ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Being black and non-citizen in South Africa: Intersecting race, white privilege and afrophobic violence in contemporary South Africa

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Abstract

Post-apartheid South Africa is characterized by growing feelings of pain, anger and frustration amongst black communities triggered by pervasive social inequalities. This has given birth to a new form of political and social activism shaped by crude violence, vandalism, destruction, brutal killings of women and children as well as thuggery in different black communities. It has also led to an upsurge in violence particularly on Africans from other parts of the continent. In this article, I attempt to examine how racial politics and resilient white privilege intersect to trigger afrophobic violence in South Africa. I draw on existing literature on broad conceptions of race and xenophobia to make a set of assertions about racial valuations, the resilience of white supremacy and black on black violence. In the article, I argue that black South Africans' pain, anger and the performance of violence on African migrants are on one level a consequence of resilient structural racism and racial practices, which continue to marginalize, emasculate and dispossess blacks. These racial practices force black South Africans to look elsewhere to express their anger, pains and frustrations.

KEYWORDS
afrophobia, black identity, dispossession, race, racial reconciliation, South Africa, white privilege

1 | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This article attempts to examine how racial politics and a deepening culture of afrophobia intersect to drive the recurrent brutal attack of other Africans residing in South Africa. It draws on existing literature on racism and xenophobia to make a set of assertions about racial valuations, the resilience of white supremacy and black on black violence, with a particular focus on Africans from other parts of the continent. The article argues that black South Africans' pain, anger and the performance of crude violence on African migrants are on one level a consequence of resilient structural racism and racial practices, which continue to marginalize, emasculate and dispossess blacks. This argument does not in any way trivialize other triggers of afrophobic violence, including the role that the ANC government and a group of black middle-class South Africans have played to perpetuate this form of violence (see for example Pineteh, 2018 & 2017; Naicker, 2016; Neocosmos, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2006). In fact, the article does not seek to simply reproduce very familiar scholarship on xenophobia and afrophobia but rather to understand how racial hierarchies and white privilege contribute to reproduce social violence in black and immigrant communities. I decided to approach the topic through this lens because the vast body of knowledge on migration and xenophobia has tended to neglect how enduring racial practices also contribute to trigger different forms of violence in contemporary South Africa.

But before I engage with this argument and try to tease out the relationship between race, white privilege and afrophobia, I would like to point out that black-on-black violence in post-apartheid South Africa is not restricted to other Africans only. In fact, this form of violence happens to all black bodies in South Africa because racial constructions in the history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid have consistently portrayed black bodies as worthless symbols of evil (see Manganyi, 1973; Matthews, 2012; More, 2014). As Matthews (2012; P.1) points out "South Africans today live not only in the memory of the racial injustices of the past but also with present injustices that are a consequence of that past". As these racial injustices persist in the present, we see growing feelings of anger, anxiety and frustration emanating from the continuous disempowerment and dispossession of the black majority (Mamdani, 1997; Mbembe, 2007; More, 2014). Black anger, pain and frustration are therefore triggered by the "pervasive material inequality between whites and blacks" (Mbembe, 2007, p. 6). This has given birth to a new form of political and social activism characterized by vandalism, destruction, brutal killings of women and children as well as thuggery in different spaces including those inhabited by Africans from other parts of the continent (Mbembe, 2007, p. 6). This article therefore does not seek to exceptionalize the violence on African migrants or to ignore the significance of other forms of black-on-black violence in South African communities. Rather, it is merely an intentional attempt to explore and tease out the intricate relationship between race and afrophobia, especially since previous studies on xenophobic violence have, in my view, not given this issue adequate research attention. Here, I attempt to answer one critical question: How does racial politics and white privilege influence afrophobic violence in South Africa? In responding to this question, I have structured the remainder of the article in four main parts. Firstly, I analyse racial politics, white privilege and the construction of blackness in South Africa and beyond. Secondly, I examine the perpetuation of a racialized system through employment and migration. Here, I interrogate the normalization of precarious employment as a form of black empowerment and aspirations, and the implications for afrophobic violence. Furthermore, I explore the role of African migrants in entrenching white supremacy through what I call "African migrants and the adoration of whiteness". Finally, I revisit the philosophy of Black Consciousness and examine whether it can be used to disrupt racial hierarchies, white privilege and black on black violence.

2 | RACIAL POLITICS, WHITE PRIVILEGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACKNESS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Racial valuation in contemporary South Africa is part of an enduring global political economy of racial discrimination, which promotes white supremacy and solidarity, while ensuring the subordination of other races (Andrews, 2021;

Delgado & Stafanicic, 2000). Since the pioneering scholarship on the intersections of race, gender and class by scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw, there has been an irruption of studies on racial hierarchies, whiteness and anti-blackness in the USA and Europe (See for example, Andrews, 2021; Brooms & Druery, 2023; Brooms & Perry, 2016; Hooks, 2014; Issar, 2020). These seminal texts have employed Critical Race Theory (CRT) to examine the social construction of black identity in western democracies, forms of racial discrimination and stereotypes. They have also explored ways to dismantle recurrent anti-black narratives that seek to maintain white supremacy and its associated privileges. These studies remind us that in an era of globalization, the processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as access to material opportunities are still intentionally racialized and gendered (Andrews, 2021; Song, 2004). Here, the purveyors of CRT continue to argue that the world we live in is still imagined and constructed according to the three intersecting "isms": racism, classicism and sexism. One's right to be human and to enjoy the material benefits of being human are constantly disrupted by social formations that promote hierarchies based naively on racial origins, gender and social class.

For example, modern day America and Europe still inhabit pervasive racial and gender stereotypes that persistently entrench covert and overt forms of subjugation and dehumanization of particularly blacks. These global social formations have been exacerbated by migration especially from sub-Saharan Africa to the Global North and South Africa. As Andrews (2021 & 2018) argue, although the West and America continue to extract mineral resources from Africa, they have not relented their efforts to subject blacks to unimaginable pain, suffering and forms of victimization. So, whilst white South Africans are a minority group in a majority black South Africa, they are part of a global structure of racial capitalism, which promotes white supremacy, power and solidarity (Andrews, 2021; Issar, 2020; Melamed, 2015). The influence of this global political economy of racial inequalities in a majority black South Africa, has ushered in a new form political activism characterized by anger, anxieties and arbitrary violence, as calls for radical economic transformation persist.

For example, Achille Mbembe's reading of the politics of viscerality in Fanon's works and the implications for the reconstruction of South Africa refers to this political activism of crude violence, rape, destruction and brutal killings in post-apartheid South Africa. For him, the grotesque form of violence experienced today is a form of madness akin to that which was experienced during the colonial and apartheid eras. This form of madness is a consequence of systemic "racial and gender imbalances in the distribution of wealth, income and opportunity…" stripping poor South Africans of any possibility of living materially meaningful lives (Hardy, 2018; Matthews, 2012; Mbembe, 2007, p. 6). Reading South Africa through the politics of viscerality, he contends that social and political mobilization have become "a politics that deploys the motif of the body such as pain and suffering, anger, grief and fear to perform a certain type of radicalism" (Arendt, 1969; Hardy, 2018, p. 53/54). While South Africans now enjoy some amount of political freedom since the demise of apartheid, new and subtle forms of racial and class hierarchies have uninterruptedly hamstrung attempts to redress the ills of the past and transform the country. In fact, ideals of a rainbow or non-racial nation have simply reproduced a new culture of racial superiority and pervasive patterns of white privilege on the one hand and "cronyism, clientelism and corruption" on the other hand (Mbembe, 2007, p. 6; Sullivan, 2006). Despite the dethronement of white political leadership, whiteness still embodies narcissistic and "vicious traits that help to sustain white privilege and whites cannot simply throw off these traits" for the greater good (Matthews, 2012, p. 10). These vicious traits consistently rear their ugly heads during debates on land redistribution, affirmative action and higher education transformation (Langa & Kiguwa, 2016; Mamdani, 1997; Pirtle, 2022). The spectre of white superiority and the willingness to maintain the black majority in a permanent state of subjugation mean it is hopeless to foresee a "possibility of white people undoing the unconscious habits of white privilege on their own" (Matthews, 2012, p. 13).

Racial reconciliation in South Africa has therefore been characterized by conscious and unconscious attempts by the white minority not to disrupt the master and servant relationship or the privileges associated with racial injustices (Hook, 2011; Vice, 2010). In this context, the emasculating and dehumanizing of black bodies are still the social order while the white minority constructs a narrative of victimhood to masquerade their racial privileges, as the ANC government attempts to redress the injustices of the past (Hook, 2011, Mbembe, 2007). For me, white supremacy and privilege have not only disempowered black South Africans, they have managed to pit blacks against

blacks including South Africans against African migrants. In their state of privilege, white South Africans have carefully crafted a narrative that black suffering and pain, as well as the state of criminality and insecurity in this erstwhile apartheid state is partly a consequence of illegal migration (Langa & Kiguwa, 2016; Naicker, 2016; Pineteh, 2018). This narrative absolves whites and their enduring attempts to maintain white supremacy in the new political dispensation. It also forces black South Africans to look elsewhere to express their anger, pain and frustration. In doing so, they have targeted the most vulnerable including African refugees and migrants living in particular areas of South Africa such as townships and migrant ghettoes.

The call for a non-racial post-apartheid South Africa as the cornerstone of a constitutional democracy particularly by white and black liberals means race and racial politics are almost tabooed in public conversations about transformation in South Africa. To be called a "racist" is a dreaded label amongst those advocating for a non-racial South Africa although they repeatedly reject any form of racial grievances and attempts to dismantle racial practices that elevate whiteness (Matthews, 2012; Milazzo, 2015; Vice, 2010). Interestingly, racism and white privilege are a dinner table conversation in black spaces and the pejorative construction of blackness "is usually reserved for fellow whites and Afrikaners only" (Verwey & Quayle, 2012, p. 552). To understand racial politics and afrophobia in South Africa, one must carefully navigate the set of contradictions in this so-called non-racial, equal and right-based South Africa. One of such contradictions is the unique and rather uncharacteristic coexistence of extreme poverty and opulence, with the white minority and the black nouveau rich clinging firmly to their riches and privileges at the expense of an impoverished black majority (Matthews, 2012; Mbembe, 2007; Milazzo, 2015). Therefore, a non-racial South Africa suggests that one way to address the ills of the past and transform the lives of the poor is to de-racialize the new South Africa. This means government-led initiatives to transform the material conditions of those marginalized, dispossessed and displaced by apartheid such as affirmative action and land redistribution, are easily labelled "reverse apartheid" by some white South Africans. The group of South Africans argue that the political economy of race does not matter anymore and that the promotion of the principle of meritocracy should prevail in a country where the playing field has always been uneven in favour of the white race. Here, they seek to maintain racial hierarchies and the associated privileges, while disrupting any form of social justice through reparation and/or restitution (Ansell, 2006; Chitonge, 2022; Wambugu, 2005).

Therefore, the recurring argument today in South Africa is that social inequalities can no longer be blamed on racial valuations and white supremacy only. The precursors of such an argument see inequality in South Africa as an intersection of both race and class. Although Mbembe (2007; P.6) argues that "blacks are visible in positions of leadership, affluence and influence in almost every sector of South African life" it is by no means an indication that race and white privilege no longer matter in the struggle for racial reconciliation. As Mbembe's text rightly points out, disrupting racial hierarchies is not yet a finished project because the widening black middle-class is hardly powerful enough to disrupt a racial formation which revolves solely around "mental and physical patterns of engagement with the world that operate without conscious attention and reflections" to the suffering of the black populations (Sullivan, 2006, p. 4). The juxtaposition of extreme poverty and privilege in black communities and white suburbs, for example, Sandton and Alexandra, tells us that racial harmony in a multiracial South Africa is mentally and physically impossible when blackness is still associated with poverty, suffering, crime, corruption, rape and so on (Manganyi, 1973; Mbembe, 2007; More, 2014).

In contemporary South Africa like elsewhere around the world, racism is still very much institutional and systematic, performed not only in the overt micro-aggressions experienced daily by blacks. This chronic form of racism leaves black South Africans always yearning for a sense of belonging in their own country while unintentionally prioritizing white feelings (Andrews, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2017; P.x). Therefore, anti-African sentiments that have led to the violence against African migrants are at one level a response to white complaints that the mere presence of many black Africans in South Africa is a source of discomfort to white lives and the reasons for unemployment in black communities (Naicker, 2016; Pineteh, 2017). But their narrative does not focus on the discomfort caused by the presence of blacks from other African countries because it would mean acknowledging the privileges associated with whiteness. To spur emotions, anxieties and anger, the narrative is intentionally framed around black misery and

pain, claiming that the black-led government is prioritizing the wellbeing of illegal migrants at the expense of its own citizens (Langa & Kiguwa, 2016; Naicker, 2016). Common phrases such as "they are taking your jobs" "they are the reasons for the high crime rates in South Africa" "they are draining state resources meant for the poor" and so on, are used for mass mobilization during afrophobic violence (Mbembe, 2019; Neocosmos, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Pineteh, 2017, 2018).

But unemployment, poverty and crime are three closely related social ills that cannot simply be nationalized or blamed on the presence of African migrants only. Many politicians and white liberals have refused to acknowledge that racial capitalism has contributed significantly in entrenching poverty and social inequality in South Africa more than migration. For example, to maintain white hegemony, whites deplore all their resources to resist any form of structural reforms that will disrupt white privilege and foster the socioeconomic upliftment of the masses (Matthews, 2012; Pirtle, 2022). For example, the call for land restitution to redress the history of dispossession has been met with resistance from whites, claiming the risk of plunging South Africa into a state of food insecurity. Put differently, whites' continuous control of key factors of production including land is good for the South African economy (Mbembe, 2007; Milazzo, 2015; Vice, 2010). This phrase perpetuates a "sense of ownership of the country" and white saviourism that has been existing in Africa since slavery and colonialism.

This impassioned and rather disingenuous defence of white hegemony in South Africa speak to the "psychosis of whiteness…that white people are the key agents of history, the ones who decide the future of the world, for all of us" (Andrews, 2018, p. 198). This psychosis of whiteness survives on negatively stereotyping blackness and exalting whiteness. Here, whiteness and associated connotations are used as the golden standards, forcing blacks to constantly strive to "represent [themselves] as upright and decent citizens to counter the negative stereotypes of the lazy and defiant black person" (Andrews, 2018, p. 232), especially in the presence of white South Africans. This points to the psychology of black inferiority complex which continues to haunt blacks, engendering the urgent and desperate need to subscribe to what Andrews (2018; P.232) terms "respectability politics" when they are in contact with whiteness. But when blacks desperately try to prove their worth during confrontations with whiteness, it helps to maintain white privilege and control creating opportunities for whites to manipulate blacks including African migrants. As pointed previously, one such form of manipulation is the familiar narrative that migrants precisely from sub-Saharan Africa are responsible for the social pathologies in South Africa.

3 | PERPETUATION OF A RACIALIZED SYSTEM IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

To understand the perpetuation of a racialized system in South Africa and how it influences employment and migration, one needs to revisit the co-dependent relationship between racial hierarchies and capitalism. In fact, the global system of structural/institutional racism provides a fertile ground for capital accumulation. For capitalism to flourish, certain races and genders must be unequally valuated, exploited, marginalized and/or dispossessed. Put differently, "capital can only be capital when it is accumulating, and it can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups" (Dawson & Francis, 2016; Melamed, 2015, p. 77). With unemployment increasing exponentially in South Africa, the proliferation of precarious employment and the exploitation of black South Africans and migrants in this sector have helped to entrench white privilege. The situation has also been exacerbated by middle-class African migrants' adoration of whiteness and their unwavering loyalty to white bosses.

3.1 | Normalizing precarious employment as a form of black empowerment and aspirations

One of the racial practices which triggers tensions between particularly low skilled black South Africans and African migrants is the normalization of precarious employment as a form of black economic empowerment and personal

aspirations. Empirical studies on race and employment inequalities in South Africa show that white South Africans still occupy leadership positions in key sectors of the economy. These studies also reveal how domestic and/or casual labour contribute to entrench racial hierarchies in South Africa (see Murray & Durrheim, 2019; Pirtle, 2022). For example, being a maid, gardener, security guards or waiter is perceived as permanent employment for economically marginalized black South Africans. This practice has been embraced by the black *nouveau* rich and black middle class (Jinnah, 2020; King & Shackleton, 2022; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Although white South Africans spend resources to maintain the hierarchies of race, their lives depend on the existence of blacks. The employment of black maids and gardeners grants them access to their private spaces and love ones. It is not uncommon that the children of white and rich black South Africans have been raised by maids while they pursue careers and run businesses. Maids and gardeners have become surrogate parents to many white families (Bosch & Mcloed, 2015; Gaitskell et al., 1983; Jinnah, 2020). Working as maids or gardeners in white homes for years puts blacks in a permanent state of vulnerability and insecurity because of the precarity of their employment (Jinnah, 2020; King & Shackleton, 2022). In the age of racial capitalism and the widening social inequality in South Africa, domestic employment has been documented as a common form of employment (see Archer, 2011; Griffin, 2011; Jinnah, 2020; King & Shackleton, 2022).

For me the problem is not employing maids and gardeners but how they are treated by some of their white and *nouveau rich* black employers. For example, Nyamnjoh (2005; P.181) argues "that the world of maids [and gardeners] is one of uncertainties, insecurities and acute dehumanization, even in the midst of abundance and the rhetoric of rights and entitlement". Thinking about domestic work through the colonial discourse of master/mistress-slave relationship, this form of employment is disempowering and reduces blacks to human beings without any agency and/or aspirations or whose only aspirations are to serve the masters/mistresses (Archer, 2011; Bosch & Mcloed, 2015; Jinnah, 2020). By normalizing this form of employment, black South Africans find themselves competing for such employment opportunities with refugees and asylum seekers from other African countries (see Dahlberg & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2023; Pineteh, 2017; Tewolde, 2020; Tewolde, 2023).

Many white South Africans and the new black bourgeoisie who employ maids and gardeners claim audaciously that they helping the failed ANC government to address the rising unemployment statistics. However, black maids and gardeners are employed to also affirm racial and social class superiority in this context (Archer, 2011; Murray & Durrheim, 2019; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Unfortunately, unemployment creates a sense of desperation in human beings and those who find themselves at the margins of poverty are likely to accept any job. It is important to note that some of the white and black bosses and madams have actually contributed to transform the lives of their maids and gardeners. But domestic labour still helps to maintain the cycle of destitution in black communities. It is arguably a systemic form of black exploitation because maids and gardeners often leave these jobs perennially poor after more than 20 years of employment because these are jobs without any retirement benefits (Archer, 2011; Bosch & Mcloed, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2005). The contradiction here is that architects of white superiority spend centuries and enormous resources inferiorizing blackness but strangely they do not have any problem sharing their intimate spaces with maids and gardeners, and entrusting the lives of their children in their care for years as long as they are serving them.

Furthermore, to protect white purity in South Africa, public spaces, especially up-market suburbs with properties owned by affluent whites and blacks have been privatized and protected with gated access control, sophisticated surveillance equipment and black security guards. Their houses have CCTV cameras and high walls with electric fencing designed to insulate the owners from crime. Another motive for privatizing and controlling access in these suburbs is to transform them into exclusive spaces for people of specific races and social class. Many studies on gated communities in South Africa have argued that privatizing public spaces is influenced not only by crime paranoia but also by the desire to reconstruct the apartheid culture of seclusion and exclusion in specific suburbs (see for example Breetze, Landman & Cohn, 2014; Landman, 2002, 2004 &, 2006). The most recent example in Pretoria is the enclosure of Waterkloof with access-controlled gates, CCTV cameras and 24/7 security guards. Access to this suburb is now through biometric technology and some of the streets are completely closed at night disregarding how these enclosures affect easy access to public schools in Waterkloof and surrounding neighbourhoods. Although the

securitization of private spaces is intended to restrict access for the inferior races, these spaces are still accessible and sometimes appropriated by black maids and gardeners, whether or not they are granted permission by the owners. I am not implying that all white South Africans are wealthy and live in gated communities. On the contrary, I am contending that in a country with a painful history of displacement and dispossession, gated communities can become a new and subtle form of apartheid style spatial configuration (Breetzke et al., 2014; Landman, 2006).

The justification for high-tech surveillance especially in white dominated South African suburbs is that crime is out of control in post-apartheid South Africa. Here, crime is easily racialized, enforcing the stereotype of the black criminal. Given the high level of unemployment, poverty and suffering amongst the black majority, it is easy to submit to the uncritical argument that most crimes in South Africa are committed by blacks. Perhaps, it is correct to make this assertion considering the destitution in black communities. But any race can resort to a life crime, if members of that racial group have been systematically subjected to a life perennial suffering (Milazzo, 2015; Pirtle, 2022). Put differently, crime is a consequence of poverty and one of the main causes of poverty in contemporary South Africa is systemic and institutional racism, which consistently deprive blacks of economic opportunities while sustaining white privilege (Matthews, 2012; Mbembe, 2007; Vice, 2010). While institutional/systemic racism persists, a new small class of black bourgeoisies or "*nouveau riche*" has emerged, often used by white supremacists to argue that social inequality in South Africa can no longer be blamed on race but on social class structures. They are used to conceal how racial power persistently subjugates and dehumanizes black populations, whose lives are disrupted daily by racial habits and attitudes (Matolino, 2013; Milazzo, 2015).

But what is the relationship between domestic employment or casual labour in general and afrophobic violence in South Africa? One of the characteristics of migration especially in Southern Africa is the movement of migrant domestic workers from countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho; Swaziland and so on (Griffin, 2011; King & Shackleton, 2022; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Cross-border migration from these countries has therefore increased the supply of domestic workers, who are now in competition with low-skilled citizens, whose minds have been conditioned to believe that they can only aspire to be domestic workers in a country of many opportunities. Despite the precarity and insecurities in this employment sector, the aspirations of particularly unskilled black South Africans have been reduced to becoming maids, gardeners and/or car guards. In many European countries these forms of employment are rejected by citizens, abandoning them exclusively to destitute migrant workers. However, resilient structural racism as well as social class have driven unemployed and unskilled South Africans into unhealthy competition with African migrants including refugees and asylum seekers in this informal employment sector. So, when some blacks and white South Africans speak about the porousness of borders and the urgency to protect South Africa's sovereignty from an imaginary influx of illegal migrants or when politicians construct the "illegal migrants are taking your jobs" narrative, they are also referring to domestic employment and other forms of precarious work in the South African informal economy (See Mathers & Landau, 2007; Pineteh, 2017; Tewolde, 2020, 2023). Although, they use this narrative to instigate violence against African migrants, many of them actually employ the same African migrants, particularly those without legal documents. Here, the cycle of black exploitation continues because these undocumented migrants are always afraid to seek any form of justice (Angu et al., 2022; Griffin, 2011; Nyamnjoh, 2005, 2006).

The contradiction also plays out in the way the ANC-led government has employed these cheap political tactics to garner political support in poor communities. For instance, Pineteh's (2017) analysis of the framing of African migrants in South Africa exposes how political rhetoric and media representations deceptively place migrants at the centre of social pathologies in contemporary South Africa (Also see Tewolde, 2020, 2023; Dahlberg & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2023). On the one hand, blaming African migrants for unemployment seeks to disguise the government's failures to meaningfully transform South Africa. On the other hand, it is an indication that the ANC government is incapable of dismantling racial hierarchies, which have allowed white hegemony in South Africa. Therefore, afrophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa cannot be interpreted simply as an expression of human anger but also as an interplay between different structural/systemic factors such as racism, poverty, rising unemployment and poor service delivery. These structural/systemic factors have worsened the material conditions of the black majority, driving the type

of desperation, anger and crude violence seen today in South Africa (see Pineteh, 2017; Tewolde, 2020). To dismantle this form of racism and racial politics or resilient structural/systemic racial formations, and possibly restore black dignity requires more radical approaches, which may include disrupting the privileges of politicians and/or the new black bourgeoisie.

3.2 | African migrants and the adoration of whiteness

As argued previously, the valuation of one race as being superior and the others as inferior is at the epicentre of black suffering in South Africa and one of the cardinal reasons for the performance of anger and frustrations on other black bodies. Although Mbembe (2007) argues that the configuration of racial identity is no longer easily discernible with the entry of blacks in positions of leadership or leading the life of affluence and influence, this does not mean that all lives in South Africa matter. In fact, the text is also saying that despite this noticeable black transformation, all lives can never matter because "contemporary reconfiguration and mutations of race and racism is the splitting of humanity itself into separate species and sub-species…" (Mbembe, 2007, p. 3). Moreover, the widening disparity between white privilege and black destitution suggests that the use of social class to conceal the prevalence of racial power "remains deeply racialized and that institutional racism impacts not only economic distribution but also [on black] people's very chance to reach adulthood" (Milazzo, 2015, p. 14). Afrophobic violence in South Africa negates the relationship between the different black bodies in South Africa while the inferiorization of the black identity creates a form of adoration and respectability of whiteness among a class of educated African migrants.

This group of African migrants have been elevated to the status of "special blacks" and to maintain this status in a racially divided South Africa, they have to respect whiteness and work to please their white bosses. They also participate in spreading racial stereotypes about black South Africans such as "*black South Africans are lazy* or *black South Africans hate other Africans"* etc. For example, Angu and Mulu's (2020) reflection on the changing material conditions of African migrants through the lens of Cameroonians, highlight the socioeconomic transformation in African migrant communities. For them, this transformation particularly in professional work spaces can be attributed partly to the nature of relationships between African migrants and their white bosses. Also, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that white bosses prefer to employ African migrants rather than black South Africans because of their work ethos. From this perspective, the tensions between black South Africans and Africans from other parts of the continent, often emanates from the perceived feeling of betrayal, especially when migrants internalize and verbalize racialized constructions of non-citizens from the continent as dedicated, hardworking, smarter and responsible versions of blacks. This group of African migrants have tended to resist any practice of *Ubuntu* or black solidarity in order to maintain their relationships with whites.

3.3 | The practice of black consciousness: Can it be a panacea for racism and afrophobia in South Africa?

Racism and its twin white privilege stem from unconscious attitudes and practices that construct whiteness as the symbol success, hard-work and intellectual ability. This has persisted in South Africa because blacks are always reminded of "their inferiority, laziness and inadequacy" as a way of shaming the black identity into submissiveness and subjugation (Gqola, 2015, p. 38). Race and racial superiority implant in the black psyche that the "black body is unwholesome, that the white body is the societal standard of wholesomeness" (Manganyi, 1973, p. 7). Whether one is a "*black South African*", "*black Zimbabwean"*, "*black Nigerian*" or "*black Cameroonian*" if I may use such categorizations, or *Zulu, Ibo, Bassa, Shona or Gikuyu*, black people globally "share common distinguishable biological and somatic features and cultural characteristics different from other races" (More, 2017, p. 48). But Black Consciousness is more than the discernible biological differences between races as More (2017) continues to enunciate. It is a political

ideology framed around "common experiences of racism and oppression" which characterize the daily lived experiences of black people in Africa and the Diasporas (Andrews, 2018; Manganyi, 1973; More, 2017, p. 48). The black body has been both physically and mentally insulted, shamed, exploited and abused regardless of its ethnicity, nationality or ancestral origin. Therefore "part of [the collective] consciousness of being black people amounts to a mutual knowledge of this suffering at the hands of white domination (Andrews, 2018; Manganyi, 1973, p. 23; More, 2017).

But for Black Consciousness to be a panacea for racial discrimination and afrophobia in South Africa, its practice cannot be restricted to black historicity and reconstructions of collective memories of suffering, pain or, oppression. Rather, black collective experiences of the past should be used to re-imagine the present and the future. For Manganyi (1973; P.24) the practice of Black Consciousness today, which is restricted to its historicity is "nothing more than ancestor worship". To avoid this trap, it argues that for Black Consciousness to be meaningful today there should be "a recognition and the desire to re-establish community feeling" (Manganyi, 1973, p. 24). For me, this means Black Consciousness, which celebrates our cultural richness and modernization, black beauty and inspires black solidarity, can dismantle white collective consciousness and solidarity as well as the stereotypes about blackness. In fact, one noticeable particularity of white superiority is a global sense of white solidarity, or better still a form of "*racist capitalism*" which ensures white protection regardless of nationality or ethnicity, when white privilege is threatened by any adversary force (Andrews, 2018; Manganyi, 1973; More, 2014). To maintain racial power and white privilege in South Africa, this type of white solidarity is embedded in the practice of whiteness in this context. It is unthinkable that the white minority in South Africa is so powerful when it is clichéd that strength is in numbers. But what is the use of black majority if there is no black solidarity?

To practice Black Consciousness and use it as a weapon to dismantle racial superiority and afrophobia, all blacks in South Africa must undergo a process of unlearning to relearn. This is imperative especially in a country, which experienced and continues to experience one of the crudest forms of racial oppression (Gibson, 2011; Hook, 2014; More, 2014). For this process to translate into the type of radicalism that can confront systemic racism and black-on-black violence, blacks must return to the prophetic intellectual work of Frantz Fanon and his disciple Steve Biko. Re-reading Fanon and Biko can be a process of epiphany that blacks actually belong together and "black solidarity means rejecting the apartheid division along essential tribal lines and developing a genuine humanism, which would draw on and reshape African cultural values in contradistinction to white values" (Hook, 2014, p. 227). Moreover, these canonical texts will re-introduce blacks to the idea that the black radicalism required to counter the inferiorization of blackness is also "a process of black re-entry into their own history and the creation of an alternative history that had been buried and dismissed by colonialism and apartheid" (Hook, 2014, p. 227).

4 | CONCLUSION

Post-apartheid South Africa has been shaped by a resilient culture of racial hierarchies and the unconscious promotion of white privilege. The process of redressing the injustices of the past has been impeded by the resistance of a white minority to any transformative project, which can disrupt their racial power and associated privileges (Hook, 2014; Matthews, 2012; Mbembe, 2007). The subjugation of poor blacks has become a permanent practice in the process of racial reconciliation. Here, the remaking of South Africa into a non-racialized society means ensuring that white superiority and black inferiority continue to prevail. This social order allows many white South Africans "to pass on to succeeding generations the spoils of racial violence and atrocities" (Mbembe, 2007, p. 12). This forces the majority of black South African into inter-generational poverty because of lack of opportunities that can materially transformed their lives. As racial hierarchies persist, the ANC led government has been preoccupied with self-enrichment rather than addressing the social challenges eroding black communities. At the centre of subtle or overt forms of racial discrimination and ANC failures are African migrants, who are being scapegoated for high levels of unemployment, poverty and crime in South Africa. The pains, suffering and anger from black destitution have resulted in recurrent violence against Africans residing in South Africa. In this article, I have attempted to explore how race and white

privilege have influenced afrophobic violence in South Africa. The article has also examined how the practice of Black Consciousness can act as a panacea for racial discrimination and afrophobia in post-apartheid South Africa.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
None.

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