not bound up organically, through established ties of kingship, locality or occupation’ (Simmel, 1950: 405). This is also a conflictual point described as ‘the instinct driving to individuality and the instinct driving to dissolution into the community’ (cited in Watier, 1993: 71). Although the stranger is noticeable on a daily basis, his individuality, to a large extent, is attached to the distinction of his physical traits such as the shape

of his *body*, the colour of his *skin* and the thickness/curliness of his *hair*. I extend all this to be the point where the stranger, who is idiosyncratically different becomes a threat and also the point where racialisation intervenes in the affair of the Polish society. It is precisely the point where the black body becomes a questionable body.

When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his 'social identity' – to use a term that is better than 'social status' because personal attributes such as 'honesty' are involved, as well as structural ones, like 'occupation'. (Goffman, 1986: 12)

Evidently, there is a consensus among some of the respondents that many Polish women are prepared to take the risk of being with a stranger in Poland. In the excerpt below, Johnny (black, male) explained why some Polish women would like to take such risk:

They want to take a risk... first they're looking at you, you're black, you speak English...walking into a room, they don't need to tell people in the room that they're dating a foreigner. The fact that he's black shows that they're dating someone who's from a different country and everyone is interested to know how it is. How are black men or how's this person? But if it's white on white, it's like whatever... I think colour plays a part, it's the first unique thing that they'll point at, it's like, he's black, I want to know what black is! What's the experience like with a black person? (Johnny, black, male)

Here, Johnny associated blackness in Poland to uniqueness and risk, confirming the attraction and repulsion of a black person, who is unique because of difference, but equally risky because the body has become an element of question, an exposure to danger and a possibility of threat (Bauman, 1990). Danni repeated a similar explanation when he talked about how Polish girls/women perceived him as a mixed-race man:

I think [Polish] women feel attracted to my skin, not actually myself....as a teenager I was happy with this at parties, girls are usually happy to see me around, really happy to see me around... For Polish women, mixed [men] are so special, they see us as citizens of the world. (Danni, mixed-race, male)

Danni pointed out attractiveness to skin-colour, not attraction to the person, as a factor that draws Polish women towards mixed-race men. This supports the 'Biracial Beauty Stereotype' (Sims, 2012: 64), the idea that mixed race people are 'exotic', 'fascinating' 'exquisitely beautiful', and 'the more exotic the better' (Alibhai-Brown 2001; Bradshaw, 1992; Hope, 2010). The same notion of attraction was echoed by Enzo (mixed-race, male): 'I think Polish women find me pretty-attractive...'. Johnny, Danni, and Enzo attributed shade of their skin to 'rituals of "getting girls"' which 'allowed boys to find common ground in affirming each other's masculinity and positioned them as subjects who had a right to control what girls did with their bodies.' (Pascoe, 2011: 92).

However, for Julius (mixed-race, male) these ‘rituals of getting girls’ do not run deeper. Julius’ experience typifies 21st century tragic mulatto who happy marriage is beyond his reach. He explained why:

I had a girlfriend [white Polish], but didn’t work out because of the parents...for them I’m black, but if you want to reason with them, they said they have in their family, from one of their cousins, a mixed-race daughter and explained to my girlfriend that they don’t want her to go through what the parents of the mixed-race daughter went through with [Polish] people. They believe that this was a common sense and told their daughter to regain her senses by stopping meeting with me.... (Julius, mixed-race, male).

It has been argued that for ‘many black men sexuality remains the place where dysfunctional behavior first rears its ugly head’ (hooks, 2004: 63). This is understandable through the construction of black body as a body of fascination. The fascination of Polish women with black men is something that Zabek (2016) explores in great details when he notes that such fascination is simply based on the exoticness of the black Africans, hence, ‘a short-lived fascination’ (Zabek, 2016: 142). In his view, there is nothing serious, nothing deeper, often objectification targeted at black male, and reduces them to objects of sexual pleasure and gratification. The reason why the feeling does not run deeper is embedded elsewhere, somewhere outside Julius’ relationship, but more in the long-existing and broader experiences of mixed-race people who are never seen as European or white. A brief exploration of this could be interesting.

The description of the Polish population is a major influence. Following the effect of the first world war, the 1931 Polish Census showed at least 31% of the Polish population was from ethnic and national minorities backgrounds (Davies, 1981), consisted of mainly Ukrainian, German, Jewish, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Czech, Armenian, Hungarian, Slovakian, and Romanian. Also, the effect of the second world war resulted in the Polish population declaring their ethnicity and nationality as Polish (Brzoza & Sowa, 2007), making Communist Poland ethnically, culturally and religiously homogeneous (Davies, 1981; Snyder, 1998; Podemski, 2012). However, Poland’s accession to European Union had a dramatic, but less reported, effect on the Polish homogeneity as the 2011 Census confirmed 94% of the country’s population was ethnically and nationally Polish, with 2.2% declaring both their Polish and non-Polish ethno-national backgrounds; and only 1.5% said to be non-Polish (GUS, 2012).

All this suggests that as early as 1930s multi-ethnicity was a common site in Poland (Snyder, 2003), as its population was and still made up of many ethnic groups. However, ‘race’ has never been used to indicate the ethnicities of these groups. Therefore, the state categorisation seems problematic, as it is difficult to know the number of black/white mixed-race people in Poland

partly because the country is often presented as a homogeneous nation, with an assumption that all marriages in Poland are between people of the same racial background.

Contrary to the above categorisation of Poland as all white, the country remains one of the popular destinations, within CEE, for many people from sub-Saharan Africa, majority men, coming to Poland for educational reason (Chilczuk, 2001; Pedziwiatr & Balogun, 2018). As already detailed in chapter One, some students from sub-Saharan Africa found home and set up family life in Poland. Although seen as an exclusive country with difficult Slavic language and strict Catholic culture, opinions about Poland often differ when it comes to Polish women who assisted many black Africans to navigate the bureaucratic and complex Polish society and it is within such assistance emerged love relationships (Zabek, 2016: 138). Despite many ambiguities and ambivalence that may exist in such relationships, there has been an increase in the number of interracial relationships that resulted in a small bi-racial population that now exists alongside a small community of black people in Poland.

Given the above demographic that presents Poland as a reserve for white people (Balogun, 2019), Julius' narrative needs to be seen from the standpoint of being mixed-race in a white dominated society often with discursive constraints (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). I extend such constraints to the reproduction of category of nation that assumes everyone is white, Polish and therefore must follow an imposed Polish cultural expectation. Townsend et al. (2009: 186) have provided an extensive detail of the difficulties that mixed-race people experience, especially being in between cultures, where they are often compelled to "choose one" racial identity (Hall, 1992). Other studies contend that people of mixed-race backgrounds have an advantage in terms of their attractiveness (Rhodes et al., 2005), and in some circumstances, more attractive than white or black people. Their attractiveness, according to Lewis (2010: 1-2), has a biological explanation in heterosis - crossbreeding within species that leads to offspring that are genetically fitter than their European ancestry (white) and African ancestry (black). This suspiciously implies that people with diverse genetic backgrounds are fitter and attractive than those with less diverse backgrounds.

Several other studies have problematised race and attractiveness and the desire for 'Mulat' (Mullato) beauty. For example, the European concepts of beauty have always been based on notions of purity, delicacy, and physical frailty (Bush, 1990). Seen as the embodiment of beauty, whiteness has always remained the standard in which other forms of beauty are measured. In comparison, black beauty is viewed as being physical, immodest, an animal sensuality (Collins, 2004: 27) and the opposite of all that is white. However, it was the emergence of 'biracial baby boom' (Root, 1992), including a group of women who were neither black nor white with different

bargaining power that bridged the standard in which both white and black beauty was measured, in some ways, interrupted the dominant paradigm of whiteness as the embodiment of beauty. As Du Bois observed, this group of 'coloured' women 'became the medium through which two great races were united' (Cited in Genovese, 1976: 413-415) in slaveholding societies.

Both Robert Young's *Colonial Desire* (1995) and Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather* (1995) pioneering works examine early debates about mixed-race attractiveness, in doing so, they provide details on how 'Mulatto'²⁵ women whether slave or free, were generally viewed as being more sexually desirable, bringing their beauty closer to 'European' facial features, hair texture and lightness of skin colour (Bush, 1990). For these women, 'sexual objectification tends to defuse the perceived power of the object', and the lighter they are, the higher was the ranking on the social ladder (Mohammed, 2000: 30; Mathurin, 1974).

The mulatto female was relatively well placed in creole society price for her favours. For the dominant male group, applying made it clear that browns, being closer in physical appearance black, were the more desirable mates. In the absence of white of supply and demand thus gave mulatto women some bargaining (Mathurin, 1974: 422)

Along similar lines, Barbara Bush (1992) adds that 'White men remained "infatuated" with light-skinned coloured women. In some circumstances, preferred to the white men in terms of companionship and preferred as "house-keepers" instead of black or white women (Bush, 1990: 115). Their social ranking not only catapulted their social status, but Mark Pereira (1992) finds that in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, mixed-race women were becoming subjects for European painters focusing on the positioning of the mixed-race women in their works.

Whilst the above works suggest ample of evidence that confirmed the attractiveness as well as the social status of mixed-race women at least in the slaveholding societies, what is particularly interesting is their predicament of being in-between cultures where they struggled with the complexity of their identity. This is supported by Lucille Mathurin (1974) when she argues that the idea of mulatto attractiveness and social status may be slightly over-rated, as among the mulatto population were many in poverty, suffering from drunkenness, disorderliness and some were presented as society's vagabonds (Mathurin, 1974: 418). This resulted in the literary tragic mulatto²⁶

²⁵ The term 'Mulatto' coined in the late 16th century to describe people of mixed race. The 18th century racial classification schemes described a mulatto as a person who is of half European and half African. Mulatto has a different meaning at different times in different places. For instance, in the United States, a mulatto woman is referred to as 'woman of colour'; in Jamaica, a mulatto woman is called 'browning', the same woman is identified as 'red woman' in Trinidad, and 'mulata' in Latin societies (Mohammed, 2000: 24). To add to this complexity of description, Allsop (1996: 394) confirms that term was historically meant to be derogatory.

as a stereotype of mixed-race woman who is either enslaved or free but limited by her racial ambiguity. Tragic mulatto's racial ambiguity asserts itself in the realm of marriage where a mulatto is forbidden by law from marrying a white man, and by the hierarchy of race, cannot marry a black man (Clark, 2016: 260). Sex, love and marriage are at the heart of a mixed-race woman's social conditions and often connected to a dramatic revelation that leads to tragic mulatto. More than just a fiction, the problems of being mixed-race lie in identity. Rather than being recognised as a product constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin, solidarity and allegiance (Hall, 1996: 2). It is the long-standing definition of identity as 'natural' that is particularly problematic for of the perception of being black and the perception of being white that resulted in a discord with the society that prompts conflict with the self.

The above literary exercise suggests that contemporary studies about mixed-race attractiveness and preferential treatment are not a recent phenomenon, it was one of the major ways of navigating around even the most racist slaveholding societies. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that not all mixed-race individuals enjoyed the privilege or held the bargaining power to change their social status, as many were still in similar, if not exact, position as black women.

Recalling Julius' narrative, whilst it is true that some Polish women transcend race and racism, Julius' emotional experience proves otherwise. To understand Julius' experience, it is necessary first to understand what his ex-girlfriend's parents referred to as 'a common sense' in interracial relationship in Poland as a link to the tragic mulatto experience. Bonilla-Silva et al., (2006: 242) have noticed that white people are least likely to support interracial marriage and most of their concerns are about children produced from interracial relationship. People in interracial relationship do have very good relationships with each other, but the problem is having very good relationships with people outside the relationship where there is a lot of pressure that could make interracial relationship very difficult for the people involved in such relationship. This speaks directly to the centre of the problem Julius encountered with what his ex-girlfriend's parents called 'a common sense' and therefore must protect themselves, their daughter and their unborn grandchild from people like themselves. To spotlight the root cause of prejudice shown by Julius' ex-girlfriend's parents, it is important to situate it within 'biological continuity of generations' (Mannheim, 1952: 277), in which every day Polish reality is a point-like event, that the presence of Julius is about to unsettle. Simply put by Bauman (1990: 150) 'His presence is a challenge to the reliability of orthodox orientation points and the universal tools of order-making'. A good way to

²⁶ The tragic mulatto is among the most recognisable characters in the American literature. According to Emily Clark (2016: 259), this character first appeared in fiction in the late 1830s, but many of the features associated with the tragic mulatto stereotype appear earlier in journalism and travel accounts.

unpick this is through the understanding of the anti-miscegenation law. Poland has never had an official anti-miscegenation law, nonetheless, there is a fear of the threat of miscegenation manifested in the Polish Catholicism and articulated in everyday Polish life. For example, getting married is one of the scared things Polish culture holds dearly, getting married to a partner who is not a Catholic could be difficult to implement in Poland. A licensed must be requested, if a non-Catholic person has to marry a Catholic in Poland. This law may apply across the board, in the case of a stranger who is also non-white, the restriction could even be more complicated because the Catholic Church is reluctant to conduct mixed marriages:

From the very beginning, the Church would have been unwilling to make marriages with people who did not accept faith in Christ, or who did not believe in it. The motive of such a ban was simple: a mixed-race mother's exposure to the danger of religious blame and family divisions, posing a threat to full harmony spiritual spouses and the life of a married couple. Experience shows that mixed marriages make it difficult to perform religious duties and the offspring born of such relationships are difficult to bring up to the Church and the Catholic religion.²⁷

The essence of the above quotation is to highlight extensively how Catholicism provides Poland with a sense of national identity that informs the Polish sense of family, parenting, and sets strict pronouncement on sexual conduct. It is within this cannon that one finds the traces of anti-miscegenation rules that account for the exclusion of strangers. The focus of the above pronouncement by the Catholic church is the protection of a common 'blood', culture and religion, bonded together by a shared sense of solidarity (Smith, 1997).

This process is further exacerbated by institutional mechanisms when representatives of the state authorities vent to condemn mixed marriages. Bauman (1990: 154) has unpacked almost completely the Polish state's condemnation of mixed marriages when he argues that the state not only promotes 'nativism' but also construes its people as 'natives through the enforcement of ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural homogeneity'. Using incessant propaganda of shared attitudes, the Polish state constructs joint historical memories and often speaks about the sense of common mission, common fate, a common destiny. This legitimises hostility towards everyone standing outside the holy union. In Poland, the state assumes the church's responsibility that forces the prospective flock into submission as an act of enforcement of homogeneity. For Bauman (1990: 154) this is not a religious practice, but a national ideology.

²⁷ See https://parafiaofiarowania.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2258:2017-02-25-20-21-18&catid=57:katechizm-na-niedziela&Itemid=189

By introducing an element of ‘alien’ into legislation, Zabek (2016) notices that authorities, in many European states, including the Polish state, arbitrarily apply restrictive legislation to strangers who get married to their citizens. The restriction serves as a soft-ban on such marriages, as well as ‘a form of prohibition on any sexual contact with a representative of an ‘alien race’ (Zabek, 2016: 152). If Julius, as a mixed-race, is perceived as a part of an ‘alien race’ based on an assumption that “The stranger is by nature no “owner of soil”, hence, ‘He is not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group, and therefore approaches...with the specific attitude of “objectivity”’ (Simmel, 1950: 403-404). Stranger-foreigners as ‘alien race’, especially those from outside Europe, are often forced to register their marriages and could only do so if they have the right to remain in the country. This happens because state administrations, including the Catholic church, perceive ‘mixed’ marriages as a ‘threat’ to law and order simply because a stranger-foreigner, as an outsider, is assumed to be a ‘threat to national security’ (Zabek, 2016: 152-153). As Bauman (1990: 149) points out, the individual that bears the trait of a stranger is recognisable as inferior, dangerous, and less desirable because he is a threat to the world order.

The argument that I am trying to signal here is that the above soft expression of anti-miscegenation by the church and the state institutions empowered ordinary people, everyday Polish people to express, spoken or unspoken, fear of miscegenation through the concern that Polish blood and heritage would be lost. Frank (black, male) believed that this perception contributed to the ways he is seen by some people in his Polish community:

They talk about poverty, talk about diseases, talking about very anger person, about someone who uses drug, a person who likes to sleep with women all the time, person who likes to run away from his Polish wife, a person who wants to have a Polish wife because of the paper, so I represent all this based on their wrong perception. (Frank, black, male)

The fear of mixing not only limited to the black body as a foreign body, but also extended to Polish women with black men. Such fear includes constant exposure to remarks such as the ones described by Zabek (2016: 151-152): “You love a black man? Are you crazy? Aren’t there any Poles around? Or maybe none will have you?”, or “There are so many Poles around, why did you have to choose a bloody black?” In the street, it becomes normal for the passer-by to comment on bi-racial relationships: “How can you do it with a golliwog?” or “What is this lass doing with him? Either he’s with her for her money, or she’s with him for sex”. The neighbours, especially in rural areas, where everyone knows everybody’s business, are more concerned about Poles involving in bi-racial relationships. Such Poles are seen as a shame to the community at large (Zabek, 2016).

Lastly, at first glance, it may appear that the shade of the skin colour drew upon by Johnny, Danni and Enzo, plays a significant role in sexual attractiveness. On a closer inspection, however, it is important to recognise that such attractiveness is largely constrained by the fear and threat of black man as an ‘alien race’ trapped within the white gaze (hooks, 2004; Yancy, 2008).

Black body as a body of curiosity

Having established the black body as a resident alien in the Polish society, in this section, I provide an alternative reading of blackness in Poland, one that focuses on the element of curiosity. To put this into a context, I draw on various scholarships that provide language and frameworks to adequately describe the reality of curiosity whilst I take on the question of race and racism in which the black body is situated.

What I experienced is the stare, the look is a bit of being curious about something. I remember when I weaved my hair, the kids and the boys tend to look in a very curious way at me (Diane, black, female).

What we see here is not just Diane being read as a body of curiosity, in Goffman terms, she has come to represent ‘something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor — a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places. (Goffman, 1986: 11). What Diane tried to describe is a look or stare that comes with ‘the uncertainty that arises when confronted by someone who is impossible to classify...’ (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013: 30). This is a point where a black body becomes an element of curiosity brought into a public space, interpreted as a noticeable sign of flaw, as such, the body is easily judged as less desirable, inferior, and perhaps dangerous (Bauman, 1990). Eloquently described by Edmund Burke (1958: 31), ‘Curiosity is the most superficial of all the affections; it changes its object perpetually; it has an appetite which is very sharp, but very easily satisfied; and it has always an appearance of giddiness, restlessness and anxiety’. The earliest account of curiosity is to be found in the work of William James, later articulated by William McDougall (1918), identifying curiosity as a stimulus that motivates organisms to explore their environments and fear plays an important role in the risk posed by such exploration. Freud attributes curiosity to some of the characteristics ascribed to sexual drive (cited in Posnock, 1991: 46).

I read Diane’s case of curiosity through the black ontology that deals with the reality of being black in a white dominated society. In *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, Sara Ahmed (2000) examines the relationship between strangers and communities. In doing so, she challenges the understanding of the stranger as someone who is not recognised, instead she proposes that

some bodies are already recognised as strangers, even without meeting them. Such preposition lies in the colonial fetishism that already situates the black bodies in strange conditions, hence “the stranger’ is produced through knowledge, rather than as a failure of knowledge’ (2000: 16), as often assumed in the Polish society that lack of encounter with non-white people increases the element of racism in the country.

In her focus on the representation of a stranger, Ahmed (2000) observes that the encounter with stranger is often face-to-face and could be fetish. The fetishism of a stranger is effective in the mechanisms that produce and reproduce self-conception, communities and nation-states (2000: 16). I understand Ahmed’s interest is not exactly as fetishism, but the features of a stranger that make him/her appear fetish, as strangeness is first of all defined in terms of aesthetics of appearance (Ahmed, 2000: 24). This implies that it is the ontologising power of the visual, the racialising gaze, that fixes bodies in their strangeness. Homi Bhabha (1994), in stream with Ahmed (2000), concurs that the fetishness of a stranger, especially a black stranger, has colonial dimension that he identifies as mimicry:

...mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both “normalized” knowledges and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha, 1994: 126).

Diane’s account helps to introduce a key element of mimicry in relation to the black body as an object of gazing. Whilst attentions have been given to the black hair and its importance to the black life elsewhere in this thesis (see chapter 6), here Diane reminds us that hair as well as other physiognomic characteristics such as skin colour highlight the ground from which curiosity emerged. This instructs us to understand curiosity as an unusual or interesting object, perhaps someone’s peculiarity, oddness, strangeness, unusualness, not knowing and never come to contact with. In Bhabha’s (1994: 126) words strangeness could be ‘the sign of the inappropriate’. This makes curiosity to appear as an information-gap as Loewenstein (1994) observes; ‘an unpleasant deprived state of not knowing something’ (Noordewier & van Dijk, 2017: 411; Jepma et al., 2012; Kruger & Evans, 2009; Shani et al., 2008), that may result in exhibition of certain impulsive behaviours (Loewenstein, 1994).

For example, when people are curious about the content of a box, with less knowledge about the box, and only to find that the box also contains something around it (Van Dijk & Zeelenberg,

2007). This compels people to focus more on what they do not know, it is the focus that intensifies the fulfilment of a desire to know (Loewenstein, 1994). It is a suggestion that curiosity itself may not come from a bad place, as many would argue in Poland; there is nothing wrong in being curious, after all, curiosity is an area of knowledge and discovery. The problematic aspect of curiosity lies in its giddiness, anxiousness (Burke, 1958) and impulsive behaviours (Loewenstein, 1994) that emerge in a curious situation.

In Diane's brief narrative, the exhibition of anxiousness (Burke, 1958) and impulsive behaviours (Loewenstein, 1994) shown by 'the kids and the boys' looking at Diane's weaved hair is recognisable as 'the stare' - a long fixed look is not exactly a mechanism of curiosity, but strangeness as an indication of inappropriateness (Bhabha, 1994: 126). 'The major thing that I experienced badly is the stare', said Jona, (black, male), 'which I think is from a point of curiosity'. The same sentiment is articulated by Enzo (mixed-race, male): 'you have to get used to people looking at you all the time because Polish people are looking at black people every time'. In fact, my empirical data revealed almost all the respondents talked about 'the stare' in different ways:

Cedric (black, male): 'Some of these stares are just amazement like they're surprised with happiness like – *oh my God I can't believe you're here*'.

Eldami (black, male): 'I was on the tram and there was an old lady who walked straight up to me and was staring at me, and I stared back.'

Mary (black, female): '...going on the bus, people just stare at me... sometimes kids just stare at me and some will smile and some of them would shy away and I'm also staring back and sometimes smile at the kids...'

Maya (mixed-race, female): 'People look at me or stare at me, asking me why my skin colour is black and how long I have been in Poland.'

Mikey (black, male): 'I'm on the bus and people stare at me, people that I walk past on the road often take a second look at me...'

Nafisa (black, female): 'This happens to me every time, when you get on the bus everybody looks at you, everybody literally stares.'

Julius (mixed-race, male): 'Everywhere I go, there's a stare...'

Drilling deeper into anxiousness and impulsive behaviour identified as stare, Enzo suggested that many Polish people who have never met black people are only interested in looking at what a black person looks like, hence the stare. He added, however, that the Polish stare could be construed in terms of rudeness, curiosity and aggression:

Polish people, most of them, have not seen non-white people, and they're just interested in looking at you, but I guess they know it's rude, but they just can't do anything about it. For them, they're just looking at something they've never seen, and they're interested in the look. But there's something you may not know that some of these people turn their curiosity into aggression. (Enzo, mixed-race, male)

There is a lot enclosed in the above excerpt. A possible way to unwrap this is through the understanding of a black body 'as a thing', not exactly human. Since a black body is not seen as human body, the lookers are not interested in the being, as Enzo observed: 'they just can't do anything about it. For them, they're just looking at *'something'* – 'branded as not quite human', not quite European, not quite Christian, not quite White (Tlostanova, 2012: 133), therefore, 'that thing' becomes inappropriate which intensifies its surveillance, as Goffman (1963) puts it:

The attitudes we normals have towards a person with a stigma, and the actions we take in regard to him, are well known, since these responses are what benevolent social action is designed to soften and ameliorate. By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human... We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents... (Goffman, 1986: 15)

Unsurprisingly, staring is something that many, if not all, black people complain about in Poland. Whilst some of the respondents acknowledged that the stare they experienced did not come from a bad place, studies have shown that lookers '...experience stronger negative feelings when confronted with ambiguous perceptual input' (Jepma et al., 2012: 7), as encountered by one of the respondents:

I was crossing a road and a man walking towards me gave me a very bad look, you can see the disdain in his eye, downsizing, as if to ask: *'what are you doing here?'*. It wasn't a normal look, I can see the disgust on his face. I did not feel good with it and thought how can you look at me like that? (Nafisa, black, female)

Nafisa's encounter is consistent with a study which suggests that people enthusiastically prefer to view the clear version of an image rather than an unrelated clear picture (Nicki, 1970). Relating this psychology to racial differentiation experienced by the above respondents, especially the turning of 'curiosity into aggression', the presence of black bodies presents a blurred image of the recognised white bodies, and interrupts the order of the assumed Polish homogeneity, hence, the exhibition of 'impulsive behaviour and attempts at self-control' (Loewenstein, 1994: 76) by many Poles when they encounter black bodies. Putting the Polish stare through Bourdieu's (1984) 'habitus', such behaviour would appear to be an internalised character, taste, behaviour, perception and expressions that 'generate meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions' in everyday life (1984: 170). According to Bourdieu (1984), these qualities are often automated that individuals are hardly conscious of them. Also, they appear as practices unique to an individual, but 'they are

compatible with objective conditions that include the social group, family and community in which one is engaged' (Cleland & Cashmore, 2013: 28), as Julius (mixed-race, male) affirmed – 'Everywhere I go there's a stare...'

Absence of enough contact with black bodies

We had a really nice atmosphere, what really surprised me was what one of the guys said that he didn't really expect to meet a black person in the stadium, not in a bad way, but because, he never met a black person and they don't have people like us [black] in his city. He was happy to meet me. (Abel, black, male)

In the above excerpt, Abel shared his experience of going to watch Nigeria playing Poland at the stadium in Wroclaw, South Poland. Football stadium is one of the major fields where the effect of racism, as part of everyday racism, played itself out (Hylton, 2010). From this standpoint, it is a no-go-zone for many black people in Poland. Nonetheless, Abel found a 'favourable condition' he described as 'a really nice atmosphere' in a place often perceived as an unfavourable for many black people. So, it seems that the issue here is partly about social processes. One way of bringing this out is through the study of contact hypothesis. The absence of contact, to a significant degree, plays a pivotal role in racial differentiation in Poland.

The contact hypothesis is often considered one of the most effective ways of improving intergroup relations (Watson, 1947; Williams, 1947; Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2003). Its effect was noticed in the mid-1930s and early 1940s in the United States where Zelig & Hendrickson (1933: 26) and Zelig (1954) explored attitudes towards different racial groups and found that the 'most significant factor related to social tolerance was the degree to which children claimed acquaintanceship with the various races...except the Negro'.

By the mid-1940s, there was already a shift in the perception of black people in the United States, as Smith (1943) observed at the Columbia University where white students who experienced interracial contact demonstrated significant improvements in their attitudes towards black people. The experiences of American soldiers, during the Second World War, also pointed to a similar conclusion that, whilst segregation remained the official policy of the US Army during the war, white soldiers who had contact with black soldiers showed positive racial attitudes than those that did not (Singer, 1948: 404-405; Stouffer, 1949). Furthermore, in a comparative race relations analysis between American seamen who belonged to the industrial union such as the National Maritime Union, and those who belonged to the various craft unions who were independent, Ira

Brophy (1946: 463) reported that the National Maritime Union members are noticeably less prejudice.

Whilst there is a change in the ways in which black bodies are perceived in diverse societies in the west, largely due to contact hypothesis. This is exemplified in a similar investigation carried out in the Polish cities in the late 1950s and early 1960s where 74% of respondents found Negroes children different from the children from the Polish national group such as Russians, Germans, Czechs, French, English and Americans (mainly whites). Evaluating Polish children's reaction towards blackness, Kloskowska (1962) pinpoints the absence of face-to-face contact with black people and Polish homogeneity as a clue:

Opportunities for personal contacts were scarce, sources of information and orientation were mainly literary. For most Polish children Negroes formed a part of a distant, exotic world existing rather in the imagination than in reality. Most of the adult inhabitants of Lodz in the pre-war period certainly never in their life saw a Negro outside of picture books and films. (Kloskowska, 1962: 190)

All this leads Bramfield (1946: 245) to conclude that 'where people of various cultures and races freely and genuinely associate, there tensions and difficulties, prejudices and confusions, dissolve; where they do not associate, where they are isolated from one another, there prejudice and conflict grow like a disease'. So far, contact hypothesis has shown that intergroup contacts do help 'people in face-to-face contacts with persons of a different race, religion, or background' (Watson, 1947: 54). This encouraged Williams (1947: 91) to recommend 'a comparative study of intergroup relations in segregated and mixed areas of the same community'.

Whilst I share the view that intergroup contact plays important role in racial relations, I take seriously, however, the implication of Amir's (1969: 319) argument that the conditions or the circumstances individuals find themselves – 'favourable' (condition that reduces prejudice) or 'unfavourable' (condition that increases intergroup tension and prejudice) – are absolutely important in contact theory hypothesis. Drawing on my empirical data, Amir's (1969) argument is neatly captured in the ways some of my respondents talked about their relationships with Polish people in both 'favourable' and 'unfavourable situations'. For example, Cedric (black, male) expressed a delight when he found himself in a 'favourable condition' – 'I'm like a celebrity among my Polish friends and I very much enjoyed the attention I get as a black guy'. Cedric felt like a celebrity because he was in the presence of Polish people who were already exposed to intergroup contact and created conditions that were favourable for themselves and Cedric. Reading intergroup contact through Amir (1969), simplistic intergroup contact is not sufficient to create a post-racial society because certain 'unfavourable condition' could create tension and prejudice, as Cedric, the

same respondent, talked about barriers between Polish students and international students who are mainly blacks:

I was at a conference recently and I was the only black guy with about 300 attendants – there were looks like *'what are you doing here?'*. Simply because I'm different, that alone is exclusion because of the colour of my skin, but that doesn't make me less human than you're. (Cedric, black, male)

Being a student is never an issue, Cedric pointed out that not being accepted as a member of the society creates a condition that was 'unfavourable' for him and perhaps many black people in Poland, even in places such as universities where there is already simplistic intergroup/interracial contact. This leads to the question of prior interracial contact, that is, not having to wait until people get to university or higher education before having contact with racial differentiation. This is a challenge taken on by Emerson et al. (2002), in doing so, they argue for an extended version of contact hypothesis. For Emerson and colleague, 'It is one thing for people to say they think positively about other racial groups; it is quite another for people to form and sustain meaningful webs of relationships with people of diverse groups' (2002: 758). Therefore, there is a need for 'prior interracial contact' as a measure that could have 'more diverse contemporary social networks' (Emerson, 2002: 757; Ellison & Powers, 1994; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987).

Extending Amir's (1969) and Emerson et al's (2002) arguments, I suggest that contact hypothesis alone is not enough to improve race relations in Poland. Once certain level of interracial contact has been achieved, new studies would be required to probe further the racial contours in the Polish society. There are more issues here than just contact hypothesis. It is quite remarkable what happens once the contact is established between black and white and this is the point where race and racism, especially in an unfavourable condition, become the focus of the contact as well as relationships that emerge from the contact. Borrowing briefly from Goldberg (1993) and Hesse (2004: 11), it is most likely that these relationships continue to be 'understood axiomatically, as biologically constituted superior and inferior 'races', with the former assumed to naturally exercise authority over the latter'.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed attraction and repulsion as bedfellows in racial desire in Poland. Using Georg Simmel's account of a stranger, I situated the predicament of black bodies in the Polish society within Simmelian stranger narrative. In doing so, first, I utilised rudiments of attractiveness/sexuality by placing the darkness of the skin in the circumstances that highlight its foreignness which could be attractive to some Polish women, but equally repulsive to some Polish

men. By recounting the history of blackness and attractiveness in the slaveholding societies, I have drawn attention to how the emerging mixed-race women were viewed by European men as object of desire, whilst continue to enslave the men of colour. Secondly, I used the element of threat to highlight an aspect of Polishness that vents against foreignness. Highlighting some aspects of Polish Catholic pronouncement and the state administration, I demonstrated how the activities of the church and the state together served as a constraint on the black life in Poland. The reason for this lies in the representation of people that are believed to be of 'alien race' assumed to be a threat to the 'soil'. I conceptualised this in terms of Bauman's (1991) notion of the stranger as a collective perception of a group that is unfamiliar and possibly dangerous. Third, I discussed how curiosity could easily be utilised to read racism. Drawing on various psychological frameworks, I explained that it is within the behavioural aspect of curiosity that racist acts emerged in Poland. Whilst many white Polish people are not meant to be racist, the inability to cope with or normalising the presence of black people prompted some impulsive behaviours (Loewenstein, 1994) informed by the preconceived knowledge of black bodies as fetish bodies and colonial bodies (Ahmed, 2000). Lastly, through my respondents lived experiences, I linked *Attractiveness/Sexuality*; *Threat*; and *Curiosity* together by arguing and concurring with Emerson et al. (2002) that the *absence of 'prior interracial contact'* although not the only factor that plays a pivotal role in racial attraction and repulsion in Poland. I further this by noting that further work, perhaps new research, would be required in looking at race relations once a certain level of interracial contact has been achieved in Poland.

Chapter 8: The Polish ethno-racial contract – rerouting *The Racial Contract*

Introduction

Before bringing this thesis to an end, I want to consider the implications of the racialised accounts provided by the research participants in all the previous chapters in this study, in doing so, the current chapter elaborates on the understanding and the position of black bodies in the Polish polity. To do this effectively, I reroute Charles Mills' concept of the Racial Contract in order to represent the lived experiences of racism in Poland as part of a European-wide contract with racial hierarchy at its core. I begin this chapter with some familiar points about racial contract as a global contract between white and non-white peoples and the roles of white domination in such contract. I then reflect on the Polish polity that is often considered to be race-neutral in terms of its citizenship. To illustrate this, I discuss how anti-Semitism, anti-Roma and Islamophobia formed the key historical components of the racial contract in Poland, and I consider how the contract has defined the Polish state and its population as homogeneous. Lastly, I reroute *The Racial Contract* (Mills, 1997) beyond the normative liberal western hegemony, showing that Mills' concept has not been marginal to the history of race and racism in the west, it also formed part of the configuration of nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

In developing *The Racial Contract* theory, Charles Mills (1997) talks about an agreement between people as a way of establishing a civil society and a government. As such, it is a government that is based on the consent of individuals who are seen as equals. The particular contract to which Mills refers is based on the post-Enlightenment political theory – the social contract – ‘not a contract between everybody (“we the people”) but between just the people who count, the people who really are people (“we the white people”)’. Such agreement, Mills (1997: 3) says, ‘is a Racial Contract’ that is located within the focus of the four most important contract theorists: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, showing that the modern moral theory and the modern racial theory have the same founding father[s] (Mills, 1997: 64-72). Rather than the common knowledge that racism, fundamentally, is an individual act of bigotry against another individual based on supremacy of race, Mills (1997) proposes a rethink of racism through the racial contract be considered from a global perspective that underpins how white and non-white ‘races’ come to exist.

The Racial Contract is that set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements (higher-level contracts *about* contracts) which set the limits of the contracts' validity) between the members of one subset of humans, henceforth designated by (shifting) "racial" (phenotypical/genealogical/cultural) criteria... (Mills, 1997: 11)

Following Mills' logic, the subject of all the contracts with which I am concerned is the 'ethno-racial contract' – the identity individuals hold on to in order to own their persons. I employ the term 'ethno-racial Contract' keeping within the Polish political construction of rights in relation to Third and Fourth World people who are often racialised and categorised as non-Polish and non-white. National identities – like all forms of identity – are expressed within multi-layered social systems (Porter-Szűcs, 2009: 3). In the case of Poland, and perhaps the entire Central Eastern Europe (CEE), such systems are constructed through the multifaceted Civil, Cultural-history and Ethnic. These three social rudiments are not often exclusive, but they overlap. It is within this slippage that I situate the 'Polish ethno-racial Contract' as a fuse between the Ethnic (we, the Polish people) and Civic (the Other) – the category that many participants in this study are locked into. It is for this purpose that I revisit and reroute the framework suggested by Charles Mills (1997).

To unpick all of this, it is important to understand the racial contract as the creation of the modern world 'as a racially hierarchical polity, globally dominated by Europeans.' (Mills, 1997: 27), hence, the Racial Contract is a global contract between people described and identified as white and non-white. This description expands the understanding of the racial contract as an arrangement that is not limited to or only applicable to the western hegemony, but better understood in terms of its Europeanness and non-Europeanness conditions as elaborated in the second chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, I reflect on the Polish polity that is often considered to be raceless, in doing so, I explain how anti-Semitism, anti-Roma and Islamophobia formed key historical components of the Racial Contract that is particular to Poland. In rerouting *The Racial Contract*, I am signalling an argument that racial contract goes beyond the western hegemony. It is an indication that there is a close relationship between the Polish polity and the benefits of the global white supremacy.

The Racial Contract as a global Contract

The Racial Contracts (Mills, 1997) rests on the idea of domination that has inspired a wide range of scholarship many of which are based on the discourses of subordination. For example, Keisha Lindsay (2015) has provided a feminist analysis of the framework suggested by Mills to bear on both the 'male gaze' and embodied subjectivity. Using the domination aspect of the racial contract, Stacy Simplican (2015) has identified what she calls the 'capacity contract' where able-bodied people agree to treat each other as equals, but the same equal treatment is not extended to disabled

bodies. Drawing on Mills' framework and a wide variety of literature, Anna Smith (2015) has shown that Mill's argument offers a particular understanding of the structure and analysis of school segregation in the US. The same framework has served as inspiration for Yasmeen Abu-Laban & Abigail Bakan (2008) when they considered how the racial contract has defined the state of Israel since 1948, and how the international racial contract assigns a common interest between the state of Israel and international political allies.

There are several perspectives one might take in discussing race and racism. From the position of a scholar interested in the study of race as historical idea with global implications, I would argue that there is a distinctive perspective on the study of race and racism that is particularly worth revisiting Charles Mills' (1997) *The Racial Contract*. The value of revisiting Mills' contribution could be underlined through which racialised people make sense of their being-in-the-world (Knowles, 2003). Therefore, an understanding of Racial Contract must begin with the theorisation of Europeanization as a global scale, because 'Europe came to see itself as a "planetary process" rather than simply a region of the world' (Pratt, 1992: 589). Seen as such, Mills' (1997) *The Racial Contract* cannot be reduced to the western colonialism, voyage discoveries and the management of non-European and non-white peoples. The book represents a major advance in Mills' thought that has never before been considered from a standpoint of the European-wide modernity that underpins the self-conception and racial formation in Central and Eastern Europe. To be clear, *The Racial Contract* is not exactly western, as a pact of historical fact and post-Enlightenment political thought, racial contract is broadly a European contract through which Europeans define and manage non-Europeans. This effect has been recognised, not only in the west, but also in the configuration of nations of Central-Eastern Europe. In fact, it is all related to the:

...international law; pacts, treaties, and legal decisions; academic and popular debates about the humanity of nonwhites; the establishment of formalized legal structures of differential treatment; and the routinization of informal illegal or quasi-legal practices effectively sanctioned by the complicity of silence and government failure to intervene and punish perpetrators - which collectively can be seen, not just metaphorically but close to literally, as its conceptual, juridical, and normative equivalent. (Mills, 1997: 20-21)

In essence, *The Racial Contract* needs to be conceived from the standpoint of modernity created as a racial hierarchy that is dominated by Whites/Europeans. It aimed at privileging the whites as a group with respect to the non-whites, and the exploitation of the non-white bodies, whilst being denied equal socioeconomic opportunities. As Mills (1997) rightly points out – some whites may not be signatories to the creation of the exploitation and denial of non-white bodies, there is a sense in which '[a]ll whites are beneficiaries of the Contract' (Mills, 1997: 11).

The construction of the ethno-racial contract that I deploy in this chapter rests on the ‘constructed character of race’ (Mills, 2000: 451) as a system of domination. Historicised domination is pivotal in all of this; it defines race, not as a biological reality, but a social construct premised on inequality between whites and non-whites as a form of domination and exclusion. If race is a social construct, it follows that social contract as an unspoken general will of ‘the people’ (Rousseau, 1968; 1984) would have different implications for different people depending on the racial character. This is the point where the concept of racial contract enters the Polish parlance. It is a historical fact that is located within a series of events in the creation of the modern world with a global impact from which Polish polity cannot be exempted.

Reading *The Racial Contract* as historical and global fact helps to reroute its understanding beyond the west, but mainly as a contract that is racially applicable within the historicity of many European nations that acquired modernity through the adoption of global racial rules. A number of studies have illustrated this effectively as a world racially, hierarchically, and globally dominated by Europeans. Curtin (1971: xiii) sees it as ‘a conception of the world largely based on self-identification – and identification of “the other people”’. Unlike the common assumption that Europe was advanced and more progressive than all other regions prior to the beginning of the period of colonialism (1492), Blaut (1993) disagrees with this received knowledge of Europe. He argues that it was not Europe’s cultural and technological superiority that allowed Europe to spread its influence across the world. Rather, Blaut (1993: 5) contends that it was the loots of colonialism that led to the rise and the superiority of the European nations and the control of resources in non-European countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In his account of the rise of Europe, Blaut develops a conceptual approach he calls ‘tunnel history’:

I will argue not only that European colonialism initiated the development of Europe (and the underdevelopment of non-Europe) in 1492, but that since then the wealth obtained from non-Europe, through colonialism in its many forms, including neocolonial forms, has been a necessary and very important basis for the continued development of Europe and the continued power of Europe’s elite. (Blaut, 1993: 10)

He further contends that ‘tunnel history’ was deepened by the European mind-set that Europe was the source of all human advancement and it was this that defines European colonisers’ relationships with the rest of the world diffused in a hierarchical manner.

Most notably Anthony Marx (1998) has pursued a constructive engagement with an understanding of the configuration of a nation. In doing so, he argues for the need to see European nations as institutions conceived on the basis of race; Europe is one collective place where the political production of race and the political production of nationhood are connected. As such, many European states discriminate on the basis of race:

Citizenship is a key institutional mechanism for establishing boundaries of inclusion or exclusion in the nation-state. It selectively allocated distinct, civil, political and economic rights, reinforcing a sense of community and loyalty among those included. But by specifying to whom citizenship applies, states also define those outside the community of citizens, who then live within the state as objects of domination. (Marx, 1998: 5)

The result of this domination, as Satnam Virdee (2019: 13) argues, has been the encoding of the category black people based on their skin colour in order to exploit the labourers of African descent.

From chapter three to seven, I have provided an analysis of the racialised accounts provided by the research participants. These accounts need to be theorised from a point of view of a social contract. They are connected and constructed through the Racial Contract history, as well as its culture that takes an assumed biological development which makes European nations and peoples appear different from non-European nations and peoples. Given the nature and the conditions that sustain the racial contract, it becomes possible to argue that racial contract (Mills, 1997) sets the precedence for the racial state (Goldberg, 2002) – the state in which the ‘Power in the polis, and this is especially true of racialized power, reflects and refines the spatial relations of its inhabitants’ (Goldberg, 1993: 185).

The enactment of Polish ethno-racial Contract

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, ethnicity offers a unique window into the Polish perception of self as a mechanism for the axing of the Other. Ethnicity is the state of being a member of an ethnic group, based on ‘physical and moral universe’ (Smith, 1986: 47), often exclusive and differentiated from nations on several grounds because they are usually linked to a common ancestry and the attitude of superiority towards the Other. This sits within what Brubaker (2002: 146) called ‘groupism’ – ‘the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed.’ The Polish conception of ethnicity is ‘confined to those who share certain inborn attributes’ (Kellas, 1991: 4). One way of seeing this is through the Eastern European perception and representation of ethnic categories. The Polish nation is understood mainly in ethnic terms referring to an individual’s tie to a community of descent, “Poland”, which puts into question the status of the civil society as a the legal-political pact between an individual and the state. From this standpoint, ‘Nationality’ and ‘Citizenship’ are viewed as two distinctive entities: the former has a clear ethnic connotation, the latter only reflects the legal-political relationship between the individual and the state but not naturally binding (Zubrzycki, 2001: 638). Put bluntly, non-Polish born and non-white Polish ‘cannot significantly

influence the shape of Poland, like the sons of the nation who created this state.’²⁸ This has also been understood by some Poles in terms of the recovery of a sovereign state and of national identity that genuinely represents Polish interests, ‘a state of and for Poles’.

The NATION is obviously a community of blood, history, language, religion, traditions, territory etc..., and it is impossible to become a member of a nation by being granted, by administrative decision, the citizenship of a certain state.... A foreigner, who not long ago settled in Poland and received Polish citizenship, will have identical rights in the affairs of our Nation, as the descendants of Tadeusz Kosciuszko.... How is it possible..?²⁹

The above confirms that ‘Race relations’, often considered narrowly as a social relation that is largely applicable in the west, is yet an important dynamic in the understanding of race and racism in Central and Eastern Europe. This is evident in the separation of ‘race’ from ‘nation’ and ‘ethnic group’ primarily because ‘races’, like ethnic groups, are discussed mainly in sociobiological relations, the idea that biology is the ‘basis of all social behaviour’ (Wilson, 1975: 4), with emphasis on ‘phenotypical’ distinctions such as skin colour, and assumed genetic differences (Kellas, 1991: 5). This concept of ethnicity relies on blood relations – father, mother, sister, brother, cousin, nephew – that forms the extendable family network which is defined strictly by race and blood presented through primordial attachments (Curta, 2011: 537; Malesevic, 2014). The purpose of such attachment, Sam Lucy (2005: 96-97) notes, is partly to make the boundaries of the ethnic group visible to outsiders in order to acknowledge the existence of the dominant group; it is a marking of a “sense of one’s place” in the social contract and also indication of a “sense of the place of others” (Bourdieu, 1989: 19).

One of the most important studies on ethnicity is the work of Anthony Smith (1986) showing that ethnicity is an attempt to bring people back to their family heritage and leads them to a common circuit, one that departs completely from that of the Other. But Ignatieff (1993) has shown that there are other paths that ethnicity follows. In the nations of Eastern Europe, ethnicity offers something more which is the supreme emotion and loyalty that was premised on the memory of the Second World War and then the collapse of Communism (Ignatieff, 1993). The residue of the menace created by these two important events, Kymlicka (2001; 2001a) argues, has a backlash against immigrants of colour in the post-Communist CEE, as they seek changes within mainstream institutions in order to make it easier to participate within the institutions (2001a: 35). However, their demands and the changes they seek are taken for granted through the notion of ‘racial polity’ as a process of civil government or constitution. Racial polity, Mills (1998) suggests, is a system of

²⁸ See Wiesław Magiera in *Nasza Polska* (1997).

²⁹ See Wojciech Cejrowski in *Gazeta Polska* (1997: 16).

white domination that works through ‘dark ontology of master and subordinate races, members of the subordinate races will routinely *not* get respect’ (Mills, 1998: 87). He sees this as a monolithic ideology that assumes that putting non-whites as equals would put moral economy in jeopardy. Therefore, ‘racial polity’ must be maintained through boundaries that forcefully recognised national identity (white Poles) above all other identities (especially non-whites) and the differentiation between ‘Nationality’ and ‘Citizenship’ as natural categories. This is not a political differentiation; it is a racial differentiation that walks its way through ‘ethno-racial contract’. As demonstrated in the empirical chapters, in Poland, non-white citizens could not acquire the status of ‘national’ because people are raced according to a certain history and culture, and it is this that indicates their ‘location’ and ‘contract’ within such racial polity (Mills, 1998: 106; 1997).

Correspondingly, it is through the contestation of Polishness that makes certain people Polish and others less or non-Polish – this is the contractual point in the Polish nation-building. To this end, ethno-racial contract needs to be framed as structural and patriarchal white domination as against individual racism. It is through this logic that one begins to see an emerging racial domination but often lurked within the political system. Institutional discourse in CEE is largely political and has never been entirely straightforward and definitely not without conundrum due to the abrupt changes in the region, leading to the emergence of nationalism, anti-Semitism and detestation of the minorities. For example, in Poland, it has been observed that the institutionalisation of the national project, enshrined in the Polish Constitution, is constrained by ‘the textual representation of nationalists’ aspirations and of what nationalists claim the nation to be’ (Zubrzycki, 2001: 633). On the one hand, the nationalists have their own Polish imaginary, which would include the reification and stabilising of the national identity of the past, extending it to the future and making it constitutionally binding. On the other hand, the constitution, as the symbolic pact where the nation is openly defined, holds the view that such ‘powerful sentiments of affiliation and division that mobilize social action in domains far removed from the actual writing of Constitutions.’ (Zubrzycki, 2001: 633). All of this makes Poland a fertile soil for exclusion where civic and ethnic fuse and their victims are often individuals perceived to be alien, different, potentially destructive of a presumably homogeneous ethnic body (Tismaneanu, 1994: 106).

Furthermore, most studies on CEE nationalism continue to be approached in political and ethnic terms (Kennedy, 1994: 27). However, within the regional languages, identity, and in the social scientific studies, the category of “race” has remained hidden in the Eastern European lexicon of ethnicity. Aniko Imre (2005: 83) has argued that race and racism have remained the most poorly articulated influence in the relationship between official ideologies and people’s imaginations of Communism, and the reason for this is because the global conceptualisation of race is often

reduced to western coloniality and imperialism, from which CEE is completely exempted. However, this can no longer be the case for the reasons set out at the beginning of this thesis (see chapter two). The issue here cannot be reduced to its political form, but a particular problem of identification and categorisation that leaves minorities disconnected with Polishness. It is an instance of majoritarianism with consequences for an immigrant or any minority groups. It denies the acceptance of minorities into the national groups because they are ethnically different, leading to hostility towards non-ethnic minorities (Kende et al., 2018; Mephram & Verkuyten, 2017). This confirms that ‘white supremacy’s function in the constitution of the Polish and CEE national identities is rooted much deeper than nations’ official self-representations (Imre, 2005: 80). More than that, it heartens the Polish nationalist project that requires the specification of what Polishness should be and the preservation of its values:

The unquestionable goal of “preserving the nation” against alien influences has played out in terms of the preservation of national cultures... The call to save the national culture has often been issued in the name of a resistance to the demonic values conveyed by “cultural imperialism,” associated with consumerism, global media homogenization, and multiculturalism (Imre, 2005: 81)

The trouble with “preserving the nation” is that it presents Polishness as a conflict between ethnic groups. If this argument is taken further, it gives recognition to conflict between races, that is Europeanness versus Non-Europeanness. In the Polish nationalist worldview, Europeanness would signify ‘cultural nationalism’ as ‘eastern type of development’. Cultural nationalism is not only an expression of nationhood politically and social economically. The concept, significantly, entails the desire to be European, expressing ‘an overwhelming concern for fictions and symbols’ that is very peculiar to Europe (Csepeli, 1991: 328). Indeed, Poland, like many CEE nations, has unspoken ways of insisting on its Europeanness and whiteness as the most effective and recognised means of asserting such Europeanness. It is part of the supremacy of European Enlightenment ideas, its rationality, its progress, and its racial hierarchy (Shohat & Stam, 1994: 18). Again, one finds ethnicity very useful in the understanding of how CEE whiteness has remained unmarked. The usefulness of ethnicity lies in its ability to be “fictive” (Balibar, 1991: 96) in the imagination and reinvention of racial, linguistic, class, gender, sexual, and religious differentiations in the Eastern European countries. In this way, ethnicity plays two roles – first, the most obvious politics of solidarity based on the recognition of the differences highlighted above. Second, and perhaps the unconscious part of ethnicity is racial homogeneity. Stuart Hall is familiar with dangers of ethnicity and has a lot to say about it especially in relation to blackness. Hall (1996a) situates the struggle of blackness in the historical, political and cultural constructions that referred to the ethnicity of a white dominated society. Such construction is made possible by ethnicity assignment

of 'the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual' (Hall, 1996a: 447). The point that Balibar (1991) and Hall (1996a) are making here is that blackness has always been constructed differently in the imagination, culture, history and language of Eastern Europe that are dominated by unmarked and unacknowledged white ethnic solidarity. Therefore, the presence of blackness in all of this would suggest a 'new ethnicity', a different ethnicity whose interests sit outside the CEE solidarity, it is 'not an ethnicity which is doomed to survive' (Hall, 1996: 448). This makes possible the argument that, in CEE, racism has survived fossilized under the surface of "ethnic" and "national" relations especially in terms of Europeanness and non-Europeanness (Imre, 2005: 85).

For a better understanding of "ethnic" and "national" relations, we need to appreciate a particular feature of Foucault's genealogical analysis of racism. Foucault (2003) says the first function of racism is to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological domain. In this sense, racism, according to Foucault (2003), is not primarily prejudice; it is a power that treats 'population as a mixture of races, or to be more accurate, to treat the species, to subdivide the species it controls, into the subspecies known, precisely, as races.' (Foucault, 2003: 255). Such understanding of racism often identified in 'an internal war that defends society against threats born of and in its own body' (Foucault, 2003: 216). In a strict sense, it is associated with three phenomena: biological race thinking; colonial racism at the end of the 19th century; and specific forms of ethnic nationalism. These three phenomena may appear as a conflict between a society and its outside. The outside, Rasmussen (2011: 39) reminds us, 'is not outside the border of the state, but rather posed or constructed as an outside within society.' These ethnic and national relations have manifested themselves across Eastern European countries' historical attempts to exclude and eliminate minority groups assumed to be non-Europeans. It is important to demonstrate this in such a way that puts Poland at the centre of racial exclusion. Racism in Poland needs to be theorised as a political system, and has historical context to the treatment of Jews, Muslims, Roma and later blacks.

First, the most formidable challenge has come from the changing situation of the Eastern European Jews who have shared territory with ethnic Poles for centuries. The end of Communism in Poland and its newly regained freedoms brought with them anti-Semitic ideologies with an almost vanished Jewish population. This is evident in the actions of both extreme and mainstream politicians often use anti-Semitic concepts to reinstate the "true Polish origins" and in worse cases, extremist groups have used the same ideology as a form of racism and Nazism (Bilewicz,

Winiewski, & Radzik, 2012: 2802). Anti-Jewish sentiments are not only found in the political expressions, but often take religious form through the Polish Roman Catholic Church (Michlic, 2004). This logic of scapegoating, Bilewicz & Krzeminski (2010) have argued, serves as an explanation of anti-Semitic prejudice in post-transition in Poland and across Central and Eastern Europe.

Second, the trepidation of Islam in Poland is a challenge taken on by Narkowicz & Pędziwiatr (2017). In doing so, they identify similar patterns of scapegoating and elimination found in the Jewish question across CEE, all centred around post-1989 transition. Drawing on Sayyid's (2014) and Kalmar & Ramadan's (2016) understanding of Islamophobia in the west, Narkowicz & Pędziwiatr (2017) situate Polish Islamophobia in relation to racism and anti-Semitism. In doing so, they maintain that Jews and Muslims are, throughout the Polish nation-building, imagined as the Others whose interests are often defined differently from the mainstream ethnic Polish groups.

Third, East European states are imagined homogeneously to which unruly populations posed a potential threat, and a particular population perceived as unruly is the Romani people. The dormant racial prejudice has been the experiences of this group. Whilst Romani people have settled in Eastern Europe for centuries and today are predominately Europeans, the colour of their skin that is almost close to black and the nomadic lifestyle both account for their exclusion. Romani people's forceful assimilation under Communist regimes across CEE is a confirmation of the representation of the group as a threat. The assimilation policy was based on, among other things, the absence of 'a common language let alone a territorial base, the majority of both communists and Roma were unaware of Romani history, and they did not have a uniform culture' (Barany, 2000: 422). Therefore, in many parts of Central and Eastern Europe, Romani people are classified differently from the national category. For example, in Bulgaria, they are "citizens of non-Bulgarian origins"; in the Czech Republic, they are placed under "other and non-stated nationalities"; the Polish documents referred to the same population as "population of Gypsy origin" and in Romania, they are documented as "other nationalities" (Mirga, 1993; Barany, 2000). This historical persecution of Jewish, Muslim, and Romani people is a confirmation that 'the Racial Contract is explicitly predicated on a politics of the body which is related to the body politic through restrictions on which bodies are "politic" (Mills, 1997: 53). In this instance, the Jewish, Muslim, and Romani are bodies judged incapable of *forming* or fully *entering into* the Polish body politic.

Routing the above situation through social ontology requires an approach that recognises the troubled relationships between anti-Semitism, anti-Roma and Islamophobia and anti-black as system of political domination, as Mills (1998: 74) suggests: 'If we see these problems

solely in terms of individual prejudice and bigotry, free-floating attitudes and cultural predispositions, we will miss crucial realities that need to be incorporated into an adequate explanation'. In other words, the figures of the Jew, alongside that of the Roma and Muslim, has explicit historical anxieties about blackness in Poland. It is a confirmation that racism in Poland, as part of global racisms 'has to do – it has always had to do – more complexly with the set of views, dispositions, and predilections concerning culture, or more accurately of culture tied to color, of being to body, of "blood" to behaviour' (Goldberg, 2009: 175).

It is important to think about the above trajectories of the European Jews, Roma and Muslims not as antithesis, but as an anecdote to the black ontology in the Polish imaginations. They may appear as individual accounts, but stand as a monolithic pattern of exclusion from the 'Family Tree of Man', as well as 'The Racial Family Tree' – showing that the 'national' is not only *secularized*, but also *domesticated* through popularising and disseminating the idea of *racial* progress that has its foundation in Europeanness and whiteness (McClintock, 1995: 39). In Poland, such dissemination is asserted in two ways. First, the significance attached to common values, language and customs (Kamusella, 2009; Jaskulowski, 2019: 60) and its ethno-Catholic identity – the national tie between ethnicity and faith all resulting in the "Polak-Katolik" stereotype' (Zubrzycki, 2001: 639; Porter-Szűcs, 2017). Second, the historicity of Poland has largely been based on victimhood, that is, the freedom from outside interference developed from a long tradition of hostility from the alliance of the Three Black Eagles (Russia, Prussia and Augsburg empires) and later by Russia and Nazi Germany leading to the Holocaust. The histories of these difficult times are currently retold from an exclusionary view that gives the Polish society an impression that every outsider is a suspicious element.

Rerouting *The Racial Contract*

How is Poland, the most homogeneous state in Europe, implicated in the Racial Contract? To examine this question, it is important to point back to the above observation as ethno-racial Contract (between the Poles and people assumed to be non-Poles) as an aspect of Charles Mills' *Racial Contract*. The contract was based on and guided by Catholic faith; European exploration; self-identification and the identification of the Other, and as pointed out by Mills (1997: 23), race gradually became the formal marker of the contract. The racial contract, I reroute in Polish context, has two important historical manifestations.

The first manifestation is the colonial contract with European rules over Africa, Asia and South America. Consider, for instance, Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński's 1880 exploration of Africa with '10 bales of fabric, 6 guns, three boxes of gin, 4 coffers, 1 black coat, 1 top hat, 3 sun hats, a dozen red caps, 4 dozen

jars of pomade, a dozen bracelets and 4 silk handkerchiefs'³⁰ - typical coloniser's paraphernalia. Returning to Poland, Szolc-Rogoziński started a campaign to raise funds for further exploration with an attempt to create a Polish colony in Cameroon. This idea later gained the support of early Polish writers including Henryk Sienkiewicz, the author of *W pustyni i w Puszczy* (In Desert and Wilderness), one of the most racialised books in the Polish history.

Szolc-Rogoziński's 1880 exploration was only a rehearsal, as he was travelling around the time when European imperialism was growing, it seems difficult to say that the Polish elites were not interested in colonial states. Nonetheless, the ambition was confirmed and pursued in 1930s by the Polish Maritime and Colonial League (see chapter two for full details).

Indeed, I want to suggest that many aspects of Poland's attempt at colonisation should be understood as a form of one monolithic Europeanisation with racial contract at its heart. Whilst the origin of structural racism was a class project of the English colonial state (Virdee, 2019; Fields & Fields, 2012; Federici, 2004; Billings, 1991,1973; Allen, 1997; Vaughn, 1989; Robinson, 1983), it was the same structure that eventually gave birth to the Polish colonial attempt that was based on the same long-standing conceptualisation of race, as Satnam Virdee (2019) notes:

(1) humans could be sorted into a finite number of racial groups using a limited set of physical markers; (2) these groups were endowed with differing capacities for cultural development with Whites ranked at the top of this racial order and sub-Saharan Africans at the bottom; (3) each group's capacity for civilization was fixed and immutable over time and space such that African and Asian societies were effectively imagined as lying in a state of arrested development akin to European societies at an earlier stage in their civilization. (Virdee, 2019: 19)

A useful way to understand East Central Europe as part of the western patrimony and embodiment of racial pact is through the understanding of whiteness not merely as a set of attitudes. Whiteness is constitutive of the world economically, culturally and socially, as well as militarily and politically. Also, the European colonial order may appear as a western project, but it was unified racially, therefore, whiteness and Europeanness are at the heart of postcolonial question which works through racial order that rests on the differences between Europeanness and non-Europeanness. Colonisation, in this sense, is far from being a monolithic concept, it is a European/white concept.

The second manifestation is economics. The above observation has already suggested that the Racial Contract is not just about a social contract, there is an economic dimension to it. Mills (1997) asks what, then, is the nature of its economic system? To examine this question, it is

³⁰ See 'More Than Malinowski: Polish Cultural Anthropologists You Should Know', <https://culture.pl/en/article/more-than-malinowski-polish-cultural-anthropologists>

important to recognise the designation of white and non-white people that reveals the economic aspect of the racial contract from the point of view of the rise of Europe as a whole. Therefore, racialised economy cannot be a single objective of powerful European states, but a financial exchange, through which less powerful European nations have massively profited. For example, Poland's membership of European Union is geared towards the sudden transformation of Poland from a communist economy to the capitalist path. It is a membership that is based on a common identity, and the past and present transcontinental exploitation of non-European world. Victor Kiernan (1995: 98) calls this 'the pool of material wealth', through which all Europeans shared in a heightened sense of power engendered by the successes of any of them'. The fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Soviet dominance allowed Poland to transform from a communist to a democratic system in 1989. This was only a preparation for the in and out flows of Polish people when the country joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, hence changed Poland from a country with strictly controlled outflows to one with borders open to migration and 'Poles in the EU turned from so-called 'third-country nationals', whose movement is controlled, to freely moving EU citizens' (Kindler, 2018: 183). This particular period indicates a substantial paradigm shift on how Poland, a country of relatively underprivileged economy, transformed and aligned itself with well-ascertained institutions in the west as a source of immigrant labour (Olsson, 1996).

The above resonates with the experiences of different European groups being accepted as white in North America through the American labour system (Roediger, 1991; Igantiev, 1995), in a similar way that Poles took up the domination of European labour force. For example, in the first years of the Polish post EU accession, the number of Polish people temporarily living abroad increased from around 786,000 (2002) to 1 million (2004) to 2.3 million (2007), which is the equivalent of 6.6% of the Polish population (GUS, 2009: 458). This was followed by an exodus of Poles moving abroad (Kostrzewa & Szaltys, 2013: 52), and becoming largest ethnic minority population in many countries in western Europe (White et al., 2018: 19). In the exploration of how Poland and Polish people have changed and still changing through the EU mobility, active English-language knowledge has increased in the Polish population and even in older age groups. This power of English-language or ability to speak the language puts the speaker in a position to do more than basic things that many without the language cannot do. The ability to speak at least English as an additional language opened up opportunities for many Polish people to be able to work in the EU. The inclusion of Polish people, as 'new Europeans' (Favell, 2008: 711; McDowell, 2009), in the EU family completes the processes of their journey to become 'white people' and benefitting from the racial contract, as Adrian Favell points out:

On paper they would be equal with all West Europeans before international law, and free to choose to move as individuals, to travel, study, live and work in all other member states of the European Union. In other words, they would be free of the restrictions of immigration legislation and categories—as have been West Europeans for many years. As international migrants they would thus become co-citizens and “free movers” (Favell, 2018: 263).

Although not an empirical claim, the conditions set out above by Adrian Favell (2018) is an indication of how Poles could benefit from free movement following their membership of EU. The effect of Polish citizenship of EU is not just economical but also has role expectations. It goes deeper into the culture, social structure transformation, and essentially the distribution of power (Portes, 2010: 1544). As McDowell (2009: 23-26) rightly points out, East Europeans who arrived in the UK after the end of the First World War benefited from racialised immigration policies with preferences for white European workers. It is a process that works through becoming similar, the similarity that is brought about by contact between two or more groups blending into one and the function of such contact gives strength to interdependent processes that are biological; psychological; cultural; and structural (Yinger, 1981: 249). In the recent time, colour, in combination with other somatic differences, was the marker used by the ‘new Europeans’ to distinguish themselves from Britain’s ethnic minorities – the Koreans are seen as ‘yellow’; Pakistanis are ‘half-cappuccino’ and Caribbean and Africans are ‘soot black’ or ‘negro’ (Fox, 2013: 1875), leading many Eastern Europeans in the UK to claim whiteness as a weapon to racialise non-whites (Fox, 2013). All this confirms that Poland’s transformation from a communist economy to a capitalist one has a shifting and ambivalent relationship with the global white polity. It is a shift that demonstrates the complicity with the terms of the Racial Contract itself (Mills, 1997) and within which many of the participants in this study find themselves, not as participants of the contract but the victims.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to emphasise that the conditions created by the racial contract not only led to massive economic power for many Poles, but also put them in a ‘privileged-pot’ of white-skin people with transnational histories and nationalistic sentiments that shaped their racial notions of non-white people. What is particularly interesting is the assumption that Eastern European states share a ‘race’ often coded as white, Christian, and European with powerful and colonial states. Such a link has a cumulative effect on the Other racialised as non-white and non-European. The overarching aim of this chapter is not to redefine the racial contract. However, the purpose of this chapter has been to revive the contract in order to elaborate on ‘ethno-racial contract’ in Poland. It is only when one comes to terms with ‘ethno-racial contract’ as a technology of exclusion that

the accounts provided by the research participants become clear and sensible as part of global racisms.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: Digesting race and racism in Poland

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I bring together all previous discussions and suggest ways forward to engage with an understanding of race and racism in Poland. This thesis has been shaped by the anecdote I started with in the opening chapter, leading to an attempt to understand my experiences, as a sojourner in Poland and the experiences of other black people who live in the country. Given my encounters, I spoke with other black people about their experiences and by identifying commonalities in our perspectives and experiences, I have a better insight into what it means to be black and Polish or be black in the Polish society. My intention throughout the thesis has been to understand the lived experiences of the research participants and I have been guided, in particular, by an aspect of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a technique that offers counter-hegemonic narratives (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015) that help to pinpoint instances of race and racialisation that ran through the discussions with the respondents. The thesis had focussed on an attempt to understand and handle the threat of racism. In doing so, it offers important contributions to and expands some areas of scholarship such as Postcoloniality; Black masculinities; Racialisation; Racial microaggressions; Polish nationalism; and specifically, an understanding of the everyday experiences of black bodies as an identity that is outside of Polish imaginary (Balogun, 2019). The primary research questions that the study addresses are – *Is being black a problem in Poland? How is the notion of blackness racialised in Poland? What is responsible for the identity problem of the racialised groups in Poland?*

Theoretical contributions to knowledge

This thesis has attempted a reroute of critical race theory more usually applied to familiar ‘western contexts’ (the US and Western Europe), via the case of blackness and racialisation in contemporary Poland. With a wide range of knowledge about the history and context of Poland, and an armoury of critical race theory, this study reveals how everyday racism and ‘micro-aggressions’ against sub-Saharan African migrants and mixed-race Polish can be understood in terms of eugenics, nationalism, whiteness and European colonial projects. Contextualised with a deep historical and linguistic knowledge, this work opens the theoretical field to new global applications, able to re-centre questions of colonialism and domination in more peripheral, understudied locations. The empirical materials presented in the thesis show how Eurocentrism, colonialism and racialisation

take specific forms determined by the history and myths of Polish nation-building, thereby shifting critical race theory out of its usual Anglo-American patterns.

The issues discussed in this thesis collectively contribute to the understanding of race and racism in Poland in a way that has never been done before in the country. Racisms, in many parts of western Europe, have shifted slightly from being obvious to subtle often mediated through institutions and states' policies that impact on the life of people of colour. This thesis has attempted to show that Polish racisms are experienced in both subtle and blatant ways. Blatant racism (perceived threat from and rejection of the outgroup) is close and often direct. It relies on the genetic inferiority of the out-group, mainly black people by establishing and highlighting the differences in genetics – inferior and superior. Subtle racism is distancing and indirect. One way of understanding this is through the prevention of intimate contact with the out-group, often occurs in different ways. According to Pettigrew & Meertens (1995: 58-59), this form of prejudice operates at three levels. The first would be 'the defence of traditional values' where the ways of life of out-group are deemed as not acceptable or in general European term, uncivilised. The second has to do with an over exaggeration of differences in culture by stereotyping the culture of the out-group. The third component denies positive emotional responses towards the out-group. All these three components of prejudice, in their local forms, are present in the Polish context, but often denied as existence of racism in Poland.

Whilst extensive research has focussed on each of the above issues in different countries in Europe and in the US (Freriks, 1990; Bergmann & Erb, 1986; Essed, 1984; Esses, et al., 2002), in Poland, there is a dearth of literature on such issues. It is partly the dearth of literature that prompted specific focus on these particular areas that demonstrate the operationalisation of Polishness and Europeaness as a single unit of racialisation that is factored through whiteness. For example, in **Chapter Two**, I explored how black people are disadvantaged through European colonisation, arguing that the conditions created by the European imperial powers gave rise to the manoeuvring of the less powerful European states that encouraged Poland's colonial attempt in Africa and South America. This was successfully demonstrated through an engagement with the transnational and transatlantic history of Poland, especially during the interwar period, in an attempt to develop a labour control that would ensure that black Africans would work in similar ways as they did during slavery. It is the emergence of this Polish 'governmental racism' (Hesse, 2004: 26) that places Poland alongside its western neighbours in terms of racial thinking and practices. By adopting this view, my thesis expands and contributes significantly to the critique of coloniality/postcoloniality articulated by Hesse & Sayyid's (2006: 21) 'Racialised governmentality'

as ‘the governmental division between *whitened* Europeans and *non-whitened* ‘non-Europeans’” (Hesse, 2004: 24). I take the implications of the Polish colonial attempt seriously because it is an episode of the Polish history that establishes profusely and explicitly the perceived inferiority of black people, written into the Polish state formation that every other forms of racisms build on. My aim here has been to highlight the broadness of race and racism as a European problem, rather than a problem that is reduced to a particular locality.

Chapter Three opened the empirical section of the thesis, where I drew upon various studies of nation and nationalism, and more specifically the banal nationalism culture (Billig, 2015) and racism and nationalism (Balibar, 1991). I argued that Polish nationalism has a particular kind of nationalism that is privileged and protected through the exclusion of black bodies seen as an interruption of the category of Polish nation. To do this effectively, the chapter proposed the term ‘*Narodowiec* – ‘the national character’” to probe the integration of nationalism into Polish culture. It is then argued that *Narodowiec* – ‘the national activism’ within Polish nationalism is largely exploited by the current Polish government by focussing on racial paradigm within Polish nationalism as a reaction against multiculturalism. This allowed ordinary Polish people as well as the state to use the idea of Polish national identity to position themselves opposite of the non-national and non-white Other. To illustrate the above in an effective way, the thesis proposed a broader understanding of migration and social relations.

In **Chapter Four**, by considering the ways in which race and racism have been neglected, but still interact with migration in Poland, I mapped the figures in the Polish imaginary of European, and examined whether Poland has different, if related, histories of racial thinking and exclusion. I asked how such histories have been conceived, shaped and mediated. Whilst focussing on the assessment of race and racism as exclusionist logics, I introduced the concept of ‘Polish-centrism’. I differentiated ‘Polish-centrism’ from Polonization, the imposition of Polish culture on non-Polish populations. ‘Polish-centrism’ focusses strictly on Polish worldview, civilisation and identity; it regards Polishness as the essential, hence, the exclusion of a wider view of the world. In the chapter, I argued that Whiteness and Europeanness provide the mechanism that sustains ‘Polish-centrism’. This terminology contributes to the body of knowledge on homogeneity (Balibar, 2014: 6) Europeanness (Goldberg, 2006) and whiteness (Dyer, 1997; Garner, 2006; Roediger, 1991).

In **Chapter Five**, I focussed on racialisation as a device of exclusion. By introducing the important work of Robert Miles (1982) *Racism and Migrant Labour*, and Adam Hochman’s (2018) ‘thin and thick’ sense of racialisation, I developed a framework for extending the theoretical terrain of everyday racialisation in Poland. Providing examples from the everyday experiences of the

respondents, I argued that, in Poland, discrimination goes beyond the concept of race. Whilst acknowledging both the positive (better-sweet) and negative effects of racialisation, throughout the chapter, I showed the role of physiognomic as well as economic characteristics in the racialisation of many of the research participants. This ranged from being racialised through neoliberal economy to politics and the media. In the same chapter, my argument supports the evidence that it is the powerful sight of invisibility/hypervisibility that confirmed the intersecting oppressions of racism and sexism experienced by people of colour (Crenshaw, 1995; Collins, 2004). Using racialisation as part of the concepts in the thesis, the chapter not only set out the understanding of the phenomenon but demonstrated its operation through the lived experiences of the respondents such as Sophia, a mixed-race Pole racialised as black or migrant.

Whilst the above chapter in no way exhausted forms of exclusion and discriminatory practices in Poland, **Chapter Six** did highlight other forms of racism through the concept of racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1969; 1970; Sue, 2003; 2004; 2005; 2010; Sue et al, 2007; 2008). Racial microaggression, as discussed by its theorists, helps to situate positions of a dominant group over non-dominant groups, that in turn lead to related structures and acts of subordination (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). In its structural form, racial microaggression has formal or informal mechanisms such as policies and processes that systematically subordinate, marginalise, and exclude non-dominant groups and mediates their experiences with racial microaggressions. This form of exclusion, especially for black and mixed-race people, often appears automatic and subtle, but it is an offence mechanism (Pierce, 1970). Expanding on the operationalisation of microaggression, I utilised Sue et al's (2007: 274-275) compartmentalisation of microaggression – (a) *microassaults*, (b) *microinsults*, and (c) *microinvalidations* to unpack the lived experiences shared by the research participants. In utilising various readings on racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1969; Kohli & Solorzano 2012; Perez Huber & Cueva 2012; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015), this study not only set out the understanding of microaggressions, but demonstrated its operation through pathologising black experiences usually a presentation of a black person with personality disorder or someone like Nafisa, seen as a representation of black people, with no command of technology.

Part of the objectives of this study was to examine whether black bodies are found attractive in Poland. In addressing this objective in **Chapter Seven**, I examined Georg Simmel's (1950); Zygmunt Bauman's (1990) and Erving Goffman's (1986) broader accounts of strangeness and stigma. Drawing on black ontological framework to analyse the respondents' lived experiences, I identified and focussed on *Attractiveness/Sexuality*; *Threat*; *Curiosity*; and *Absence of contact* all related to the conceptualisation of black bodies as strange and stigmatised bodies in Poland. During the discussions on *Attractiveness/Sexuality*, some of the accounts provided by the sub-Saharan African

men often began with an aspect of erotic occidentalism. However, as the reader may recall the accounts provided by both Harry and Achille in the chapter demonstrated interesting roles of ‘Culture Brokers’ who bridge gaps (cultural differences) (Jezewski, 1990: 497-498) between sub-Saharan Africans and the complicated Polish society. Nonetheless, some levels of attractions are noticeable in such relationship. To explain the factors responsible for this, I turned to various studies on attractiveness and race (van den Berghe & Frost, 1986; Lewis, 2012; Burke et al., 2013; Wade et al., 2004; Madrigal & Kelly, 2006; Stepanova & Strube, 2018; Elena et al., 2018) to argue that physical features played a key role in attraction between black and white people in Poland.

Whilst many of the issues raised by the respondents may appear as racial microaggressions, **Chapter Eight** demonstrated that a closer excavation of the cases revealed something much deeper than just microaggressions. After all, racial microaggression as a concept was only developed in the 1960s, ran through the 1970s and was largely an American affair (Pierce, 1969; 1970; Pierce et al., 1978). It is through the introduction of essential works of Charles Mills - *The Racial Contract* (1997) and ‘White Ignorance’ (2007) that one begins to understand the perspective through which racial microaggressions come to exist. Rather than the common knowledge that racism, fundamentally, is an individual act of bigotry against another individual based on the supremacy of race, Mills (1997) proposes a rethink of racism through the racial contract be considered from a global perspective that underpins how white and non-white ‘races’ come to exist. The particular contract to which Mills refers is based on the post-Enlightenment political theory – the social contract – ‘not a contract between everybody (“we the people”) but between just the people who count, the people who really are people (“we the white people”)’ (Mills, 1997: 3). Throughout chapter six, this study has attempted to provide a justification for an argument that racial microaggressions, and perhaps other concepts of racism, do not exist in a vacuum. They are mediated through the conceptualisation of race, often historical, developed into the ‘assumptions of mainstream epistemology’ (Mills, 2007: 16) and later accepted as the natural order of things. In chapter Eight, it was argued that *The Racial Contract* needs to be conceived from the standpoint of modernity created as a racial hierarchy that is dominated by Whites/Europeans. This does not necessarily mean ‘that all whites are better off than all nonwhites, but that, as a statistical generalization, the objective life enhances of whites are significantly better’ (Mills, 1997: 36-37). It is a system of domination that allows white people, mainly Europeans and their descendants, to continue to benefit from the Racial Contract that creates a world in white cultural image and a political system that favours an economy structured around the exploitation of the others. In the chapter, I argued that *The Racial Contract* is not exactly western, as a pact of historical fact and post-Enlightenment political thought, racial contract is broadly a European contract through which

Europeans define and manage non-Europeans. It was argued that the effect of racial contract has been recognised, not only in the west, but also in the configuration of the Eastern European states. In doing so, each of the above chapters outlines the precariousness of blackness in Poland and collectively provide evidence that shows how black people remain marginalised in a society where whiteness prevails.

Methodological contributions

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has a major influence on the ethnographic processes of this study in two ways. First was the concept of 'white supremacy' which describes oppression based on 'race' and the second was the belief in 'race' rather than social class as the primary contradiction in society (Cole, 2009: 247). Therefore, the basic tenet of CRT is the identification of whiteness as a privilege that impedes exposure of racism and 'considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993; 2001: 3). This speaks directly to the heart of the site of this investigation, Poland, with an ethnically homogeneous white population within which the idea of CRT has never been tested. Part of the contributions of this study is the introduction of CRT theory to a new environment and tested to determine whether the influence is the same or different in comparison to the UK and US where the idea of CRT has been largely applied.

Implications and future directions

As demonstrated in different chapters throughout this thesis, almost all the participants agreed that people from sub-Saharan African background experienced prejudice and discrimination in Poland because of their skin colour. This confirmation of the persistence of racism equally calls for significant changes needed in order to address and challenge racism in Poland. In *White Privilege* (2018: 159) Kalwant Bhopal asks – 'How can we move forward in a society that continues to reinforce inequality based on skin colour?' To address this question, in the case of Poland, immigration and migration discourses in the country need radical changes. Some of the issues highlighted by almost all my respondents are mediated through modern measures of control of migrants and immigration from the Middle East and Africa that intertwined with the current Polish government's political conservatism. Yet Poland itself has benefited from migration, if fact, Poland is a country of migration with complex migration history. This reveals links between racism and right-wing ideology and identity politics. By positioning itself as a defender of traditional Polish values, the Polish state, aided by the right-wing media, often present migrants and immigration to Polish people as threats to traditional Polish values. By migrants, I do not mean white EU citizens

living in Poland – they are often referred to as expats, as Johnny, one of the respondents originally from Kenya, pointed out – ‘white people, when they come to our country, they’re expats, but when we come to their country, we’re immigrants...’ The fact that a person from the Middle East or Africa may appear highly professional does not matter here, in Poland, the term migrant is reduced to people of colour either from the Middle East or Africa. What often becomes the signifier is the blackness or darkness of the skin which plays an automatic role in the racialisation and then the reduction of African expats to the status of migrants. This implies that the public institutions in Poland need to be held accountable for racialised practices.

Discrimination, race and racism are pervasive and problematic issues that exist at the institutional and structural levels of a society. They are communicated through the media, politicians, and feature in many everyday situations. In Poland and CEE broadly, race and racialisation are phenomenon people do not talk about, the lack of engagement with the phenomenon allows it to perform a variety of social functions, which are often seen as consequence-free in the Polish society. It is important to note that not all Poles simply reproduce state’s narrative of race and racism, and not all ethnic minority group members are aware or recognised experiences of racism. What seems apparent is the fact that black and white relations are largely impacted upon by the phenomenon of race and racism. They are predominantly examined in terms of intergroup perceptions, in this case, the perception of black people in the country. The chapters discussed in this thesis provide insights into the underlying perceptive and emotional processes of perception of the racialised bodies. They collectively examined some of the ways in which the black people in Poland are racialised in everyday situations in the Polish society.

As demonstrated in chapters five and six, racialisation and racial microaggression are part of the daily life of people of sub-Saharan African backgrounds in Poland. It is important to acknowledge the fact that many of the issues raised by these people are not that simple nor straightforward. I am equally aware of extensive discrimination experienced by Poles elsewhere in Europe. However, the point that needs to be emphasised in the entire thesis is that the level of discrimination is different, Polish people may not be discriminated against because of their white features in Poland or in Europe. The level of racism experienced by the people of sub-Saharan African backgrounds in Poland is based on their non-Polishness, non-whiteness and above all, their sub-Saharanness which is based on, among several features, the darkness of their skin. In addition, it may be true that the dominant-subordinate model carries the danger of portraying in-group members as passive recipients of socially oppressive practices and out-group members as helpless victims. Whilst this may be the case in certain circumstances, the lived experiences of sub-Saharan Africans,

in Poland, show that many are held back by the difficult Polish language and largely by their non-Europeaness.

As a starting point, I suggest that the Polish government develops a specific policy that addresses racism by introducing knowledge of non-white and non-Polish people to the curriculum at both primary and secondary school levels. Introducing non-Eurocentric knowledge into the Polish curriculum would help to address explicit racism currently experienced in Poland and enlightened many about the understanding and the negative impact of race and racism in contemporary Polish society.

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Appendix One: Participants' Information Table

Warsaw, Poland.

Pseudonyms	Age	Country of Origin	Duration in Poland	Gender M/F	Religion	Occupation	Relationship
Abel	49	Nigeria	12 years	M	Islam	IT Customer Service	Polish wife
Harry	43	Nigeria	16 years	M	Christianity	Ex-footballer	Polish wife
Eldami	34	Uganda	8 years	M	Christianity	Worker	N/A
Achille	29	DR Congo	2 years	M	Christianity	language consultant	Polish partner
Enzo	26	Mixed race Pole	Live in Poland all his life	M	Christianity	Street dancer, actor	Polish Girlfriend
Sophia	23	Mixed race Pole	Live in Poland all her life	F	Christianity	Singer	Black Boyfriend
Johnny	33	Kenya	3 years	M	Christianity	Network Engineer	Polish wife
Kenneth	27	Angola	10 years +	M	Christianity	YouTuber	Polish girlfriend
Joseph	46	Mixed-race Pole	Live in Poland all his life	M	Christianity	DJ	Polish girlfriend
Mary	35	Nigeria	5 years	F	Christianity	PhD Student	Single
Gloria	49	Nigeria	10 years	F	Christianity	PhD Student	Single
Aaden	49	Somalia	22 years	M	Islam	Charity worker	Non-Polish partner
Frank	35	Kenya	12 years	M	No religion	activist	Polish wife
Maya	33	Mixed-race Pole	Live in Poland all her life	F	Christianity	Cultural Practitioner	Polish husband

Krakow, Poland.

Pseudonyms	Age	Country of Origin	Duration In Poland	Gender M/F	Religion	Occupation	Relationship
Julius	24	Mixed race Pole	Moved to Poland at age 7	M	Christianity	Medical Doctor	Single
Diane	26	Nigeria	1 year	F	Christianity	Student	Single
Jona	25	Nigeria	1 years	M	Christianity	Student	Single
Kath	27	Nigeria	3 years	F	Christianity	Analyst	Single
Nafisah	22	Cameroon	4 Months	F	Christianity	Student	Single
Danni	22	Mixed race Pole	Moved to Poland at age 5	M	Christianity	Student	Single

Lodz, Poland (Focus Group).

Pseudonyms	Age	Country of Origin	Moved to Poland	Gender M/F	Religion	Occupation	Relationship
Amil	23	Nigeria	3 years	M	Christian	Student	Non-Polish girlfriend
Ezera	22	Nigeria	3 years	M	Christian	Student	Single
Wanda	23	Mixed-race Somalian	3 years	F	Christian	Student	Non-Polish boyfriend
Ashima	24	Zimbabwe	3 years	F	Christian	Student	Single

Katowice, Poland.

Pseudonyms	Age	Country of Origin	Moved to Poland	Gender M/F	Religion	Occupation	Relationship
Chiny	36	Nigeria	4 years	F	Christianity	Student	Non-Polish partner
Mikey	26	Ghana	2 years	M	Christianity	Student/work	Non-Polish partner
Zilma	33	South Africa	9 Months	M	Christianity	Student	Polish partner
Cedric	30	Nigeria	4 years	M	Christianity	Student	Single
Zeta	33	South Africa	9 months	F	Christianity	Teacher	Single

Appendix Two: Information Sheets and Consent Forms

(English Version)



INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Project Title: **Poland, Blackness and Racialization.**

My name is Bolaji Balogun and I am a Doctoral student at the University of Leeds. My research investigates blackness, race and racism in Poland. It is hoped that the outcome of this research will enhance our understanding of racism and provide new information on how race and racialisation work in Poland.

You are invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in the project, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with anyone, if you wish. Please let me know if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of the interview is to explore race and racialization in Poland. You can help in this study by consenting to participate in an interview session, which will be audio-taped.

Participation in this study is voluntary, you may withdraw your consent at any time during the interview, at which the recording will be stopped, and any information collected so far will be destroyed. No names or other information that might identify you will be used in any publication or documentation from this research.

After the interview, written transcripts will be created from the recording and will contain no names or details that may identify you. However, please do let me know if you wish to be unanonymous. After the transcription, the original recordings will be destroyed for data protection.

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return the form to email address: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk. If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me or call +48 5791 04214 or email my supervisor (Dr Paul Bagguley): p.bagguley@leeds.ac.uk

If you prefer to speak to someone who is not involved in this study, you can contact the **Human Research Ethics Committee** at the following address:

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Email: ris@leeds.ac.uk

(Polish Version)



ROZMOWA INDYWIDUALNA, ARKUSZ INFORMACYJNY (Polish)

Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Tytuł projektu: **Poland, Blackness and Racialization.**

Nazywam się Bolaji Balogun i jestem doktorantem na Uniwersytecie w Leeds. Moje badania analizują rasę i rasizm w Polsce. Mam nadzieję, że wynikiem tych badań będzie lepsze zrozumienie rasizmu i dostarcza one nowe informacje na temat problemu rasy i rasizmu w Polsce.

Jestes zaproszony do wzięcia udziału w tym projekcie badawczym. Przed podjęciem decyzji, czy chcesz uczestniczyć w projekcie, ważne jest, aby zrozumieć dlaczego badania zostaną przeprowadzone i na czym będą polegać.

Poświęć czas na uważne przeczytanie poniższych informacji, jeśli masz jakieś pytania, wątpliwości lub potrzebujesz dodatkowych informacji na temat badań możesz ze mną na ten temat porozmawiać.

Celem rozmowy indywidualnej jest zbadanie i zanalizowanie problemu rasizmu w Polsce. Możesz pomóc w tym badaniu zgadzając się na wzięcie udziału w rozmowie, która będzie nagrana. Udział w badaniu jest dobrowolny, możesz wycofać swoją zgodę w dowolnym momencie podczas rozmowy, na której nagrywanie zostanie przerwane, a wszelkie informacje zebrane do tej pory zostaną zniszczone. Żadne imiona lub informacje, które mogłyby zidentyfikować Ciebie, jako użytkownika nie będą wykorzystane w jakiegokolwiek publikacji lub dokumentacji z badań.

Po rozmowie zostanie sporządzony pisemny protokół z nagrania, który nie będzie zawierał żadnych imion lub informacji, które mogłyby zidentyfikować Ciebie, jako użytkownika. Jednakże jeśli chcesz, aby Twoje imię znalazło się w protokole i dokumentach z badań, proszę mnie o tym poinformować. Po transkrypcji, oryginalne nagrania zostaną zniszczone ze względu na ochronę danych osobowych.

Jeśli chciałbyś wziąć udział w tym projekcie badawczym, proszę o wypełnienie załączonego formularza wyrażającego zgodę na udział w badaniach i odesłanie go na adres: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk

Jeśli masz jakieś pytania dotyczące projektu , nie wahaj się ze mną skontaktować lub zadzwoń +44 +48 5791 04214 lub wyślij e-mail do mojego promotora (Dr Paul Bagguley): p.bagguley@leeds.ac.uk

Jeśli wolisz rozmawiać z kimś, kto nie jest zaangażowany w ten projekt , możesz skontaktować się z działem Bioetyczne Badania na Ludziach pod następującym adresem:

Research & Innovation Service

Charles Thackrah Building

University of Leeds

101 Clarendon Road

Leeds, LS2 9LJ

Tel: +44 (0)113 343 0900

Fax: 0113 343 0949

Email: ris@leeds.ac.uk

Website: www.leeds.ac.uk/ris

(English Version)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Title of Project: Poland, Blackness and Racialization.

Name of Researcher: Bolaji Balogun, School of Sociology and Social Policy.

Please tick the box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated.....for the
above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and
have
had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time
without providing any reasons and without there being any negative consequences. In
addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to
decline. Research project contact: Bolaji Balogun, email: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk ☐
3. The confidentiality processes and procedures (use of names, pseudonyms, and
anonymisation
of data etc.) have been explained to me. I give permission for members of the research
team to have access to my anonymised or unanonymised responses (*Please indicate*). I
understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. ☐
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be stored and used in relevant future research in
an anonymised form. ☐
5. I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree
to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. ☐

6. I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐

7. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

☐

8. I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.

☐

Participant's Full Name

Signature

Date

Bolaji Balogun

Researcher's Full Name

Signature

Date

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties, the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents, which must be kept in a secure location.

FORMULARZ ZGODY UCZESTNIKA BADANIA NAUKOWEGO

Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Tytuł Projektu: Poland, Blackness and Racialization

Imię i Nazwisko Badacza: Bolaji Balogun, Szkoła Socjologii i Polityki Społecznej

1. Potwierdzam, że przeczytałem arkusz informacyjny z dnia..... dla powyższego badania. Miałem okazję rozpatrzyć informacje na temat badania, zadać pytania i jestem zadowolony z otrzymanych odpowiedzi.

☐

2. Rozumiem, że mój udział w badaniu jest dobrowolny i mogę w każdej chwili wycofać się z badania bez podania przyczyny i bez żadnych negatywnych konsekwencji. Ponadto jeśli nie będę chciał odpowiedzieć na jakieś pytanie mam prawo odmówić odpowiedzi. Kontakt w sprawie badania: Bolaji Balogun, email: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk

☐

3. Poufność procesu i procedura (wykorzystanie nazwisk, pseudonimów i anonimizacji danych itp) zostało mi wyjaśnione. Wyrażam zgodę, aby członkowie zespołu badawczego mieli dostęp do moich anonimowych odpowiedzi lub nie anonimowych odpowiedzi (*proszę podać*). Rozumiem, że moje odpowiedzi będą traktowane, jako ściśle poufne.

☐

4. Wyrażam zgodę na przechowywanie i wykorzystanie danych zebranych ode mnie w przyszłych badaniach naukowych w formie anonimowej.

☐

5. Rozumiem, że inni badacze naukowci będą mieli dostęp do tych danych, tylko wtedy kiedy zgodzą się na zachowanie poufności zgodnie z wnioskiem w tym formularzu.

☐

6. Rozumiem, że inni badacze naukowci mogą wykorzystywać moje słowa w publikacjach, raportach, stronach internetowych i innych wynikach badań, tylko jeśli zgodzą się na zachowanie poufności zgodnie z wnioskiem w tym formularzu.

☐

7. Rozumiem, że niektóre sekcje z danych zebranych w trakcie badania mogą być przeglądane i analizowane przez osoby z Uniwersytetu w Leeds lub organów regulacyjnych. Wyrażam zgodę, aby te osoby miały dostęp do moich akt.

☐

8. Zgadzam się na udział w powyższym projekcie badawczym oraz poinformowanie badacza, jeśli moje dane kontaktowe ulegną zmianie.

☐

Imię i nazwisko Uczestnika Badania

Podpis

Data

Bolaji Balogun

Imię i nazwisko Badacza

Podpis

Data

* Do podpisania i opatrzenia datą w obecności uczestnika.

Po podpisaniu przez wszystkie strony, uczestnik powinien otrzymać kopię podpisanego i opatrzonego datą formularza zgody uczestnika, list / wcześniej napisany skrypt / arkusz informacyjny oraz wszelkie inne pisemne informacje przekazane uczestnikom. Kopię podpisanego i opatrzonego datą formularza zgody należy przechowywać wraz z głównymi dokumentami projektu, które należy przechowywać w bezpiecznym miejscu.

Appendix Three: Research Posters, Confidentiality Agreement, and Ethical Approval

(English Version)



Are you Black or Mixed-Race?

Participants needed for a research study

Participants must be 18+, male or female from Black or Mixed-race background. You need to be prepared to complete a short questionnaire and 60 minutes interview.

During the interview, we will explore experiences and views on living in Poland from the perspective of an African person.

If you are interested in this study, please contact :

Bolaji Balogun (Doctoral Researcher)
Sociology and Social Policy
University of Leeds
Phone: +48 579-104-214
Email: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk

Your participation in the study will be confidential and your anonymity will be guaranteed.

LEVERHULME TRUST

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

(Polish Version)



Are you Black or Mixed-Race?

Poszukiwane osoby czarnoskóre lub rasy mieszanej do badania naukowego.

Poszukiwane są zarówno kobiety jak i mężczyźni, którzy mają ukończone 18 lat. Badanie będzie polegało na wypełnieniu krótkiej ankiety i maksymalnie 45-60-minutowej rozmowie.

Badanie dotyczy Życie w Polsce z perspektywy Afrykańczyka

Proszę o kontakt::

Bolaji Balogun (Doctoral Researcher)
Sociology and Social Policy
University of Leeds
Phone: +48 579-104-214
Email: ssbb@leeds.ac.uk

Twój udział w tym badaniu będzie poufny i anonimowość w pełni zapewniona.

LEVERHULME TRUST

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Ethics Reference: AREA 15-086

Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title: **Poland, Blackness and Racialization**

I have volunteered to work on the above project as Research Assistant (Interpreter/Translator/Designer/Demographer) and I agree to the following:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher*.
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure, if it is in my possession.
3. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher* when I have completed the research tasks.
4. After consulting with the *Researcher*, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the *Researcher* (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).
5. Adhere to the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) [guidelines Framework for Research Ethics](#) (FRE).

Research Assistant's Full Name

Signature

Date

Researcher's Full Name

Signature

Date

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds. If you prefer to speak to someone who is not involved in this study, you can contact the **Human Research Ethics Committee** at the following address:

Research & Innovation Service, Charles Thackrah Building, University of Leeds. 101 Clarendon Road, Leeds. LS2 9LJ. Tel: +44 (0)113 343 0900, email: ris@leeds.ac.uk website: www.leeds.ac.uk/ris



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Performance, Governance and Operations
Research & Innovation Service
Charles Thackrah Building
101 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk

Bolaji Balogun
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Social Sciences Building
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds**

23 March 2016

Dear Bolaji

Title of study: Poland, Power, and Black Atlanticism: Whose identity?
Ethics reference: AREA 15-086

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document Version Date
AREA 15-086 Maps - Warsaw and Cracow.pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Ethical Review Form.pdf 2 22/03/16
AREA 15-086 Email Signature - Prof. Ian Law.pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Initial Email Template (English Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Initial Email Template (Polish Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Posters (Polish and English).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 INFORMATION SHEET (Group English Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 INFORMATION SHEET (Group Polish Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 INFORMATION SHEET (Individual English Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 INFORMATION SHEET (Individual Polish Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 CONSENT FORM (English Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 CONSENT FORM (Polish Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 METHODOLOGY.docx 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Topic Guide.pdf 2 22/03/16
AREA 15-086 Research Assistant Agreement (English Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 Research Assistant Agreement (Polish Version).pdf 1 24/02/16
AREA 15-086 ESSL Fieldwork Health & Safety Risk Assessment.pdf 1 24/02/16

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service

On behalf of Dr Andrew Evans, Chair, [AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#)

CC: Student's supervisor(s)