

Encountering post-colonial realities in Namibia

Volume 22 Issue 1 | 2020

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On the relation of coloniality and masculinities in Namibia

Ethnoscripts 2020 22 (1): 108-128

eISSN 2199-7942

Abstract

The following is an essay that offers a critical view on the dominant gender studies' concepts and utilizes theory from black and black masculinities studies in conjunction with the implications from the coloniality of power. The text will later touch on different aspects of black male experiences and organizational traits of Namibian masculine organization. Taking into consideration the immense transformations that were provoked by colonial occupation in the area of sexuality and identity, I intend a holistic approach that combines a critical view on capitalism and modernity under the light of the different dimensions of coloniality. As a contrast, ancestral Afrikan cornerstones are thematized as political points of articulation on which Afrikan masculinities and body-type in general can be renewed upon.

Publisher:

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eISSN: 2199-7942



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On the relation of coloniality and masculinities in Namibia

Camilo Angola

Introduction

In this text the reader will encounter a contribution on the relations that exist between masculinities¹ and coloniality in Namibia. I firstly ought to mention coloniality as a central element in this work and as a starting point for problematizing masculinities in a first place. Taking these aspects into consideration I will also try to go into the Namibian notions of collectivity and community developed ancestrally as a reference to grasp and contrast coloniality or rather how the lifestyles of the peoples of the nations² from the nation-state now called Namibia were modified due to the imposition of colonial ideology, organization, spirituality, feeling, etc. since the beginning of colonial invasions in Afrika³ several centuries ago (Ani 1994). This is to say that coloniality in Namibia is closely related to coloniality in other Afrikan and even world regions. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 338). A final moment of this relational approach will take into account a critic assessment of capitalism, imperialism and modernity as crucial elements for a multifaceted statement on coloniality and colonial economics.

I would secondly introduce the concept of black masculinities as academic and empiric production of black men who have been building the way for the articulation of black male theory from black male experience which is not only decisive for the understanding and conceiving the sense of this text but also determining for a fair and responsible delineation of this specific framework. It has poorly been written about the experience of Afrikan men and even less about the experience of black men from colonially occupied non-imperialist countries and subjectivities (Curry 2017a: 5).

- 1 I use the plural form of the word in order to ensure a wide understanding of how *being a man* is a heterogeneous process that contains several contradictions: amongst Afrikans and men in general.
- 2 By nation I refer to the different groups who identify with local ancestral identities with own languages, spirituality and territory. The nation-states founded after the “independence movements” are not meant by the usage of this term.
- 3 The term “Afrikan” and “Afrika” is written this way because it implies not only those peoples and territories from the Afrikan continent but also those of the historical diaspora. On the other hand, the classical spelling fails to recognize the political agency of Afrikan identities beyond geographical and/or national sense of belonging.

In this text I would rather refer to theoretical and empirical sources that focus on the experience of the black male and its political, bodily profundity. Classic feminist and black feminist literature on this regard are inaccurate and pursue a different goal. Often are black men portrayed and situated in ways that remotely contribute to this essay. The aim of several racialized men for domination⁴ when speaking about the male experience is (as it is in my case) to politicize the male *body-type's* experience within racist and imperialist entanglements in order to break down and revise concepts like *patriarchy*, *male privilege* and *toxic masculinity*.

Alongside to the diversity of tools and elements present in this study I will constantly offer a materialistic dimension in order to grant a political completion to these reflections. A materialistic view situates cultural phenomena's origins on a material/economic sphere and regards material dealings as the basis and/or of special importance in social and cultural constructions.

Hence, this essay will state a connection between politically problematized masculinities, gender politics and coloniality. It will also be treated how coloniality shifts masculinity and sexuality as well as how it also affects other institutions of culture and organic structure such as communal ways of life and ancestral collectivity in Namibia.

Drawing attention to the colonial dimension of contemporary masculinities is a way of thematizing the male black experience in the framework of possible/imaginable new experiences and new collective realities. Conclusively I will pursue an approach to engage diversely and through a multi-perspective undertaking in an assessment and eventual healing of Afrikan masculinity. This essay's topic is a multi-sided conversation on colonial material realities, the resulting ideology and how they shaped the understanding, embodiment, theory and praxis of the black male in Namibia. Summing up the previous aspects, the text's question is what are the difficulties and challenges black men face in organizing and where do they come from?

So, based on the obtained data we will touch on current forms of Afrikan, collective, positive male organizations in Namibia. This is a conviction that by all means derives from the feeling that masculinities are cultural constructs based on and therefore fundamental for spiritual, cosmological, energetic pillars of (Afrikan) culture. In other words an experience that should also be studied and comprehended within the global patterns' parameters of structural hegemonies chiefly based on the *coloniality of power*.

From where do I speak and what I pursue: I see this contribution as a continuation of a personal search for clarity regarding the safety, wellbeing and factual liberty of Afrikan and historical diasporic black communities. I

4 Every person and group of people is racialized in every context therefore I do not utilize the term BIPOC since it fails to portray the fact that white people are also racialized, however not for domination but for dominance.

was born and raised in a dispersed black diasporic community in the heart of Colombia, the country where I grew up as well. My family moved from the country's pacific region off to the capital city. While growing up I fully identified with an Afrikan ancestry in a country whose national identity discourse was not only created and shaped by former and current colonial domination's requirements, but also deeply harmed by Spanish colonial occupation between the 16th and 19th centuries. This occupation generated similar power-amalgams to those in Namibia. My family's and thousands of other Afrikan families' origins in Colombia and other countries in the region are in fact one of the key elements within the structuring of a global colonial system: the brutal and continuous kidnapping of millions of Afrikans by European colonial states between the 15th and 20th century and latter enslavement in Abya Yala⁶. Throughout the time spent in Namibia I engaged in powerful discussions with touching people and circumstances, with whom I was able to share not only deep interest in the subject but also a transcendental synchrony of the mutually unveiled emotions expounded in several occasions among brothers and sisters who accompanied me in this process. Moreover, I have been able to sense a notion of urgency dwelling around issues of masculinity, sexuality, identity and their relation to power and violence within Afrikan communities in Colombia, Germany, and Namibia. A process that I believe to be part of a larger, detailed and thorough effort to restrain and fight contemporary systemic violence.

Towards a basic understanding of the theory of coloniality

Throughout this essay that relates black male experiences with colonial power, the presence of decolonial and anti-colonial theory shall play an explicatory role on how colonialism established a model of global domination upon the entire world and not in specific and isolated areas. The understanding of coloniality as a very wide concept that explains colonialism as much more than a simple historical episode "located in the past" but a large and complex interweaving of power and culture among others (Quijano 2000: 201). This is to say that colonially occupied territories and their peoples are imbued in a global scale of colonial domination that manifests in the imposition of a colonial culture and share therefore very similar economic, political, social, etc. traits (Grosfoguel 2011: 15, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 345, Dei and Asgharzadeh 2001: 301). Coloniality is a matter of power: the power to explain and

5 Post-colonially assuming that the process of liberation ends in a culminated non-colonial country in August 7 of 1819 at 4PM.

6 Abya Yala is the Name that the Kuna people who reside in the current territories of the nation-states of Colombia and Panama gave to a major territory comprising lands and countries beyond those of the Kuna. This term is politically utilized in opposition to the foreign Name (Latin) America given by European invaders.

narrate, power to produce and validate information, power over social behavior and relations between people, and finally to control and determine resources and work as well as how and by whom are production and consumption supposed to take place (Dei and Asgharzadeh 2001: 304, Mignolo 2007: 468, Wa Thiong'o 1992: 4). Coloniality presupposes that colonial schemes are still valid in spite of the evaporation of colonial administration. In short, colonial protocols, codes, and covenants still exist in the form of a global domination systematic. Domination occurs at several levels beyond the classic colonial paradigm empire/colony – racialized for domination/racialized for being dominated. The understanding of decolonial theory also breaks down power structures to the level of relations between colonial subalterns and is able to frame the relations between e.g. impoverished and dominant socio-economic classes, peripheral and metropolitan inhabitants, men and women (Grosfoguel 2008: 8, Lugones 2008: 78).

In order to frame the issue of black masculinities I will refer to theories developed by Afrikan males as internal agents of reflection of a bodily and political experience. This afrocentric perspective stresses the necessity for own subjects and collectives to theorize over their own subjectivity/collectivity, as it is in the case of black males to speak about sexuality, body-type gender and genre from the own experience (Wynter 2003: 312, Curry 2017a: 39, 245). To conceive them through the lenses of a black male theory radically shifts the political range of actions if compared to theoretical frameworks that rather pathologize and tend to an ontological stigmatization of the Afrikan male commonly conceived as an individual (Lemelle 2010: 97). Other male and non-male Afrikan's considerations will be included as theoretical inputs for this article, for other subjectivities have also contributed to a further understanding, conceiving and construction of the mentioned Afrikan masculinities. The political agenda of the black male is closely related to that of the community, the shared abstract and physical spaces, and (applying the sense of anti-colonial praxis) an appeal to the Afrikan ancestral principles (Oyewumi 2001: 80, 83, Oyewumi 2002).

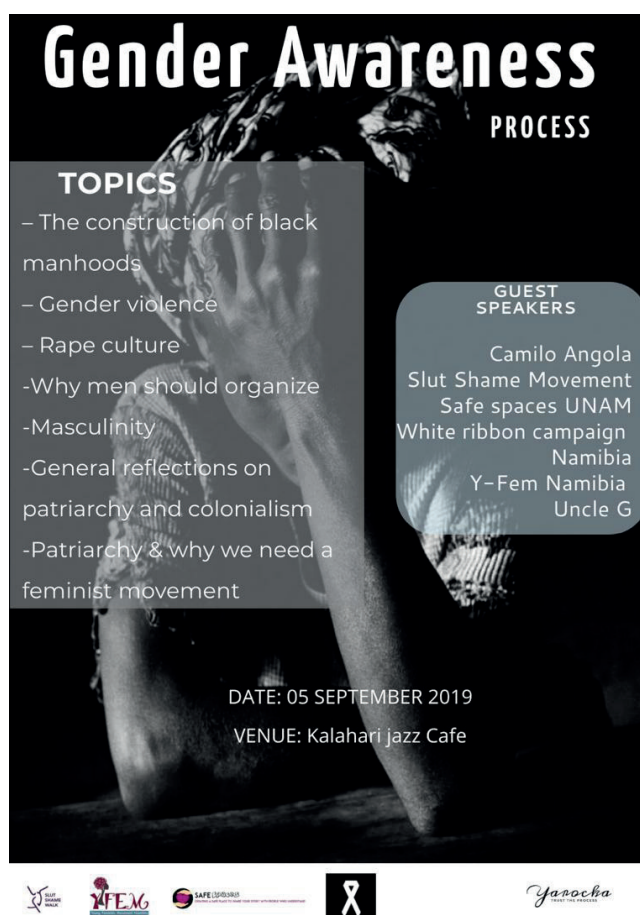
As Oyewumi states in her work, the concept of genders were culturally politically produced by external non-Oyo colonial domination programs by rewriting and revising ancestral history, for that reason a thorough analysis of power structures for which the role of black Namibian men and other racially oppressed will be pondered and located in a global structure of colonially-based imperialist system (Connell 2000: 46, González-López 2006: 75).

Methodology and procedure

This essay is empirically based on an eight-week research stay in Namibia between the months of July, August and September in 2019. Methodologic processes were chiefly carried out in the city of Windhoek, however other

rural and urban locations were included in the conceiving and deploying of methodological procedures. In order to reach out to interested parties I arranged casual meetings, informal conversations later led to common interest and motivation to participate and organize events. Afterwards I conducted different kinds of interviews with several people, then this allowed me to carry out participant observation in different contexts.

A central method applied was a panel discussion event in order to gather different political views and convictions on a range of interrelated topics and political agencies. This panel discussion was planned and conducted in cooperation with activists, politically motivated people and interested private individuals who were later welcome to use as a platform to convey own ideas and proposals. A virtual flyer was distributed and functioned as an invitation for those who acknowledge masculinity, gender and genre, sexuality and sexual identity, etc. as relevant agendas.



Flyer designed by *Prince*, a panel discussion collaborator and participant, to reach out to interested parties. The flyer displays the event and the range of topics covered by five speakers.

This multi-sided encounter was a sole frame which was appropriated and furnished by the panel speakers. In other words, those interested in making

a statement and sharing it publically (including me), co-designed the event and filled it with contents. I then drew on the topics and conclusions from the speakers as well as the audience's in order to 1.) sketch out logistical later steps for the research process and 2.) obtain an approximation on what participants believed in and motivated them. Collective interviews as well as semi-structured interviews were then conducted with different interlocutors in different constellations. Besides interviews and recorded group meetings I applied participant observation as a method in the context of work activities and events regarding activist or topic related purposes. So, not everyone who participated was subsequently interviewed; those who had a practice and a personal motivation to be involved in activism and/or those who manifested special interest as well as other activists referred by the former were involved in further and detailed examination through the means of interviews.

In the course of my investigation process the following topics emerged as central discussion points in the conducted interviews and the fundamental material for the already posed question: "Masculinity", "Why men should organize", "General reflections on patriarchy and colonialism" and "The construction of black manhood".

Breaking with the fundamentals of a theory of Afrikan Masculinities

In the course of my fieldwork it quickly became clear that an examination of the concept of gender in its colonial topicality is crucial for the accompanying discussion of the theme of African masculinity, given that, not few interlocutors that I got to know in the panel discussion constantly emphasized the importance of understanding and labelling the experience of women and eventually of members of the LGBT⁷ communities based on gender-framing discourses. Throughout the interviews conducted numerous understandings of gender and common traits amongst the definitions appeared, which however can be synthesized as follows: Gender as a term that is able to tolerate several definitions throughout time, there was nevertheless a relative consensus of gender as a socio-cultural construct typically conceived as accompanied by biological sex-assignment and/or dual genital categorization, culturally explained but perceived as natural. It was too usually defined in conjunction with social behavioral roles, meaning a culturally justified bundle of conducts and regulations for members of certain a cultural group. In the end, gender as a term was employed to wrap up and deal with different questionings surrounding the (black) male experience by the virtue of the fact that they were directly connected to experiences of violence and/or trauma; in short, an inquiry towards the experience of black males was in most

7 I encountered that other possible letters for this acronym were rarely used in Namibia. I acknowledge the importance for other identities and embodiments but I am willing to reproduce what was transmitted to men by those I collaborated with.

of the cases led to an account of violent non-male experiences, gender based violence (shortened GBV)⁸ and patriarchy.

It is a remarkable detail and a significant demonstration how the flyer design chosen by the one of the male collaborators for the event logistic, utilized a darkened and troubled image of an Afrikan female as the foremost suitable theme for an event on male, female and communitarian issues of sexual politics. The title “Gender Awareness” corresponds in the same manner to these essential assumptions, in this context, in regard of the narrative aesthetics of gender.

Gender was shown to be a political category suitable for feminist agendas which seek to tackle political phenomena such as GBV, female empowerment and identity, body sovereignty, gender equality, birth control rights, and the like. Under this light, the black male existence as a political agency relative to gender was either not considered, relegated or simply categorized as inexistent while female and LGBT issues would naturally surface. This has been constructed as primary gender theory and dominant discourse about sexuality, (sexual) corporality and sexual identity based on the paradigm of oppression from predominantly black male subjects or “black patriarchy” (Curry 2018: 142, 203, Lemelle 2010: 49, 53).

This observation brings us to the question of what does gender then mean under the light of black masculine studies. Throughout the panel event black males were portrayed by several interlocutors as dominant individuals with factual patriarchal power. Masculinities and all male experiences, regardless of different personal and collective contextual settings were situated at the same oppressive level with same oppressive capacity only with circumstantial nuances. Being masculine or a man would lead to the realization that power is inherent to the ontological condition of such, yet oppression is carried out individually by every man drawing on *patriarchal privilege*. This usually meant, that men were generalizable and fairly homogeneous and at the same time are to be held individually accountable for their violent actions, discarding any linkage with a systemic structure.

Patriarchy is still there, is still dominant. Men are holding up power. “No, I am the man...” He enacted and carried on. “As long as I have a penis. I got everything”... You know? “I have all the world.” (Interlocutor A)

The implications of such focalized narratives on negative experiences and privilege to define and delineate sexual politics were clearly manifested by several of the interlocutors that participated in the panel discussion as part of the audience, especially those working with, advocating for or addressing

8 Gender based violence is a term coined to refer to the violence that takes place over those who socially and culturally represent certain gender and/or gender attributes, categorically oppressed by male dominance/patriarchy.

LGBT rights, women's issues or gender as the agenda. This is by no means to say that violent actions of any nature have to be justified, trivialized or indulged due to the incidence of power structures. It is rather an observation on how hegemonic sexual politics discourse and praxis dismisses black masculinities from constructive articulations for collective transformations and with them, the space for constructing positive, communal and emotionally equilibrated/loving dialogues (Watkins 2016: 285).

Educating men is important but education is about what you want to communicate, then you need the methodology, that is the how. So once you have a man network talking to men, men are most likely to change. (Interlocutor Q)

Interviews showed repeatedly that an obvious lack of male organization is perceived in Namibia. Black male organization was pointed out and exhorted by few interlocutors and participants throughout the panel. They referred to political processes based on the black male experiences as a political intention and are seen by all means as one of the main goals in order to recreate a practice from a communal, Afrikan and masculine agency. Also, according to Interlocutor Q in order to eschew erroneous portrayals stemming from external political paths, Afrikan male organization should represent a mode for black men to assemble different strategies to develop own narratives and build consecutive sovereignty over them.

Gender, complementarity and body-type

As it will be stated latter, several interlocutors stressed that quotidian work in all Afrikan-Namibian societies have been divided by the corporal type of person that one assumes: men and their bodies are culturally conceived for a certain type of tasks whereas women rather for another kind. Despite of the local praxis of globalized interest in gender discourse and its current debates on breaking down the binary understanding of gender, queerness, etc., the attention to the issue of Afrikan Complementarity was a central moment in my research. Afrikan Complementarity was thematized as a manner of ontological structuring as follows. Certain interlocutors elucidated a keen and fundamental sense of complementarity between the male and the female energies/experiences. Beyond sexual and labor complementarity, there was a clear association between ancestral/traditional balance and equity in terms of Afrikan values. Such a balance was also interrelated to the praxis and belief of complementarity: there is balance because there is complementarity not only amongst "individuals" but amongst the different possible sub-groups within the main community – male/female, old/young, etc. (T'Shaka 2012: 29).

I think it was more respectful. It doesn't matter if she stays at home, it does not matter if I endanger myself going to the forest... I still appreciate what you do. But now is like: "now I am going to the mine, I am digging and what, what. Cleaning is nothing!" [...] Women felt more appreciated because men will say thank you. (Interlocutor L)

This quotation stems from a collective interview conducted with a group of female interlocutors on the impact of social roles and colonialism.

Identity based on body-type is much of an old concept for the nations that have ancestrally lived in the territories of today's national state of Namibia. The way body-type identity is conceived and described has been at the same time multifaceted throughout time and space. In the end, it was stated that it leaves a mark in every one of us beyond our bodies. According to my interlocutors bodily identity is well known to be affected by and fused with other social and political institutions of culture.

Men in my village know how to talk to cows. It's like when they talk to them, they know from their inside how to communicate with them... and women sing and dance to the food and it tastes so good because they already have it in them. (Interlocutor V)

Corporal identity and economical practice are interdependent in Afrikan ancestral social constellations; the cultural system determines the roles and bodies on the other hand ascribe sense to the system by performing these economic tasks.

Subsistence economy and models for complementarity

Subsistence economy systems like the Bantu subsistence organizational scheme as well as hunters and gatherers like the San have traditionally established that men were those in charge of herding and agriculture (Likuwa 2014: 55). Women on the other hand were given the administration of the homestead, food and diet among others. This is, conclusively, a system constructed upon the designation of certain groups of people to hold accountability for, carry out and feel intrinsically connected to specific and general social and economic affairs necessary for the subsistence of a group instead of forcing "individuals" to perform unwanted duties. Rituality understood as the transcendental motive inherent in one's vocation and behind quotidian actions to carry out a task imbued in the sustainability of the group.

Did you know that before the European invasions in Africa there was equality? Have you seen the paintings of the San people? [...] in the mountains... you can go see how significantly women are put on those drawings... there is the story of a San man who

interprets them for tourists and he will tell the story: apparently in the San community, the first architect was a woman, because those guys are hunters and gatherers. When the men went to hunt it started to rain while the woman had a baby at home and she had to find a means to protect that baby and then she built something. When the man he found that wat the woman had done was really safe for the baby, so the man came up with the idea, how do we strengthen this shelter to protect our babies... You can really see the significance of women in history. (Interlocutor Q)

This is an abstract of the interview with a male interlocutor currently engaged in the organization of men in rural and urban contexts.

During my interviews in Namibia I encountered a perception that work division responds to *cosmological dispositions* in which a group identifies and structures its necessities, world-organizing narratives which are the theoretical basis for quotidian narratives: oral tradition, laws, religious, spiritual, and cultural regulations, in other words, systems. People would later reflect and evaluate on the work performed by referring to these systems. This forms fundamental acceptance of ideological corpuses that can be interchangeable with the group's common sense and the basis for a feeling of belonging to a community. In other words, sets of ideas, justifications and validations, symbolically spelled out⁹ to which everybody can refer for complementary political dialectics, namely 1.) to enforce, call for order or 2.) to question its sense, reform. Wrapping up, complementarity offers the possibility for modifications in one's system of values as long as one understands and acknowledges its sense (Ani 1994).

Complementarity is therefore one of several Afrikan systems that underpins the sense of body-type and situates it in relation to other (complementary) body-types in a dynamic circulation of duties and rights which fundamentally involves every person at various levels of material and emotional reciprocity. Finally and to summarize, complementarity was a central concept while finding approaches to guiding inspiration for a better understanding of Afrikan sexual politics.

Corporal and sexual identity as an Afrikan organizational paradigm

To several interlocutors, there was a clear distinction between *before colonialism* and *after colonialism* by the virtue of the fact that crucial changes

⁹ This compendium of cultural laws are often based in ancient accounts of how humans from a specific group and in a specific place(s) were given or comprehended essential information to limit their desires and inclinations but to optimize their happiness as well. Spiritual entities and their realms are commonly in close relationship with them.

were enforced upon the Afrikan nations and that people share collective awareness of these modifications. Afrikan views assigned the male body-type certain roles, duties and rights based on a range of economic activities; these activities are complementary to those of the female body-type. This complementary system determined who amongst mainly body-type and age criteria will be in charge of managing which economic activity. In this essay patriarchy is understood as a cultural system that serves the legitimation and explanation of why and how are work, and other institutions of culture, divided and categorized. An important number of these nations have been practicing economy within subsistence structures' parameters. African nations, especially those from which have occupied the territory of the present Namibian nation-state are known to have based their economy (in large part) on the possession of livestock and count specifically on dairy, fur, eggs, and the like together with agriculture in order to subsist. Cattle is an ecological source traditionally and emphatically regarded by the majority of the interlocutors as an element commonly associated in present-day Namibia with high economic estimation – both for the livestock-based subsistential economic activities and for agreements and settlements of monetary nature. Men are traditionally associated with the possession, care, administration, graze, accountability, security and prevalence of cattle (Likuwa 2005: 14). In this sense, dowry implying cattle-exchange as a cultural phenomenon is seen of extreme relevance by my interlocutors in Namibia. Furthermore, violence, trauma and transgressions were essentially discarded as a system's defining feature.

Yes cows are very important in Namibia. They have always been. The meat, the leather, the milk. We marry thanks to cows. If you as a man have no cows, you have a problem, my friend. [...] How are you going to start your own family, your life independently from your parents? (Laughter). (Interlocutor D)

Elemental cultural practices and their accompanying theories were restructured by colonial patriarchy through the means of *modernity*: Christian missions, capitalist production requirements, racism and apartheid, etc. Colonial patriarchy has much influenced the way in which economic tasks are carried out (Likuwa and Shiweda 2017: 36, Seroto 2018: 2).

Coloniality of power: The functionality of colonial patriarchy

Revising and studying masculinity and masculine behaviors is a crucial step in this essay as it assesses how masculinity might have been shaped under the light of power discourses. This led to shedding light upon the relevance of colonial realities and its structures.

My interlocutors firmly agreed upon the fact that when it comes to patriarchy one should conceive it drawing on structures of oppression set up on material and abstract realms of quotidian life reaching the foremost institutions of political spheres. Patriarchy is therefore conceived as a system that comprises every level of human interaction based on its systematic condition.

Colonial patriarchy, however, shows two specific particular power dynamics which are relevant for this contribution.

Firstly, coloniality in the form of patriarchy restructures traditional organization and seeks the elimination of the links to former practical or ideological sources. In this stage, the imposition of the intersection patriarchy/coloniality declares all racial subalterns as pre-modern, uncivilized, bodies-to-conquer (Seroto 2018: 10, Quijano 2013: 171). Namibian-Afrikan nations were progressively claimed as property of the German Empire, whereas none of the black bodies were considered to have comparable characteristics to the new paradigm of genre: the white subject (Wynter 2003: 269). Coloniality is synonymous to the concept of race per se and racial hierarchical definitions at a global scale. As a modern world domination project it pursues the suppression or alteration of the already existing cultural institutions, therefore European invaders in Namibia and South Africa had already been introducing separate and alienated understandings of body type and sexual identity through missionary interventions in order to ensure the basis of ideological and corporal discipline from subalterns. (Mignolo 2007: 451, Seroto 2018: 9)

The exercise of institutional power generated from military and cultural-ideological dominance formally settled the grounds for patriarchal-economic domination in terms of accumulation of production, capture of production means such as productive fertile land, as well as the exploitation of ecological energies and social energies (workers and work).

Secondly, another type of complementarity was produced based on societal models from European cultures based on Abrahamic cosmologies¹⁰ and replaced the holistic understanding and embodiment of the Afrikan body-type. The former communal production, consumption and disposal chain is broken and the economic capacity of Afrikan-Namibians was redirected in order to be able to supply the material needs of the invaders' colonial domination project. Following this unsettling line, economic activities became less subsistence-like and mutated into rather market and individual patterns. Economic behaviors were radically shifted and colonial complementarity set up the imaginaries and physical discipline for contemporary genders (Oyewumi 2000: 1093, Curry 2018: 243).

10 Those religious conceptions stemming from the religious prophecies of Judaic figure Abraham. For instance: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Considerations: Further thoughts on Afrikan masculine organization

I have previously examined the coloniality of gender and a brief genealogy of its colonial formation. Then I contrasted Afrikan complementarity as an alternative system for the original conceiving of ancestral Afrikan comprehension of corporality and spirituality as the body-type (Oyewumi 2002: 4, Oyewumi 2000: 1096). Subsistence economy represents the material fundament for the Afrocentric distribution of political and socio-economic (cosmic) sense. At last, patriarchal structures were introduced as a phenomenon belonging to the dynamics imbued in the coloniality of power. Now I intend to assemble the different stages in this contribution so that we can trace what is the current state of community-based organizational dialectics of theory and practice.

Communities are firmly based on diverse types of solidarity and reciprocity networks in which people regard themselves as members of a group and therefore look after each other and assist each other mutually. Members of a community support each other and take care of values, property, and objectives based on the shared notion of the common. This means ultimately that people do not conceive themselves as sufficient individuals but as part of a group maintained by personal actions coordinated and carried out in groups. Therefore, when capitalist production, consumption and disposal is progressively imposed, communal values decay (Likuwa and Shiweda 2017: 34). Afrikan and other continents' communal values regarding care and mutual check-ups are based on rules of conduct that underline the relevance of every person's integrity for the achievements and community's material and spiritual wellbeing.

If I think something is not right with my cousin, I would simply go and talk to my sister, to iina, or kuku. I love her but [...] I can't be always be there as an older cousin for her [...] because I am a man. She'd do the same and call my brother or my dad. Here in Africa, if you do something wrong or something that offends someone, the first thing that people will ask is "Aye!, what is wrong with this person's family?!" (Interlocutor E)

In this sense, people remain vigilant¹¹ about every possible transgression, felony or wrongdoing. If the community has barely not watched after itself, the collective can be individually fissured and community structures dismantled. People would alert the community and prevent the harm from being done. In this way, both the potential victim and the potential offender would

11 Vigilance is in this case a key concept. In surveillance-societies, "vigilance" is a negative value rooted in mistrust and oppression. In communal and rather horizontal communities, vigilance appoints care and everybody's inclusion in shared goals and is rooted in confidence.

be protected. This concept lies upon the fundament of preventive care, which states that the offender's misbehavior can be traced to another unbalanced source, which must also be collectively healed.

People in the village think more like... with a sense of community. The communities in the village are more helpful and mindful [...] even men are more romantic. Is like they are opposite to the people in town. They would know everything about me like who am I with and will establish boundaries [...] Respect, love and all those things. Because people don't have much to show off. They don't look for you to impress you, but because they are in it for the real feelings they have for each other and not because: "this man has a beautiful car, I respect him". They know each other for a long time. They are good people... They sacrifice a lot for the people. (Interlocutor B)

Shared cultural and accompanying material conditions contribute to a feeling of "belonging-together". Proximity generated in geo-collective identity units (such as villages, small towns, hamlets, etc.) results in caring relationships and socio-emotional cohesion between members of the same unit(s). In addition, economic and identity distance provokes different or opposite values such as apathy, detachment, and disengagement. This consciousness- and emotional-capital makes it unlikelier for a person within the community to do wrong to women and likelier for people to be "whistle-blowers" even before any maltreatment takes place.

Capitalist fracturing of the communal body-type

For our tradition if my husband comes home and I have cooked for him... like if he has come with the meat I would praise his totem, his clan, his what; and after I have cooked the food and I give it to him, he praises my totem, he praises my ancestors, we are done. Here if I go to work, I have to come and cook for you and I have to say "thank you daddy for bringing this money" but what I cooked... you did not say thank you. So it was more respectful people appreciated more every little you were doing. (Interlocutor J)

Through the development of modernity and capitalism men are physically and ideologically molded to fit into the prototype of waged workers who receive monthly or weekly salaries for working a constant amount of hours a day. Wage labor market-economy is installed in this way and women become responsible for upholding the production chain. This represents momentous profit for men and the most basic scale of oppression that will later fund a capitalist system. Men become worthy of the highest social acknowl-

edgement by the fact of being those systematically appointed to become the earners and owners of money: the new standardization of worth. Henceforth money becomes a decisive symbolic element in this scheme in three different moments 1). Apart from a remuneration, men's wage labor does not represent long-term benefits for neither their familiar units nor their communities; the wageworker's labor fruit counts as surplus for the global liberal-market economy and as extracted raw materials for the development of private enterprises. This given, men are granted money not only as a budgetary remuneration, but also as a repetitive incentive or reward to keep progressively mutating inhuman working-rates, demands and circumstances. 2). Money grants payed men prestige, acknowledgement and purchasing power. This later becomes of extreme relevance considering a major geo-sociological shift that accompanied this new economic standard, common to a vast majority of colonially occupied countries: people gradually move their residence from (now declared) rural areas to cities and urban centers in order to access working places and other entities that capitalism and colonialism made "necessary" (schools, churches, markets). So-called modernity is brought into being and male-generated money is its language (Likuwa 2014: 51). Namibian masculinities are then led by systematical pressure to practice and identify with different social and cultural values that I believe are compactly explanatory in a dialectic figure. Pursuing an autocritical perspective, black masculinities shaped and conditioned by imperialist and colonially-based modernity might prioritize material over spiritual, roughness over vulnerability, self-sufficiency instead of support, the excess over modulation and the individual over the collective.

Organizing beyond masculinity and patriarchy

A lack of assessment of a transversal male experience within capitalist, racist and misogynist system represents a common structural difficulty when analyzing men's organization. An analysis of the current global systematic and the role that racialized males for domination are expected to accomplish or are led to believe that they need to fulfill (Curry 2017b: 326) is usually missing for them to feel motivated to organize.

In order to speak about an empowering Afrikan masculine organization men ought to organize and design own safe-spaces where man-to-man talks can freely take place. Afrikan masculinities as any other political agency implies a multidimensionality of the being. The current male experience is forced by the circumstances to recognize itself as a multidimensional experience built upon the masculine category, within capitalist caprices and requirements, as a racially defined subject as black and at the same time all these intersections surrounded by coloniality. The fruits of the modern male identity are hence planted and harvested by a colonial system, Afrikan masculinities are trying to re-align with ancestral values of subsistence and community.

This readjustment of the black communities represents an enormous advantage for the articulation of anti-patriarchal hegemony, namely, the possibility to organize with all other groupings in the community without disregarding the importance of periodical safe-space continuous organization. Following the understanding of colonial patriarchy as a system supported by global institutional power requires such procedural shift in terms of political organization in the mentioned institutions so that different and rather radically own constructs are able to manifest.

...she said it was important to educate men... Educate them on what's happening but we are investing little to no energy in creating spaces for the elaboration of common strategies for our common goals. Patriarchy is the problem. That should be the goal for men and women. (Interlocutor Q)

The reflections on the cornerstones of decolonizing black masculinities

The paradigm of violence as a category intrinsically ascribed to (heterosexual) males transcends the question of the violent male subject before or after colonialism. It rather serves as a legitimation for an essentialist portrayal of men as inevitably transgressive and emotionally numb (Ferguson 2001: 60). This rationale condemns Afrikan males to exist as inhabiting body-types unable to be declared victims and survivors of (systematic) violence and splits Afrikan community further over the concept of gender (Seroto 2018: 9).

All male experiences are not “the same” and immutable categories but very varied and essentially related to class and race. Basing a theory on the static understanding of the male experience leads to the realization that patriarchy is according (as it is in primary gender theory) identified as a structural oppression over non-male gender identities and bodies. Patriarchy is ultimately a system based on gender pursuing economic logistics such as the organization possession and distribution of property and means of production. Patriarchal systematic stresses the ownership of nature and family as elemental means of production (Oyewumi 1997: 170).

Gender view: The coloniality of gender stresses that the gendered understanding lies on division of the body-type experience in three different moments in order for it to be conceived as the sexual organic paradigm: 1). the ontological breakup of a socio-cultural groups by dividing them into genders and later 2). dividing these genders again by the means of corporal and political difference, in other words: men and women and then e.g. men are natural rulers to women or women are the “weak sex”. 3). Gender then separates the Afrikan-Namibian body-type from its original collective logic and the accompanying economic, spiritual, and ancestral qualities (Curry 2017a: 247).

As the focus of a gender discourse or “gender equality” appeared to be rooted in a corpus of violent experiences with black men, it is not a matter of surprise that a sub-focus takes shape; namely the ruined/ruining black male Black masculinities are directly ascribed the intrinsic tendency to transgression, domination and (structural) power. This is set up as the ground for narratives of what Ferguson categorizes as naturally naughty after analyzing narratives about black boys in schools (Ferguson 2001: 80). Connell and Lemelle problematize pathological explanations for global male and black male violence as erroneous, destructive, and racist (Connell 2000: 217, Lemelle 2010: 95).

It has been pointed out that Afrikan males face several difficulties regarding organization processes, I will now touch on crucial aspects on the organization process. Safe-spaces are a necessity for all body-types. It is by no means the responsibility of other body-type experiences e.g. women to evaluate and stimulate male-centered organization. It is a radical reflection of the African male experience, that can direct Afrikan males to the articulation of this political agency (Curry 2019: 5). In spite of being fundamentally difficult, it is the Afrikan man’s constitutive sense to find a reason to transform the possible sense of privilege and supposable superiority into solid political statements for political engagement (Curry 2017a: 226).

Gender and sex in other words are the European sexual, identifying organizing principle which could only materialize in a colonial eurocentric societal structure. Gender, before responding to a political categorization, as a critical term used against the insufficiency of the term “sex” and oppressive patriarchal gender roles, is an organizing model. Society and culture had to be modified in order to correspond to the project of a European world.

Having said that, I would like to pause the flow of thoughts to consider the *intercontextual* universal validity of these thoughts. If the causes for an unbalanced social body-type scheme which produce the call for active Afrikan masculinities studies and practices are rooted in capitalism, coloniality of power and, as a result in, gender, I would dare to assert that based on my literature (Connell 2000, Curry 2018, Oyěwùmí 1997, Grosfoguel 2011). I have encountered a phenomenon applicable on many other national-states in colonially occupied territories and forcefully incorporated into the economic capitalist system.

Conclusion

Coloniality is a model for understanding the incidence of power dynamics in a global scale. Challenging power through gender-centered discourses has stood out around the world as a manner of creating “equality” or “equity”. Gender-understanding is a concept that firmly rooted in the individual view of the material self: the own body, the own identity, the own way. I have analyzed gender as a narrative that deals nevertheless with violence and domi-

nation by using these crucial concepts in order to shape a narrative that interweaves different and large groups of individuals. As we have already seen, those bodies declared savage, not-human, bodies-to-conquer, bodies that did not apply to the category of full human subjects by not fitting in the paradigm of the colonial understanding and practice of power. The coloniality of power creates the structural conditions for these not-subjects to accept and practice the civilizing paradigms imposed by the colonizers. As Mignolo (2007) states, always advocating that exploitation is good for all. The obsolescence of community structures in today Namibia are underpinned by the advance of the project of colonial capitalist modernity. A project that requires the organic feeling of people as individuals in every aspect of life. Colonial institution's power played an enormous role in the process of setting up a mindset and a number of European rooted practices which disciplined the bodies of people to a Christian, patriarchal and racist expectations of this individuals-to-be. The concept/embodyment of body-type is replaced by external notions of sexuality and then by the contemporary and current definitions of gender.

Within the context of imperialism and globalized capitalist production Afrikan and Namibian masculinities have been drastically redirected to believe in money as a legitimate organizing and categorizing agent. Modern masculinities tend to find a means for potentiation in money at the same time that they make themselves dependent of it. An entire societal structure was set up in order for Afrikan men to consider themselves not a complement but the counterpart, the opposite of women. In fact, individual conception excludes the collective comprehension of oneself and voids organizational potential. Hence men structurally adopt a series of feelings of detachment and disengagement as a consequence of the rupture with the original substance of work and the social dynamics and ancestral mentors.

Trends indicate that the male experience's overt exclusion from political gender-spaces in this framework has been leading (cis)masculine heterosexual experiences to invalidation and dismissal from gender platforms of articulated discourse analysis, deconstruction and politicizing of the own psycho-sexual and bodily experience alongside with the corresponding intersections. The critique of power from a gender perspective implies that certain subjects are privileged by and others oppressed by the systematic of patriarchy, whereas often the "privileged" embody power as well. Several implications can stem from this point on. A key implication is that unified and integral political movements from different body-types are initially discarded. A result from this conclusion is the fact that every-body has a gender without everybody being able to elaborate theory and praxis about gender equal terms. The male experience is, despite of the fact of being requested or simply expected to deconstruct itself, denied to put forward any proposal from the spaces of "gender-deconstruction" such as reorienting sexual poli-

tics towards ancestral communality or articulating violence prevention for Afrikan men and boys.

Nevertheless, (organized) men's practices which already exist and construct upon the basis of being a black male cannot be a negative experience per se, but like others, one full of contradictions and nuances. While observing the work of male activists on the male experience I realized that male organization is the key for a larger theoretical production about the different male experiences, now from the perspective of the variety of Namibian masculinities.

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