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Lateral colonialism: exploring modalities of engagement in decolonial politics from the periphery

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ABSTRACT

This article contributes to an understanding of how the world outside the Global North is complicit in the visibility politics that render spaces of harm relevant or irrelevant to the reproduction of racism. Extending insights from decolonial theorising, we examine the colonial matrix that produces ongoing legacies of violence and racism through the case of Cyprus. As a peripheral location, Cyprus has been invisible to this story yet had a role in the distribution and mitigation of colonial violence through the institution of what we call *lateral colonialism*. Through this concept, we explore how peoples otherwise situated and outside the purview of these violences (non-colonisers and non-Blacks) were also enveloped and complicit in them. The case of Cypriots in Africa helps delineate three modalities of this involvement: governmental, entrepreneurial and religious. Lateral colonialism, we argue, is indispensable in linking decolonial possibilities to a global political agenda. The paper re-scripts Africa into Cypriot histories and Cyprus-qua-periphery into the decolonial narrative. In this double sense, lateral colonialism excavates connections that have been forgottern and obscured.

Lateral colonialism

On 23 October 1998, Greek-Cypriot anti-riot police were filmed 'viciously clubbing, kicking and stomping on' African migrants refusing deportation. As news broke, the Foreign Minister expressed shock, saying the images 'would only harm Cyprus' reputation abroad … [if] broadcast to the outside world'.[1] At the time, Cyprus was negotiating its European Union (EU) accession and drafting asylum legislation. The boat from which the migrants were rescued was a precursor to the trans-Mediterranean refugee regime we know today (Bartolo and Tilotta 2017; Mainwaring 2008).[2] Revisiting that violence now that Cyprus is a member of the EU points to connections to racist practice that have since become bureaucratised and, if less vicious, also more pervasive, normalised and unseen. Decolonial studies has emphasised the trajectory of violence from colonial logics to contemporary policing (Sharpe 2016; Smith 2016; Weheliye 2014; Sylvestre 2021). Spaces like Cyprus often seem irrelevant to these

discussions. Yet such peripheral locations have contributed and continue to contribute to violences and their legacies, while the rest of the world 'is not watching'.

This article exemplifies how the world outside the Global North has become complicit in the visibility politics of citizenship, migration and economic regimes, rendering spaces of harm relevant or irrelevant to the reproduction of racism. Decolonial scholarship highlighted how historical harms around transatlantic slavery persist in modern US politics and inform contemporary differential experiences of citizenship, from rates of incarceration (Wacquant 2001, 2002) to surveillance methods (Browne 2015) and techniques of seeing (Campt 2017) to critical theorising (Weheliye 2014). It underscored the need for 'epistemic decentralisation', thinking beyond the hegemonic knowledge of colonial designs, retrieving local histories and Indigenous knowledges eradicated in the process (Mignolo 2009). Decolonial methods focus attention on relational ontologies of the quotidian and incorporate 'minor' experiences that have been rendered invisible, providing new perspectives into what happened in the past that continues to affect the present (eg Glissant 1997; Odysseos 2017, 2019; Opondo and Shapiro 2021). The recovery of connections across history is central in understanding contemporary violences 'in the wake' of slave ships (Sharpe 2016). The obfuscation of these connections normalises those harms today and makes them legible in a liberal democratic script espoused far beyond white supremacist constituencies (Sharpe 2016, 94–97). The urgency of these insights after the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement brings into relief its global implications (Bledsoe and Wright 2019). Our work intervenes here. Because even as those global implications seem intuitive given the white North's hegemonic position, many places still appear to be localities where decolonial insights do not intuitively apply. Thus, literature on BLM as a global movement is still scant (Beaman 2021). The lessons of BLM, we argue, are precisely that anti-Black violence should not be seen through a US-centric lens but that it should spur thinking on how colonialism as a global phenomenon reaches beyond the Global North, rendering peripheral locations complicit in such violence in ways that reverberate today – not least, as our opening shows, in the policing of migration (also Adamson and Tsourapas 2020, 869–870).

Being a strategically proud member of the Global South, before fully embracing Europe, Cyprus is located in a postcolonial periphery often rendered irrelevant to decolonial efforts to recover connections of violence (Agathangelou 2004). Exploiting its geographical location – an island between three continents – the newly established Republic of Cyprus identified with the United Nations (UN) Afro-Asian Group, joined the Non-Aligned Movement and displayed solidarity with anti-colonial struggles. Equally, it flagged its European origins, Greek and Christian heritage and contribution to European civilisation, but also its adherence to the modernist ideology common to Greek and Turkish national aspirations (Constantinou 2004, 109–111; Argyrou 2010). Based on the Cyprus case, we suggest that the colonial matrix extends to peripheries that are not readily legible as political or colonial. These spaces share similarities with spaces where colonial sovereignty is exercised through the 'production of boundaries and hierarchies, zones and enclaves; the subversion of existing property arrange-ments; the differential classification of people; resource extraction; and, finally, the manu-facturing of a large reservoir of cultural imaginaries' (Mbembe 2019, 79). Earlier, Mbembe had argued for rethinking 'the postcolonial relationship [as] not primarily a relationship of resistance or of collaboration but … as illicit cohabitation, a relationship made fraught by the very fact of the *commandement* and its 'subjects' having to share the same living space' (Mbembe 1992, 4). We here explore these relationships across imperial spaces and in ways

that complicate the coloniser/colonised dyad and internal colonialisms in the postcolony. We argue that social spaces and peripheries like Cyprus, a white colony, played a particular role in the distribution and mitigation of colonial violence through the institution of what we call *lateral colonialism*.

In 1998, after the brutal beatings of African deportees, Greek-Cypriot officials were able to argue to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) that the violence was the result of an 'unprecedented' experience of mass arrivals (300 people that year) and a system ill prepared to prosecute police officers.[3] The CERD accepted the logic of exceptionality.[4] It accepted that Cyprus, a small island located in the Mediterranean Middle East and bidding for EU entry, was not yet properly European, nor fully Southern, and hence outside the fold of global relations where migration produces bordering structures comprising restrictive and rights-protecting mechanisms at once. Racism could be excused because in such peripheral locations it could be assumed to have been unknown. It was a problem of being geographically, politically and temporally located at the periphery of liberal democracy. Compare this to the approach of the EU Commission's head in 2020, when two people were killed in police clashes while attempting to cross the Turkey–Greece border: praising the stance of the Greek police, she called them 'Europe's shield'. As Cyprus now reproduces, from Greece (another location with which relations of coloniality arguably pertain), brutal migration deterrence policies of pushbacks at sea and inhumane asylum detention, it seems that this early-day exceptionalism paved the way for the contemporary migration regime, where the Global North, in the guise, here, of the EU Commission, is carving out a particular role for its southern periphery (Demetriou 2022).

Paying attention to the 'orthographies' of racism – how it is written into and out of the script in the accounting of current harms (Sharpe 2016, 20–21) – we maintain that those orthographies are also spatially scripted. They assign places to where slavery and racist colonialism happened and where it did not. In that (ge)orthography the African colony and the Western metropole are arch signifiers, but the peripheral colony falls through the cracks. And so Cyprus is read as not having experienced racial difference prior to the onset of irregular migration, and its racism is written out of history. In revisiting that assumption here, we view earlier migration trajectories between Cyprus and Africa as precursors to the structural positioning of the former in the Global Northern periphery through its establishment as a white colony in the colonial era. We suggest that the violences that animate the migration regime today are not disconnected from earlier violences that ordered colonial relations into multiple gradations, even though the movements involved may appear disconnected.

To begin with, it is not historically true that Cyprus has not known racial difference. Cyprus has had a Black Indigenous population descending from the Ottoman slave trade (Hatay 2009; Kanay 2013, 64), integral links with its Middle East neighbourhood, and a role as a white British colony. It also has a long-standing 'ethnic' conflict, often racially read too, that has produced a border that now implicates the EU in those racialisations. Exploring the modalities of that colonial role, we show that Cyprus had a part to play in the colonial project in Africa as a peripheral colony. It supplied mid-level colonial officials who were native Cypriots, it cultivated an entrepreneurial class that populated the white middle classes in sub-Saharan colonies often from a marginal position, and it provided Orthodox missionaries who carried out political Church work. Not only has this role been overlooked, but its extensions into official and unofficial diplomatic work that marked Cyprus's positioning in Cold

War politics as a non-aligned state have also been ignored. By inserting Cyprus in the discussion on colonial peripheries we also want to re-script Africa into Cypriot colonial history. The twofold contribution this paper offers centres on the concept of lateral colonialism.

Within earlier postcolonial literature scholars have nuanced the putatively dichotomous colonial order, arguing, for example, that Gandhi's experience of racial segregation in South Africa animated his peaceful anti-colonial campaign in India (Bhana 1975; Switzer 1986; Brown 1999), while recognising the selective focus and racial exclusions of anticolonial struggles (Desai and Vahed 2015). Fanon's experience in Algeria (Omar 2009) exemplifies such nuance, as do Switzerland's 'neutral' colonial adventures, indirectly complicit through private investments, scientific research and commercial projects, rendering the Swiss a *tertius gaudens* – a third party that profits from and rejoices in but is politically neutralised from conflict and suffering – and their activities effectively a 'colonialism without colonies' (Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné 2015). Recent decolonial discussions further these nuances even as they break with earlier literatures (Bhambra 2014; Weheliye 2014, 3–7; 61–64).

Our data shows that Cypriots in sub-Saharan Africa figured as government officials, supporters of independence struggles, employers of natives and, more rarely, spouses. They were often 'proxy-colonials' but always placed within a rigid racial hierarchy that disallowed them to go native but also offered no scope for complete identification with colonisers. They were caught in the complexities of colonial ambivalence (Bhabha 1994). Such complexities, shot through by gender and class (Stoler 2010), positioned Cypriots in Africa on a broad spectrum of subjectivities, circumscribed by the politics of colonialism's power. In this sense, lateral colonial relations are also the collateral (unintended) consequences of colonial politics.

The involvement of Greek Cypriots in sub-Saharan Africa largely occurred while independence struggles were underway in both regions. The lateral relations we explore include peoples who were colonised either by the same central government (British), or by different ones (British and Belgian), who left their homelands in search of livelihoods not at the colonial centres (London) but in other colonies. While scholarship has focussed on migrations from colonies to the centre (Gilroy 2013), migrations between 'subaltern' spaces has only recently been explored (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley 2018; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020; Hurgobin and Basu 2015). Attention to 'transcolonialism' has highlighted the biopolitical legacies of colonial capitalism (Venn 2009). In speaking of lateral colonialism we want to highlight the hierarchical racism-based relations that persisted between these colonial subjects. The encounter across colonial spaces was also an encounter with and re-enactment of the racialising colonial logic, and with how it might be resisted.

We therefore define lateral colonialism as the regime that assigned to some colonial populations power over other colonial populations – a regime and mode of thinking with which the colonised-cum-colonisers were complicit but that they also were ambivalent about. Lateral colonialism references relations of hierarchy, where racial concepts play a crucial role. These relations occur within a field that is circumscribed by the vertical relations between coloniser and colonised, but they are by no means relations of equality. They are relations mediated in large part by the structure of colonialism, involving governmental and entrepreneurial activities arising from colonial situations. They are thus not only relations across boundaries of colonialism. The major issue is the crossing via colonial structures. What we elucidate is a wide area of interaction marked by relations of power arising within colonialism, which have multiple, changing and ambivalent aspects. *Lateral colonialism* captures this range of interactions between colonial subjectivities.

Our data draws primarily on 12 out of 19 life histories collected between October 2014 and August 2021 with Cypriots who had spent significant amounts of time in sub-Saharan Africa. These interviews show the complexity of the colonial matrix that elicited ongoing legacies of violence and racism, as they exemplify the multi-layered and ambivalent nature of the interactions within which lateral colonialism was and remains embedded. The narratives show the ambivalence of these relations as they pivoted around relations to a common (Britain) or different (Belgium) coloniser. We also utilise research undertaken on the politics of religious conversion into Greek/Cypriot brands of Orthodoxy in Africa (including life history interviews collected during a field study in Kenya in 2015), to locate another modality of lateral colonialism, in which the North European colonial power did not have such a pivotal role.

As Cypriots scripted into the ethnic majority narrative, towards which we have also been critically positioned through previous work on the ethnic conflict and the minority voices it has often silenced (Constantinou 2007; Demetriou 2014, 2018, 2021), we have tried in this research to remain alert to the power dynamics that animate lateral colonialism and also animate part of our research relations. Choosing a non-confrontational approach to our interlocutors during the conduct of interviews allowed more open discussions but has also meant the voicing of at times racist positions in describing experiences. At other times, it has meant putting on record difficult histories that involved our own social networks – of acquaintances, colleagues or distant relatives. Respecting anonymity while also respecting the need for visibility and voice was in such instances a difficult negotiation that meant eliding details in ways that might be thought to perpetuate silencing. We have chosen to prioritise alertness to the complexities and ambivalences of lateral colonialism towards the goal of enabling further discussion on relations that have hitherto been completely muted, even if that has meant sacrificing some of the transparency in the narratives.

Afro-Cypriot colonialisms

The Ottoman Empire ceded control and administration of Cyprus to Britiain in 1878 in exchange for protection vis-à-vis Russia. Cyprus was annexed by Britian in 1914 and formally recognised as a British colony under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). British colonialism in Cyprus has been read together with demands for self-determination, Greek Cypriots often portrayed as welcoming British colonists in 1878 with requests to allow Cyprus' union with Greece, then still embroiled in independence struggles against the Ottomans. Although these depictions have been questioned for their historical accuracy (Varnava 2017) they provide a picture of the historical imaginary of postcolonial Cyprus, where nationalist aspirations were bound up with ethnic divisions between Greeks and Turks, and colonial interests entangled with rival local goals. To the British, Cyprus was constructed from the start as a colony different to others because of its Greek heritage and thus European lineage, and hence its presumed whiteness (Varnava 2017, 113–114, 225). Greek Cypriots were happily coopted into that role.

Yet the political order in which that colonial relationship was embedded was thoroughly paternalistic, British officials orienting their role towards development and civilisational advancement (Durrell 1957; Hadjimichael 2019). Cyprus has many parallels with decolonisation struggles in sub-Saharan Africa, ongoing at the same time, and yielding similar conflict legacies that stretch to today. As in Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, the ethnic conflict in

Cyprus was intensified through the colonial divide-and-rule policy. Institutionalised neo-colonialism in the form of military bases and troops that remained in Cyprus to 'guarantee' the new state of affairs has been justified through a hegemonic stability lens as in Djibouti, Kenya and Gabon. The conflation of anticolonial struggles and irridentist claims (eg Greater Greece, Greater Turkey) mirrors similar predicaments to those faced today in Somalia and Western Sahara.

Still, these parallel histories have notable differences. Cypriots were involved in the African colonial project from the very beginning and independently of the British colonial administration. Their involvement can be traced back to 'the scramble for Africa', and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although under British rule, Cypriots were then formally Ottoman subjects, and Greek Cypriots saw themselves as members of the panhellenic diaspora emigrating to sub-Saharan Africa for a 'better life', intitialy down the White Nile route and the early Greek settlements in Khartoum, Kosti and Juba. Like other Greeks, Cypriots acquired land and worked in farming, import–export trade, transportation in the Great Lakes region, small-scale businesses, and railway construction (Antypas 2008). They were among the first to be involved in Leopold's Free Congo State and became a prominent community comprising entire Greek-Cypriot villages. The competition from 'Portuguese, Greeks and Indians' vis-à-vis Belgian entrepreneurs in Congo became a major concern in the Brussels 1920 Colonial Congress that sought to legislate and restrict their activities (Antypas 2008, 74). These 'paracolonial' agents were nonetheless considered essential for the opening up and 'development' of Congo. The last organised Cypriot communities in Congo were evacuated from the Ituri region during the civil war in 2003 (UNOCHA 2003). Currently, around 25,000 Cypriots live in South Africa and around 5000 are scattered in sub-Saharan Africa.[5]

In terms of anticolonial politics, Cypriot solidarity with African independence struggles was expressed in the 1945 PanAfrican Congress (Anexartitos, 4 November 1945), a precursor to the position the Republic took within the Non-Aligned Movement post-independence. Still, Cypriots continued to settle, including as colonial government employees, in Kenya, Tanzania and Rhodesia. They remained active, although in progressively reduced numbers, as land-owning farmers and entrepreneurs after the 1960s decolonisation wave, adding to their activities missionary and humanitarian work. For many of the Cypriots who experienced the decolonisation process there, parallels between the struggles in Africa and the struggles in Cyprus were hard to miss. However, these did not determine a unified perspective on either of these struggles. Below, we delineate the contextual contours of this parallel imaginary.

A typology of lateral colonialism

Our typology of lateral colonialism identifies three modalities of operation: governmental, entrepreneurial and religious. In the governmental modality, subjects operated under the control of the (British) colonial regime. Cypriots were posted in African colonies as servants of the Crown – they were police officers or judges, even torturers and intelligence officers (a press report claiming Cypriots were recruited to quell the rebellion in Kenya).[6] This modality operated in the political-security sphere. In the entrepreneurial modality, Cypriots went to Africa to exploit economic opportunities by opening their own businesses, or joining businesses of family or friends already established there. This modality was not completely distinct from the governmental one, as the establishment of businesses depended on

concessions secured from the colonial authorities in the different territories. It operated in a sphere that was perhaps more politically free than in the case of the governmental modality, but still required the colonial master to enable this political liberal order. Lastly, the religious modality consisted of missionary activity of Cypriot priests who went to African colonies to convert locals into Orthodox Christians – less in converting 'non-believers', and more in reconverting those already converted by the master colonisers into other Christian creeds. This modality operated under a neo-imperial as well as micro-imperial order, whereby connections to Cyprus were established via references to the imperial orders of Byzantium and Orthodoxy. As a modality that operated top-down (resting on a single version of 'correct' religious beliefs) it was akin to the governmental modality; and, at the same time, it rested squarely on anti-colonial pretences, drawing on liberation theology that offered a vision of becoming liberated from the colonial master, and rendering it a domination theology in presenting this as the correct route to political and personal liberation.

Therefore, rather than being completely distinct, these modalities operate on a spectrum. They show that the lateral relations spurred by colonial arrangements were by no means uniform. They were highly diverse and ranged from collaboration with colonial authorities to collaboration with people fighting independence struggles. Lateral colonialism is situated at the convergences between these modalities. The governmental modality created accessories out of colonial subejcts, the entrepreneurial put in place a liberalism that was neither free nor fair through granting privileges to certain colonial subjects, and the religious employed a shifty move that produced domination out of liberation theology, and ended up illegalising the free Orthodox African religion as schismatic.

These modalities extended into and were intensified in the post-independence period, thus solidifying a politics of lateral colonialism into processes of decolonisation and the postcolonial order. Business migration saw Cypriot communities grow in Sub-Saharan Africa, missionary work intensified under the presidency of Archbishop Makarios III, and governance intersected with business and religion as former Africa-based entrepreneurs became Honorary Consuls back in Cyprus, missions engaged in political work, and bilateral agreements provided Cypriot 'experts' to various governments in the 1980s.

Lateral government

Canan, the widow of a prominent Turkish-Cypriot lawyer, reminisces about the time spent in Tanganyika, before Tanzania's independence.[7] Her husband, Emre, was offered a position as Crown Counsel upon his graduation from Cambridge. This position laid the path for the successful career he later pursued in Cyprus. They married on a return trip he made two years into the position and she joined him, then in her late teens, for a further four years before the family returned for good. His posting in Tanganyika between 1948 and 1954 was by no means unique. Canan remembers that his brother was already posted there as a police officer before her husband took up his post. She also remembers that their social circle there included Greek-Cypriot Crown Counsels, who followed similarly successful careers upon return and post-independence. In these later years back in Cyprus, which were marked by the inter-ethnic conflict, these relations continued, despite the fact that these prominent ethnically divided lawyers held diametrically opposed views on local politics and put these opinions to the service of their respective communities. Photographs

of happy encounters at elite dinner parties included in Canan's family albums testify to this closeness.

It could be argued that Cypriot officers in the African colonial administration were engaged in a lateral colonialism that meted out justice and order while being firmly implanted in a colonial subjectivity. Canan's house is carefully adorned with objects expressing her Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot heritage as well as the couple's time in Africa: carvings, statuettes, rags. Her account of both fond and difficult memories concurs with those Greek-Cypriot entrepreneurs who categorise social life on a spectrum where the English governmental elite stood at the top, lower colonists below and the native subjects at the bottom, across a wide chasm that placed them inside colonisers' and lateral colonisers' homes as servants, cooks or gardeners. For such colonial officers – natives of other colonies – time in Africa would have been seen as temporary, a step up the social ladder – a ladder, however, that was firmly placed at home. These lateral colonists aspired not to an Empire-wide status but to a local one. And this allowed them to serve their communal interests once back home as well as serving British interests abroad.

Navigating this lateral colonial subjectivity would admittedly have been harder for Emre's Greek-Cypriot friends, who upon return in the 1950s would have had to contend with the calls for self-determination, which in 1955 took a militant form. This would have sharpened the dichotomy between coloniser and colonised, subsuming ambivalences under the discourse of treason and purity.

On the ground, however, collaboration with colonial governments was much more ambivalent. In one example, it even blended into support for independence struggles as Cypriots found themselves drafted into the police reserve force in Zimbabwe when this became mandatory. Anna's father served as such a reservist. Anna (b. 1966)[8] grew up with guns in the house and remembers having to inform the military on their movements during the independence struggle. Yet, because her father had also been a Commissioner of Oath under the colonial government and had been helpful to people who sought his services, his name was never found on guerrilla 'hit lists'. Anna has a measured approach to the decolonisation process, recognising the discrimination that existed and the exploitation through the farm system, but also criticising the way in which nationalisation was carried out.

Petros (b. 1944),[9] who served in the reserve force too, draws parallels between Cyprus and Zimbabwe. He recalls an incident where his unit was ordered to search a nearby village believed to have helped the guerrilla forces by giving them supplies and to burn down houses if anything was found. He happened to have acquaintances in the village, and showed them the orders, asking for their collaboration. They were defiant and he was unwilling to execute the orders to the letter. Similarly, from his double position as a police reservist and shop owner with links in the community, he was able to recognise who must have been the local guerrilla commander and who they were communicating with through the letters that arrived for distribution at his shop. He knew, and his employees knew also. But he never told on them. He was a white European, but also a sympathiser who could relate the tactics he was observing to the anticolonial struggle in Cyprus. His service in the army was compulsory, and he did not see it as his duty to strictly serve the interests of the white minority.

Kimon (b. 1931),[10] however, who was a follower of Ian Smith and served as treasurer for the local party branch, has no doubt about the benefits of white rule:

It was a very organised state, there was rule of law generally; even though the outside world believed we oppressed Blacks it was not like this. The truth is that the presence of the whites created better conditions for the natives to work and be educated.

The comparison with the struggle in Cyprus is downplayed in this narrative:

The Cypriots of Rhodesia were peaceful and good workers. They were not seen suspiciously, in fact many of them were in the army, in high-ranking professional positions. Of course, some people saw us as terrorists – but we worked with those that did not.

Politically, lateral colonialism placed Cypriots in a position from which they were able to negotiate their loyalties above and below the ruling order. Two ideological structures provided the frame for this negotiation: the civilisational scale on which white colonialism was based and the emancipatory imperative that Cyprus' transition from colony to postcolony offered.

Lateral business

The entrepreneurial modality of lateral colonialism indicates how the colonial state might have been assisted indirectly, through entrepreneurial activities with an impact on the state apparatus. Our interviews show that such assistance was forthcoming.

Ioannis (b. 1928)[11] had been a shop owner in South Africa since 1953. Officials he had met while securing his licences supplied him with poultry and eggs from their farms to sell. Many of his clients were Europeans whom he helped to secure residence permits through his government contacts. His connections with the government in South Africa were tied to his business, and amplified through his membership in the white United Party. This allowed him to act as broker between the government and different individuals, in one case accepting a heavy bribe to secure a customer's release from military service. A failed attempt by the secret services to frame him for diamond smuggling indicates the success of his business and his perceptive manoeuvring of governmental structures. However, such manoeuvring was firmly based on the espousal of racist narratives that drove the apartheid regime. Ioannis lent assistance to white Europeans exclusively, and harbours no sympathies for the plight of the Black majority. His assistance was led by personal interest, developed in tandem with personal gain, and was exclusively framed within white supremacist governmentality.

South Africa seems an extreme case of such governmentality; other interviews, like those discussed in the previous section, reveal more ambivalent stances about the racist political environments within which these entrepreneurs operated. However, that white supremacist governmentality enabled capitalism and colonialism to thrive in tandem and to do so within a graded hierarchy in which colonisers, colonial subjects, and lateral colonisers were ordered within both the governmental and private business spheres. Entrepreneurial migration and governance were intertwined from at least the end of World War I. Cypriot soldiers who had served on the front returned to Cyprus and were rewarded with opportunities to run plantations in Africa. Kimon's uncle (interview #6 above) was one such soldier, who took up 'the opportunity the government gave him to buy land in South Rhodesia cheaply under very favourable terms – at that time a unit over there was equal to three *skales* [local units] in Cyprus'. He had already migrated there in 1908, had volunteered in WWI, and, after establishing himself in his new land, was joined by his brother in 1921. Chain migration was a

feature in all the interviews, where interviewees spoke of going to various countries in search of opportunities, spurred by family members who were already established there, or sending for their relatives once they themselves became established. Thus, governmental incentivisation initiated and supplemented what might otherwise seem private life choices.

In a second iteration of this intersection, young men emigrated to Africa at the end of WWII, when jobs in Cyprus becamse scarce. Zacharias (b. 1928)[12] recalls that in 1946, when he graduated from high school, 'the situation was very different to today. It was the end of the war and 40,000 Cypriot soldiers were repatriated. All the government jobs went to them so that they would not be unemployed'. Although he eventually found a job, his brother later invited him to join him in Congo, where the salary would be triple what he was earning in Cyprus. When he saw his other brother being dismissed from his teaching position in Cyprus because he was considered a Communist, the comparison of fortunes became compelling.

Africa was constructed and shaped into a land of opportunity for lateral colonial entrepreneurs on the back of policies that perpetuated the concept of terra nullius long after the start of colonial settlements. Plantations were handed out to these lateral colonials by well-established British governments, and trade, with which nearly all our interviewees were involved, thrived on existing infrastructures. The entrepreneurs found a well-articulated order within which to insert themselves. Sophocles (b. 1953),[13] who lived in Congo and worked with his uncle in a business that employed 250 Blacks and three Europeans, opines that 'things worked more smoothly before Blacks came into power. Nobody could touch a white person. A European was a European'. The business continued to thrive after independence, and the social relations developed with employees and other locals played a role in this continued success.

> I had relations with many Blacks. They bought beer from me because they ran their own pubs, and I frequented them often, to show my acceptance. You had to be political if you wanted a good life. I would go, we'd have our beers, I also treated them. We'd crack jokes. It was fun.

Nationalisation ended this and Sophocles repatriated. Even so, it is a decision he often regrets: 'Because here it is worse. Because Blacks can be controlled. They are happy with little. Here there are a lot of sharks'. The racist legacy of settler colonialism endures in its allure even after the economic benefit it has extracted has been expended.

Almost all the former businessmen interviewed pine the losses they suffered prior to their repatriation. Stella (b. 1952)[14] recalls that her brother was able to sell his farm in Zimbabwe before nationalisation but others were not. The Cypriot community was not as severely affected because they were mostly shopkeepers rather than farm owners, she reasons. On their way out, she was able to bring her jewellery, a car, and furniture together with 500 dollars cash (the limit they could export). Elli (b. 1940s)[15] remembers that when nationalisation was announced in the Congo her husband was shocked, 'seeing all his fortune disappear overnight. He went to bed with black hair and woke up with grey'. She was repatriated through an emergency flight with other women who had their children in Cyprus. This was right after the 1974 war in Cyprus and Elli found little sympathy for her condition. Arriving with nothing, her husband, who followed her, discovered that he had also lost his rights to refugee welfare that he might have otherwise claimed for land lost in northern Cyprus, since he had not lived there after he emigrated. Lateral colonial positioning entailed both privileged access to gains in the colonial and early postcolonial transitional order and greater

uncertainty in its aftermath in postcolonial polities. In contradistinction, George (b. 1934),[16] who never left the Congo, maintains that people exaggerate their losses. 'Despite what you hear, nobody lost their wealth. The government provides reparations and support to this day'.

Lateral religion

Makarios (Andreas) Tillyrides (b. 1945)[17] is now the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Nairobi and All Kenya. His adopted, religious name reflects that of the first President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios III, who sent Tillyrides in 1977, then a young Oxford PhD graduate in theology, on this special mission to Kenya. Although Cypriot priests typically accompanied the Greek-Cypriot diaspora in Africa, the religious mission in Kenya was sui generis. It was planned at the highest level by President Makarios to punctuate his historic relationship with Kenya. Makarios passed through Kenya on his way to exile in Seychelles in 1956 and briefly stayed and delivered anticolonial speeches there following his release in 1957. This was during the Mau Mau uprising, when Kenyan leaders were in prison. President Makarios returned to Kenya on official visits after Cypriot independence and officiated over mass baptisms in the 1970s. His efforts to build a lasting relationship with Kenya culminated in the foundation of a theological seminary in Nairobi to train Orthodox priests from all over Africa.

Had it not been for President Makarios's anti-colonial reputation, his missionary activities would not have been different from the first wave of European colonialism leading to colonial rule. Makarios enhanced his political capital and influence, at home and abroad, by establishing this ecclesiastical presence in Africa, and in doing so fully capitalised on his anticolonial credentials and Cypriot membership of the Non-Aligned Movement (Constantinou 2018). As he cynically put it in an interview with Oriana Fallaci (1974), unlike those of Catholic and Protestant missionaries, his mission was quite easy, not having to 'help women, nurse babies, and what have you … I didn't have to do any of those awful things, and the result is that in Africa I have at my disposal the largest concentration of Black Orthodox Christians'. He was especially gratified at the spreading of his own name through mass baptisms, the 'little Black Makarioses' that branded him and Cyprus in Africa. Worse, he dismissed African religious understanding of Orthodoxy: 'Naturally they understood nothing of belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. You meet some fellow in the street and ask him, "What religion do you belong to?" and he answers, "To Makarios's religion!"' (see Constantinou and Tselepou 2017, 179–181).

The Cypriot mission in Kenya is lateral religious colonialism par excellence. But contrary to President Makarios, Makarios Tillyrides is a humble, tireless and committed missionary. He is involved in countless humanitarian projects. He is constantly on the road visiting orthodox parishes as well as schools and hospitals financed by the mission. Although his commitment is not in doubt and he has done a lot in deintellectualising Christianity, making it more accessible and experiential – e.g., translating the bible into local minority languages and adopting African customary practices such as dancing – he still works under the legacy of Cypriot lateral colonialism. On the one hand, there is a continuity and even idolisation of President Makarios's involvement and his political qua religious mission – even to the extent that the Church of the Theological Seminary has an icon of President Makarios that students kiss. On the other, there is a striking racial gap not just in Kenya but in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Greek Orthodoxy in Africa, which the Patriarchate of

Alexandria and All Africa considers to be a non-issue and addresses through token appointments.

Especially problematic is the co-optation of the independent African Orthodox Churches under the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. For a start, both the Coptic Orthodox Church, that operated in Egypt and Nubia, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church are Indigenous African churches that preceded European colonialism and Christian missionising in Africa. Beyond these established churches, there was also an independent African Orthodox movement that used Christian orthodoxy as an anticolonial liberation theology, led by pioneering and inspiring Africans, such as William Alexander, Reuben Spartas and Arthur Gathuna. This is rarely acknowledged in Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical history, and when it does, it is presented as a heroic yet confusing Indigenous beginning that sought enlightenment, catechism and eventually canonisation by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (Constantinou and Tselepou 2017, 186–188).

The case of Bishop Gathuna is especially interesting – a Mau Mau revolutionary imprisoned for 10 years together with Jomo Kenyatta by the British colonial authorities. Gathuna was a pioneer in Kenya, who led in the 1940s the autonomous African Orthodox Church of Kenya, challenging through orthodoxy the complicit religion of the colonisers. He embarked on personal missions, conducted mass baptisms and employed lay evangelists (Akunda 2010, 80–95). Interestingly, this was done in full Pauline style, without offering the converted any material incentives, other than the spiritual message of the gospel which he associated to political activism (Akunda 2010, 82). Following the involvement of the Church of Cyprus in Kenya, President Makarios in his visit ordained a new set of Orthodox priests and ordained anew priests ordained by Indigenous African bishops, thus officially bringing the whole Kenyan Orthodox church 'in communion' with the Patriarchate in Alexandria (Akunda 2010, 80). Eventually, Gathuna, the historic first Orthodox priest and later first Bishop of Kenya, was sidelined by the Greek Orthodox hierarchy and defrocked. This created a schism in 1974 within the Kenyan Orthodox Church – i.e., into a Greek Orthodox church and an independent African Orthodox church. This schism ran until 2006 when Bishop Gathuna was reinstated posthumously – a schism that Makarios Tillyrides helped to mediate.

Christian Orthodoxy in Africa thus displays both local anticolonial promise and lateral colonialism. Cypriot missionary work reinforces the structural biases and symbolic violence of traditional European missionary work. But emanating from a small country with limited geopolitical reach and ability to dominate makes the Cypriot mission more acceptable to Indigenous African communities sensitive to colonial control and co-optation. Moreover, unlike the typical registered or unregistered African migrant in Cyprus, those migrants who come under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Church in Africa, on scholarships or as aspiring priests or monks, enjoy a privileged status and access to resources not readily available to other Africans. In the case of some, officiating religious ceremonies and ministering religious rites, it might be the only place in Cypriot society that one can encounter African migrants in positions of authority.

Afro-Cypriot legacies

Maro's[18] family album opens with images of two women: her mother, an Ethiopian teacher whom she never met, and her grandmother, a Cypriot villager who raised her. Maro's mixed heritage is not obviously visible and although her African origins have always been part of

her identity within the family, she was never seen as different to the other cousins she grew up with – or at least, this is how the story goes. Prompted to think about the 'difficulties' she had to contend with, her initial depictions of a large united family with many kids all growing up together begins to crack and another 'hieroglyphics of the flesh' (Spillers 1987, 67) becomes legible.

Maro was brought to Cyprus with her siblings when she was two. Her father, having migrated to Ethiopia in the 1930s, was married there. He returned briefly to Cyprus to bring the children, in the hope that they would be given greater opportunities growing up. He returned again after WWII, without her mother, who had to remain in the country, and then once again in the mid-1950s. Maro remembers games with cousins, everyone sharing in chores and celebrations, and a large group of aunts and uncles.

> But I did not have a godmother like other kids had. All my aunts had baptised all of the different cousins but none of them wanted to baptise me. I only realised this later, when I asked how come I did not get to call one of my aunts 'godmother'. I then learnt that it was my grandmother who had baptised me. And that was that.

Maro was 18 when her father died. She was married off to a Nicosian from a well-known family whom she had previously rejected while her father was alive. Her greatest struggle was in that marriage, which lasted for nearly two tormenting decades, and across two countries as they later migrated to the UK. Through very bitter times, she was able to claim some independence, secure jobs, and eventually divorce. Those tribulations also took a toll on her relationship with her siblings. Having eventually managed to rebuild her life, she now looks back on those strenuous times as an injustice in which the large, united, happy family was complicit. She understands that the cousins, aunts, and uncles who concluded the marriage agreement probably thought they were looking out for her, providing for her. But they were also becoming unburdened by her upbringing.

Although in mid-twentieth century Cyprus arranged marriages were also often forced, Maro's story speaks of the additional pressures involved in the raising of children in extended family environments. 'We were orphans without knowing it', she concluded in her interview. Providing continuities with the general predicament of patriarchal stricture whereby all women were potentially at risk of forced marriage at the time, and all girls to be eventually provided with dowries (Loizos 1975) seen as potential liabilities to their families, renders this specific predicament normalised and unremarkable. Yet Maro remembers, as a child, being told by a frustrated aunt once that her father had been all set up to marry one of the wealthy girls in the village after his return from Africa – 'and what does he do? He brings you lot instead!'

If in Spillers' (1987) seminal reading of the Moynihan report of 1965 produced for the US Department of Labour, which racialised the African American family, the pathologised Black family is the legacy of slavery, the grammar through which an orphaned-like condition becomes unseen is the legacy of a lateral colonialism, across its three modalities explored here. For the children who were mothered in Africa and brought to Cyprus for a better future (for Maro's story is not, in fact, unique), racism seemed not to exist because other orders, such as patriarchy, postcolonialism and ethno-nationalism, rendered 'race' unspoken and normalised injustices. Lateral colonialism posited Cypriots as ignorant of such racism while they enacted it. The same dynamics pertained later, when racist police violence was excused to the CERD as inexperience.

Spillers' essay (1987) points to the ungendering of Black mothers in the US as a structure of oppression across the centuries. Sharpe's discussion of the wake (2016) extends that tracing of anti-Black violences in time and space as they migrate across the Atlantic and across the Mediterranean. Between these two readings, Maro's story exemplifies the investment of lateral colonialism in the private and the familial, and the global relations that, through it, extended the reach of colonial racism well beyond the Middle Passage.

Lateral decoloniality?

Decolonial theorising has provided tools for exploring the legacies of violence wrought by colonialism and connecting slavery and exploitation to present day anti-Black violences in the Global North. This paper has sought to extend these insights by looking at colonial legacies in the peripheries of this geography. We proposed that the concept of lateral colonialism heps to analyse the ways in which peoples otherwise situated – outside the purview of these violences (non-colonisers and non-Blacks) – were also enveloped and complicit in them.

The case of Cypriots in Africa delineates three modalities in which this involvement has taken shape: governmental, entrepreneurial and religious. Examining those modalities close up through life history interviews shows that they are wrought with ambivalence and hesitation. At the same time, it shows that they reverberate with repercussions today, in the ways in which lives are lived, injustices considered and politics conducted. Twenty years after that foundational moment of police brutality against African migrants, the CERD continues to report concerns over racist crime, particularly against people of 'African descent', and about inadequate reporting and prosecutions of both police and other perpetrators.[19] Lateral colonialism is indispensable in linking decolonial possibilities to a global political agenda. In this sense, the paper re-scripts Africa into Cypriot histories and Cyprus-qua-periphery into the decolonial narrative. Lateral colonialism excavates connections that have been forgotten and obscured. It may help us connect previous African migrations to the migrations, established racisms and colonial orders that Fortress Europe now forgets as it takes shape in the Mediterranean precisely on those unseen structures.

Making such connections seen and heard offers a way to begin resisting these scripts. Maro spoke in her interview of relief and vindication that her story was being sought, heard and recorded. The brutal beatings of migrants in 1998 are now recoverable through the work of the Cyprus Movements Archive, a collective that records the (mainly post-war) history of left radical movements on the island, where the story features as the starting point in a report tracing the contemporary trajectory of racism and xenophobia. In an increasingly hostile environment against migrants in Cyprus, which mobilises racism in more and less overt ways, resistive discourses will often hark back to history to question the 'right' of Cypriots to be racist: they will point to the inter-ethnic conflict that 'should have taught us something'; and, occasionally, they will also point to the wealth that Cypriots amassed in Africa as evidence of their complicitness in the exploitation that has deprived countries of origin forcing new generations to migrate. These resistances, which cannot be fully explored here, are pointers to how the concept of lateral colonialism might also lead us to begin thinking of possibilities in lateral decoloniality.

Lateral colonialism prompts us to address both the convergences between Afro-Cypriot colonialism and Euro-colonialism that are evident in the narratives we explored and their differences. This tension arises in the ambivalences and the solidarities fostered, but also in their foreclosure and disavowal. Lateral colonialism was sustained by naratives and mythologies of freedom and humanity that drove the missionary narrative to foreground solidarity with the locals before it imposed its own religious 'truth'. Or, equally, the liberal narrative projected a grammar of opportunity and hard work that masked the inequalities that normalised exploitation. These narratives were underpinned by myths of development that rendered self-determination and self-rule as rights to be gained only after proper (Western-style) governance had been established.

And as much as they still drive North–South relations today, their resonance is nowhere more apparent than in the narrative of humanitarianism that re-scripts theological, liberal and developmental grammars into violences of mobility. Cyprus is today policing its borders together with the European agency FRONTEX, legitimating its often violent practices to deter people having 'unfounded' asylum claims and based on a script that is both humanitarian and racialised. Cyprus still projects itself as a small, peripheral, yet reliable partner – then opening up the Dark Continent, now safeguarding the gates of Europe – and continues to be assigned a place in this neocolonial global order that remains firmly and stably lateral.

Disclosure statement

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Notes

1. Jean Christou, 1998, 'Markides Orders Probe into Police Brutality', *Cyprus Mail*, 27 October 1998.
2. Cyprus Movements Archive, last accessed 13 July 2021, https://ia902908.us.archive.org/10/items/archiveracismcyprus7/Φασισμός%2C%20Ξενοφοβία%2C%20Εκμετάλλευση%20και%20Ρατσιστική%20Βία%20στην%20Κύπρο%20-%20Έβδομη%20Έκδοση.pdf
3. During the proceedings, the Attorney General confirmed that an investigation had been opened, which concluded that 'all the members of the unit had availed themselves of their right to remain silent and so it had proved impossible to identify the culprits. The head of the unit had been prosecuted, but had been acquitted after a lengthy trial. That case had led the Law Commissioner and the Attorney-General to extend the criminal liability of the police'. See CERD/C/SR.1473, 17 August 2001, §6.
4. CERD/C/SR.1483, 12 September 2001, § 51-53.
5. Data from the Cypriot High Commission in South Africa, http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/highcom/highcom_pretoria.nsf/page51_en/page51_en?OpenDocument; and Frangou (2010, 111). Φράγκου, Μαρίνα. 2010. *Ανθρωπογεωγραφίες της ελληνικής διασποράς: τυπολογία μιας παγκόσμιας δικτύωσης* [Anthropo-geographies of the Greek Diaspora: A Typology of Global Networking]. PhD Dissertation, University of the Aegean.
6. Machi [Struggle], 16/10/1962. This referred to Turkish-Cypriot policemen and was reported in a nationalist newspaper known for its clear support of EOKA, the Greek-Cypriot anti-colonial armed movement that sought Cyprus' union with Greece between 1955 and 1959.
7. Interview #3, 5/11/2014.
8. Interview #2, 1/11/14.
9. Interview #5, 9/12/14.
10. Interview #6, 31/12/14.
11. Interview #7, 5/1/15.
12. Interview #14, 4/3/15.
13. Interview #13, 3/12/15.
14. Interview #4, 7/12/14.
15. Interview #15, 4/3/15.
16. Interview #1, 27/10/14.
17. Interview #18, 29/6/15.
18. Interview #19, 8/8/2021.
19. CERD reports 2013 (session 92) and 2017 (session 83).

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