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The fact of the ‘uncommodified blackness’ image: The lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background in Australia and New Zealand

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

The University of Auckland

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Abstract

This is the first academic study to investigate and compare the lived experience of black Africans who reside in Australia and New Zealand. All twenty research participants in this study settled in Australia and New Zealand via refugee and humanitarian programmes. Research about refugee resettlement in Western countries often uses a resettlement discourse or integration paradigm to frame some of the challenges faced by people from a refugee background.

On the grounds that the resettlement discourse and integration paradigms are discursively narrow and therefore, do not adequately account for the lived experience of black Africans, this work deviates from this hegemonic mode of researching and theorising black Africans from a refugee background. Instead, a race analysis, as well as the African diaspora and Africana Studies approach, is utilised to analyse data from semi-structured interviews with black Africans from a refugee background. The aforementioned different perspectives enabled this work to develop its own original theoretical concept – the uncommodified blackness image - with which to interrogate the life struggles of black Africans living in Australia and New Zealand.

The findings show that the construction of the image of uncommodified blackness is achieved by deploying identical discursive strategies in both Australia and New Zealand. Through an everyday racism process, which includes institutionalised racism and the utilisation of various racist discourses, the image of uncommodified blackness is developed and constructed. In both Australia and New Zealand, black African refugees are associated with the image of uncommodified blackness - an embodiment of poverty, nescience and philistinism. They are seen as uneducated Others who speak poor English or an accented English, not only non-Western, but essentially ‘un-Western’ Others who threaten the social cohesion of Western countries.
The key finding of this research project is that the image of uncommodified blackness shapes the lived experience of participants in both Australia and New Zealand in almost the same way. This contradicts the dominant view that Australia is ‘more racist’ than New Zealand, or the prevailing assumption that New Zealand is more liberal than Australia.
Acknowledgements

This is a self-funded PhD. Research highlights the lack of funding as one of the major factors that contribute to poor completion rates among PhD students. According to Haggerty and Doyle (2015), the normal practice is for PhD students to be supported through scholarships, since a self-funded PhD requires a student to engage in paid work in order to pay for university fees, as well as to support him/herself. This precarious financial situation is emotionally and financially demanding and can severely delay a student’s completion (Haggerty and Doyle, 2015). For four years, while researching and writing this PhD thesis, I worked as a graduate teaching assistant in the university’s Sociology department, and I wrote a monthly column for a South African online publication to supplement my income. I did all of this while juggling childcare duties – I have two small children. One was born in 2014, just after I finished the data collection for this project.

To make matters even more interesting for myself, in the first year of my PhD I changed departments – from Politics to Sociology, after spending almost a year in the Politics department. It has been a tough, rocky journey. However, according to an English proverb, “a smooth sea never made a skilful sailor.”

A number of people have made this journey bearable. My wife - Anna, who proofread the entire thesis, supported me emotionally and our family relied on her financially. Without her support, I would not have had the emotional strength and financial means to complete this project. My beautiful two daughters – Nkwenkwezi and Zara - to whom this work is dedicated, helped me stay focussed and sane in a myriad of ways.

I wish to thank my supervisors Dr. Tracey McIntosh and Dr. David Mayeda for their encouragement and support throughout the project. Their critical insights and excellent feedback at different stages of this research project are much appreciated. I will always be
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOI</td>
<td>Africa Orientale Italiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>North / South Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPLF</td>
<td>Eritrean People’s Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPRP</td>
<td>Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSS</td>
<td>Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSN</td>
<td>Refugee Services New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REWA</td>
<td>Revolutionary Ethiopian Women’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKIP</td>
<td>New Zealand Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLI</td>
<td>Standard Language Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLA</td>
<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLM</td>
<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIS</td>
<td>Translating and Interpreting Service (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITA</td>
<td>Union for the Total Independence of Angola</td>
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Chapter 1 - Introduction: Departures

The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds. – John Maynard Keynes

1.1 Introduction

The title of this thesis, *The fact of ‘uncommodified blackness’: The lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background in Australia and New Zealand* captures the intellectual influences that shape this research project. Commodification speaks to the commodity culture that characterises Western societies. American popular culture has constructed a commodified black male image that mainstream whites in Western countries find appealing, safe to mimic and to consume (Leonard & King, 2010). Through hip hop and certain sports like basketball, black male bodies are increasingly admired and commodified in many Western countries (Leonard, 2012).

The construction of this commodified blackness is achieved through a complex and contradictory discourse which presents black bodies as fashionable and deviant at the same time (Leonard & King, 2010). The public discourse that shapes the commodification of black male bodies through hip hop and sports is characterised by the deployment of long-standing discursive practices of locating black male athletes or hip hop celebrities within an aura of deviance and criminality (Hoberman, 1997; Leonard & King, 2010). Thus, just as the black male athlete or hip hop celebrity may radiate an aura of criminality, “so the black criminal can radiate a threatening aura of athleticism” (Hoberman, 1997, p. xxix) and hypermasculinity as is often depicted in hip hop music videos.

The global construction and representation of blackness in the public imagination of the West is defined by the fetishisation of commodified blackness (Leonard, 2006), which is
associated with modernity and being Western (largely American), on the one hand, and the
demonization of ‘uncommodified blackness’ which is largely associated with under-
development, Africa and being a refugee, on the other hand. Therefore, the uncommodified
blackness image is deployed to locate a particular Western discourse that is often used to
create a stereotypical image of black Africans that becomes central in the discussions about
black Africans from a refugee background who reside in the West.

Unlike commodified blackness, uncommodified blackness is not a discursive
construct that mainstream Western society finds appealing. Uncommodified blackness
derives from the long-standing racist image of the ‘nigger-savage’ (Fanon, 1986). The
uncommodified blackness image reinforces and reinscribe white supremacy (hooks, 1992).
Thus, in the collective unconscious of mainstream Western society, uncommodified
blackness equals ugliness, darkness, and immorality (Fanon, 1986). Through the image of
uncommodified blackness, black Africans are portrayed as humanity at its lowest, and
associates Africa with black magic, primitive mentality, and antediluvian values (Fanon,
1986).

This thesis draws on Fanon (1986) and the Negritude movement to investigate and to
interrogate the discourse that shapes the constructed image of uncommodified blackness.
Fanon was not an orthodox Negritudist, but instead deployed and deconstructed
“Negritudesque themes throughout his oeuvre” (Rabaka, 2015, p. 247). It is in the same spirit
that this thesis explores Negritudesque themes within the context of Australia and New
Zealand.

Negritude had its origins among blacks living in the diaspora (McCulloch, 1983).
Consequently, the recurring themes of Negritude include exile, alienation, and racial
consciousness (McCulloch, 1983). Fanon (1986) is utilised in this project to explore
Negritudesque themes that include exile in the form of forced migration, alienation that is
embedded in the process of adjusting to a new society, and the struggle against a racist representations of uncommodified blackness. In addition to using Fanon to discuss these issues, this study utilises insights and discourses generated by American and other Western academics to theorise the lives of black people.

The historical construction of blackness in Western countries largely revolves around an image of an uncivilised and an inferior Other to whites. This perspective is based on Mills’ (1997, p. 1) philosophical claim that “white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.” Hence, although different Western countries differ in their construction of blackness, the overarching theme that shapes the construction of blackness is that blacks are deviant and inferior to whites. It was Fanon (1986, p. 173) who once said “wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro.” In United States of America, “Negroes are segregated. In South America, Negroes are whipped in the streets, and Negro strikers are cut down by machine-guns. In West Africa, the Negro is an animal” (Fanon, 1986, p. 113). Narrating his experience in France, Fanon (1986) further points out that mainstream whites identified him with:

ancestors of mine who had been enslaved or lynched: I decided to accept this. It was on the universal level of the intellect that I understood this inner kinship – I was the grandson of slaves in exactly the same way in which President Lebrun was the grandson of tax-paying, hard-working peasants.

This study is cognisant of the historical fact that the white supremacist discourse has historically been deployed to argue that:

Some non-whites were close enough to Caucasians in appearance that they were
sometimes seen as beautiful, attractive in an exotic way (Native Americans on occasion; Tahitians; some Asians). But those more distant from the Caucasoid somatotype - paradigmatically blacks (Africans and also Australian Aborigines) - were stigmatised as aesthetically repulsive and deviant (Mills, 1997, p. 61).

The British colonisers regarded the Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, as being a “higher race” than the Aboriginal people (Ballara, 1986). According to Ruru (2012, p. 217), the British colonial government viewed the Māori to be “unusually intelligent (for blacks)…” Contrast the foregoing to how the British settlers in Australia perceived the Aboriginal people. As far as the white settlers in Australia were concerned, the Aboriginal people were “irredeemably inferior, indeed vermin that should be exterminated” (Moses, 2000, p. 96). The history of white supremacy and the colonisation of Australia and New Zealand is discussed in this thesis in chapter four and chapter five, respectively.

Writing about the racialising processes in the United States of America, Vaught (2012) points out that the ‘people of colour’ trope has historically been constructed based on the ways in which whites perceive others as approaching the assigned characteristics of blackness or whiteness. Hence:

Asian Americans, South Asian Indians, Chicanas/os or Latinas/os have not become White, and Chicanas/os, Southeast Asians, and Latinas/os (among others) have not become Black, in spite of various legal and cultural designations over time and geography. In dominant discourse and ideology, White and Black are racial categories against which other groups are often measured and defined (Vaught, 2012, p. 571).
At this juncture it is worth pointing out that it is beyond the discursive scope of this thesis to explore the global history of white supremacy and how it has been deployed to racialize different groups in different countries over the past centuries. Rather, the point in the foregoing discussion is to underscore that in this thesis the label ‘black’ is utilised to refer to people of African descent. Moreover, this study argues that, historically, discourses about ‘blackness’ in Western countries have been conceptualised in reference to a white supremacist discourse about people of African descent – whether they be African American or Africans from a refugee background.

Historically, whites, as a social group, have always regarded people of African descent as incapable of logic or reason, hence implying that people of African descent rely on animal-like instincts to negotiate their way through life (Dawson, 2006). Whites used the same discourse to rationalise enslaving people of African descent. Through the same discourse, “the Enlightenment articulated the language of democracy in spite of its dependence on the slave trade” (Eisenstein, 2004, p. 5). When people of African descent in Haiti used the Enlightenment discourse to revolt against slavery, they paid heavily for their efforts to express their humanity (James, 1989).

The larger point in the foregoing historical analysis is to show that people of African descent “have a special place in the Western imagination” (Hoberman, 1997, p. 207) as fantasy objects associated with childlike simplicity, alleged high-powered and unbridled sexuality, and presumed low moral character. Obviously, these afore-mentioned discursive tropes have historically been expanded upon and deployed differently in different Western contexts. Be that as it may, this study utilises the history of the over-arching discourse of white supremacy in relation to alleged black inferiority to discuss the lived experience of respondents via the West’s (in particular American) discourses about blackness.
This approach is inspired by Fanon’s (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks*, and it is consistent with the philosophy of the Negritude. The Negritude movement foregrounded “an abstract solidarity joining all members of the Negro race irrespective of the social or economic realities governing the interests of individuals” (McCulloch, 1983, p. 8). Similarly, Fanon’s philosophy asked and offered answers to questions that continental and diasporan Africans struggled with (Rabaka, 2015). More importantly, like this thesis, Fanon’s (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks* deepens and develops a critical theory of the ‘lived-experience of the black’ in the West (Rabaka, 2015).

### 1.2 Research questions

Individuals are social beings, people do not exist in isolation from the human community. We develop a sense of who we are through socially interacting with others. In other words, people create societies, and in turn, societies create people (Albert & Hahnel, 1978). It is a truism to point out that societies differ in their outlook, social relations and values. Similarly, it is a truism to argue that because societies differ, different societies produce socially differently people. This has to do with the fact that institutional roles and prescribed social roles available to people in different societies vary greatly (Albert & Hahnel, 1978). Social roles are necessary for society to function smoothly. For human beings to meet individual and social needs, as well as expand and enhance sociality, individuals have to fill roles within societal institutions (Albert, 2003).

Therefore, to relate and benefit from these institutions in our society, we all have to fill roles that those institutions offer. Institutional roles are “‘slot’[s] that people fit into, carrying with it characteristic duties and obligations, defined by institutionalised expectations as to the behaviour of the role-occupant” (Gintis, 1972, p. 6). Examples of institutional roles include being a worker, a capitalist, a lover, a wife, a husband, and a community member.
(Gintis, 1972). Therefore, for society to exist and persist, people’s personalities and values must be largely in conformity with the institutional roles they must occupy in societal institutions (Albert & Hahnel, 1978).

Prescribed social roles have been referred to as scripts (Henry, 1990). According to Henry (1990), there are two types of scripts; namely: societal type-scripts and personal scripts. Societal type-scripts include ascribed statuses such as sex, race and class; whereas personal scripts are associated with social identities which are created by the individuals in relation to the social world (Cohen & Taylor, 1976, cited in Henry, 1990). Institutional roles and social roles overlap, and the outcome for broader society is stability and social cohesion (Albert & Hahnel, 1978).

Based on the analysis of institutional roles, social roles, and how societal institutions function, this thesis aims to grapple with the following research agenda:

Since societal institutions define social life and social relations, this thesis is concerned with investigating the lived experience of black Africans by looking at: 1) the social life of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand, and 2) investigating the social roles and institutional roles that are available for black Africans to play in these two countries. In other words, the over-arching question that shapes this research project is: how do societal institutions in Australia and New Zealand impact the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background?

1.3 Paradigm shift and this PhD’s contribution to the field

Research about people from a refugee background often uses a resettlement discourse or integration paradigm to frame some of the challenges and issues faced by individuals from a refugee background. In their influential paper, entitled Understanding Integration: A conceptual framework, Ager and Strang (2008, p. 166) identify features “central to
perceptions of what constitutes ‘successful’ integration”:

Key domains of integration are proposed related to four overall themes: achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment (Ager & Strang 2008, p. 166).

Although Ager and Strang (2008) point out that there is no generally accepted definition of “refugee integration”, the key domains of integration form part of the dominant research tools used by numerous researchers in the field. For instance, research (see: Correa-Velez & Onsando, 2009; Dhanji, 2010; Haggis & Schech, 2010; Marlowe, Harris, & Lyons, 2013; Wille, 2011) on black Africans from a refugee background in Australia often frames its discussion of research data by deploying an integration, resettlement, or acculturation framework. Similarly, New Zealand researchers often utilize the resettlement and integration paradigm to frame the experiences of black Africans (see: Elliott & Yusuf, 2014; Ibrahim, 2012; Marete, 2011; Mugadza, 2012).

The concept of resettlement is often used interchangeably with integration. According to Fozdar and Hartley (2013, p. 24), “successful settlement is defined as integration” of refugees into a host society. Dhanji (2010) writes that appropriate accommodation, health and welfare comprise the social determinants of resettlement. Similarly, Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book, which is entitled ‘South Sudanese Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand’, comprise a collection of studies that explore the resettlement experience of South Sudanese who reside in Australia and New Zealand.
Acculturation, on the other hand, is a concept derived from cross-cultural psychology research (Berry, 1997). According to Berry (1997), the concept of acculturation refers to how individuals who have developed in one cultural environment manage to adapt to new contexts that result from migration. Unlike an institutional analysis approach which focuses on the dynamics of societal institutions in its explanation of social phenomenon, acculturation foregrounds personalities, personal motivation, and cultural difference or cultural clash in its analysis of social events (see: Guerin & Guerin, 2002; Juuk, 2013; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham, 2009; Wakholi, 2010).

The aforementioned studies are useful, but their intellectual approach limits the discursive exploration of the lived experience of black Africans who live in Australia and New Zealand. This PhD study highlights and foregrounds institutional features and discourses that impact the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand. An institutional analysis does not negate human actions. The point of an institutional explanation is to move from examining personal factors to investigating institutional factors (Albert, 1995).

Society is structured around institutions that allow its citizens to interact and accomplish a variety of functions that are key to life (Albert & Majavu, 2012). Moreover, societal institutions are legitimised through ideologies and discourses that reflect the interests and values of the ruling class. According to Althusser (cited in Thompson, 1984), society is produced through two types of institutions, namely: the state apparatus which comprise the government, the police and the courts, as well as the ideological state apparatuses which include schools, family and communication networks. It should be noted that ideology is used in this research project in a very broad sense (Therbon, 1980).

The production of ideology cannot be separated from the production of institutional roles and social practices (Susen, 2014). Thompson (1984) further adds that the analysis of
ideology is in a fundamental respect the study of language in the social world. This work utilises the concept of discourse to highlight the relation between language and ideology (Thompson, 1984). It is worth noting that the analysis of discourse includes a discursive analysis of linguistic constructions, as well as a social analysis of the conditions in which discourse is produced and received (Thompson, 1984). A discursive analysis is a “study of sequences of expressions, not only as a socially and historically situated occurrence, but also as a linguistic construction which display an articulated structure” (Thompson, 1984, p. 11). According to Thompson (1984), this structure can be analysed in numerous ways, with a view towards explaining the role of discourse in the operation of ideology.

Discourse analysts have increasingly paid attention to the ways in which language is used to serve as a medium of power and control (Thompson, 1984). Power is conceptualised in this study as being based on privileged access to valued social resources, such as wealth, status, and a preferential access to public discourse (van Dijk, 1996). Naturally, it is this increasingly sociological turn “which has rendered discourse analysis relevant to, though by no means neatly integrated with, some of the principal tasks in the study of ideology” (Thompson, 1984, p. 99).

Ultimately, although Ager and Strang’s (2008) key domains of integration have become “the ‘recited truths’” (De Certeau, 1984, cited in Lentin & Titley, 2011, p. 2) in the field of refugee studies in Australia and New Zealand, the integration paradigm does not adequately account for the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand. Thus, this study advocates for a sociological conceptual framework premised on the analysis of power – “the fundamental concept in social science” (Russell, 2004, p. 4). The principles of social dynamics are principles which can only be formulated in terms of power (Russell, 2004). This thesis regards power as a key element in the development and maintenance of discourse (Mills, 1997).
1.4 Theorising Race

Although many Australian and New Zealand studies cite discrimination and racism as one of the problems facing black Africans in Australia, there are also a few academic studies that use a race analysis to research the problem. Research done in Australia by Fozdar and Torezani (2008), Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013), Mergia (2005), Tilbury and Colic-Peisker’s (2006) grapple with some of these issues by deploying a race analysis. Similarly, New Zealand researchers (see: Adelowo, 2012; Ibrahim, 2012; Marete, 2011; Tuwe, 2012) highlight racism and discrimination against black Africans as one of the social problems that black Africans have to grapple with in New Zealand.

Although these studies are useful, theoretically, most studies that utilise a race analysis to discuss the experiences of black Africans do not tell us something substantive nor do they expand or deepen our understanding of race analysis within the Australian and New Zealand context. Instead these studies merely apply a particular race analysis to new empirical data.

It is worth noting that some Australian studies explore the issue of race and discrimination by discussing visible difference (see: Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007), or Othering and experiences of disrespect (see: Hatoss, 2012; Losoncz, 2013). Some research foregrounds resilience, cultural identity and labelling (see: Oliver, 2012; Phillips, 2013). In some studies (see: Lejukole, 2013) the word racist is put in scare quotes. For instance, writing about the comments made by the then Australian Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews who questioned the ability of some black African migrants to ‘integrate’ into Australia, Lejukole (2013, p. 121) writes that some of his respondents claimed that the minister was ‘racist’.

This PhD study takes a fundamentally different approach to the studies highlighted above. Through an institutional analysis, this thesis will show that both in Australia and New
Zealand, institutionalised racism is deployed through various long-standing racist discourses and Eurocentric ideologies to enact and rationalise the everyday racism process that effectively marginalises and Others black Africans. Through an everyday racism process, which includes institutionalised racism and a use of various racist discourses, an image of uncommodified blackness is developed and constructed - one that allegedly fails to contribute to the consumption and production of commodities that sustain the consumer culture that characterises Western societies.

Simon Pattern once observed that the 20th century marked a period in which the West had entered the ‘affluent society’ phase (Fox, 1967). Put simply, the defining feature of the 20th century Western societies, as far as Patten was concerned, was that they had become consumer cultures. Patten further argued that a consumer culture requires social subjectivity to be forged in consumption rather than labour (Mullins, 1999). According to Clarke, Newman and Smith (2007, p. 11), consumer culture embodies late modernity:

It is associated with both economic and cultural dynamics of globalisation that create the conditions for the proliferation of commodities and their increasingly aestheticised - or signifying – character (Edwards, 2000). It promotes de-traditionalisation, unlocking taken-for-granted associations of taste, style and social position … Finally, consumer culture is associated with reflexivity and some versions of life politics, in which identities are constructed through the signifying practices of consumption choices.

In contrast, the standard image of refugees in Western countries is an image of helplessness, poor Others, and needy and traditional Others (see: Colic-Peisker 2005; Harrell-Bond, 1999). African refugees in particular are typically cast as a people who are outside of modernity and consumer culture (see: Kumsa, 2006). These mainstream images of African refugees are
utilised to construct and to represent uncommodified blackness as an embodiment of poverty, uneducated Others who speak poor English or an accented English, and are not only non-Western, but essentially ‘un-Western’ Others who threaten the social cohesion of Western countries. In other words, black Africans from a refugee background are often cast via widespread tropes as being unfit to play the roles of the citizen and the consumer that characterise Western societies. Within Western societies, the citizen and the consumer are important social figures that dominate the liberal political imaginary and “embody its conceptions of liberty, freedom, individualism and equality” (Clarke, Newman, & Smith, 2007, p. 2).

Uncommodified blackness is widely regarded as unsuited to the consumer culture that defines Western societies. As far as this thesis is concerned, the concept of uncommodified blackness is the overarching theoretical theme that shapes the everyday racism that black Africans are subjected to in Australia and New Zealand. Not only does the concept of uncommodified blackness illuminate the type of everyday racism that black Africans endure in these two countries, but it also refines and expands the theoretical concept of institutionalised racism.

One of the received wisdoms in the study of institutionalised racism is the claim that the mechanisms of institutionalised racism are difficult to identify. Some scholars have argued that this is partly because the concept first emerged out of political activism in the 1960s, then used loosely to “account for attitudes and practices that led to racist outcomes through unquestioned bureaucratic procedures” (Murji, 2007, p. 844). According to Bonilla-Silva (1994), black activists used the concept to identify a "sense of racial superiority" in whites, but also to talk about the practices and processes that lead to racial discrimination. According to Phillips (2011, p. 173), the concept of institutionalised racism remains a contested concept “that has been critiqued by multiple constituencies.” Some scholars have
gone so far as to argue that for the concept of institutionalised racism to overcome its conceptual origin – a political slogan - scholars have to develop the concept through empirical research and theory (Mason, 1982). Among other things, this thesis illustrates how institutionalised racism functions in Australia and New Zealand. Through institutional analysis, this study documents and highlights how societal institutions in both Australia and New Zealand marginalise and discriminate against black Africans through various discourses.

This thesis applies the race category in order to interrogate the lived experience of research participants (Massao & Fasting, 2010). And, by focusing on the lived experiences, “it gives room to interrogate race not as a biological fact or an essential component of identity but rather as a historically constituted and culturally dependent social practice” (Alcoff, 2006, cited in Massao & Fasting, 2010, p. 148). Put differently, this study does not essentialise race, rather it rejects the approach of those who wish to erase difference without first removing the structure that produces differences in life chances (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). This thesis advocates a move from the use of race category as soon as the social structure that gives rise to racial stratification no longer exists (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

According to hooks and West (1991), social categories such as class, gender, and race are fundamental concepts which black intellectuals must utilise in order to understand the lived experience of black people. Intellectual concepts that are in vogue and are regarded by mainstream academy as more acceptable, such as ethnicity, are not used as key conceptual tools in this project mainly because to do so would be equivalent to denying the social significance of visibility, historical legacy of race and the social outcome of racialization (Massao & Fasting, 2010).
1.5 Multiculturalism and diversity

Dominant discourses that are often utilised to talk about difference, race and ethnicity are multiculturalism and diversity. This thesis neither subscribes to nor utilises these discourses. In Western societies where talking about racism has become taboo, multiculturalism serves as a coded concept to talk about discrimination, race and belonging (Lentin & Titley, 2011). Proponents of multiculturalism define the concept as “the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western societies from outside the prosperous West” (Modood, 2007, p. 5). According to Banting and Kymlicka (2006, p. 1), multicultural policies go beyond the protection of the basic civil and political rights guaranteed to all individuals in liberal democracies, to further extend a degree of public recognition and support for minorities to maintain and express their cultural practices.

As far as this thesis is concerned, multiculturalism desires a ‘detoxified’ Other (Lentin & Titley, 2011). In reality, a detoxified Other is an individual whom mainstream institutions regard as an outsider, but makes an effort to be less threatening and less noticeably different (Leonard, 2012). In such a social climate, a detoxified Other becomes confined in performative geographies like ethnic cultural festivals, entertainment and athletics (Guerrero, 2010). In other words, multiculturalism serves to create a climate of illusory pluralism to distort the discursive normativity of whiteness. The notion of whiteness involves exploring whiteness as a positionality of power and privilege (Steyn, 2001). The concept of whiteness is the notion that there exists a certain social group of people who, by virtue of their skin colour, are entitled to greater social and economic privileges than other social groups (MacMullan, 2009). Whiteness permits an exploration of ways in which some people benefit from and informally reproduce patterns established by racism (Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 1999).
It should be further pointed out that the evocations of diversity in researching difference, immigration issues, race and ethnicity is another discursive tool that is often deployed to avoid addressing the problem of discrimination (Essed & Nimako, 2006). The concept of diversity becomes a discursive buzzword to resist the use of the term racism, while simultaneously, it helps create a social climate that positions whites as ‘prisoners of tolerance’ (Essed & Nimako, 2006). According to Essed and Nimako, (2006, p. 301):

> The continual resistance against using the term racism has been discussed at length by critical scholar Baukje Prins (2002). Researchers rather write about ‘stereotypes’ or ‘negative representations’, which, conveniently, can be applied ‘equally’ to both parties: dominant group and ethnic minorities or refugees, or to use the mainstream concepts.

According to Anzaldua (1990, p. xix), whites are not interested in confronting racism and therefore “shun it like the plague.” Smith (1990, p. 25), however, points out that whites who are tired of hearing about racism ought to “imagine how much more tired we are of constantly experiencing it, second by literal second, how much more exhausted we are to see it constantly in your eyes.” It is worth noting that a discussion on the discursive limitations of diversity, as well as the “discursive messiness” (Lentin & Titley, 2011) of multiculturalism is beyond the scope of this thesis.

### 1.6 African diaspora paradigm

Most of the literature does not attempt to locate the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand within the wider literature on the African diaspora or African immigration to the West. Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book, entitled ‘*South Sudanese Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand*’ attempts to locate the discussion of people of
Sudanese heritage living in Australia and New Zealand within the broader African diaspora. However, apart from briefly mentioning Arthur, Takougang and Owusu’s (2014) book, which is entitled ‘Africans in global migration: searching for promised lands’, Marlowe, Harris and Lyons (2013) neither seriously nor rigorously engages with a wider literature on the African diaspora or African immigration in the West. Examples of the literature that could have been explored include:

- The new African Diaspora edited by Okpewho and Nzegwu (2009)
- African Diaspora: Towards a global history by Zeleza (2010)
- The limits of authentic heteronormativity in African Diasporic discourse by Wright (2013)
- Black identities by Waters (1994 and 1999)
- Un / settled multiculturalism, edited by Hesse (2000)

Although Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book is entitled ‘South Sudanese Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand’, the book is really about Australia for of the 17 chapters that make up the book, with only two chapters discussing and exploring New Zealand. Furthermore, no attempt is made to pull all the chapters together in order to compare and highlight insights that could be shared about the lived experience of South Sudanese in Australia and New Zealand. Such an approach would have been consistent with the African diaspora paradigm, which presupposes that through a comparative analysis there is something to be learned from experiences that unfold for black people in different places and times (Holt, 1999).
One of the consequences of the failure to situate black Africans living in Australia and New Zealand within the African diaspora intellectual framework is that many research studies on black Africans from a refugee background tend to homogenise black Africans by nationality (Mahler, 1995). For instance, Ibrahim’s (2012) PhD researches Somalis in New Zealand, whereas O’Byrne’s (2012) explores agency and belonging among South Sudanese in New Zealand. Similarly, in Australia some studies investigate the lives of Eritrean immigrants in Australia (see Kifle, 2009), while other research projects focus on immigrants from the Horn of Africa and Sudan (see: Bitew, Ferguson, & Dixon, 2008; Losoncz, 2011; Nunn, 2010; Tilbury, 2007). Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book is entitled ‘South Sudanese Diaspora in Australia and New Zealand’, and not black Africans in Australia and New Zealand.

Marlowe, Harris and Lyons (2013) rationalise their approach by arguing that the mainstream portrayal of Africans does not account for the vast ethnic and cultural differences of Africans in Australia. Thus the aim of their book is to highlight the cultural and economic differences that exist between “many South Sudanese Australians, and the range of other African immigrants” (Marlowe, Harris, & Lyons, 2013, p. 1). Although this study recognises the value in this approach, this project is interested in interrogating the function of the discourse that homogenises black Africans as a people with one defining historical background. Australian researchers whose work attempts to achieve the same intellectual goal include Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013) and Ndlovu (2014). My research contributes to these ongoing efforts to locate the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand within the black African diaspora paradigm.

International scholarship on black migration to the West acknowledges racism in Western nations’ immigration policies (see: Bashi, 2004; Waters, 1999). In their article, entitled ‘Obstacles to refugee integration in the European Union Member States’,
Mestheneos and Ioannidi (2002) identified racism, experienced both at personal and institutional level, as one of the most fundamental barriers to integration for refugees from the developing world. According to Arter (1992, p. 357), “racial questions, as elsewhere in Western Europe, are indeed firmly on the Scandinavian political agenda: immigration legislation has been amended to make entry more difficult.” European states’ regulations such as the Dublin Regulations have restricted access to asylum procedures, making it difficult for black African refugees and other immigrants from the South to get a European visa. Research shows that African migrants have to contend with racism when trying to get a European visa. For Africans inside ‘fortress Europe’, family reunions are made very complicated and often impossible; and “Europeans and Africans who desire to get married these days meet labyrinthine obstacles” (König & de Regt, 2010, p. 2). The presence of black Africans in European countries such as Ireland exposes “a societal fear of heterogeneity”, according to White (2009, p. 72). She adds that:

This is evidenced in the successful passage of a 2004 referendum in which a 79 percent majority voted to change the Irish constitution to end jus soli citizenship; believed to be a result of, inter alia, rhetoric about ‘baby scams’ in which Nigerian women would arrive in the country to give birth to Irish citizens and receive leave to remain (White, 2009, p. 72).

Similarly, Øien’s (2010) research into the lives of Angolans in Portugal points to the hostile treatment of black Africans there. In France, a country known for its historical narrative of liberty, equality and fraternity, black Africans were ignored and considered outsiders for a very long time (Fila-Bakabadio, 2011). It was only after the 2005 riots in the suburbs and the
2007 presidential election that black Africans living in France gained attention as a community worthy of recognition (Fila-Bakabadio, 2011).

Based on the foregoing analysis, this thesis takes the view that the racism experienced by Africans in the West is a reflection of immigration policies that Western states have chosen to adopt. This work contributes to the African diaspora studies by providing a new theoretical concept with which to understand racism and xenophobia directed at black Africans from a refugee background. That concept is the uncommodified blackness thesis. Furthermore, this study contributes to the field of the African diaspora studies through providing the first academic research on the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand.

1.7 Africana Studies

To my knowledge there are no research studies that investigate black Africans in either Australia or New Zealand from an Africana Studies approach. In this PhD study, Africana Studies is utilised to refer to the notion that people of African descent who reside in the West largely share a common set of experiences that centre around the struggle against racism, domination and the pursuit of economic freedom (McLeod, 1999). The Africana Studies approach dovetails perfectly with the African diaspora paradigm because both the African diaspora paradigm and the Africana Studies approach are interested in investigating the differences among the experiences of differently located black people (Holt, 1999). Further, both the African diaspora paradigm and the Africana Studies approach presuppose that via a comparative analysis there are lessons to be learned from experiences that unfolded for different black peoples in different places and times (Holt, 1999).
As an Africana Studies research project, this thesis is a discursive venture that organises data with the aim to “ponder over the place of blacks in the entire universe given black people’s common experience in slavery and colonialism” (Bassey, 2007, p. 925). It is argued that the history of the black struggle against white supremacy has engendered an imagined global black community among people of African descent. This work advocates for the recognition of the shared sense of identity and historical linked experience that binds the black diaspora irrespective of nationality, class and gender (Leonard, 2006). Be that as it may, this study is cognisant of the fact that “no single explanation can capture the varied experiences of black people in diaspora” (McLeod, 1999, p. xix).

What the Africana Studies approach affords black scholars is an opportunity for a genuinely comparative outlook that illuminates (McLeod, 1999) the lived experience of black people in the West. One of the challenges facing black African scholars in Australia and New Zealand is the lack of institutional power to forge and develop intellectual paradigms that are based on the lived experience of black African people.

1.8 Being a refugee

Not all refugees are viewed in the same light. For instances, research shows that refugees from Eastern European countries like Bosnia and other ex-Yugoslavs were Australia’s preferred refugees and immigrants during the 1990s (Colic-Peisker, 2005). Black Africans from a refugee background are talked about in the media as being supposedly less intelligent, violent, crime-prone and disease carriers (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008; Fozdar & Torezani, 2008). Furthermore, researchers in the field openly discuss the psychologisation of black Africans from a refugee background (see: Marlowe, 2009; Matthews, 2008).

This study expands the debate by highlighting and theorizing a mainstream medical folklore that often portrays black Africans as the diseased Other who poses a threat to the
health of whites. Diseases that mainstream white societal institutions associate with black Africans are often diseases tied to sexuality (Ferber, 1998). For example,

In December 2006, Australian media… reported that a number of African refugees arrived carrying communicable disease such as tuberculosis, hepatitis C and AIDS, despite obligatory health checks in ports of departure. (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008, p. 42)

Likewise, in New Zealand, research (see: Birukila, 2012; Worth, 2002; Worth, 1995) shows that in the imagination of the New Zealand public, Africans are constructed as a source of HIV infection. I argue in this thesis that in the mainstream discourse the HIV/AIDS body has been conflated with the black African body (Bloodsworth-Lugo & Lugo-Lugo, 2010). Fanon (1986, p. 177) argues that the black male body in particular “is taken as a terrifying penis” in the eyes of mainstream whites. According to Fanon (1986, p. 151), the black male body is ‘phobogenic’ – “a stimulus to anxiety.” In such a state of affairs, the black body is deemed a threat “vis-à-vis the ‘virgin sanctity of whiteness’” (Yancy, 2012, p. 4). The black body becomes a useful site to mobilise consent (Leonard, 2012) for stricter medical checks and regulation, and for elaborative medical screening and surveillance.

1.9 Masculinity
The prevailing view among researchers in the field is that refugee men often lose their traditional masculine status due to resettlement in Western countries (Byrne, 2006). According to Byrne (2006), the loss of traditional masculine status sometimes leads to chronic depression, substance abuse, domestic violence and family breakdown. Writing about black Africans from a refugee background, Dhanji (2010, p. 124) writes that men from the
Horn of Africa and Sudan come from “traditionally patriarchal societies.” Similarly, Muchoki (2013, p. 78) argues that his male respondents from Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia and Eritrea were of the view that women were in a privileged position in Australia and, consequently, they viewed themselves and other men in general as victims of Australian gender arrangements. In his research, Marlowe (2011, p. 63) found that “the experience of forced migration for many Sudanese men has meant losses of power in both gender and institutional domains.”

Similarly, New Zealand researchers (see: Birukila, 2012; Ibrahim, 2012; Machingarufu, 2011) point out that black African men struggle with the shift in the gender power dynamics, the loss of economic power, which are embedded in the immigration process. The theorisation of black masculinity in the literature is discursively narrow, and consequently fails to account for many of the social dynamics that impact on the lives of black African men in Australia and New Zealand. For instance, Marlowe (2011) invokes RW Connell’s conceptualisation of masculinity in his study, while Muchoki (2013) references Ken Plummer’s theory of ‘traditional intimacies’. Many research projects on refugee men generally use the integration and resettlement discourse which says that the resettlement process exposes refugees from third world countries to a Western culture, which supposedly gives women and children increased rights, and therefore goes hand-in-hand with the loss of a traditional male role (Byrne, 2006).

Africa has no monopoly on patriarchy. This thesis challenges assumptions that reflect long-standing Eurocentric interpretations of African cultures as inherently sexist and oppressive. Masculinity in Western countries is associated with whiteness, power and dominance (Gunn, 2011). This privileged type of masculinity is called hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987). It is a type of masculinity that is reserved for only able-bodied white males (Gunn, 2011). Hegemonic masculinity is founded upon a pecking order among
men that depends, in part, on having access to socio-economic resources, as well as the sexual and physical domination of women (Collins, 2004). In Western countries, hegemonic masculinity is attained through having accessing to political, economic and educational institutions. White males have more access to these institutions compared to other males (Majors & Billson, 1992).

The public sphere in Western countries is closed off to black African men. Consequently, black men find themselves in the “humiliating double bind of having to prove manhood while being denied access to the legitimate tools with which to do so” (Majors & Billson, 1992, p. 31). Furthermore, through racist discourses, black males are routinely typecast as deviant, aggressive and dangerous by Western mainstream institutions (Essed, 1991). This thesis theoretically expands the discussion of black African men in Australia and New Zealand by highlighting the gendered forms of racism that black African men are often subjected to in these countries. The concept of black misandry is deployed to identify this type of gendered racism. Black misandry exist to justify and reproduce the subordination and marginalisation of black African men in Western societies (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011).

1.10 English / Language ideology

Most studies in the field do not attempt to problematize nor to theorise the issue of language or English. Research studies (see: Adelowo, 2012; Ibrahim, 2012; Mugadza, 2012) in New Zealand often cite accent or low English proficiency as one of the barriers to settling down in the country.

Likewise, some Australian studies do not theorise the issue of language. Instead these studies simply report on how low English proficiency hinders ‘resettlement’. For instance, Wille (2011, p. 98) argues that South Sudanese former refugees experience “limitations in
expressing their agency often due to lack of language…” Hebbani and Colic-Peisker (2012, p. 543) write that:

it is possible to increase free English tuition allowance for humanitarian entrants, which will improve their language proficiency but not automatically their symbolic capital diminished by their immigrant/refugee status of the cultural ‘Other’ who speaks with a foreign accent.

Ndholvu (2014) is one of the few Australian academics who theorises and problematizes the issue of language. According to Ndholvu (2014), there is a “clear pattern” in the history of Australian migration which illustrates the importance of language in determining who is either included or excluded from Australia. This PhD builds on this observation by utilising insights from socio-linguists to argue that language has the power not only to shape the way people talk and interact generally, but also to naturalise social relations of power and privilege (Winford, 2003). According to Dyson (2012), language is socially charged with issues of race, class and other forms of social identification. Lippi-Green (2011) identifies the standard language ideology (SLI) as the philosophy that underpin the power of language.

The SLI champions an abstracted, idealised, homogenous spoken language which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class, and is enforced and upheld by dominant societal institutions (Lippi-Green, 2011). Additionally, the SLI is based on the view that a nation-state has “one perfect, homogenous language” (Lippi-Green, 2011, p. 68). Immigrants are promised socio-economic rewards such as prestige, career success and recognition if they strive to assimilate linguistically (Lippi-Green, 2011). For those who are not prepared to kowtow to this line, “the Anglo world is saying: you must assimilate linguistically, or we will systematically shut you out. Fair warning: learn our language, be like us, or we will discriminate against you” (Lippi-Green, 2011, p. 309).
1.11 African geopolitics

Although there are exceptions, there exists a tendency in literature on black Africans from a refugee background to write about the political conflicts from which many African refugees fled from, by deploying what this thesis terms the ‘Africanist discourse’ (Miller, 1985). The assumption that underpins the Africanist discourse is that “Africa produces monsters” (Miller, 1985, p. 4). It is an ahistorical account of political events in Africa, in which Africa is portrayed as “theatre of devastating armed conflicts” (Ratsimbaharison, 2011, p. 269).

In such political analyses, civil conflicts and wars are largely explained by focusing on local issues such as tribalism, ethnocentrism or African dictators. Take for instance Beaglehole’s (2013) book, which is entitled ‘Refuge New Zealand: A Nation's Response to Refugees and Asylum Seekers’. Writing about how New Zealand accepted Ugandan refugees in the 1970s, Beaglehole (2013, p. 64) explains that New Zealand accepted 244 Ugandan Asians who were “expelled in the course of President Idi Amin’s ‘Africanisation’ policy.” In the entire book, Beaglehole neither defines the “Africanisation policy” she refers to nor does she show insight about post-independent Ugandan politics. Beaglehole argues that Amin’s predecessor, Milton Obote, introduced in 1969 legislation restricting further immigration from South Asia and the right of non-citizens to hold trade licences. According to Beaglehole (2013), Obote also intended to force the departure of Asians who held British passports. Beaglehole further argues that when Amin came to power in 1971 – 1972, he announced that all Asians were sabotaging the country’s economy and must therefore leave Uganda.

Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan academic and a professor at Columbia University, has written extensively on the topic and offers an informed, nuanced, and historically accurate perspective on this subject (see: Mamdani, 1993; Mamdani, 1975). Beaglehole neither utilises Mamdani’s work, nor does she point out the historical fact that the Ugandan
Asians were the only African refugees offered overseas resettlement by the UNHCR during the 1960s and 1970s – a volatile political period in Africa (Mamdani, 1993). To fully understand why the West took an exceptional interest in the plight of the Ugandan Asians, one has to locate the rise of Idi Amin to power within the historical context of global politics. Amin came to power with the full support of Britain and Israel. However, soon after taking over the control of the Ugandan state, Amin had a fall-out with his British and Israeli supporters. Consequently, Britain supported efforts to overthrow Amin (Bhagat, 1983). The fall-out between Amin and Britain partly led to the expulsion of Ugandan Asians. Bhagat (1983, p. 1614) argues that the “expulsion was a direct blow against Britain because most Asian businesses were compradorial extensions of British economic interests.” Thus, Britain and its Western allies decided to embarrass Amin by widely publicising the expulsion of Ugandan Asians and offering them overseas resettlement. Beaglehole’s book does not account for this history.

Similarly, Ramsden and Ridge (2012) write about the political conflict and civil wars in the Horn of Africa that have produced millions of refugees from an ahistorical perspective. They rightly point out that Somalia is one of the countries generating the highest number of refugees worldwide. According to Ramsden and Ridge (2012, p. 227), Somalis began to migrate to Australia in small numbers in the 1980s; the “largest migration of Somalis began in 1988 when the northern part of the country came under attack from Siad Barre’s regime…” According to Ramsden and Ridge (2012) before May 1992, the root of displacement had to do with fighting and drought, whereas after May 1992 the basis of displacement was due to food scarcity.

Although Ramsden and Ridge’s (2012, p. 227) article was published in 2012, it does not adequately explain why in the first four months of 2012 some 20,000 Somalis sought refuge in neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. As far as Ramsden and Ridge
(2012) are concerned, the ongoing conflict in Somalia, as well as poor seasonal rains and famine, continue to force Somalis to flee their home country. The authors neither touch on the recent involvement of the United States in Somalia nor how the creation of al-Shabaab has helped further destabilise Somalia.

Likewise, Hassan Ibrahim’s (2012) PhD briefly explores the history of Somalia. Ibrahim’s study which was completed in 2012 at the University of Canterbury, is entitled “From Warzone to Godzone: Towards a new Model of Communication and collaboration Between schools and Refugee families.” Presumably, the Warzone is the Horn of Africa and the Godzone is New Zealand. First of all, the contrast of the warzone with Godzone is striking. Secondly, the invocation of a Godzone trope functions to reinforce an old colonial myth that on many levels shapes the national identity of New Zealand – and that is “the notion that the country is special” (King, 2003, p. 509). Richard John Seddon, one of the country’s great political leaders, once expressed this idea by referring to New Zealand as ‘God’s Own Country’ (King, 2003). According to Michael King (2003), the New Zealand liberal government of the early 20th century felt that the programmes it had introduced to the country had achieved something in the country that offered an example to humankind as a whole:

The view emerged that, with votes for women, old age pensions and labour legislation in particular, New Zealand was ‘showing the way’ to the rest of the world - that Seddon’s ‘God Own Country’ was, among other things, a social laboratory which other countries could study with envy and profit (King, 2003, p. 282).

Having invoked the colonial trope of a Godzone, Ibrahim (2012, p. 12) gives the historical background to the ongoing conflict in Somalia by pointing out that:
Fighting occurred between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Somali-dominated Western region in 1978 and led to the formation of Somali opposition movements in Ethiopia. The military government was overthrown in 1991, but the power vacuum created was too difficult for the clan-based factions to fill. Despite many reconciliation meetings, the clan-based factions failed to agree on the formation of a broad-based government and this led to inter-clan fighting between the warring factions in 1991. The resulting widespread war and famine forced many Somalis to seek refuge in other countries, including New Zealand.

This is certainly part of the historical context within which the war took place. However, this is not the full story. Instead of exploring the history behind the war further, Ibrahim (2012) moves on to discuss the “Historical Overview of Somali Education” and, for the rest of thesis, he never discusses again the history of some of the conflicts between different states in the Horn of Africa or some of the geo-political factors behind the civil wars in that part of the world.

This study theorises this lack of knowledge about African politics by utilising the Africanist discourse concept. The Africanist discourse dates back before the 19th century. One of the defining features of the Africanist discourse before the 19th century was the “guess-work” upon which knowledge about Africa was generated (Miller, 1985). This approach to knowledge creation saw information shaped “about itself” rather than “shaped by the inquiry, creating the illusion of a ‘pre-existing essence’” (Miller, 1985, p. 21).

1.12 Being Sociological

It is true that the sociological imagination is the rationale for any sociological study. In this project, it is utilised particularly to add another dimension to the interrogation and the
analysis of the data. Thus, in four chapters, the research findings are subjected to a rigorous historical and structural analysis with the aim to deconstruct the discourses that shape the research participants’ lived experience. The sociological imagination is driven by an urge to understand the social and historical meaning of the individual in the society and in the social period in which he or she has developed his/her values and outlook (Mills, 2000).

This means that whenever it is theoretically relevant, an historical analysis of Australia and New Zealand is utilised to grapple with the data, and where it is applicable, an historical analysis of Africa is used to put the research findings in a historical context. C. Wright Mills (2000, p. 143) put it best when he wrote that modernity’s social problems cannot be sufficiently understood without constant practice of the assessment that history is “the shank of social study, and recognition of the need to develop further a psychology of man that is sociologically grounded and historically relevant.”

The logic that shapes the presentation of the research findings is that a researcher is not “a mere mouthpiece” of the respondents (Bryman, 2004). In other words, sociological research is not a story, but an analysis (Lareau, 2011). A sociological analysis entails a critical approach to social reality. Thus, “critique is an important part of what sociologist do” (Willis, 1993, p. 76). Sociologists question official explanations that are often used to rationalise the status quo, and sociologists challenge those in authority or those who traditionally occupy positions of power in society and therefore have a particular vested interest to misrepresent or to distort reality and history (Willis, 1993).

1.13 Limitations of the thesis

Given the limited number of research participants in this research project, I am unable to extrapolate my findings to the broader black African population in New Zealand or Australia.
Therefore, this thesis does not make claims about people who were not research participants in this particular research.

Similarly, this research project focuses only on men, while certainly not the intention, may contribute to the implicit message of tomes on the African diaspora “that focus wholly or overwhelmingly on male figures” which is “that female bodies are less important to the researching and theorizing of the African Diaspora” (Wright, 2013, p. 3). It is not the intention of this project to give the impression that women’s lived experience is not worthy of academic research. The decision to research men only was partly informed by the view that men from a refugee background are under-researched in New Zealand and Australia. Byrne (2006) writes that Australian refugee agencies are often preoccupied with the needs of women and children. According to Guerin, Guerin, Abdi, and Diiriye (n.d.):

New Zealand requested primarily women and children in need from the UNHCR, which meant that the first generations arriving were primarily single mothers with many children. While the girls have in general done well, we have found that many of the boys lack an authority to control them and they might not have had an adult male in the family for ten or more years.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, this thesis contributes to the ongoing efforts to theorise the lived experience of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand.

I chose to research Australia and New Zealand because I live in New Zealand and initially I was interested in investigating the lived experience of black Africans in New Zealand. However, New Zealand is a small country with a very small black African population. Of the 4.24 million people living in New Zealand, black Africans make up less than one per cent of the population. Therefore it made sense to expand my research to include
Australia. The reading of the literature revealed that “there is not enough scholarship that provides comparative analyses of Australia and New Zealand, which is surprising given the geographical and cultural proximity of the two nations” (Fozdar, 2013, p. xvi). Thus, this project attempts to contribute to ongoing efforts to research, theorise and develop a comparative analysis of the lived experience of black Africans residing in Australia and New Zealand.

It is worth noting that, as a comparative study, this thesis is limited in the sense that it is not the intention of this project to make a systematic comparison between Australia and New Zealand. Rather the ultimate objective is to investigate the differences among the lived experience of differently geographically located black people (Holt, 1999). This approach is consistent with the African diaspora paradigm.

I do not aim to cover everything in this thesis, nor does the thesis contain everything about Australia and New Zealand. And, lastly, the decision to recruit research participants from Melbourne and Auckland was based on the demographics of these two cities. Most black Africans in New Zealand live in Auckland. In Australia, the State of Victoria, which includes the metropolitan area of its capital and largest city, Melbourne, hosts the largest number of black Africans (Robinson, 2011).

1.14 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into eleven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 gives an historical overview of causal factors that have led to the conflicts that have produced millions of refugees in Africa.

Chapter 3 is a theory chapter and thus comprehensively details the theory that is utilised to engage with the literature, as well as the research data.
Chapter 4 discusses key research literature on black Africans from a refugee background residing in Australia. Likewise, chapter 5 reviews research on black Africans from a refugee background living in New Zealand.

Chapter 6 outlines in detail research methods utilised to carry out this research project.

Chapter 7 and 8 discusses the Australian research findings. Similarly, Chapter 9 and 10 discusses the research findings from New Zealand.

Chapter 11 is a concluding chapter. This chapter highlights key similarities between the Auckland findings and the Melbourne findings.
Chapter 2 - The political economy of African civil wars

I wish Africa was dead! – Charles Dickens

2.1 Introduction

In mainstream Western scholarship, communism and fascism are often described as the two great totalitarian political systems that wreaked havoc in the 20th century without any acknowledgement of the third great totalitarian system - European colonialism (Hochschild, 2000). This long-standing myth shaped the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ original conceptualisation of refugees as white people who were running away from fascism or communism. According to Loescher, Betts, and Milner (2009), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950 as a temporary organization with the sole responsibility for addressing the needs of refugees in Europe who had been displaced by the Second World War. Hence, the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees identified refugees as persons fleeing events occurring before 1 January 1951 within Europe.

Political events that happened in Africa, for example, before 1951 were not covered by the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. This was partly because powerful Western states such as France and Britain, which subsidized the operational costs of the UNHCR and therefore influenced the philosophical focus of the organization, were behind some of the repressive colonial regimes in Africa. Additionally, Westerners largely felt more sympathetic “to the victims of Stalin and Hitler, because they were mostly European,” than to black Africans whom the West generally regarded as being inferior and uncivilized (Hochschild, 2000).

Mainstream Western scholarship’s practice of not acknowledging European colonialism as one of the great totalitarian systems that wreaked havoc in the 20th century has resulted in a tendency in literature to discuss African civil wars by foregrounding and
emphasising local political phenomena such as tribalism and African dictators without rigorously interrogating the ways in which these political phenomena relate to the global political economy. This is sometimes achieved by maintaining silence around significant historical events or conveniently omitting relevant historical facts in the discussion of the historical background to African conflicts.

For instance, in his discussion of the conflicts that have produced millions of refugees in Eritrea, Koser (2002) discusses the history of Eritrea in broad strokes, omitting important historical facts that would yield a deeper insight into the present situation in Eritrea. Koser (2002, p. 139) writes that “after a thirty-year struggle, Eritrea was effectively liberated from Ethiopia occupation when the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) captured the capital city, Asmara, on 24 May 1991.” Thereafter Eritrea’s main focus was on reconstruction and rebuilding the country, a process that was disrupted by a conflict with Ethiopia in 1998 (Koser, 2002). According to Koser (2002, p. 139):

The causes of the recent Eritro-Ethiopian conflict, which finally came to an end in the last months of 2000, remain unclear. Ostensibly it started as a localized conflict over a small, disputed area of the common border between the two countries. However, most analysts now agree that the border issue did not lie at the heart of the conflict. For some analysts the conflict was essentially economic, sparked off by the decision by Eritrea to launch its own currency (Clapham, 1998). For others, the central issue was strategic, as Ethiopia became land-locked when Eritrea won independence, and has become reliant on access to Eritrean ports. For still others, the conflict was driven by internal politics in Ethiopia, or expansionism by Eritrea.
Koser (2002) does not trace the 30 year Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia to the Italian colonial project – the Africa Orientale Italiana. Similarly, Koser (2002) highlights neither the involvement of Israel in the 30 year Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia, nor the fall-out between Eritrea and Sudan after Eritrea declared independence as factors in the war. According to Lefebvre (1995), the Eritrea-Sudan crisis was among the major topics of discussion between the Eritrean government and top-ranking U.S. officials during the Eritrean president’s three-week visit to the United States in January – February 1995. In meetings with President Clinton, the former U.S. president, the Eritrean president, Isaias Afwerki, argued that Sudan wanted to involve Eritrea in its “strategy of Islamisation in the Horn of Africa’” (Lefebvre, 1995, p. 36). This history is discussed in depth later in the chapter, but the foregoing highlights the proclivity of mainstream scholarship to overlook relevant historical facts in the discussion about African conflicts.

Similarly, Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book on the South Sudanese diaspora in Australia and New Zealand has very little to say about the history of Sudan or the impact of the Cold War on the civil wars that have occurred in that country. In the introduction to the book, Marlowe, Harris and Lyons (2013, p. 4) argue that whilst the warfare that has plagued the country since independence in 1956 “can be conceptualised as a conflict between Islamic Arabs based in the north and southern black Christians, several writers maintain that this history cannot be simply viewed as conflicts between ethnic or religious identities as there have been contentious debates about access to natural resources – most notably oil.”

Marlowe, Harris and Lyons (2013) neither seriously explore the impact of the Cold War on Sudan’s political conflicts, nor do they rigorously investigate the role of Israel in Sudan’s deadly political conflicts. In fact, none of the seventeen chapters of the Marlowe, Harris and Lyons’ (2013) book even attempts to make sense of this history.
The omission of the global historical context within which African political conflicts occur is revealing because it is consistent with the Eurocentric metanarrative on African civil wars, which overlooks the impact of European colonialism and Cold War on African civil wars. The Eurocentric metanarrative on African civil wars establishes frames of reference and intellectual themes that are henceforth considered to be important and relevant, while simultaneously, it excludes inconvenient historical facts from public scrutiny (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Mamdani (2009, p. 19) explains that the way in which the Eurocentric metanarrative achieves its intellectual dominance is through the Western media, which downplays well-documented analyses and facts, “thereby continually misrepresenting the African continent.”

Thus, without regard to the historical context and the wider global political economy, African civil wars are presented in the public imagination of the West “as a contest between brutes” (Mamdani, 2009, p. 19). The Eurocentric metanarrative on African civil wars reifies and is consistent with the discourse that creates the image of uncommodified blackness. This chapter challenges the Eurocentric metanarrative on African civil wars by carefully documenting the ways in which European colonialism and the Cold War contributed to the conflicts and the civil wars that have produced millions of refugees in those African countries that are currently regarded as the top three refugee-producing African countries – that is, Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This is achieved by critically and concisely exploring the history of the DRC and, the Horn of Africa, including Sudan.

2.2 European colonialism and the Cold War in the DRC

King Leopold II of Belgium colonised the Congo in the 1880s. In the 1890s the invention of first the inflatable bicycle tire and then the automobile sparked a worldwide rubber boom (Hochschild, 2000). These events convinced Leopold to turn much of his colony's adult male
population into slave labourers, forcing them to spend years gathering the Congo's abundant wild rubber (Hochschild, 2000). King Leopold’s soldiers drove many black African workers to death, raped their wives, and shot down tens of thousands who rebelled (Hochschild, 2000). According to Hochschild (2000), hundreds of thousands of Congolese fled the draconian regime, “but the only place they were able to go was deep into the rain forest - where they died from lack of food and shelter.” The Belgians did not consider those who fled as refugees, rather, as far as Leopold was concerned he was forcing Africans to free themselves from laziness. In Leopold's forced-labour system, black African workers were referred to as "liberes" or "liberated men" (Hochschild, 2000). The brutal exploitation of the Congo, between 1880 and 1920, is estimated to have reduced the population of the Congo by half: from about 20 million in 1880 to 10 million people by 1920 (Hochschild, 2000).

It took the Congolese about 80 years before they successfully challenged the colonial brutality that destabilized that part of Africa. The years 1959 and 1960 showed signs of political turmoil in the Congo; tens of thousands of ordinary Congolese began to seriously contemplate independence and freedom for the first time (Zeilig, 2008). According to Zeilig (2008), what triggered the political turmoil in the Congo was the rioting in Léopoldville in January 1959. The rioting led to fighting between the authorities and the demonstrators, resulting in the destruction of symbols of colonial power such as shops and mission schools (Zeilig, 2008). African thinkers refer to this period in the DRC as the decolonisation process. The decolonisation process in the Congo coincided with the global political developments – the Cold War, that would shape that country’s post-colonial political configuration.

The decolonisation process in Africa, particularly in the DRC, took the United States by surprise and “stirred deep concerns” (Gleijeses, 2002, p. 6). According to declassified US government documents (U.S. Department of State, 2013), the United States was concerned about “dangerous, pro-Communist” African radicals who were supposedly going to turn to
the Soviet Union for political support and military assistance. The U.S. was particularly apprehensive about Patrice Lumumba, who was elected Prime Minister of the Congo in 1960.

The U.S. regarded Lumumba as “an African Castro, a Soviet instrument, and threw its support behind Lumumba’s rival” (U.S. Department of State, 2013). Furthermore, because Lumumba enjoyed broad national support in the Congo, the U.S. government at the time “feared he posed a potential threat to U.S. interests and goals in Sub-Saharan Africa.” In response, the US launched a covert operation in the Congo lasting almost seven years, which was aimed at eliminating Lumumba and intended to support pro-Western candidates and marginalize Marxist groups (U.S. Department of State, 2013). Thus, the covert operation included organizing mass demonstrations, distributing anti-Communist pamphlets, and providing propaganda materials for newspapers. The US’ stated objectives were to identify and isolate Marxist groups, and in the process to ensure that the Congo had “moderate, pro-Western leaders” who will adopt “a generally pro-Western posture” (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

After Lumumba’s assassination in 1961, the US’ main objective was to “have the Congo emerge as a country unified along acceptable political and economic lines.” Throughout this whole period, the US’ “anchor to windward” was Joseph Mobutu, whom the CIA subsidized from 1960 to the late 1970s (U.S. Department of State, 2013). When Mobutu staged his first coup in September 1960, the US government provided the new Congolese government with covert funds as part of a general program of covert support, using the previously established, not attributable to the United States, channel. Mobutu ruled the country until the Congolese parliament approved a government headed by Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula the following year on August 2, 1961. The US government supported Adoula and sought to strengthen his position as the national leader, and to strengthen the position “of his closest colleagues as a group, in order to endow the Adoula Government with sufficient
political stability to resist leftist pressures aimed at its overthrow and to bring about a successful, peaceful settlement with the Government of Katanga leading to unification of the Congo” (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

When a Maoist group rebelled against the US funded government in the Congo during the Kwilu revolt in 1964, “the non-combat, psychological mission of the CIA unit was changed with State Department approval to one of active combat participation” (U.S. Department of State, 2013). As far as the US was concerned, Congolese forces needed Belgian or other white officers to be effective in the battle field. This also meant that “to provide a ‘cutting edge’ necessary for military victories, the U.S. should encourage the use of a requisite number of mercenaries” (U.S. Department of State, 2013). Enter the “White Giants”. According to Gleijeses (2002, p. 71), the year 1964 would be the year of the White Giants -“‘tall, vigorous Boers from South Africa; long-legged, slim and muscular Englishmen from Rhodesia’ - who would restore, in Zaire, the white man to his proper place.”

In many ways, the white man was restored to his proper place in the Congo. In 1965, Mobutu staged another coup d’etat deposing the then Congolese President, Joseph Kasavubu. The US government saw Mobutu’s government in the Congo as representing “the last hope for the West in the Congo (and possibly throughout Black Africa). There is little chance that, should his regime fail, it will be replaced by a regime acceptable to the West” (U.S. Department of State, 2013). Although the US acknowledged the fact that Mobutu could be “cruel to the point of inhumanity,” the US government made it clear that the military and financial support Mobutu was receiving was dependent on “his ability to keep his soldiers from harming the white population in Kisangani and other cities” (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

Mobutu was a notorious dictator who ruled the Congo with an iron fist for over three decades. Gump (2001) points out that Mobutu employed any means necessary to remain the
undisputed leader of the Congo: torture, public hangings, and deaths in detention. A creation of Cold War politics, Mobutu’s government relied for political legitimacy on his Western allies, most importantly the Americans, the French and the Belgians (Gump, 2001).

According to Gump (2001), the West viewed Mobutu as an indispensable ally in the struggle to contain Soviet expansionism:

In return for aid and loans from the west, Mobutu allowed the United States to send covert arms shipments through his country to supply UNITA rebels in Angola and permitted France to use Zaire as a staging area for its operations in Chad and the Central African Republic (Gump, 2001, p. 1109).

Moreover, Mobutu treated the Congolese state treasury as his own personal bank account. During the 1980s, Mobutu embezzled as much as $400 million per year from Congo’s copper and cobalt exports, while the majority of the population lived in poverty (Gump, 2001). As the Cold War came to an end in the 1990s, the United States and Europe pressured Mobutu to bring about democratic changes in the Congo, a political transition that “unleashed a flood of discontent, forced Mobutu into exile, and brought Laurent Kabila to power in 1997 (Kabila was assassinated in early 2001 and has been succeeded by his son Joseph.)” (Gump, 2001, p. 1109). The end of the Cold War facilitated the collapse of Mobutu’s oppressive government, which led to two Congo wars and involved most of the country’s neighbours, killing more than five million people (van de Walle, 2010). The first Congo War was from 1996 to 1997, and the second war was from 1998 to 2003. Gerard Prunier calls the Congo Wars ‘Africa’s World War’ (Paddon, 2010). The use of the label ‘Africa’s World War’ is meant to highlight the fact that the two Congo wars involved more than ten African countries (Paddon, 2010).
Despite the fact that since 1996, many agreements about ending violence have been reached after complicated, costly, and lengthy negotiations in the DRC, the Congo remains a politically volatile place (Fuamba, Yonekawa, & Seegers, 2013). Rebel groups roam through the ungoverned spaces of the DRC, the country is prone to outbreaks of violence; in short, Congo is a place where civilians are routinely subject to personal threat, primarily because the supposed ‘settlement’ to the Congo wars did not resolve many of their underlying causes (Larmer, Laudati, & Clark, 2013).

The forgoing history partly explains why the DRC remains one of the main refugee producing countries in Africa.

2.3 European colonialism in the Horn of Africa

This thesis’ intent, among other things, is to accurately account for the conflicts that have produced millions of refugees in the Horn of Africa. This is achieved by disentangling geopolitical causal factors that have led to the conflicts which produced millions of refugees in that part of the world. A geo-political analysis of the Horn of Africa requires a thorough examination of interacting factors which include historical legacies, ethnic and religious division, as well as the colonial partition of the region and “accompanying irredentist and separatists-inspired violence,” the Cold War, the war on terror and “the manifest intervention by external powers” (Assefaw, 2006, p. 24). Such an academic exercise requires a proper historical framing of African political events within a global political economy.

The Horn of Africa has always played a vital role in the geopolitics of the continent (Novati, 2008). After all, three of the world’s great religions (i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have contested in the Horn for over a thousand years producing fierce nationalist conflicts (Novati, 2008). Consequently, as Novati (2008, p. 42) points out, kinship and religious affinities in the Horn “transcend national borders which are contested and have
generally been badly demarcated and hence constitute a permanent threat to the political order.” Before colonialism, the borders in the Horn were determined by two factors:

On the one hand, Ethiopia imposed a policy that centralized power around the dynasty, the national Christian Church and a feudal mode of production based upon agriculture. On the other hand, the government of Somalia, or more accurately the different authorities which have administered the lowlands inhabited by Somali-speaking peoples, predominantly Muslim, was always fluid and volatile, mirroring the anarchism and clanism that are more suitable in a physical and social environment where nomadism and pastoralism prevail (Novati, 2008, p.42).

Italian colonialism of the Horn added another dimension to the notion of statehood in the Horn. Through the Africa Orientale Italiana (AOI), Italy created an administrative political structure which grouped together the countries of the Horn, that is, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, minus Northern Somaliland, which was under the British (Selassie, 2003). According to Novati (2008), the Italian colonialism of the Horn proved to be a critical moment for the formation of all states and nations in the Horn.

The Italian colonial project in the Horn was based on the view that the political character of the region could be changed by manipulating the hierarchical balance of the elites and major ethnic groups (Novati, 2008). Thus, to advance its colonial project, Italy’s colonial administration in the Horn exploited issues of identity such as religion, culture and shared values (Novati, 2008). To that end, Italy separated Ogaden, a province occupied by Somali-speaking nomads, from Ethiopia, and “annexed to Somalia as part of a project of ethnonational homogeneity” (Novati, 2008, p. 43). This had far-reaching consequences, for it later stimulated Pan-Somalism – a notion rooted in the reunification of an ‘idealized Somali
nation’ (Novati, 2008). Furthermore, in the north of Ethiopia territory was separated from the Empire to enlarge Eritrea with a view to preparing the effective transformation of Italy’s colonia primogenita (first-born colony) into an established society in quest of nationhood (Novati, 2008).

However, after the Second World War, Italy lost all its colonies in the Horn (Negash, Papa, & Taddia, 2003). According to Novati (2008), the terms of the 1947 Peace Treaty signed after the Second World War forced Italy to formally abandon all of it colonies. Further, “the Peace Treaty acknowledged full sovereignty to Ethiopia” (Novati, 2008, p. 44). The terms of the Peace Treaty further stipulated that the final destiny of Italian colonies would be determined by the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, “or, if no deal was struck within a year, by the United Nations” (Novati, 2008, p. 44). Eritrea was proclaimed an autonomous unit federated to Ethiopia, whereas Somalia was assigned to Italian trusteeship for a period of ten years (Novati, 2008). Italy’s influence in Somalia was limited by the enduring British influence in the former British Somaliland, until that was combined with the former Italian colony to form the Republic of Somalia that became independent in 1960 (Novati, 2008). At the moment of Somalia’s independence:

Somali nationalism claimed that national self-determination required that the French colony of Djibouti, reckoned as a Somali territory, the Ogaden and the Northern Frontier District of Kenya be co-opted into the new state, however, this Greater Somalia project, alias the unification of all Somali lands initially sponsored by Britain, was rejected practically by everyone, especially in Africa (Novati, 2008, p. 45).

The point in the foregoing historical discussion is to illustrate that the boundaries that were created by European colonisers in Africa were created mainly to suit the interests of
European colonial powers (Selassie, 2003). According to Westin (1999, p.26), Africanists in general agree that one root cause of the severe political conflicts haunting the continent dates back to the arbitrarily drawn boundaries settled by the European imperial powers at the Berlin Conference in 1878. This observation partly explains why the Horn of Africa has had one of the longest wars in modern times, lasting 30 years (Selassie, 2003). The Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia lasted 30 years and produced millions of refugees. In fact, all five countries of the Horn of Africa (that is, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Sudan) have been, in the past decades, the scene of conflicts rooted in disputes over colonial borders, and have, as a result, produced millions of refugees (Selassie, 2003).

2.4 European colonialism in Sudan

Sudan was colonised and ruled by Britain from 1899 (Makinda, 1993). In principle, Britain and Egypt jointly ruled Sudan through the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium; however, in reality the Condominium empowered the British to be the full colonial authority over Sudan (Makinda, 1993). The British colonial authority there, like everywhere else on the continent, was based on the political strategy of divide and rule. Thus, the British ruled northern and southern Sudan as two different entities, according to Makinda (1993). For historic reasons, many northerners Sudanese claim Arab descent (Dean, 2000), while southern Sudanese look to black Africa as an identity platform linked to descent and place and to legitimate claims (Makinda, 1993).

When Britain withdrew from Sudan, it circumvented the legal process established between the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium and granted formal independence based on a temporary constitution drafted by the British without dealing with historically important issues of whether Sudan would become a unitary or federal state and with a secular or Islamic constitution (Ayers, 2010). According to Ayers (2010), Sudan’s nationalists aligned with two
dominant Islamic sects to mobilise electoral support, and that effectively eroded the possibility of building a broad-based national political movement.

Consequently, at independence, southern Sudanese were largely excluded from constitutional negotiations and the ‘Sudanisation’ process” (Ayers, 2010). Post-independent nation building in Sudan revolved around constructing Sudan as an Arab country (Ayers, 2010). This led the southerners to demand a federation with a separate advisory council for the south and an assurance of their religious freedom (Makinda, 1993). The Khartoum government at the time refused to give legitimacy to these demands. As a result, Southern leaders formed a revolutionary organisation called Anya Nya and fought the Khartoum-based government for 17 years (Makinda, 1993). The first civil war in Sudan officially ended in 1972, when Jaafar Nimeiri’s government and Anya Nya signed a peace agreement in Addis Ababa, giving the south regional autonomy. However, in 1983, Nimeiri revoked the north-south Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and instituted Islamic law. That triggered an armed rebellion in the south that led to the renewal of the civil war (Medani, 2012).

What also intensified the second civil war was a series of economic grievances that the southerners had relating to oil that had been discovered at Bentiu in the south in 1978 by an American firm, Chevron (Makinda, 1993). According to Makinda (1993), southern Sudanese were of the view that the Nimeiri government wanted to incorporate Bentiu into the north in order for the north to benefit from the oil. Moreover, the southerners resented the Nimeiri government’s decision to build the Jonglei canal to make for a more efficient use of water from the Nile without consulting them. The southerners felt that the canal would disrupt some of their communities and that the extra water generated would benefit northern Sudan and Egypt rather than southern Sudan (Makinda, 1993, p. 128).
The second civil war was devastating for southern Sudan. According to Medani (2012), by the time the cease-fire was brokered in 2003, more than 2 million southerners, most of them civilians, had been killed. The war generated over four million refugees (Haynes, 2007). Medani (2012, p. 287) points out that “the sheer magnitude of human suffering led to stronger calls for self-determination in the South and increasing support for an orderly ‘separation’ of the two regions by the international community.” The second civil war ended in 2005 with the signing of the North / South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which culminated in the secession of the Southern provinces (Medani, 2012).

2.5 The Cold War in The Horn of Africa

The root of the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia in the 1970s lay in the Ethiopian claim that Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti are part of Ethiopia (Assefaw, 2006); while, on the other hand, Somali nationalism considered Ogaden to be part of Somalia (Novati, 2008). It is against this historical background that, in 1977, the military junta that in 1974 had overthrown Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, “was rocked by Somalia’s invasion of the Ogaden, a region in eastern Ethiopia inhabited by ethnic Somalis” (Gleijeses, 2006, p. 13). At the request of the Ethiopian junta’s chairman, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Cuba sent military troops to Ethiopia to help repel the attacks (Gleijeses, 2006). According to Gleijeses (2006: 13), “critics charge that the Cubans intervened at the behest of the Soviet Union.”

Gleijeses (2006) concedes that the Cuban operation in Ethiopia was indeed coordinated with and supported by the Soviet Union. In fact, for most of the 1970s and 1980s, the Horn of Africa was used by the United States and the Soviet Union as a proxy for Cold War. Both superpowers attempted to influence the ideological orientation of local actors in the region through arms and aid (Lefebvre, 1996). Between 1974 and 1978, the United
States was “militarily entrenched” in Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union was aligned with Somalia and Sudan (Luckham & Bekele, 1984). From 1977 to 1978, the United States switched allegiance and was aligned to Siad Barre’s murderous regime in Somalia, whereas the Soviet Union established military relationship with Ethiopia. Up until the late 1980s, both the US and the Soviet Union assisted the governments of these two countries financially and militarily. Through this military support from the two superpowers, these two countries waged war against each other and engaged in civil wars that have produced millions of refugees.

Another external force that has played a pivotal role in the politics of the Horn of Africa is Israel. According to Lefebvre (1996), Ethiopia and Israel were drawn together by their mutual fear of Arab and Islamic encirclement. Lefebvre (1996, p. 394) adds that even when Ethiopian military junta chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam publicly terminated the Israeli connection in 1978, “there were several subsequent instances of secret and informal cooperation between the two states.” Throughout the Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia, Israel supported Ethiopia in one way or another. Lefebvre (1996) argues that Israel viewed the war in Eritrea as a southerly extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was partly due to the fact that when the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) launched its war of secession against Ethiopia in 1962, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser permitted the EPLF to establish its headquarters in Cairo where members of the EPLF received military training as well. Another strong ally of the EPLF was North Sudan. During Eritrea’s 30-year struggle for independence, North Sudan was the most important regional ally for the Eritrean resistance (Lefebvre, 1996).

Ayers (2010, p. 161) further points out that “following the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, Sudan had aligned more closely with the Arab League.” While North Sudan gave support to the Eritrean resistance, Ethiopia helped Israel assist the Anya Nya rebels who were fighting
against North Sudan for their own independence. Ethiopia allowed Israel to establish military centres to train the rebels. Moreover, according to Collins (2007), Israel brought Anya Nya officers to Israel to attend short courses in weapons and explosives, as well as radio transmissions. Many Arab states viewed Israel’s military support for Ethiopia a political threat (Medani, 2012). According to Medani (2012), prior to the Israeli victory in the Six Day War, Arab concern over events in Ethiopia was minimal, however, the Six Day War meant the closure of the Suez Canal and that increased the significance of the Bab-al-Mandab strait, which links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. It is for this reason that Lefebvre (1996) argues that in addition to being driven by ideological reasons, Israel’s involvement in the Horn has also been about making sure that the Red Sea did not “become an Arab Lake” from which Arab states could threaten Israeli shipping in the southern Red Sea region.

The end of the Cold War brought an end to the financial and military support that some regimes in the Horn received from the superpowers. Without external aid, dictators in countries such Ethiopia and Somalia were overthrown by warlords and armed factions (Loescher, 2001). As a result, the overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam regime in Ethiopia led to the independence of Eritrea. The fall of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia also had an impact on the civil war between north and south Sudan. For instance, the fall of Mengistu’s regime resulted in the southern Sudanese revolutionary organization, Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), losing its strategic bases in Ethiopia (Medani, 2012). These political developments enabled north Sudan “to impose punishing blows on the southern population in 1992 and 1994 and a self-proclaimed holy war (Jihad) against the south” (Medani, 2012, p. 284). By the early 1990s, North Sudan was considered the hub of an ‘Islamist revolution’ within the Horn (Ayers, 2010). Consequently, the American George Bush (senior) administration supported the political wing of the SPLA, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) as a pro-insurgency force against North Sudan (Ayers, 2010).
When Bill Clinton took over from George Bush as US president, he classified North Sudan as a “state-sponsor of ‘terrorism’” (Ayers, 2010).

Meanwhile, the fall of the regime of Siad Barre, Somali military dictator, in 1991 left Somalia without a centralised and effective government (Plaut, 2013). Furthermore, since the end of the Cold War, there has been a constant political tension in all five countries in the Horn (Plaut, 2013). Post-Cold War conflicts in the Horn of Africa have taken on changing forms and patterns, and new ones have emerged (Cliffe, Love, & Tronvoll, 2009). For instance:

Ethiopia and Eritrea are in a state of near-conflict along their common border.

Ethiopian troops are inside Somalia, attacking al Shabab, while Eritrea is accused of putting resources behind rebel movements operating in Ethiopia and Somalia (Plaut 2013, p. 321).

According to Lefebvre (1996), lying at the root of post-Cold War conflicts in the Horn is the “secularist-Islamist conflict”. Thus, “the East-West Cold War and the Ethiopia-Somalia dispute have been replaced by a new cold war in the Horn of Africa between secularist and Islamist governments and political movements” in countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Sudan (Lefebvre, 1995). Plaut (2013) further points out that the Horn has been an arena of political contest since the war on terror erupted with the attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. According to Chomsky (2012), after September 11, the U.S. has strengthened and reformulated its long-standing effort to control the Horn of Africa as a front line in the war on terror. Hence, the ongoing crisis in Somalia may be viewed partly as collateral damage from the war on terror (Chomsky, 2012). The Al-Barakaat case partly illustrates this point.
Al-Barakaat, a Dubai-based Somali remittance network was shut down on the grounds that it was financing Al-Qaeda; providing internet services, and even involved in shipping weapons to terrorists (Warde, 2007). In reality, Al-Barakaat was established to address the needs of Somali immigrants who sent, on regular basis, a significant part of their earnings to their families (Warde, 2007). Following the 1991 collapse of the Somali government and banking system, Al-Barakaat played a significant role in the Somali economy (Warde, 2007).

According to Warde (2007, p.101), the annual remittances to Somalia “amounted in 2001 to about $500 million, more than it earns from any other economic sector and ten times the amount of foreign aid it receives.” The closure of Al-Barakaat resulted in the reduction of such remittances by half, which partly led the country to collapse in starvation among other things (Warde, 2007). Although the U.S. government eventually conceded that it made a mistake and withdrew its charges against Al-Barakaat, the economic damage had been felt far and wide in Somalia. Beyond the economic impact, the symbolic impact, meaning “the perception that Somalia was unfairly treated - may have been the most significant and may have played a role in the rise, four years later, of Islamic fundamentalists” (Warde, 2007, p. 102).

Furthermore, the US air strikes in Somalia in 2007 and the US support for the Ethiopian invasion of that country partly led to the creation of al-Shabaab, a fundamentalist religious group which has wreaked havoc in neighbouring countries like Uganda and Kenya (Turse, 2014). Naturally, al-Shabaab has become a major security concern in the region, and to counter that threat the US has funnelled counter-terrorism funds into East Africa and underwritten a stronger Kenyan military (Branch, 2011). According to Branch (2011), “the rise of Islamism in the Horn of Africa put Kenya on the frontlines in the global fight against terrorism.” In fact, ever since the 1998 bombing of US embassies in East Africa, which were followed by the US retaliatory strike against Sudan, the US has regarded Africa as the next
frontier in the war on terrorism. According to Ploch (2009, p. 70), the US Department of Defense officials claim that “Africa has been, is now and will be into the foreseeable future ripe for terrorists and acts of terrorism.” As far as the US is concerned, civil wars in Africa have created “ungoverned spaces” and “failed states” which terrorists groups may use to operate from (Ploch, 2009).

2.6 Conclusion
Ultimately, the exploration of the impact of the Cold War and European colonialism in political conflicts that produced millions of refugees in Africa is undertaken to illustrate the point that many of the conflicts from which African refugees fled from are partly attributable to the actions of Western powers (Philo, Briant, & Donald, 2013). The refugee crises in Africa are partly a product of a global system that has been shaped by colonialism and white supremacy.

When mainstream Western scholars who investigate African refugees fail to frame the conflicts from which African refugees fled within the global political economy, researchers run the risk of perpetuating the Africanist discourse (Miller, 1985). Through the Africanist discourse, African conflicts and civil wars are presented as exhaustingly unfathomable even to those who advocate for the cause of Africa. In his novel, titled ‘Bleak House’, Charles Dickens utilised the Africanist discourse to create the character of Mrs Jellyby. While Mrs Jellyby’s “telescopic philanthropy” for Africans is genuine, it ultimately leads her to exclaim that “I wish Africa was dead. I hate [Africa] and detest it. [Africa] is a beast!” (Dickens, 2001, p. 66). The Africanist discourse forms part of a sophisticated rhetoric about uncommodified blackness.
Chapter 3 - The production of the uncommodified blackness image

3.1 Introduction

As has already been pointed out in the introduction, this thesis argues that everyday racism against black Africans manifests itself in Australia and New Zealand through the deployment of long-standing racist discourses and Eurocentric ideologies that function to demonise and rationalise the marginalisation of black Africans from mainstream society. Underpinning the logic of this study is the view that these discourses and ideologies not only function to give legitimacy to the way in which societal institutions in Australia and New Zealand operate, but they also reflect the interests and the values of the dominant class.

The over-arching theme that shapes the everyday racism experienced by, and the racist discourse about black Africans in Australia and New Zealand is the widespread image of uncommodified blackness that is allegedly unsuited to the supposedly overwhelming luxury of these two countries. This thesis uses an institutional analysis, as well as the concept of everyday racism to interrogate racist discourses and ideologies that shape the production of the uncommodified blackness image.

The literature on black Africans in Australia and New Zealand often discusses anti-black racism by utilising various race analyses that do not expand our knowledge of the underlying dynamics of anti-black racism in these two countries. The racist image of uncommodified blackness not only illuminates the kind of everyday racism that black Africans are subjected to in Australia and New Zealand, but it is compatible with other theories and other intellectual frameworks that aim to understand anti-black racism in other parts of the world.

The discourses that are used to produce the uncommodified blackness image are rehashed from long-standing racist discourses of illiterate and uncivilised Negroes who are “up to the neck in the irrational” (Fanon, 1986, p. 123). The uncommodified blackness image
is constructed to highlight the alleged unreadiness of black Africans from a refugee background to fully participate in Western societies. The image is deployed to justify the social exclusion of black Africans. Moreover, the uncommodified blackness image is set up to invoke the white’s man burden thesis to help strengthen the whiteness project of supposedly rehabilitating a ‘Negro refugee’.

Moreover, the uncommodified blackness image is constructed and institutionalised via specific themes, representations of race, of blackness that support and maintain the marginalisation, exploitation, and pathologisation of black Africans from a refugee background (hooks, 1992). The dominant themes that are used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness explain the underlying dynamics of anti-black racism in Australia and New Zealand. These themes include anti-black racism encounters, black misandry, being an African refugee, accented English, presumed antediluvian attitudes and values (e.g. parenting styles and gender roles), medical folklore about diseased Others, denial of racism, and tactful blindness.

Although the afore-mentioned themes have great explanatory powers, this study does not claim that they can “explain all the facts with which it can be confronted” (Kuhn, 2012, p. 18). The concept of everyday racism is used to develop an insight into the everyday constructions of a racist image of uncommodified blackness that black Africans from a refugee background are subjected to in Australia and New Zealand. The themes of uncommodified blackness are “‘everyday’ in the sense of their informality, and the way in which they can insidiously become seen as expected or normal” (Dunn, Forrest, Pe-Pua et al. 2009, p. 8). The following sections explore these themes. However, the discussion begins by defining the concept of everyday racism.
3.2 Everyday racism

Essed (1991) defines everyday racism in terms of social encounters, processes and procedures that contribute to the development and perpetuation of a system in which whites dominate blacks. According to Essed (1991), everyday racism involves systematic, recurrent, and familiar social practices. Everyday racism includes blatant, subtle and covert actions taken by white people and other dominant groups, wilfully or half-consciously, to ostracise, marginalise, restrict, or otherwise harm black people (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Essed (1991) argues that within sociology, disagreements over institutional and micro perspectives have discouraged theories that integrate institutional and interaction dimensions of racism. Through the concept of everyday racism, this research project places an emphasis on the mutual interdependence of institutional and micro-dimensions of racism (Essed, 1991). The institutional racism perspective explains that race is used in society as an organising principle of social relations (Bonilla-Silva, 1994). Ultimately, the manifestation of institutionalised racism inhibits the life chances for people of colour; hence McDonald and Wingfield (2008) argue that institutionalised racism reinforces racial inequality.

A micro-analysis of racism, on the other hand, argues that specific social practices, whether their consequences are deliberate or unintentional, can be assessed in terms of racism only when they are consistent with our knowledge of structures of racial inequality in the system (Essed, 1991). Simply put, structures of racism do not exist outside of the socialisation of individuals, but are created and maintained by individuals (Essed, 1991). However, specific social practices are by definition, racist only when they trigger the existing structural racial inequality in the system (Essed, 1991). In other words, the system, which this project defines as a collections of societal institutions, is continually construed and acted out by social agents on a daily basis (Essed, 1991). According to Essed (1991), the notion of everyday racism describes the integration of racism into everyday situations which activate
underlying power relations. Through this process, the integration of racism into everyday practices becomes part of social reality, and of what is viewed as normal by the dominant group (Essed, 1991):

Everyday racism can be defined as a process in which (a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations (Essed, 1991, p. 52).

The revolutionary thinking of everyday racism lies in the fact that it connects institutional forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life (Essed, 1991). Moreover, everyday racism connects ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and frames the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life (Essed, 1991).

According to Essed (1991), the traditional institutional perspective on racism often puts individuals outside the institutional, thus severing procedures, processes, and regulations from the people who make and sanction them, as if institutional racism is a qualitatively different racism rather than viewing it as different positions and relations through which racism operates. It is for this reason that this research theorises the way in which processes of racism that occur in different social context relate to each other (Essed, 1991). Implicit in this argument is the idea that everyday racism does not exist in the singular, but in the diffuse plural form. According to Essed (1991), everyday racism is multifaceted and ubiquitous; and furthermore, it is a coherently and systematically activated personally through social encounters, and vicariously through the experiences of other blacks, either through the media or through the daily awareness of racial injustice in society.
The ubiquity of everyday racism means that the logic of racism spreads and interacts with dynamic forces of gender and class (Essed, 1991). It is for this reason that the study of everyday racism borrows from different intellectual disciplines to make sense of the complexity of everyday racism. Put differently, this means that the study of everyday racism is interdisciplinary in nature. Hence, this thesis borrows the concept of racial microagression from social psychology to deepen the interrogation of the social process behind the production of the un commodified blackness image. According to Sue (2010), racial microaggressions are the continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon people of colour by well-intentioned friends, colleagues and neighbours. Sue (2010) argues that microaggressions fall into three main categories, namely: microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations. Microassaults are conscious, deliberate demeaning messages and behaviours that are directed to racial minorities, whereas microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently outside the conscious awareness of the perpetrator (Sue, 2010). Microinvalidations, according to Sue (2010), are characterised by communications or environmental cues that either exclude or invalidate the feelings, thoughts or experiential reality of people of colour.

Blacks are deeply insightful into how racist ideas operate in society. With their sense of history, and through communication about racism within the black community, and by constantly assessing their own social experiences in daily life against other black people’s experiences, “black people can develop profound and often sophisticated knowledge about the reproduction of racism” (Essed, 1991, p. 1). In this study, experience is regarded as the central concept that enables blacks to generate a deep understanding of everyday racism (Essed, 1991). Experiences are an appropriate source of information for the study of everyday racism because they take account of personal experiences as well as vicarious experiences of racism (Essed, 1991).
Moreover, experience has a broader meaning in this study. Since everyday racism is embedded in everyday situations throughout the system, experiences of everyday racism include activities like watching racist news reporting or a racist television show (Essed, 1991). This research project also recognises that in the 21st century, racial inequality is not only reproduced through racism or discrimination, but also via acts of favouritism that whites show to each other. Implicit in this argument is the notion that one of the most important privileges of being white in Western societies is not having to be racist in order to enjoy racial advantage (DiTomaso, 2013).

Whites in Western countries favour each other through opportunity hoarding and via the exchange of social capital or social resources that whites share with each other (DiTomaso, 2013). Within a social capital framework, the confines of core networks are defined by those with whom one can identify, and feel a sense of obligation and reciprocity (DiTomaso, 2013). It should be pointed out that social networks that people draw social resources from include those involving friends, family members, neighbourhoods and churches (DiTomaso, 2013). Therefore, to the extent that these social networks and institutional settings are ethnically based, “then people also look to coethnics for information about opportunities” (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 55).

DiTomaso (2013) defines opportunity hoarding as the passing along of access to good jobs to friends and family members. Although the notion of opportunity hoarding is frequently used interchangeably with Max Weber’s concept of social closure, DiTomaso (2013) uses the concept to highlight how whites, in particular, reserve opportunities for other whites. The discursive use of opportunity hoarding in this way attempts to show that although racial discrimination is illegal in Western countries, opportunity hoarding is not illegal (DiTomaso, 2013). Whites protect themselves from economic recessions, unemployment and volatility of markets through opportunity hoarding, and by drawing from and using social
capital in order to gain advantage (DiTomaso, 2013). The net result is the continuation of white privilege in a political climate of racial liberalism. Although people of colour may endeavour to hoard opportunities or to exchange social capital among themselves, their relatively less disadvantaged structural positions in the economy make them less effective in doing so “or make the effects of their efforts less stable” (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 10). The fact of the matter is that the social resources available to people of colour in most Western countries are often less beneficial than those available to whites, and the outcomes of utilising them are more likely to be interrupted or reversed (DiTomaso, 2013).

The preceding exploration of everyday racism leads this study to argue that, to expose racism in the system, researchers have to analyse ambiguous meanings, “expose hidden currents, and generally question what seems normal or acceptable” (Essed, 1991, p. 10). The following sections utilise the insight generated in the foregoing discussion to show ways in which the themes that are utilised to construct the uncommodified blackness image are enacted and deployed to marginalise and “Other” black Africans.

### 3.3 Anti-black racism: Encounters and vicarious experiences of racism

In considering personal racism encounters, this research project includes vicarious experiences of racism in its analysis. This position is informed by the view that racial discrimination is “seldom just a personal matter” (Feagin & Sikes, 2013, p. 16). According to Feagin and Sikes (2013), a black person who experiences racial discrimination often shares the account with family or friends. The rationale behind this sharing is to lighten the burden of racial oppression, since the sharing leads to a domino effect of pain and anger rippling across an extended group (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). In other words, an individual’s experience of racial discrimination becomes a community matter. Furthermore, racial discrimination does not occur in a historical vacuum. Racist incidents “are freighted with centuries of racial
oppression of which the black victims are consciously or unconsciously aware” (Feagin & Sikes, 2013, p. 16).

A compelling argument can be made that a majority of whites in Western countries think in racial terms when they have to make important decisions that could potentially impact their life chances (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). These include decisions about where to buy a house, choosing a business partner, choosing friends for themselves and their children. Furthermore, through various discourses of liberalism and universalism, whites often present themselves as being outside of socialisation, and “unaffected by the relentless racial messages in the” mainstream Western culture (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 59). The primary function of these discourses is to deny white privilege and the social significance of race (DiAngelo, 2011). Moreover, white people’s insistence on the importance of foregrounding liberalism and individualism ensures that racism is not taken seriously (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; DiAngelo, 2011). In such a social environment, white centrality (DiAngelo, 2011) is never challenged, instead over-valuation of whiteness is reinforced and maintained. Additionally, blacks are expected to either ignore racism or to accept it quietly as part of a social order (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). The type of racisms that blacks are often subjected to in the West vary from public harassment, racist humour, over-scrutiny, and violence.

Public harassment is often used as a social weapon to communicate contempt and veiled loathing and hostility (Gardner, 1995). Individuals who are often subjected to public harassment are traditional targets of discrimination elsewhere in society (Gardner, 1995). Racist humour, on the other hand, is sometimes deployed as an outlet for passive aggression (Feagan & Sikes, 2013). According to Beagan (2003), racist jokes draw upon a legacy of unequal power relations and racial stereotypes. Racist jokes are meant to keep people in their place, and further, confronting a racist joke consistently leads to accusations about being overly sensitive or having a chip on your shoulder (Beagan, 2003).
The over-scrutiny of black people generally means that blacks are often critically observed by societal institutions. For instance, black people who occupy positions of authority in Western countries are often over-scrutinised, and consequently, if they make a mistake reactions take place speedily and are probably harsh, while at the same time, “even when they do not make mistakes, it is easy to unfairly accuse them of mistakes” (Essed, 1991, p. 269). The over-scrutiny of blacks in the workplace in particular is rooted in the view that blacks are generally less intelligent, low achievers and incompetent. The way in which over-scrutiny sometimes manifests itself at the workplace is through requirements that blacks perform additional tasks; blacks’ performances get unfairly negative evaluations (Essed, 1991).

The over-scrutiny of blacks also communicates the widespread racist belief that blacks are dishonest, thieves or criminals. As a result, at airports and in the street, blacks are frequently subjected to police harassment such as unwarranted searches. Similarly, insurance companies feel that blacks are more likely to commit fraud. Thus, to exclude blacks, insurance companies either give blacks insufficient information or charge them a high premium rate (Essed, 1991).

Ultimately, anti-black racism in Western countries serves to hinder the upward mobility of blacks. According to Feagin and Sikes (2013, p. 184), “the psychological costs of racial discrimination are cumulative, painful, and stifling. The economic costs include lost promotions, small or no raises, and disrupted careers.”

3.4 Being a refugee

A standard image of refugees in Western countries is an image of helplessness (Harrell-Bond, 1999). African refugees in particular are generally regarded by mainstream institutions as people who bring to Western countries poverty, diseases and crime (Castles, 2005). Writing about Canada, Kumsa (2006) argues that African refugees are feared and Othered as though
they embody the violence that created them. Through this process, the category ‘refugee’
becomes a label of exclusion (Kumsa, 2006). This discourse that cast African refugees as the
ultimate Other was used in Canada to justify the exclusion of African refugees on the basis
that they were a threat to national cohesion (Kumsa, 2006).

Browne (2006) writes that when he conducted research at a refugee camp in Kenya in
2003, a senior UNHCR staff member expressed indignation about the prejudice among
resettlement countries against Somalis. According to Browne (2006, p. 94), “Canada,
Australia, New Zealand and the Nordic countries are reluctant to take them… because they
see Somalis as what they call ‘an integration challenge.’” Many whites in Western countries
are of the view that black African refugees are culturally incompatible with a Western
lifestyle. Essed (1991) points out that although the traditional notion of genetic inferiority is
still a defining feature of racism, the discourse of black inferiority is increasingly reframed as
being related to cultural deficiency and social inadequacy.

The increasing use of medical folklore highlights how black African refugees are
often portrayed as the diseased Other. This medical discourse is characterised by its use of
sophisticated codes to talk about diseases and disorders that are associated with black
Africans. The discursive focus on the physical health and mental health of African refugees
speaks to the widespread trope of African refugees as an infectious “reservoir of diseases”
122) about the necessity to scrutinise and keep in check the physical health of blacks dovetail
perfectly with the psychologisation of African refugees in Western countries. Black Africans
from a refugee background are often portrayed as psychologically damaged by pre-settlement
traumatic experiences. To use Cross’ (1991) insight, the psychologisation of black Africans
conflates the reality of traumatic pre-settlement experiences as a debilitating factor in the
lives of a fraction with the possibility of that traumatic experience to define and to shape the
lives of the majority. The psychologisation of black Africans often goes hand-in-hand with paternalism that is motivated by “‘good intentions’ to ‘help’” black Africans cope with the pressures of Western society (Essed, 1991, p. 203). In other words, the psychologisation of black Africans draws from the long-standing discursive trope of “the white civilising influence” (Hughey, 2014, p. 61), while simultaneously rehashing commonplace efforts to cast whites in the role of a “white saviour” (Leonard, 2012).

3.5 English or Language ideology

In Western countries, debates over citizenship have often focused on the significance of language to both national identity and state citizenship (May, 2011). Simply put, Western countries require citizens to all speak a state-mandated language in the public and civic realm as a condition for full participation in the wider society (May, 2011). Thus, those who choose to speak other languages rather than a state-mandated language are constructed in wider public discourses as deliberately constraining their social mobility at best, and at worst, as a social threat to the national identity (May, 2011).

These ideas are often presented in public in discursive tropes that appear to be neutral. For example, discursive tropes such as ‘language barriers’, ‘language problems’, ‘language limitations’, ‘language proficiency’, ‘cultural knowledge’, ‘ethnic languages’ are frequently used in the literature. This study questions these discursive tropes by pointing out that since language markers serve as a symbol for numerous social allegiances such as national origin, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class (Lippi-Green 2011), in reality these language markers are often used to rationalise the exclusion and the marginalisation of black Africans. According to Essed (1991), the language deficiency trope is utilised as the standard rationalisation for the high unemployment among blacks in the West. This study identifies accent as one language marker that societal institutions in Australia and New Zealand deploy
to exclude and discriminate against black African immigrants. Drawing on Lippi-Green’s (2011) insight, it can be argued that with the introduction of tighter anti-discrimination laws in Western countries, language and accent have become an acceptable excuse to publicly exclude the Other. It is worth noting that not all accents are viewed in the same light. For instance, the Anglo world regards French accents in a positive light, whereas there is a strong pejorative reaction towards black African, Asian and Middle Eastern accents (Lippi-Green 2011).

3.6 Parenting

Prevailing child-rearing practices in any society often reflect the values of a dominant group (Stearns, 2003). In Western countries, mainstream child-rearing practices reflect the norms and the values of a white urban middle class (Stearns, 2003). Other societal institutions such as schools and social services enforce the dominant child-rearing standards (Lareau, 2011). Furthermore, child-rearing practices are historically specific and subject to change as societal values change (Lareau, 2011). The notion that there is only one right way of parenting is false. Some parenting styles work very well and some do not; it all depends on the family dynamics and the social environment within which a family exist in.

One of the functions of a black family in Western countries is to serve as a site where black children find protection against the racist forces in the broader society (Essed, 1991). Research into white children consistently shows that white children prefer their own racial group to any other, “and they do so from a young age” (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001, p. 11). According Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001), the ideas about race, which children acquire from mainstream culture, empower white children to set themselves apart as “better” than other races. Consequently, white children often use racial and ethnic concepts to control interaction with others and to establish and maintain dominance over others (Van Ausdale & Feagin,
Black children, on the other hand, are expected to play the social role of a subordinate in relation to white children without creating a fuss (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Research shows that playing the inferior in these social encounters constantly creates problems for black children’s self-esteem and self-identity (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

Thus, social and psychological support from family and friends is crucial for black children if they are going to survive daily struggles with racism (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Additionally, family is a first place where black children acquire knowledge of how racism functions and strategies to counter racism (Essed, 1991). Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001, p. 9) write that a black child who is a victim of racism may share the experience with family to lighten emotional stress and to pass on the pain to family, “who may in turn share it with other members of the family or community.” Gradually, this sharing adds to the collective knowledge about everyday racism that is vital for the survival of the individual and the community (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

To overcome a hostile and racist social environment also requires social support from other black children. Franklin and Boyd-Franklin (2000) point out that when black children choose to play and sit together during lunch breaks, they exchange a particular kind of acceptance which activates their sense of being whole. According to Feagin and Sikes (2013), an important survival tactic for black students experiencing everyday racism at predominantly white American universities is to connect with black organisations. In other words, seeking out other blacks is part of a self-healing process aimed at neutralising the emotional pain caused by indignities experienced in interracial environments (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000).
3.7 Black misandry

Black males in Western countries have to contend with the mainstream images that cast black males as criminals (Essed, 1991). Consequently, a black male is often assigned a social position related to being hypermasculine and with an ‘out-of-control male body’, while, white males are perceived to be always acting with reason and sensitivity (hooks, 2004). Since the dominant discourse portrays black males as potential troublemakers, it follows that every black male is considered by mainstream institutions as deserving of sceptical scrutiny (Anderson, 2011). A black male’s credibility is forever questionable (Anderson, 2011). The public discourse pertaining to black men’s lives consists of several racialised projections about the black masculine body as: exotic and strange, violent, incompetent and uneducated, sexual, exploitable, and innately incapacitated (Jackson II, 2006).

In the public imagination, the figure of the black male has become “more and more mysterious, dangerous, and fearsome” (Anderson, 2011, p. 5). Consequently, in many public places, the anonymous black male is often feared and considered guilty until proven innocent (Anderson, 2011). The black male is thus avoided in public, and “when the black male appears in public, common codes of civility are severely tested” (Anderson, 2011, p. 6). On trains and other forms of public transportation, the anonymous black male is often the last person others will sit next to (Anderson, 2011). Others typically are not interested in getting to know the anonymous black male in public, and therefore, seek to distance themselves from him (Anderson, 2011). The black male generally “’put white people off’ just by being black, and the younger he is and the more ‘ghetto’ he looks, the more distrust he engenders” (Anderson, 2011, p. 7).

The objective behind the deployment of anti-black male stereotypes by mainstream institutions serves to reclaim the long-standing history that foregrounds the importance of disciplining and punishing black bodies (Leonard, 2006). The portrayal of black males as
deviant is meant to activate the power of societal institutions to regulate, control, surveil and discipline black males (Leonard, 2012). In other words, since black masculinity is viewed as inherently deviant, it therefore deserves to be controlled and dominated by white men (and sometimes powerful white women) and formal authorities (Brooks, 2011).

3.8 Employment

Employers do not always employ “the ‘best person’ from an exhaustive search of all potential applicants”; rather, employers often reduce their search costs by hiring the “first acceptable candidate who has the necessary qualifications” (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 56). In other words, gatekeepers – in the form of recruitment and employment agencies, as well as hiring committees, often allow applicants and candidates with “the right social capital” to go through (Rivera, 2015). Personal connections and social networks largely determine employment outcomes. In Western countries white job-seekers often access “good jobs” by drawing on social networks and personal connections that typically give them inside edge and thus help protect them from market competition (DiTomaso, 2013). Protection from market competition often entails hiring ‘from the inside’ to not formally advertising a job opening. Jobs that are subject to market competition are often low-paying jobs with bad working conditions. In her study in the U.S., DiTomaso (2013) found that white research participants often obtained jobs with higher pay and better benefits through the assistance of family or friends, but sometimes found low-paying jobs through formal means such as utilising employment agencies to finding a job or by responding to a job advert via direct application. This means that “jobs that do not pay a living wage or do not provide benefits seem less likely to be hoarded” (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 52).

In their research study, Royster and Steinberg (2003) found that African Americans experienced poor employment outcomes owing to their reliance on poorly situated family
members and friends, combined with the fact that they received only verbal encouragement as opposed to material assistance from white teachers. According to Royster and Steinberg (2003, p. 144), their black respondents relied on formal job placement mechanisms and encouraging words from some of their white teachers, “while white students were able to count on material assistance from these same teachers, to the point where they scarcely needed formal job placement assistance.” This research finding shows that having access to white teachers or white mentors does not guarantee or even increase the likelihood that black men would develop racially integrated social networks (Royster & Steinberg, 2003).

Moreover, Royster and Steinberg’s (2003) research illustrates that white men’s networks connect them with desirable training and occupational options, which remain open even while they explore other objectives.

Royster and Steinberg’s (2003) study further shows that whites receive both preference and the benefit of the doubt in many areas of their working lives. For instance, white employers often overlooked whites’ early mistakes and they are typically deemed by friends and strangers as worthy, regardless of their mediocre school records or troubles with the law (Royster and Steinberg, 2003). In contrast, mistakes made by young black men confirm racially based suspicions (Royster & Steinberg, 2003).

3.9 Denial of racism

A common white perception about racism in Western countries is that racial discrimination is no longer a serious and widespread social problem, and that whatever blatant anti-black hostility remains is generally that of isolated white bigots (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Another white perspective that works to effectively suppress protest against racism is the formulation of racism as being due to ignorance or misunderstanding (Essed, 1991). Through this perspective, blacks are expected to be tolerant of “the ‘error’ of racism” (Essed, 1991, p. 6).
Conversely, social psychological experiments have demonstrated that whites are generally motivated to present themselves to others as non-prejudiced (Essed, 1991). Some whites will even claim to be colour-blind in order to preserve this image. According to Sue (2010), colour blindness is sometimes utilised by whites in an attempt to appear unbiased to others in social encounters that have race-related implications. Sue (2010, p. 125) points out that whites are sometimes compelled to maintain the illusion that they are unbiased because to acknowledge “that one is racist or at least holds prejudicial attitudes is both frightening and unsettling because it strikes at the core of human decency.”

Thus, when whites are confronted with the suggestion that their behaviour and actions have racist implications, whites will often either take offense or give non-racial interpretations of the event (Essed, 1991). Furthermore, according to Essed (1991, p. 272), “this failure to understand and to feel responsible for racism is legitimized by questioning the perspectives and personalities of opponents of racism.” It is against this background that opponents of racism are often accused of victimising innocent whites (Essed, 1991). In such a state of affairs, racism ceases to be the problem, rather, “people ‘who go around accusing’ others of racism are the problem” (Essed, 1991, p. 275).

DiTomaso (2013) argues that it is in the interests of whites to misunderstand or misrepresent the extent to which whites, as a group, are racially privileged. And, since whites are generally of the view that their version of reality is accurate and objective, whites are inclined to ignore or to deny the existence of racism (Essed, 1991). The denial of racism is a denial to take responsibility for racism and a denial of the necessity to take action against racism (Sue, 2010). As long as whites can attribute the problem of racism to bigoted white supremacists ‘over there’ and exclude themselves from that category, then they can easily hold on to the view that considers racism to be a problem afflicting ‘other whites’ and not them (DiTomaso, 2013). This self-serving approach to interpreting racism is influenced by
the perspective that regards racism as a social phenomenon that is largely determined by individual prejudice, and thus temporary and increasingly disappearing due to our advanced modernity (Feagin, 2010).

3.10 Tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism

Many whites are of the view that blacks in general often conclude that social situations are racist without evaluating a situation carefully before judging it discriminatory (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Research however shows that one of the ways in which minority groups cope with discrimination is by either choosing not to see discrimination or by minimising the impact of discrimination (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). A potential reason that people of colour minimise the impact of discrimination is the need for perceived control - “the belief that one can determine one’s own internal states and behaviour, influence one’s environment, and/ or bring about desired outcomes” (Wallston, Wallston et al., 1985 cited in Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997, p. 375). Research also shows that sometimes blacks excuse whites’ racism by blaming the behaviour of whites on alcohol (Feagin, 2010). It has also been argued that people of colour sometimes minimise experiences of personal discrimination because of the desire to avoid pinpointing a particular villain as the source of discrimination against the self (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997).

In her research into black women in the Netherlands and United States, Essed (1991) found that her black participants preferred not to regard social situations as racist because to do so was emotionally taxing and resulted in a struggle against racism that drained their emotional energy. And, often, people of colour minimise the impact of discrimination because they want to avoid escalating the conflict, and avoid being “seen as a ‘troublemaker’ and as having an ‘axe to grind’ about race issues” (Sue, 2010, p. 56). It is also worth noting that since black people think in complex terms about racism (DiAngelo, 2011), they do not
always interpret social situations the same way. This position is premised on the view that black people do not think homogenously and that the lived experience of black people differs based on class, gender and educational qualifications.

3.11 Conclusion

The foregoing discussion highlights various themes that are used to construct the uncommodified blackness image. The discussion further shows that the widespread racist image of uncommodified blackness is constructed through a deployment of various discourses that range from language ideology, black misandry, liberalism, and universalism. Since no member of society resides outside of socialisation, sometimes even black people accept these discourses without questioning them.

The concept of everyday racism was utilised to interrogate the discourses that are often used to develop and construct the image of uncommodified blackness. The interrogation of these discourses “shows the necessity for intersectional analysis that reflects on race, class, gender, nationality, and discourse” (Leonard, 2012, p. 110). Racism operates on different planes, through different social contexts (Leonard, 2012).

With this in mind, the next two chapters discuss and engage with the literature. Chapter four, the next chapter, explores some of the key research around black Africans from a refugee background that has been conducted in Australia. Similarly, chapter five investigates some of the key research around black Africans living in New Zealand.
Chapter 4 – Black Africans in Australia

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some important research that has been done around black Africans from a refugee background in Australia. The discussion of the literature is structured around nine thematic categories, which are derived from a reading of the literature. Black Africans in Australia are typically researched through nine themes, namely: immigration status or being a refugee, gender, work/employment, health, education, housing, family life, social community, politics and the State. This list of research themes is obviously not exhaustive, but it is argued that the aforementioned themes represent the dominant discourses around the research of black Africans from a refugee background in Australia.

The discussion of the literature is prefaced by a brief overview of the history of immigration and refugees in Australia.

4.2 History of immigration and refugees in Australia

British settlers claimed sovereignty over Australia in 1770 (Behrendt, 2012). As far as the colonisers were concerned Australia was the “land of no one”. According to Short (2003), the philosophical Eurocentric underpinning of the legal doctrine of terra nullius is based on John Locke’s philosophy of property ownership, who argued that:

property in land originated from tilling the soil, in ‘mixing labour with land’… The apparent absence of such activities led to the colonizers' conviction that the natives had no investment in the soil and hence no legitimate claim to it (Short, 2003, p. 492).

After the British settlers claimed sovereignty over Australia, the population of the British settlers in the new colony increased gradually. For instance, between 1817 and 1830, the
population of the British settlers increased from 2,000 to 23,500 (Moses, 2000). According to Moses (2000), the increase in population put pressure on land, and consequently the settlers searched for grazing land in the interior of Australia. This led to a violent colonisation of the Aboriginal peoples. Short (2003, 492) points out that “between 1788 and 1884 the indigenous death toll in the conflict is estimated to be around 20,000.” Haebich (2005) explains that, from first contact, British settlers planned to compel Aboriginal peoples to assimilate into European society. However, instead of assimilating, Aborigines resisted the colonial project by defending themselves against the settlers. As far as the settlers were concerned, “the “inferior savage” would have to give way to the march of civilization” (Moses, 2000, p. 97).

In other words, the British colonisation of Australia was “objectively and inherently ethnocidal” for Aborigines (Moses, 2000, p. 92) (italics in the original).

Furthermore, when Australia became a nation in 1901, its constitution excluded all Aborigines from citizenship (McGrath, 1993). The oppression of Aboriginal peoples was accepted as normal by most white Australians. It was only in the 1920s that Aboriginal peoples began to mobilise politically. According to Short (2003), the modern movement for indigenous rights in Australia was formed in the 1920s with the formation of several Aboriginal political organisations. These organisations campaigned for citizenship rights, land rights and freedom from the restrictions imposed by discriminatory state policies (Short, 2003). Although Aboriginal political organisations have won vital political gains, Aboriginal communities still struggle with the legacy and ongoing conditions of racism. For instance, Aboriginal communities have to deal with family breakdown, violence, ill health, increasing illiteracy, wholesale imprisonment and high levels of youth suicide (Short, 2003).
4.3 Chinese in Australia

The Chinese are another social group that the British settlers excluded from Australian citizenship. Prior to the gold rush, there were about 270 Chinese in Australia, most brought in by white pastoralists to replace convict labour (Inglis, 1972). The discovery of gold in the 1850s led to the great influx of Chinese immigrants to Australia. According to Elkin (1945), about 1,223 Chinese arrived in New South Wales in 1856-7, but by 1861 there were about 21,000 Chinese in the colony. The white miners protested the presence of the Chinese because they regarded them as “inferior people” (Elkin, 1945). These sentiments escalated to anti-Chinese riots, and at a Premiers’ Conference in 1896 it was decided that each Australian colony should enact a Restriction Act aimed at reducing the number of Chinese people in Australia (Elkin, 1945). Following the establishment of the Federation in 1901, the Commonwealth government introduced the Immigration Restriction Act which effectively ended all permanent Chinese immigration (Inglis, 1972). Known as the White Australia policy, the Act was designed to keep Chinese immigrants out through the employment of a dictation test administered in any European language to any would be Asian immigrant (Babacan & Babacan, 2007). According to Babacan and Babacan (2007, p. 26), the Act was motivated by white settlers’ deep seated fear of being “invaded” by Asians “who were intent upon ‘threatening’ and ‘polluting’ Australia’s white race.” McMaster (2001) argues that the White Australia policy rationalised institutionalised racism in Australia, and its effects were wide and far reaching. For example, it was only in 1973, when the White Australia policy was officially abolished, that the Australian state granted Chinese immigrants full citizenship rights.

The official abolishment of the White Australia policy in the 1970s, which coincided with the end of the Vietnam War during the same period, saw the “gradual introduction of Asian people as refugees and migrants into Australia” (McMaster, 2001, p. 3). According to
Mackie (1987), after 1976, the inflow of Indo-Chinese raised the total intake of Asians in Australia to over 25,000 by 1983. By 1984, Australia had accepted more than 91,000 Indochinese and Vietnamese refugees (Price, 1987). However, the resettlement of these Asian refugees happened at a time when full employment in Australia was coming to an end. The year 1974 marked the end of decades of full employment in Australia (Mackie, 1987). As unemployment levels rose in Australia, Asian refugees and immigrants were accused of stealing jobs that belonged to white Australians. Gradually, the anti-Chinese sentiments of the 19th century returned in the 1980s. Led by a well-known Australian academic, Professor Geoffrey Blainey, the advocates of these sentiments argued that Australia was going through a process of “Asianization”. Thus, from 1983, the Australian government reduced the level of intake of Indo-Chinese refugees. By the early 1990s, immigration intake was cut by 25 per cent. According to McMaster (2001), what this history shows is that the anti-Chinese debates of the 1980s appear little different from the anti-Chinese sentiment of the 19th century.

4.4 Immigration policies after the abolishment of the White Australia policy

Despite the fact that the White Australia policy was officially abolished 40 years ago, recent events show that Australians are still biased against immigrants and refugees of colour. Research shows that refugees from Eastern European countries like Bosnia and the other countries that formerly formed part of Yugoslavia were Australia’s preferred refugees and immigrants during the 1990s (Colic-Peisker, 2005). For instance, according to McMaster (2001, p. 2), the Kosovar refugees “were invited to Australia and then greeted, in a show of much positive emotion and humanitarian concern, with headlines such as ‘Sanctuary’ and ‘Safety into our Arms.’” On the other hand, refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries who arrived in Australia on boats at the same time as the
Kosovar refugees were branded as “invaders”, “illegals”, and consequently were placed in detention centres around the Pacific (McMaster, 2001).

The Australian government solution to asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boats is to detain them in Nauru and on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. The government calls this policy the “Pacific Solution”, and the rationale behind it is to discourage other asylum-seekers from travelling to Australia by boat. Mares (2002) argues that the Australian government effectively divides refugees into “good” and “bad” categories. He explains that “good” refugees are selected through diplomatic missions overseas, while “bad” refugees arrive in Australia unannounced, either by boat or by plane. Mares refers in this case to the Australian government’s offshore and onshore refugee programmes, as they are officially described. Fozdar and Hartley (2013) explain that Australia has a planned annual Humanitarian Programme designed to react to international refugee and humanitarian developments:

This programme has two components; the onshore protection programme, which protects people already in Australia who are recognized as refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (known as asylum seekers until their cases are determined), and the offshore resettlement programme, which offers resettlement through the UNHCR programme (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013, p. 25).

The programme sets an annual refugee quota of 13,750 with 6,000 resettlement places set aside for refugees who have been recognised by the UNHCR as having a protection need (McAdam, 2013). Further, there are 7,750 places in Australia’s ‘special humanitarian program which are reserved for people who are subject to substantial discrimination
amounting to a gross violation of human rights in their home country, such as ‘women at risk’ (McAdam, 2013).

The Australian government has implemented programmes to help refugees who come to Australia through the offshore refugee programme successfully settle in their host country. According to Fozdar and Hartley (2013), refugees resettled in Australia can access dedicated settlement services for the first six to 12 months following their arrival. These services are provided through the Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (HSS). The HSS programme provides assistance to refugees on arrival; it assists refugees with accommodation costs; it provides refugees with relevant information about government agencies that provide income support and health care; and it generally acts as a referral service to refugees who are interested in taking up English language classes (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013). Hatoss and Huijser (2010) add that the HSS services include the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Further, refugees are given access to federal social security. After six to 12 months, humanitarian entrants are exited from HSS, and thereafter, government-funded grants from the Settlement Grants Programme are provided according to need (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013). Fozdar and Hartley (2013) point out that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also provide services to refugees. The services provided by the NGOs and the HSS programmes aim to equip refugees with the skills and knowledge they need to participate in the economic and social life of Australia.

4.5 Black Africans in Australia

The first intake of African refugees to Australia through the Humanitarian Programme took place in the 1980s (Harte, Childs, & Hastings, 2009). The number of African refugees being resettled in Australia gradually increased during the 1990s. According to Harte, Childs and Hastings (2009, p. 52), the regional focus of the Australian Humanitarian Program “shifted
from Europe, the Middle East and Southwest Asia in the 1990s to Africa in 2001.” Gatt (2011) points out that the Australian government took an interest in resettling African refugees because the Refugee Council of Australia and other similar organisations had lobbied the government to give priority to African refugee settlement quotas. Sudanese refugees in particular were given priority in the Australian humanitarian programme (Gatt, 2011). Consequently, the “Sudanese are currently the fastest growing immigrant group in Australia” (Gatt, 2011, p. 212).

In general though, the African community is one of the major emerging communities in Australia (Correa-Velez & Onsando, 2009). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data shows that “the number of people born in Africa rose from about 250,000 in 2006 to around 338,000 in 2011…” (Ndlovu, 2014, p. 1). It should be pointed out, however, that nearly half of all Australians of African origin are white South African migrants (Phillips, 2011). Furthermore, the African community in Australia is made up of black Africans from diverse countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008).

It is against this backdrop that this chapter discusses research that has been done about black Africans from a refugee background who are living in Australia. As already pointed out, the discussion of the literature is structured around nine thematic categories, namely: immigration status or being a refugee, gender, work/employment, health, education, housing, family life, social community, politics and the State. The debate begins by critically exploring the literature around being a refugee as it pertains to black Africans.
4.6 Being a refugee / Immigration status

It is worth noting that since the largest number of black African refugees in Australia hail from Sudan, the label Sudanese becomes a discursive trope that is often deployed to cover all black Africans from a refugee background (Windle, 2008). The dominant discourse portrays black Africans from a refugee background in Australia in the context of problems they are assumed to create for the government and ordinary Australians (Essed, 1991). Thus, in the past, black Africans from a refugee background have been talked about as not fitting in socially, and through the media as deviant and criminogenic.

Research around these issues often utilizes intellectual frameworks or theories that do not yield deep insight into the underlying dynamics of the situation. Take for instances, Nolan, Farquharson’s et al. (2011) article, which is entitled ‘Mediated multiculturalism: Newspaper representations of Sudanese migrants in Australia’. As the title of the article reveals, Nolan, Farquharson’s et al. (2011) article discusses black Africans against the background of multiculturalism, which this thesis argues is often utilised as a coded concept to talk about discrimination, race and belonging. Although the article generates useful insights about how black Africans are Othered in the media, that insight is undermined by the article’s core argument that “multiculturalism can be seen as an important resource for criticising, and as an alternative to, neo-assimilationism” (Nolan, Farquharson et al., 2011, p. 669). As has already been pointed out in the introduction, this thesis views multiculturalism as a discursive trope intended to create a cultural climate of illusory pluralism.

Another article that discusses the representation of Sudanese-Australians in the media is Nunn’s (2010) study. Similar to Nolan, Farquharson’s et al. (2011) article, Nunn (2010) does not attempt to locate the experience of Sudanese-Australians within the broader African Diaspora dialogue. Consequently, Nunn’s (2010) argument fails to draw on insights generated over decades by black thinkers about black immigration to the West. Moreover,
when Nunn (2010) discusses the history of Sudan, she relies on the US State Department and the US Library of Congress as her main source of information about the history of Sudan. By relying on the US government’s information without corroborating such information with some of the work done by scholars (see: Mamdani, 2009; O’Fahey, 1977; Prah, 2006) who have been researching these issues in Africa for decades, undermines Nunn’s (2010) argument. This apparent lack of knowledge about useful research around African politics signals what this study refers to as the Africanist discourse.

It should be noted that there are a few studies that avoid some of the intellectual pitfalls highlighted above. For example, Windle’s (2008) article, entitled ‘The racialisation of African youth’, uses a race analysis to explore the ways in which black Africans are portrayed in the Australian media. Windle (2008, p. 558) shows how racist discourses in Australia cast black Africans from a refugee background as a people who come from a “‘culture of boy soldiers and social violence.” Similarly, research by Ndhlovu (2014) locates the lived experience of black Africans in Australia within the broader African diaspora paradigm. Moreover, because Ndhlovu’s (2014) work is historically informed, he is able to generate insights that point to the notion that black African immigration to Australia seems to have brought back memories of representations of race, specifically the colonial construction of “whiteness” and “blackness”, which were commonly used in oppositional relationship.

Be that as it may, a close reading of the literature shows that Australian studies which locate the lived experience of black Africans within the African Diaspora paradigm are few and far in between. There are no Australian studies, to my knowledge, that have successfully developed a race analysis that deepens and renews our understanding of the underlying dynamics of anti-black racism in particular. This thesis proposes the deconstruction of uncommodified blackness image as a race analysis framework that speaks directly to the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background in Australia.
4.7 Health

According to Matthews (2008, p. 39), “most Australian and New Zealand studies take it that trauma comprises the defining feature of the refugee experience.” Matthews (2008) further notes that a preoccupation with therapeutic interventions sees refugee issues positioned at an individual level with structural dimensions of inequality, disadvantage and white privilege consequently being overlooked. It is worth noting that although Matthews’ (2008) article discusses issues related to refugee mental health, the main focus of the article is schooling and settlement of refugees in Australia. Thus, Matthews (2008) explores Ogbu’s cultural model of acculturation to make sense of some of the issues confronting students from a refugee background. This study finds Ogbu’s (1992) work problematic because it foregrounds culture in its engagement with social reality. As a result, some of the problems that Ogbu’s (1992, p. 12) research highlights as a source of problem for immigrants are issues such as “cultural misunderstandings” and a “lack of fluency in standard English”.

A researcher who has written extensively and critically about the topic of mental health as it pertains to black African refugees is Jay Marlowe. For instance, in an article, entitled ‘Conceptualising Refugee Resettlement in Contested Landscapes’, Marlowe (2009, p 128) claims that there has been a “relatively narrow focus of trauma” in refugee related research. Tilbury (2007) is another Australian researcher who has questioned the field’s narrow focus on mental health issues. The weakness with Marlowe’s (2009, 2010) research and other researchers who adopt a critical approach to the psychologisation of black Africans from a refugee background is that it does not utilise some of the insight of black psychologists who have been critical of psychologisation of black people in the West. For instance, the works of Howitt and Owusu-Bempah (1994, 2000) could deeply enrich the debate around the psychologisation of black Africans. Further, critical psychologists such as
Boyle (1990) have written extensive critiques of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM), while, thinkers like Leifer (1969) have written books about the social functions of psychiatry.

Drawing on the insight of Scott’s (1997) research, this work argues that psychological research about the alleged pathology of black people has historically been used by conservative politicians to justify exclusionary policies towards African Americans in the USA. On the other hand, liberals in the USA have used arguments about black people being supposedly psychologically damaged due to slavery and racism, in order to manipulate white pity in order to justify policies of inclusion and anti-racism (Scott, 1997). The unintended consequences of the ubiquitous portrayal of black Africans from a refugee background as in need of therapeutic intervention further illustrates the dialectical relationship between pity and contempt that often shapes the ways in which mainstream white society relates to black Africans. In other words, the therapeutic approach perpetuates a paternalistic social relationship between whites and blacks (Scott, 1997). It makes the acceptance of black Africans in Australian society “contingent upon white sympathy and superiority rather” than upon equality and citizenship (Scott, 1997, p. 184).

Moreover, this thesis highlights a Western medical folklore that often portrays black Africans as the diseased Other. Many diseases and disorders have been “effectively coded ‘white’ or ‘black’, depending on whether they are associated with modernity (‘white’) or socially backward (‘black’) ways of life” (Hoberman, 2012, p. 66). The medical defamation of black African people by whites in positions of authority in Australia (see: Perrin & Dunn, 2007) has taken many forms over the past two decades. The medical defamation of black Africans in Australia has led to the public perception that black African refugees are a people who are inherently diseased. It is not the objective of this thesis to affirm or refute the health images of blacks put forth by white authorities, rather, the study’s main objective is to
understand and to document the dominant health images of black Africans created by white authorities and to explore the reasons why these images are dominant (Scott, 1997).

4.8 Housing

Under the HSS programme, accommodation assistance is provided on-arrival on a short-term basis. Thereafter, people from a refugee background have to find their own accommodation. Research (see: Dhanji, 2010; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer et. Al, 2008; Lejukole, 2013) shows that black Africans struggle to access decent private housing in Australia due to a number of socio-economic factors. Although some of this research is useful, it mostly uses the integration or resettlement discourse to grapple with the experience of black Africans. For example, according to Dhanji (2010, p. 107), appropriate accommodation is one of the important “‘social’ determinants of resettlement.” Fozdar and Hartley (2013) invoke Ager and Strang’s (2008) integration model to highlight the importance of making affordable housing accessible to refugees.

Research by the international research agency STATT (2012, p. 2) found that for over half of their research participants (South Sudanese), the private rental market was “a focal point for perceptions of discrimination based on their African origin.” Khawaja, White, Schweitzer’s et. al, (2008, 503) also cite “the impact of perceived racism” along with the difficulty of finding appropriate housing as some of the problems faced by their respondents.

The use of the phrase ‘perceived racism’ is a discursive trope often utilised by white institutions to dismiss informed analysis and knowledge that is not congruent with the image of whiteness (DiAngelo, 2011). The ‘perception of racism’ discourse is used in the same way as the ‘race card’ trope. According to Williams (2001), the metaphor of the race card functions to discredit any racialized suffering that can be turned to advantage. Additionally,
as an accusatory category, it implies that the deployment of a racial analysis is inappropriate and unfair (Cole & Andrews, 2010).

This thesis counters the existing literature by showing that whiteness is embedded in the notion that whites have better family and community values than black Africans (Feagin & O’Brien, 2004). In the public imagination of the West, the concept of a “good neighbourhood” is a social code for a white neighbourhood. Put differently, the quality of a neighbourhood is in large part measured via the absence of black Africans (DiAngelo, 2011).

4.9 Family life and Gender

As already pointed out in the introduction, the theorisation of black masculinity in the literature is discursively narrow, and consequently fails to account for many of the social dynamics that impact the lives of black African men in Australia and New Zealand. For instance, in his article, entitled ‘Walking the line’: Southern Sudanese masculinities and reconciling one’s past with the present’, Marlowe (2011, p. 50) argues that his respondents used the phrase ‘walking the line’ to communicate the contested “borderlands of masculinity, social relations and raising children that highlight the dynamic complexities related to gender and institutional power.” Marlowe (2011) utilises RW Connell’s definition of masculinity to point out that men and women conduct gendered lives through processes and relationships.

Marlowe’s (2011) argument, however, is not sensitive to the hierarchies within masculinity. Research on masculinity has shown inequality among different groups of men (see: Gunn, 2011; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011). Other research (see: Byrne, 2006; Milos, 2013; Muchoki, 2013) on this topic also tends to narrowly associate masculinity issues with black African men being unable to play the traditional male role of ‘breadwinners’. The argument advanced by these studies is narrow because it tends to either focus on cultural issues or ‘integration’ processes without also paying attention to the over-valuing of white
males by Western societal institutions. White men are the embodiment of masculinity in the West and the lack of sensitivity to the hierarchies within masculinity often reinforce assumptions that reflect the long-standing Eurocentric interpretation of African cultures as inherently sexist and oppressive. It is argued that these ubiquitous Eurocentric discourses enable whites, through roles as social workers or mental health professionals, to be cast as saviors who can fix African cultures with their supposedly superior moral and mental abilities (Hughey, 2014).

Furthermore, this thesis notes the struggle of African women against patriarchy. It argues that Australia did not introduce African women to feminism. Thus it points to the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women’s Association (REWA) which was established by the Marxist-Leninist government of Mengistu Haile Miriam in 1974 as an example of African women’s struggle against patriarchy (Berhane-Selassie, 1997). African feminism has a rich legacy which has enabled African women to contribute to anti-colonial resistance movements (Amadiume, 2000).

It should also be noted that the literature (see: Ngum Chi Watts, 2012; Losoncz, 2011; Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham, 2010; Wille, 2011) shows that child-parent conflict often shapes the family dynamics of black Africans from a refugee background. This thesis adds to this ongoing research by highlighting the socio-economic factors such as under-employment, racism and low social class status that negatively impact on the family life of black Africans in Australia. This approach is consistent with the Africana perspective on family.

4.10 Social community

Research around this theme is often framed around what Ager and Strang (2008) term social bonds, social bridges and social links. Various research studies have found that dealing with isolation in their community has become a common experience for most black Africans from
a refugee background (see: Gatt, 2011; Khawaja, White, et. al, 2008; Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham, 2010; Wille, 2011). In their paper, entitled ‘*We have a voice – hear us*: The settlement experiences of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa*, Pittaway and Muli (2010) point out that research participants talked with “great sadness” about how they often did not feel welcome in Australia. They quote a research participant who had been in Australia for ten years but had never been invited into “the home of an Australian” (Pittaway & Muli, 2010, p. 11).

Marlowe (2013) discusses issues related to social community by exploring Berry’s concept of acculturation and a notion of ‘contrapuntal analysis’. According to Marlowe (2013, p. 104), the concept of contrapuntality originates from a “Western classical music, in which it refers to the musical spaces whereby the interdependent harmonics associated with the melody and countermelodies are shared between different instruments – in some respects competing for the listener’s ear.” From a resettlement perspective, points out Marlowe (2013), competing melodies are represented by politicians, the media, voices from within the host country, as well as refugees themselves.

As far as this thesis is concerned, societal institutions determine social community. Societal institutions such as families, schools, and places of work involve social roles that individuals have to fill if they are to belong in a society (Albert & Hahnel, 1978). The outcome is stability and social cohesion (Albert & Hahnel, 1978). However, if societal institutions deny certain groups access to life-giving and personally rewarding social roles and relationships, then that leads to those social groups feeling excluded and alienated from society (Gintis, 1972). If a people come to sense that, together, they are victims of xenophobia, discrimination and exclusion, then they will feel alienated and not part of society (Nisbet, 1962). Alienated individuals regard the social order as remote, fraudulent and inviting apathy, or even hostility (Nisbet, 1962). An alienated individual “not only does not
feel a part of the social order; he has lost interest in being a part of it” (Nisbet, 1962, p. viii).

To be alienated is to be disconnected in concrete and specific ways from the social relations that facilitate collaboration with others (Gintis, 1972).

By deploying an institutional analysis, this study deepens and expands Ndhlovu’s (2014) thesis that argues that African diasporas in Australia are seen as “too dark, too tall” to be Australians. Additionally, through a historical analysis of Australia, it is shown that, traditionally, the quality of space and social community in Australia has always been measured in large part via the absence of blacks and other people of colour (DiAngelo, 2011). That is what the White Australia policy aimed to achieve, among other things. Multiculturalism, which replaced the White Australia policy, preserves white centrality in Australia. It is within this context that Hage (1998, p. 18) argues that:

White racists and White multiculturalists share in a conception of themselves as nationalists and of the nation as a space structured around a White culture, where Aboriginal people and non-White ‘ethics’ are merely national objects to be moved or removed according to a White national will.

4.11 Education

Research shows that racial bullying and racial harassment of black African students is widespread in Australian schools (see: Arfish & Olliff, 2008; Aveling, 2007; Bitew, Ferguson, & Dixon, 2008; Cassity & Gow, 2006; Oliver, 2012; Wakholi, 2010). Interestingly, Aveling (2007, p. 69) conducted interviews with 35 school principals in Western Australia to investigate the extent to which the state’s antiracism policy and guidelines for complaint resolution had impacted on the day-to-day management of schools and found that the school principals simply “overwhelmingly reported that racism was not a
problem within their schools.” Furthermore, these principals understood racism in terms of “individual pathologies” and suggested that racist incidents were best dealt with under various school based behavior management or anti-bullying policies (Aveling, 2007).

Through the deconstruction of the uncommodified blackness image, the underlying dynamics of racist bullying are shown to be part of the widespread view that black Africans from a refugee background are unworthy of respect and thus should be ridiculed and not accorded dignity. The uncommodified blackness image portrays black Africans as feral, and the refugee status that underscores the image of uncommodified blackness is regarded as the confirmation of the ‘racialized deficiency’ (Hughey, 2014) that racist bullies attribute to black African students in Australian schools. Australian schools are not designed to accommodate or respond to the needs of what institutions regard as uncommodified blackness. By not taking racist bullying seriously, Australian schools are essentially providing black African students with extra lessons in powerlessness (Lareau, 2011).

4.12 Work and employment

Research shows a high levels of unemployment among black Africans from a refugee background in Australia (see: Dhanji, 2009; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; McAdam, 2013; Nunn, 2010). The reasons for the high unemployment rate among black Africans varies. For instance, some studies (see: Correa-Velez & Onsando, 2009; Hebbani & Colic-Peisker, 2012; Kifle & Kler, 2008;) report that black Africans from a refugee background in Australia experience high levels of unemployment due to barriers such as language, accent and discrimination. Other studies (see: Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Torezani, Colic-Peisker, & Fozdar, 2008,) argue that black Africans cannot access employment in Australia because Australian employers insist on a ‘cultural fit’ for an individual to be considered employable. Consequently, many black Africans are heavily concentrated in factory food processing, the
security industry and aged-care jobs (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Fozdar, Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Hebbani & Colic-Peisker, 2012).

Social class and mainstream culture determines who has access to valued socio-economic opportunities (Rivera, 2015). Access to high paying jobs is facilitated by social factors such as the right social capital, and within the Australian context, the right social capital reflects white values. As has already been pointed out in the previous sections, the image of uncommodified blackness is regarded by mainstream institutions as contradictory to Australian values. Therefore, since the image of uncommodified blackness centres around notions of stateless, illiterate people in refugees camps playing tom-toms with cultural practices that supposedly subscribe to antediluvian values, it follows that mainstream employers do not view black Africans as the embodiment of Australian social capital. The image of uncommodified blackness primitivises and negrifies (to use Fanon’s words,) black Africans from a refugee background. Through this ideological climate, whites rationalise the structural bias towards them as proof that black Africans are not ‘culturally ready’ to function properly in the Australian system (Essed, 1991).

4.13 Politics and the State

Through the image of uncommodified blackness, black Africans from a refugee backgrounds are cast as outsiders – perpetual refugees. Thus, research (see: Nunn, 2010; STATT, 2012; Wille, 2011) shows that black Africans view the label refugee as a discursive trope meant to communicate that one is an outsider and does not belong in Australia. Mainstream institutions regard whiteness as an embodiment of what it means to be Australian (see: Baak, 2011; Colic-Peisker, 2005; Hatoss, 2012).

It is significant to note the ideological coincidence of the introduction of the citizenship test, as well as other changes to the Australian citizenship bill in 2007, which
occurred at the same time as then Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews questioned the ability of some black African migrants to ‘integrate’ into Australia. Interestingly, 2007 is the same year that the Minister announced that significant cuts were to be made to Australia’s intake of African refugees (see: Haggis & Schech, 2010). In his work, Ndlovu (2011) traces the use of citizenship tests in Australia to 1901 when a dictation test was introduced to exclude some ‘undesirable’ prospective immigrants.

The introduction of the citizenship test, along with other changes to the Australian citizenship bill, as well as the discursive context within which these changes took place further helped entrench the image of uncommodified blackness in the imagination of an Australian public.

4.14 Conclusion

The reading of the literature reveals that Australian researchers often use a resettlement discourse or integration paradigm to frame some of the challenges and issues faced by black Africans from a refugee background. Consequently, the problems faced by black Africans are largely understood to be only “problems of integration; too little of it, and too many people who refuse to integrate” (Lentin & Titley, 2011, p. 193).

This thesis differs from this approach in the sense that it frames the issues that black Africans grapple with by deconstructing and interrogating discourses and themes that are used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness. This intellectual approach helps deepen and enrich the discussion of the lived experience of black Africans in Australia. Furthermore, by employing an institutional analysis in addition to the race analysis, this enables this research to unearth new insights around some of the social problems that black Africans grapple with in Australia.
Chapter 5 - Black Africans in New Zealand

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the key research on black Africans from a refugee background living in New Zealand. To set the debate in the literature within the historical context, the chapter begins by briefly outlining the history of immigration in New Zealand. This approach is consistent with the sociological imagination which underpins this research project.

5.2 Colonial history of New Zealand

Since there is no clear date upon which New Zealand became a British colony (Ruru, 2012), the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 is used as a departure point in the discussion of colonisation of New Zealand. According to Ballara (1986), the British settlers considered the Māori, the indigenous people of the country, to be the “noblest” of all people of colour. The British colonisers viewed the Māori as a sophisticated people, and therefore, as far as the settlers were concerned, that made the Māori different to other indigenous peoples in other British colonies (O’Sullivan, 2007). Furthermore, the settlers claimed that the colonisation of New Zealand was relatively enlightened in comparison to the British colonisation of other countries. Based on these claims, it was argued that the supposedly benign colonisation of New Zealand would deliver “a nation of ‘one people’ a positive inevitability” (O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 11). The settlers vigorously promoted the ideology of “one people”, which was based on the idea of two social groups existing in racial harmony (Walker, 1990). However, the romanticisation of the colonial process did not reflect reality with the colonisation of New Zealand soon giving birth to the Land Wars of the 1860s (Walker, 1984).
According to Walker (1984), the Land Wars were an expensive exercise for the British colonisers costing 300,000 British Pounds. Hence, an inexpensive way of dealing with the Māori had to be devised (Walker, 1984). To this end, the Native Land Court was established in 1865. Through the Native Land Court, a large percentage of the Māori owned land was transferred from the Māori to the British settlers (O’Sullivan, 2007). Consequently, by 1900 the British settlers owned close to 95 percent of the land (Walker, 1984). The outcome of the colonisation process by the turn of the 20th century was, among other things, the impoverishment of the Māori (Walker, 1990). Additionally, diseases and poor nutrition led to the decrease of the Māori population. According to King (2003, p. 224):

Nationally, the Māori population dropped from 56,049 in 1857-58 to 42,113 in 1896. As such figures became known they contributed to a widespread belief - among Pākehā and Māori - that Māori as a people and as a culture were headed for extinction.

The prevailing view was that the Māori were a “dying race” (Lange, 1999). Ballara (1986) notes, however, that throughout the 19th century there were European settlers who hoped that the Māori would not become extinct, but would merge with the settler population through acculturation and intermarriage. In the end, the Māori neither became extinct nor totally merged with the settler society. According to King (2003), the national census of 1901 revealed an increase in the number of Māori from 42,000 in 1896 to 45,000 five years later. Despite an increase in numbers, the Māori population remain a minority group in their own land. This is partly because the colonial government brought about 100,000 European immigrants between 1871 and 1880. By 1881, the non-Māori population had soared to more than 470,000. Thus the colonisers, who arrived in New Zealand as settlers and immigrants and who were in the minority initially, effectively became the majority over the years.
Further, although the Māori population steadily increased, “Māori living standards continued to lag far behind those of the Pākehā” (Lange, 1999, p. 260). Many Māori lived in overcrowded houses and had an “unsafe” water supply, according to Lange (1999). In fact, throughout the first half of the 20th century the Māori population was effectively marginalised from mainstream society in New Zealand. It was in the 1950s that Māori leaders started to mobilise against racism and discriminatory practices in the New Zealand society. The 1960s saw protest groups that mobilised against inequality in education and discrimination in housing (Alves, 1999).

The Māori political struggle evolved in the 1970s and focused more on the Treaty of Waitangi and land issues. Activism around land issues and the Treaty of Waitangi led to the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975. The Tribunal was set up to deliberate on the breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi (King, 2003). It was also around this period that the concept of biculturalism was introduced in New Zealand. According to Walker (1986, p. 4), “the Treaty of Waitangi can be interpreted as a charter for biculturalism.” Through biculturalism the New Zealand government made efforts to promote the Māori culture and language. O’Sullivan (2007) writes that biculturalism has served Māori interests to a point because at a particular time in history it enabled Māori to engage with the Crown for their own purposes. Biculturalism “demands a Māori input into decision-making and accounts for incremental developments towards a society respectful and tolerant of cultural difference” (O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 33). As far as O’Sullivan (2007, p. 3) is concerned however, “biculturalism is inherently colonial”, for, in reality, biculturalism does not aim to challenge the hegemony of the mainstream white culture.

At this juncture, it is worth noting that the concept of biculturalism is briefly discussed in the foregoing to highlight the ongoing struggles and debates between the settler New Zealand state and the indigenous people of the country, the Māori. It is not the objective
of this study to critically investigate in depth ways in which state policies or social policies impact the Māori.

5.3 Chinese immigrants in New Zealand

For most of the 20th century, the New Zealand immigration policy favoured protestant Anglo-Celtic immigrants. It is worth noting however that other whites, like white South Africans who immigrated to New Zealand during and following the demise of the apartheid in the 1990s, also benefited from the New Zealand immigration policies that favoured white immigrants.

The history of the preference of white immigrants in New Zealand has meant that immigrants of colour like the Chinese were regarded as “undesirable aliens”. Chinese immigrants initially came to New Zealand to work in the Otago minefields in 1865. When the Chinese population grew to just over 5,000 in 1881, a series of legislative restrictions was introduced to specifically discourage Chinese immigration (Ip, 2003). These included a poll tax on new arrivals, an education test, and re-entry permits (Ip, 2003). Additionally, ships were legalised to transport only one Chinese passenger per 200 tons of cargo (King, 2003). Although these legislative restrictions failed to completely halt Chinese immigration to New Zealand, Chinese immigrants who came to New Zealand after the introduction of these laws were denied the right of permanent residency (Ip, 1995).

According to Ip (1995, p. 177), between 1908 and 1952, no Chinese person could be naturalised in New Zealand, and “every Chinese lived on temporary permits of six months to two years, renewing them periodically, and living in the acute sense of uncertainty that they could be expelled at any time.” Additionally, the Chinese could only access menial jobs in New Zealand because they were considered to be outsiders (Ip, 1995). Thus, most Chinese became self-employed by offering services as laundrymen or market gardeners, writes Ip
(1995). The Chinese worked in these occupations for many decades until anti-Chinese discriminatory laws were relaxed and they could gain the right of residency (Ip, 1995). What this history shows is that unlike white immigrants from North America and the UK, Chinese immigrants were criminalised and subjected to xenophobia and racial discrimination. The history of New Zealand also shows that the Pacific Island communities in New Zealand are another social group who was Othered by society at large.

5.4 Pacific Island Communities in NZ

Immigrants from the Pacific Islands were the only people of colour who managed to immigrate to New Zealand in large numbers during the 20th century. According to Loomis (1990), the fact that some Pacific Islanders held dual citizenship as a consequence of their country’s previous colonial or protectorate status facilitated their emigration to New Zealand. Additionally, the New Zealand government encouraged Pacific Islands migration mainly because it provided a valuable source of unskilled labour for New Zealand’s secondary industries (Ongley & Pearson, 1995). Statistically, the number of Pacific Islanders in the New Zealand workforce increased from 830 in 1951, to 5,639 in 1961, to 16,554 in 1971, and to 35,120 in 1981 (Gibson, 1983).

However, when the New Zealand economy went into recession in the 1970s, the Pacific Island immigrants were seen as contributors to the economic downturn. According to Anae (2012, p. 221), the economic circumstances provided fertile ground for the public expression of racism and xenophobia towards the Pacific Island communities whom the general white public “perceived to be taking employment from locals, threatening cultural homogeneity, boosting crime rates and adding strain to public resources such as housing, welfare and education.” Thus, the New Zealand government introduced measures to slow immigration from the Pacific Island countries, which culminated in the deportation of
“ overstayers”, individuals who remained in New Zealand past the limit of their visa (Anae, 2012; Bertram, 2012).

According to Anae (2012), between 1974 and 1976, the police in Auckland conducted waves of ‘dawn raids’ on Pacific Island households in the early hours of the morning looking for overstayers. The broader societal consequence of the dawn raids was that a link between Polynesian immigration and law and order problems was created in the mind of the public (Anae, 2012; Bertram, 2012). Further, whereas “the majority of overstayers were British or American” (Anae, 2012, p. 230), in the public imagination the term ‘overstayers’ came to mean Pacific Islanders. Moreover, according to Loomis (1990, p. 124), from the 1975 election campaign, “violent offending, rape and Polynesian identity continued to be linked in both fact and through innuendo.”

5.5 Refugees in New Zealand

Between 1944 and 1970, New Zealand resettled a significant number of refugees, mainly from various parts of Europe. During this period, the New Zealand government favoured European refugees because as far as the government was concerned, New Zealand was a Utopia for the chosen few (Brooking & Rabel, 1995). According to Beaglehole (2013, p. 14), the New Zealand government favoured European refugees because the government wanted “to ensure they ‘fit in’.” It is within this historical climate that the New Zealand government was initially reluctant to open its door in the 1970s to Asian refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (Liev, 1995).

However, in 1977, the New Zealand government approved the entrance of up to 70 Indo-Asian families (Liev, 1995). Two years later, the government agreed to resettle another 1,800 refugees. To meet the needs of increasingly diverse refugee groups in New Zealand, the Inter-Church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement (ICCI) was
convened at the request of the government (Ravenscroft, 2008). The ICCI was later renamed the Refugee and Migrant Commission. The governance of the Commission was assumed by the Christian Conference of Churches of Aotearoa in 1986, and “this group continued its governance role until 1990” (Ravenscroft, 2008, p. 4). According to Marete (2011, p. 46), “since the 1990’s, the agency has undergone several name changes – from Refugee Migrant Commission, to Refugee & Migrant Services, to RMS Refugee Resettlement. It is now referred to as Refugee Services.”

Refugees in New Zealand are accepted currently via the government’s refugee quota of 750 refugees annually. Refugee Services New Zealand provides support to refugees in Mangere upon their arrival, and through the first twelve months of resettlement in local communities throughout New Zealand. Refugees who come to New Zealand under the refugee quota are compelled to spend their first six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. According to Immigration New Zealand, refugees are required to spend six weeks at Mangere because the programmes offered at Mangere are designed to assist refugees successfully adjust to living in New Zealand. Moreover, Refugee Services is involved in decisions about:

where refugees are resettled throughout New Zealand, and provides volunteer support workers who are trained to support new refugee families in the local community. They also monitor the progress of quota refugees, supporting them with home visits by their trained social workers and bicultural workers (New Zealand Immigration, n.d.).

Further, refugees who come to New Zealand via the refugee quota system are granted permanent residence status on arrival. The permanent residence status enables quota refugees to be eligible for all social welfare benefits and government assistance. Furthermore, in 2013, the New Zealand government rolled out the first stages of the national Refugee Resettlement
Strategy. The New Zealand Resettlement Strategy document states that the overarching vision for the Refugee Resettlement Strategy is to ensure that refugees are fully ‘integrated’ socially and economically into New Zealand society as soon as possible. The Strategy (2013, p. 3) has five goals, namely:

- Self-sufficiency. The rationale behind this objective is to ensure that refugees have access to paid work.
- Participation. The thinking behind this goal is to cultivate a sense of belonging in refugees.
- Health and wellbeing. This goal aims to make sure that refugees have access to good quality health care.
- Education. Through educational programmes, the NZ government is committed to equip refugees with English language skills in order to participate in daily life.
- Housing. The goal is to ensure that “refugees live in safe, secure, healthy and affordable homes, without needing government housing assistance.”

5.6 Black Africans in New Zealand

New Zealand has a population of about 4.24 million people. According to Statistics New Zealand (2013), there are around 13,464 black Africans residing in the country. Most black Africans living in New Zealand came to the country via humanitarian efforts. The countries of origin for blacks Africans residing in New Zealand include Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea and The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to Tuwe (2012), between 1992 and 2001, about 3,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa arrived in New Zealand under the quota system. For the period of 2000 to 2012, New Zealand resettled about 2,028 refugees from Africa (Tuwe, 2012).
Compared to Australia, the number of black Africans living in New Zealand is quite small. It is partly for this reason that this study does not regard the black African population in New Zealand as a community. The African population in New Zealand is simply too small and fragmented to be sociologically described as a community. It is worth pointing out that my use of the concept community is based on the sociological view that as a sociological analytic construct, community suggests a greater social closeness, commonality of purpose, as well as familiarity and dependability. Community is about long-term co-operation based on a network of social relationships that binds people across many arenas of activity and across lines of significant social differences (Calhoun, 1980, Calhoun, 1998). I understand that mainstream writers use the concept of community loosely, and thus often talk about enclaves that have weak social relationships as communities or refer to online interactions or online presence of certain groups as communities. This is not how this research project understand the word community.

The exploration of some of the key research around black Africans living in New Zealand is structured around nine themes, namely: immigration status or being a refugee, gender, work/employment, health, education, housing, family life, social community, politics and the State.

5.7 Immigration status / Being a refugee

Research by Ward and Masgoret (2008) revealed that New Zealanders do not view all migrants in the same light. According to Ward and Masgoret (2008), New Zealanders prefer migrants from Australia, followed by British, white South Africans and Indian migrants. Their research findings show no significant differences in the way that New Zealanders view
Indians and Chinese or Chinese and Samoans. However immigrants from Somalia were regarded less favourably than all other immigrant groups (Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

The 2013 New Zealand census shows that, quantitatively, Somalis are the biggest black African group (at about 1,620) in New Zealand. It is partly for this reason and partly because Somalis were one of the first black African refugee groups to be resettled in New Zealand in the 1990s that this thesis argues that the label Somali is used by New Zealanders as a discursive trope to refer to all black Africans living in New Zealand. Thus, when New Zealand public figures attempt to create a moral panic about black Africans migrating to New Zealand, they talk about Somalis. For instance, right-wing former politician and radio talkback host, Michael Laws, said on air in his Radio Live morning show on March 16, 2012:

I’ve got something against Somalian refugees. No, I’ll be honest about it. I don’t think they should be here… They don’t fit in and they conspicuously don’t fit in and they’re just a bit too much of a problem.

Research (see: Guerin, Guerin, Diiriye, & Abdi, n. d.; Ibrahim, 2012; Adelowo, 2012) shows that Somalis and black Africans living in New Zealand are routinely subjected to public racist harassment. People in cars often yell abuse at Somalis and tell them to go home (Duerin, Guerin, Diiriye, & Abdi, n.d). Additionally, research shows that black Africans are racially profiled as potential criminals at New Zealand airports and by the police (see: Elliott & Yusuf, 2014; Mugadza, 2012).

Adelowo (2012) and Guerin, Guerin, Diiriye and Abdi (n. d) employ a psychological framework to explore issues that black Africans grapple with in New Zealand. Elliott and Yusuf’s (2014) research, as well as Ibrahim’s (2012) PhD study, all uncritically subscribes to
the integration and resettlement paradigm. Mugadza’s (2012) M.A.’s thesis utilizes an ‘empowerment based approach’ to discuss black Africans from a refugee background.

None of these aforementioned studies attempt to draw on research about the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background done in other Western countries in order to develop a better understanding of structural dynamics that shape Western societies. Although the above-mentioned research studies cite the issue of racism and attempt to use various race analyses to engage with the issue, none of the research about black Africans in New Zealand has generated insight about anti-black racism that directly speaks to the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background.

This thesis differs from these studies because through the deconstruction of the uncommodified blackness image, it proposes a new intellectual approach that illuminates the kind of racism that black Africans are subjected to in New Zealand.

5.8 Health

According to Worth (2002), the first settlement of black African refugees in New Zealand in 1993 led the public, politicians and government officials to call for mandatory HIV testing of all African refugees. Research by Birukila (2012) shows that in the imagination of the New Zealand public, black Africans are constructed as a source of HIV infection. According to Fouché, Henrickson, Poindexter et al. (2011), the black African population in New Zealand is the second highest group affected by HIV after the gay community. It is against this background that from 1 July 2013 new health checks were introduced for quota refugees to assess whether they posed a serious public health risk or would be likely to place demands on New Zealand’s health system (Human Rights Commission, 2013).
This thesis builds on the work done by Birukila (2012) and Worth (2002) in arguing that the large research output (see: Fouché, Henrickson, Poindexter et al., 2011; Guerin, Abdi, & Guerin, 2003; Lawrence, 2007) which focuses on the medical and mental health of black Africans in New Zealand, reflects the history between Western medicine and Africa. This history teaches that “diseases that predominantly afflict the poor are unlikely to garner funding for research and drug development, unless they begin to ‘emerge’ into the consciousness and space of the non-poor” (Farmer, 2001, p. 201). It is within this intellectual framework that this study understands the claim made by Fouché, Henrickson, Poindexter et al. (2011: iii) as one where “HIV-positive, Black African migrants and refugees present as a group of growing interest in Aotearoa New Zealand.”

Furthermore, as has already been pointed out in the introduction, through the construction of the uncommodified blackness image, Western societal institutions regard the black body as a discursive site to mobilise consent for stricter medical screening and surveillance. The discursive focus on the health of black Africans also helps generate a moral panic about interracial sexuality. Through the depiction of the Other as diseased, racists regard interracial sexuality as a threat to the health of whites (Ferber, 1998). Health and disease becomes a metaphor in this discourse, which is invoked again and again (Ferber, 1998). Interestingly, a research participant from Birukila’s (2012, p. 224) study recounted a story about his white girlfriend who said that when she told her mother that she was going out with a black African man, “the first thing her mother told her was if you are sleeping with an African, you must use a condom.”

The fact of uncommodified blackness centres around portraying black Africans as diseased and phobogenic – “the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions” (Fanon, 1986, p. 177). Confronted with this kind of blackness, the white man’s burden is to then rehabilitate the Negro refugee (Fanon, 1986).
5.9 Housing

Black Africans struggle to access suitable housing for their large families in New Zealand (Halango, 2007; Ibrahim, 2012; Marete, 2011; Mugadza, 2012). Consequently, research shows that black Africans tend to live in overcrowded houses. What compounds the situation is that private landlords discriminate against black Africans and are often not willing to rent their properties to black Africans (see: Marete, 2011; Refugee Voices, 2004). According to Guerin, Guerin, Diiriye, Abdi, (n.d., p. 8):

Getting a house rented is also a common discrimination problem although few have the English ability and assertion to make a formal complaint. The third author of this paper once went to look at a house to rent but when she arrived, the landlord suspiciously told her that it had been taken. She immediately told the second author about this who then phoned the landlord and asked about the house in her U.S. American accent, and was told that the house was still available and to come around.

Drawing on the concept of ‘housing discrimination’ (Feagin & Sikes, 2013), it is argued that black Africans in New Zealand are subjected to intensive background checks when looking for private accommodation to rent, and that these background checks are meant to discourage or stall black applicants. According to Feagin and Sikes (2013, p. 231), housing discrimination provides clear indications of the “processual character of some present-day discrimination.”

5.10 Family life and Gender

Research (see: Deng & Pienaar, 2011; Lawrence, 2007) identifies parenting as one of the challenges that black African families from a refugee background struggle with in New
Zealand. According to Lawrence (2007), the source of the problem has to do with the clash of parenting styles – New Zealand’s notion that children have rights versus the supposed authoritarian parenting style of Somali people, for example. Deng and Pienaar (2011) uncritically valorize and advocate for the New Zealand government’s parenting project, which is called Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents (SKIP). According to Deng and Pienaar (2011, p. 162), SKIP offers parents tools to help them “cope with stressful and challenging parenting”. But there is no attempt in the above-mentioned research to problematise the issue of parenting styles or to investigate what African research has to say about parenting styles in Africa. Instead, the New Zealand parenting style is presented as the best parenting style, and one that all other parents must adopt. The dominant parenting style in any historical period typically reflects the norms and the values of the dominant social group. Thus, this thesis expands the debate (as it relates to black Africans) through problematizing taken-for-granted claims about the most appropriate way of parenting or what it means to be a ‘good parent’.

Another common challenge faced by many black African families in New Zealand is the issue of gender role reversals (see: Birukila, 2012; Machingarufu, 2011; Ibrahim, 2012). According to the literature, black African women in New Zealand feel that black African men are threatened by the notion of women earning wages as this means they are no longer economically dependent on men. Birukila (2012) argues that black African men feel stigmatized by the loss of economic power which goes hand-in-hand with the lack of social status in New Zealand. Some men deal with the situation by engaging in domestic violence. Birukila’s (2012) male respondents rationalized their violent behaviour towards women by referring to a supposedly unwritten constitution in Africa where a man is the head of the household.
This thesis highlights the lack of historicity and theory around research on black African men in New Zealand. For instance, in his PhD research, Birukila (2012) utilises the acculturation theory to explore the issue of gender role reversal, and does not provide an African historical context to show that gender roles are continually contested all over the world, not only in African countries. This research project questions the accuracy of claims that there exists an unwritten constitution in Africa that champions the oppression of women. African feminists have a long, rich tradition of challenging patriarchy. For instance, Mcfadden (2005, p. 11) points out that Zimbabwean women were instrumental “in the formulation of the African Women’s Charter (within the African Human Rights Charter) and in the formulation of women’s rights as human rights at the global level.” Furthermore, this PhD employs the concept of black misandry to argue that through the creation of the uncommodified blackness image, Western societies casts black men as the very ‘specter of terror’ (Andrews, King, & Leonard, 2010), while white men are portrayed as chivalrous, open-minded and heroic (Markovitz, 2006).

5.11 Social community

In 2013, TV3’s debate programme The Vote asked its viewers whether they consider New Zealand to be a racist country. “Of those that voted, 76 percent said ‘Yes’” (Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 22). This is consistent with the research findings of the Human Rights Commission (2013), which reports that almost one out of every ten New Zealanders experienced discrimination in the last twelve months of the 2013 period. Hence, racial discrimination was the most common form of unlawful discrimination reported to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in 2013.

This state of race relations in New Zealand has a negative impact on the lived experience of black Africans. For example, at a social community level, research shows that
some New Zealanders are not prepared to be neighbourly and friendly to black Africans (see Halango, 2007; Ibrahim, 2012; Meager, 2005; Mugadza, 2012). According to Meager (2005, p. 1), her Ethiopian neighbours in Christchurch described how, in “addition to the problems faced by residents of the impoverished neighbourhood we shared, my friends faced racist abuse from neighbours and were often frightened for their safety, particularly since there was no adult male in their household.”

To escape racism, Meager’s (2005) neighbours in Christchurch moved to Auckland in order to be closer to more Ethiopians. Similarly, Lawrence (2007, p. 183) found that the primary reason “why so many Somalis wish to live in the Mt Roskill area is to be close to other Somalis who have clustered there.” According to Tuwe (2012), the Department of Labour and Refugee Services are strategically building strong communities of Somalis in places such as Hamilton, Auckland and Christchurch, as well as a Congolese community in Palmerston North.

The solution does not lie in creating ghettoised communities. The long-term solution ought to centre around institutionalized practices that oppose racism and xenophobia. However, like other Western countries, New Zealand is heavily invested in its image as a country that is tolerant of difference, and therefore, the government would rather talk about ‘integration’ than anti-racism. This study documents the experiences of black Africans to show that the discourse of tolerance and integration serves to conceal the hollowness of the promise of cultural pluralism (Essed, 1991).

5.12 Education

Racist bullying is a reality for many children of African descent living in New Zealand. Mainstream discourse and research into the issue in New Zealand often neglects the racist dimension of the situation and mainly frames the issue around the category of common
childhood bullying. Take for example the recently published Ministry of Education’s ‘Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools’ document (NZ Ministry of Education, 2015). There is no discussion of racist bullying anywhere in the 76 page long policy document. What the document does discuss though is verbal bullying, which it points out includes “discriminatory remarks” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2015). Similarly, a 2013 research report, entitled ‘Bullying in New Zealand Schools: A Final Report’, by Green, Harcourt, Mattoni and Prior also fails to explore the topic of racist bullying.

Connolly and Keenan (2000, cited in Rigby, 2002, p. 39) define racist bullying as actions and behaviours “‘that intentionally or otherwise either discriminate against someone or make them feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their racial identity.’” Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) argue that in many Western countries there is growing concern about racist bullying in schools. Some research reports in New Zealand highlight racist bullying as one of the problems facing black African children in New Zealand schools (see: Adelowo, 2012; Humpage, 2000; Ibrahim, 2012). However, although African children are victims of racist bullying at school, in many instances they are punished for defending themselves against racist bullies (see: Humpage, 2000; Ibrahim, 2012). As far as teachers at some New Zealand schools are concerned, the problem is not racist bullying, but aggressive and inarticulate black African students who are incapable of resolving racist situations amicably (Humpage, 2000; Ibrahim, 2012).

This thesis deepens the debate on racist bullying by pointing out that the traditional racial stereotype of black Africans as inherently uncivilised and aggressive is increasingly being replaced by the cultural belief that portrays black Africans as aggressive, irrational and inarticulate (Essed, 1991). Furthermore, in the 21st century, the tolerance of racism is frequently legitimised by pathologising those who are the victims of racism through questioning the personalities of opponents of racism (Essed, 1991).
5.13 Work and employment

Research shows high unemployment levels among people from a refugee background in New Zealand. According to McMillan and Gray (2009), people from a refugee background experience discrimination when searching for employment, and when they are employed, tend to work in a few industries, typically with poor conditions of employment and on low rates of pay.

Black Africans in New Zealand feel that the country’s labour market discriminates against them (Machingarufu, 2011; Mugadza, 2012). A report by the Auckland Council Funded Services to Migrants and Refugees (Woodley & Williams, 2012) points out that New Zealand businesses are unwilling to hire migrants who do not have New Zealand experience. The report further points out that “applicants need considerable social capital to get employment” (Woodley and Williams, 2012, p. 22).

Social capital is commonly defined as the ability of social actors to access social and economic benefits by virtue of membership in social networks (Gaddis, 2012). This thesis highlights the race dimension of social capital. Social status and people’s social networks, which determine a person’s social capital, largely has to do with race and class background. Moreover, there is no one homogenous social capital – different types of social capital reflects the values of different social groups in society. Thus, the subtext to the Auckland Council Funded Services to Migrants and Refugees report is that job-seekers need to have the right kind of social capital, the kind of social capital that reflects the values of the dominant social group in New Zealand.

The New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2013, p. 32) asked New Zealand employers what advice they had for new migrants, and:
they advised newcomers to ‘learn the English language and speak it’; ‘work hard and explain to your bosses why you should be hired’; ‘set up your own business’; and ‘make an extra effort to fit in.’

This advice is consistent with the New Zealand government’s philosophy that a focus “on prioritising English language skills for the workplace underscores the value of having a workforce confident in its spoken and written English” (Woodley & Williams, 2012, p. 38). In reality the notion of “good English” is an ideological and social tool that is often utilised by gatekeepers to filter out ‘outsiders’ from positions of prestige and power. Modern nation states require immigrants to speak a state-mandated language to demonstrate that they have socially ‘integrated’ into the broader society (May, 2011). This thesis expands the debate on under-employment and high unemployment among black Africans in New Zealand by highlighting the ways in which Western countries utilise the language ideology to discriminate against black Africans in the labour market. Moreover, through the language ideology, societal institutions in Western countries utilise language-focused discrimination to compel migrants to fit in.

5.14 Politics and the State

Although New Zealand is officially a bicultural society, it has, in recent times, become a “de facto multicultural nation”, according to Ward and Masgoret (2008, p. 228). Clarke (2006, p. 71) is of the view that New Zealand is currently grappling with rapidly increasing cultural diversity within its population, “and is doing so using a somewhat ill defined version of the ideological system of multiculturalism.” According to Clarke (2006), the multiculturalism discourse in New Zealand perceives culture to be centred around or solely consistent of ethnic food and exotic performing arts, which are often displayed in an appropriate space
outside of daily life. The control over wider daily life is maintained within the Eurocentric framework that foregrounds the cultural values of the white majority (Clarke, 2006).

Historically, the New Zealand national identity has been considered to be of white-Anglo heritage. It is against this backdrop that the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development report (2008, p. 101) argues that “people who are visibly different, for example in terms of skin colour or dress, are susceptible to experiencing negative forms of recognition and discrimination.” These negative forms of recognition are deployed to cast the victims as outsiders who do not belong (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Thus, in his research, O’Byrne (2012) found that black Africans from a refugee background felt marginalised in New Zealand and the feelings of alienation were compounded by lack of employment.

In his article, entitled ‘The imported underclass: Poverty and social exclusion of black African refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand’, Chile (2002, p. 359) argued that:

Refugees are ‘imported’ into a country by the goodwill of the government and people of the country. Shelving them on the fringes of society effectively disqualifies them from social participation and consigns them to the status of underclass. This is the fate of many Black African refugees in New Zealand.

Although this thesis expands and deepens Chile’s (2002) core argument, it does not agree with the use of the concept of ‘underclass’ to frame that argument. The notion of an ‘underclass’ has its origin in the American liberal pathologist discourse, which is often used to highlight the alleged cultural and moral deficiencies as the root cause of black poverty (Matlin, 2013). Instead, this thesis highlights various discourses that are utilised to justify and rationalise the marginalisation of black Africans in New Zealand. To date, there is no
academic study in New Zealand that explores ways in which dominant discourses are deployed to exclude and Other black Africans.

5.15 Conclusion

There is a dearth of sociological research around the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background in New Zealand. The research that has been done tends to highlight social problems, and not sociological problems. The former is concerned with an aspect of the organisation of society that researchers believe ought to be addressed to resolve the problem. Sociological research, on the other hand, is interested in explaining a social phenomenon by investigating the organisation of society as a whole (Willis, 1993). This thesis contributes to the field of refugee studies in New Zealand by framing issues that the respondents in this study grappled with within a sociological framework. To achieve this task, the study specifically utilises the sociological imagination.

This study’s methodological approach enriches and expands the field in the sense that this is the first study of its kind in New Zealand to investigate the lived experience of black Africans via the Africana Studies framework. Consequently, this approach helps highlight under-researched topics such as racist bullying in New Zealand schools.

It is also worth noting that research around refugee issues in New Zealand tends to be conducted by the government or funded by the government. For example, the Refugee Voices project is a government research project. It should be pointed out that Refugee Voices does not focus only on black African refugees, but rather on all refugees living in New Zealand. Sociologically, this is problematic because different social groups have access to different institutional roles in society. Furthermore, host societies all over the world often relate differently to different refugee groups. Both aforementioned factors impact on the lived experience of social community of refugees substantially. Above all else, Refugee Voices is
essentially a government publication and, therefore, like any government publication, scholars ought to approach it with scepticism.

Ultimately, the study contributes to the ongoing efforts to document the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background in New Zealand.
Chapter 6 - Methodology

6.1 Introduction

The intellectual approach of this thesis is inspired by Frantz Fanon’s ‘Black Skin, White Masks’. In ‘Black Skin, White Masks’ Fanon (1986) discusses the experiences of black immigrants in France. The first chapter of ‘Black Skin, White Masks’, is an exploration of the ‘lived-experience of the black’ (Rabaka, 2015), while chapter two and chapter three discuss interracial sexuality and black masculinity, and chapter five is entitled ‘The fact of blackness’.

This thesis explores the experiences of black Africans from a refugee background who live in Australia and New Zealand. Like Fanon, this thesis attempts to make sense of the lived experience of the black by employing disparate intellectual analyses ranging from institutional analysis and race analysis to discourse analysis, Africana Studies, and African Diaspora. This is where the originality of this thesis lies – “the ability to bring so many disparate discourses” (Rabaka, 2015, p. 255) into critical dialogue and then deploy them to interrogate the life struggles of black Africans living in Australia and New Zealand.

6.2 Africana Studies and African Diaspora

The term Africana refers to people of African descent and Africa-descended communities, wherever they are found worldwide (McDougal III, 2014). Thus, Africana Studies researches social environments occupied by African-descended people irrespective of where they are located geographically (McDougal III, 2014). Africana Studies is concerned with the “narrativity of black experience” (Dyson, 2003, p. 25). Similarly, the African Diaspora paradigm situates Africa and her diaspora at the centre of discourse (McLeod, 1999). Additionally, what the African diaspora paradigm provides for scholars is an opportunity for
According to Zeleza (2009), there are three types of new black African diasporas: the diasporas of colonisation, diasporas of decolonisation, and the diasporas that emerged out of the era of structural adjustment. The diasporas of colonisation include students who went to study abroad and stayed, and many other Africans who could migrate and become citizens according to the prevailing immigration regimes of the time in the host countries (Zeleza, 2009). The diasporas of decolonisation, on the other hand, consist of Europeans and Asian settlers who relocated overseas during the struggles for independence. The diasporas of structural adjustment, according to Zeleza (2009), have been formed since the 1980s out of the migrations engendered by economic and political crises on the continent (i.e. Africa).

The diasporas of structural adjustment include refugees, professional elites, as well as students. The focus in this work is on the diasporas of structural adjustment, particularly as these relate to the production of refugees. Zeleza (2009, p. 32) defines the word diaspora to mean simultaneously “a state of being and a process of becoming, a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning, a navigation of multiple belongings, of networks of affiliation.” In this research project, transnationalism and diaspora are sometimes utilised interchangeably to capture the “processual view of crossborder social phenomena” (Faist, 2010, p. 33). According to Schiller, Basch and Blanc (1995), transnational migration highlights ongoing and continuing ways in which immigrants construct and maintain their social relations to their societies of origin and settlement. Therefore, transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are constructed in relationship to more than one nation-state (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995).
The African Diaspora paradigm dovetails perfectly with the Africana Studies approach. Originally called Black Studies, Africana Studies emerged owing to the increased number of African American students in predominantly white American universities, “all of which resulted from the gains and pressures of the Black Freedom Movement in the mid-1960s” (Hall, 2012, p. 15). According to Hall (2012), it was black students, as well as African American scholars who pointed out a vacuum in American educational practice that they claimed erased, silenced, and marginalised the histories and humanities of black people. Mazama (2006) argues that Africana Studies emerged primarily as a consequence of political demands made by black students and the black community at large on white universities to break their “racist silence about, or otherwise gross misrepresentation of, the Black experience.”

Hall (2012) further points out that it was black students and black scholars who articulated an alternative pedagogy that would accurately reflect the lived experience of black people in the name of Black Studies. According to Mazama (2006), Africana Studies has over the years, confirmed and reinforced its institutionalization. For instance, in 1975, the National Council of Black Studies, the discipline's main professional organization, was established and became responsible for creating professional standards, basic curricular guidelines, and a support network for Africana Studies scholars (Mazama, 2006). Moreover, of vital importance in this institutionalization process has been the development of several doctoral programs, the first one at Temple University, in 1988 - “a true milestone in the development of Africana Studies” (Mazama, 2006).

Africana Studies has its own concepts, theories, and paradigms, and that makes Africana Studies its own intellectual discipline (McDougal III, 2014). Some of the theories and paradigms that make up Africana Studies include the Afrocentric paradigm, the colonial paradigm and Critical Race Theory. Although much of the discourse around Africana Studies
is often framed in terms of political ideology, what gives Africana Studies its unique intellectual identity is “a set of underlying epistemological issues - determining what (and who) constitutes valid knowledge about black people and black communities” (Hall, 1999, p. 35). According to Hall (2012), the struggle to establish Africana Studies in the academy was ultimately fought and won on intellectual and epistemological grounds.

Historically, black thinkers who utilise the Africana Studies approach or who work across disciplinary borders have had to defend their methodological and conceptual approaches (Ifekwunigwe, 2013). According to Angela Davis (1994, p. 427):

It used to be that any work done by a Black person about Black issues was not acknowledged as ‘real scholarship.’ Consider how long it has taken us to compel the academy to recognize the work of W.E.B.DuBois - or Zora Neale Hurston.

Thus, for decades, white thinkers were considered to be authoritative voices on racial and ethnic issues (Stanfield II, 2011). According to Stanfield II (2011), it has always been the norm in the social sciences to assume that Eurocentric empirical realities can be extrapolated to shed light on the social realities of people of colour. Feagin (2010) traces this academic practice to the long tradition of Western social science.

Consider the still influential, towering intellectual giants of the Western tradition such as Max Weber, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Sigmund Freud. They loom large in much contemporary U.S. and Western social science, yet not one of these intellectual giants gave serious research or analytical attention to the systems of racial oppression that operated conspicuously within Western countries’ imperial spheres during their lifetimes. (Feagin, 2010, p. 5)
This does not mean that this research project rejects *in toto* the insight of the aforementioned thinkers. The point, however, is that as much as black intellectuals have to be open to intellectual insights of European thinkers, on the other hand black thinkers must never lose sight of some of the theoretical silences in the work of white theorists, especially as those silences relate to issues of class, gender, race, and empire (hooks & West, 1991). The foregoing is consistent with the Africana intellectual tradition, which includes thinkers such as Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Leopold Senghor, and Aime Cesaire. Among other things, the defining feature of the Africana intellectual tradition is the:

longstanding inclination to develop dialectical relationships with both the Africana and European intellectual traditions in the interest of identifying and addressing the most pressing problems confronting continental and diasporan African, as well as other socio-politically oppressed, racially colonized, and economically exploited peoples (Rabaka, 2015, p. 255).

### 6.3 Validity and reliability of the lived experience

As far as this research project is concerned, the lived experience of the black has enabled black people to develop deep insight into how anti-black racist discourses manifest themselves, and the ways in which these discourses impact their lives. The notion of experience includes general knowledge of racism, “which is an important source of information to qualify whether specific events can be generalized” (Essed, 1991, p. 3). Most importantly, this thesis argues that the consistency between data collected from different respondents independent of each other enabled this project to achieve reliability. In other words, to go beyond individual perceptions of social reality, this study explored shared
interpretations, assessed by intersubjective comparisons (Essed, 1991). According to Essed (1991, p. 59), “intersubjectivity of interpretation is based on comparative analysis of interpretation procedures made operational by studying questions such as these”: are similar acts in similar situations interpreted in the same way by respondents? Do research participants refer to similar sources to support or to verify their interpretations and evaluations of social experience?

The construction of validity entailed linking the respondents’ shared interpretations to the overall theoretical structure of the thesis to assess whether the research participants’ constructions of reality were related to the concepts and theoretical assumptions of the study (Essed, 1991). Furthermore, the study relied on the triangulation of sampling to further achieve validity (Ngum Chi Watts, 2012). In other words, the participants in this study consist of individuals from different African nationalities, different age groups, and different walks of life (Ngum Chi Watts, 2012). Sampling is discussed in detail in the following section.

This thesis is cognisant of the fact that often the research output of scholars of colour is screened and analysed by an intellectual system that, “under the guise of objectivity, inherently favours” an Eurocentric interpretation of reality (Hendrix, 2002, p. 163). Thus, scholars of colour are routinely asked ‘Do you think that being black introduced bias into your research?’ (Hendrix, 2002). Embedded in this question is the assumption that when white academics research other whites, they are objective ‘interviewers’ rather than ‘white interviewers’ of white study participants (Hendrix, 2002). Interestingly, black researchers rarely ever get to study white working class people with the aim of revealing their lived experience or their racial and economic fears (Royster & Steinberg, 2003). It is typically only white researchers who have access to poor white working class enclaves (Royster & Steinberg, 2003). Additionally, white researchers regularly study the inner workings of poor
and working class black communities, “who seem to have become accustomed to being studied” (Royster & Steinberg, 2003, p. 1).

This study highlights the foregoing to reveal how white privilege impacts knowledge production. Be that as it may, this research project recognises the intellectual contribution of white researchers to the study of black communities. However, at the same time, the intent is to raise an ethical issue that critical black researchers are concerned about, which is that research has shown repeatedly that black participants are reticent about discussing their experiences of white racism with a white interviewer (Essed, 1991). According to Royster and Steinberg (2003), black respondents often de-emphasise anger about racial conditions, and also their concerns about being the victim of racial discrimination when speaking with white interviewers. Hence, scholars of colour view with suspicion data collected in cross-racial interviews mainly due to the awareness of this pattern of self-censorship among black respondents who find themselves in a cross-racial interview (Royster & Steinberg, 2003).

6.4 Sampling Procedure

To recruit research participants, this thesis used voluntary sampling. According to McDougal III (2014, p. 155), voluntary sampling refers to “instances when population elements are selected by putting out an explicit call for volunteers, such as an internet post or paper posted advertisement for participants.” For this study, a sample recruitment flyer was developed and circulated online, at public meetings, and at public places where black Africans often congregate. The sample recruitment flyer, as well as the data collection procedures, were approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee. The flyer (see Appendix A) clearly and briefly outlined the purpose of the study; the inclusion and exclusion criteria; as well as participation commitment requirements.
In Auckland, the sample recruitment flyer was circulated online in the African Communities Forum Inc. (ACOFI) listserve. According to the ACOFI website, the organisation is for all Africans living in New Zealand, and it is a place where information is shared. Additionally, I physically handed out the recruitment flyers at Auckland Ethnic soccer tournaments in December 2013 and January 2014. Handing out flyers at soccer games often required me to explain the study to groups of people who were at the stadium watching a soccer game. I also sent out the recruitment flyer to all the African people I knew who reside in Auckland, and these people sent out the flyer to their own networks. These are the three main strategies that I used to recruit participants in Auckland. The recruitment process in Auckland took over five months, from November 2013 to March 2014. All in all, I recruited and interviewed 11 research participants in Auckland. The eleven research participants include one pilot interview that I did before commencing the actual collection of data. The pilot interview is not included in the data analysis. The research participants come from different African countries, which include Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan.

I found that handing out flyers at soccer games was the best recruitment strategy. People were relaxed and social at soccer games, and in the company of their friends they felt confident to ask questions about my research. One of the questions that people constantly asked me was: “is this a political project?” People explained to me that they did not want to get involved in politics because they feared that would jeopardise either their immigration status or future possibilities of bringing their loved ones into the country. In dealing with this question I would explain that I was doing research for my PhD which explores social, political and economic issues, and hence that this research was not a political project in the sense they understood politics to be. For most people this answer was satisfactory. The main recruitment challenge I faced was related to people cancelling appointments at the last minute or people not showing up for appointments. Although I understood that people change their
minds all the time, the experience was frustrating and generated anxiety about whether or not
I was going to be successful in recruiting enough research participants for the study. I used
saturation as a criteria to make decisions about the sample size of this research study. A
saturation point in qualitative data collection is reached when a researcher has been in the
field for a certain period of time and collecting data from various sources, and at some point,
he or she realises that “they are hearing the same information and no new information is

Similarly, in Melbourne, I utilised saturation as a criteria to make decisions about the
sample size. However, the recruitment process in Melbourne presented me with a different
set of challenges. The first challenge I had to overcome was that I was based in New Zealand
and seeking to research people I had never met and who are based in Australia. At the time
my knowledge about Australia came mainly from reading books. I had not travelled and
spent time in Australia before I undertook this research project. I had no contacts in Australia,
but I was determined to do research in Melbourne.

I began by conducting an online search in February 2014 for African organisations in
and around Melbourne. In March 2014, I sent out the sample recruitment flyer to people,
researchers and organisations working with African people in Melbourne. Some people
replied to my email and wanted to know more about the study; and some people wrote back
telling me about upcoming African events to attend or places to go to in Melbourne where I
could present my study and invite people to participate. I was invited to attend a meeting
organised by an African organisation which is based in Melbourne. The leader of the
organisation invited me to present my study at the meeting. I travelled to Melbourne in early
April to attend the meeting. The meeting was not well attended, but I was given a platform to
talk about my research. I also gave the people in attendance the flyers to pass out to their
contacts and to other African people in their communities. I met with a couple of African
researchers working in the field and I gave them recruitment flyers to give out to their contacts and to circulate in their networks. In addition, I physically handed out the flyers in public places where black Africans often congregate in Melbourne; that is, public places in suburbs such as Footscray, Heidelberg West, St Albans, Sunshine and Collingwood. On my first trip to Melbourne in early April 2014, I managed to interview five research participants.

However, a lot of people showed and expressed interest in participating in the study. I came back to Auckland in mid-April and, via the telephone, I followed up with potential participants who had showed or expressed interest in participating while I was in Melbourne. I then set up interview appointments from Auckland and then returned to Melbourne in early May 2014 to conduct the interviews. On this second trip I managed to interview eight research participants. All in all, I interviewed thirteen research participants in Melbourne. For this thesis, I only used interviews from ten respondents that I interviewed in Melbourne. I decided not to use the other three interviews because I discovered during the course of the interview that one of the three respondents had mental health problems, and the other two did not quite fit the profile of the respondents that I was looking to interview. For instance, the second respondent of the three research participants that I did not use in this study was originally resettled in New Zealand in the early 1990s but moved to Australia after living in New Zealand for eight years. And the third unused interview was from a research participant who left the DRC as a refugee and travelled to Cameroon and then eventually ended-up in Canada where he worked as a journalist. He then decided to immigrate to Australia from Canada as a professional. The research participants interviewed in Melbourne originally came from different African countries, which include Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

The whole recruitment process in Melbourne took over four months, from February 2014 to May 2014. The recruitment strategy that worked best was physically handing out
flyers in public places where black Africans congregate in Melbourne. Interestingly, no one in Melbourne asked me whether or not my research was political. However, I had to deal with late cancellations of appointments or people simply unexpectedly failing to show up without letting me know in advance. After my recruitment efforts in New Zealand, I had come to expect these disappointments. So, in Melbourne, I always made sure I was overbooked when making appointments because I knew someone was going to cancel at the last minute. I found that for me, personally, this was the best strategy of dealing with the uncertainties of recruiting research participants in a foreign country. Another challenge I had to overcome in Melbourne was that I had to find out how to get around the city and how to get to the places I wanted to get to in a short space of time. To overcome this obstacle I spent a lot of time reading the city map, and I had to develop a working knowledge of the public transport system in Melbourne.

All the research participants in this study settled in Australia and New Zealand via the refugee and humanitarian programmes (Ngum Chi Watts, 2012). The age make-up of the research participants in the study is between 25 and 75 years of age. The data shows that although the age range of research participants is wide, the respondents’ lived experience is similar. It is worth noting that at the time of the interviews, the majority of respondents had been living in their host countries for more than three years.

This thesis does not claim that the sample size of this study is a representative sample of all African people from a refugee background in Melbourne and Auckland (Phillips, 2011). In qualitative research, ‘sample size’ does not mean ‘significance’ (Bagnasco, Ghirotto, & Sasso, 2014). The rationale behind the design of this study’s sampling procedure is to be indicative rather than representative (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). The most important epistemological reason that influenced the decision making with regards to the
sample size of this study is that “one cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything…” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 36).

The research participants of the study are not ethnically homogenous. In other words, the respondents of this project are ethnically diverse and come from different African countries. This sampling procedure is consistent with the Africana Studies research design. Moreover, the diversity of research participants in this research is used in this study as part of the sampling strategy - that is triangulation of sampling - to achieve validity (Ngum Chi Watts, 2012). Hence, the make-up of respondents in the study consists of individuals from different African nationalities, different age groups, and different walks of life (Ngum Chi Watts, 2012). Interviewing participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds also helped to counter any volunteer bias that goes with a voluntary sampling procedure. Further, although this study targeted participants with functional English (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007), one interview in Auckland was conducted via an interpreter. The interpreter had to sign a confidentiality form (see Appendix B) before participating in this study.

6.5 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in a variety of places, including participants’ homes, refugee centres, participants’ automobiles, participants’ business premises, and coffee shops. On average, the interviews in Auckland lasted slightly longer than those in Melbourne (Essed, 1991). In Auckland, the interviews lasted between one hour to one and a half hour. In Melbourne, interviews lasted on average between 50 minutes and one hour. The length of the interviews was determined by respondents, as some research participants had more time available than others. Whatever time respondents had available, the goal was never to produce a complete reconstruction of the lived experience of research participants (Essed, 1991). Rather, the ultimate objective behind the interview strategy was to elicit ‘spontaneous
accounts’ of respondents’ lived experience (Essed, 1991). Therefore, all the respondents’ interviews that are analysed and theorized in this study are spontaneous, but directed, accounts of research participants’ lived experience.

The semi-structured, interactive interviewing technique was used as a tool to collect data. According to Ellis, Kiesinger and Tillmann-Healy (1987, p. 122), unlike traditional hierarchical interview situations, “where interviewers reveal little about themselves, aloofly ask questions in one or two brief sessions, and have little or no relationship with respondents,” interactive interviewing facilitates dialogue rather than interrogation. One of the defining features of the interactive interviewing technique is that the relationship of interviewer and respondent is not as distinctly hierarchical as it is in traditional interview situations (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1987). The rationale behind interactive interviewing is to facilitate a collaborative communication process between researcher and respondents (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1987). Thus, interactive interviewing entails the sharing of personal and social experiences of both respondents and researchers, who tell their stories in the context of a developing relationship (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1987).

Interactive interviewing helped me, as a researcher, to connect with the respondents and to identify places of commonality between our experiences during the interview process (Anderson & Jack, 1991, cited in Boylorn, 2009). Furthermore, the interactive interview technique allowed respondents “to optimally verbalise their feelings, opinions, and experiences in a relatively free and detailed way” (Essed, 1991, p. 63). Interactive interviewing was also chosen to enable research participants to make sociologically relevant the seemingly trivial, but exciting or humiliating events of everyday life (Essed, 1991). The use of an interactive interview technique does not mean a loss of control over the general structure of the interview (Essed, 1991). To guarantee comparison between statements of
different participants, I utilised a global interview schedule (see Appendix C), “the use of which was adapted to the specific style and personality of the interviewee” (Essed, 1991, p. 68). The interview schedule was based on the main clusters of information which the study aimed to explore (Essed, 1991): (a) background life history, (b) lived experience, (c) masculinity and gender issues. In both countries, New Zealand and Australia, the interview method gave consistent results; namely comparable verbal reconstructions of lived experience in similar situations of everyday life (Essed, 1991). This means that the interactive interview technique was effective and reliable for this research project (Essed, 1991).

As part of interactive interviewing, active listening was utilised as part of data collection. Ayres (2008) writes that active listening strategies use both verbal and nonverbal communication channels. Nonverbal active listening strategies establish and maintain rapport, while verbal listening strategies serve to clarify any confusion (Ayres, 2008). Nonverbal active listening strategies include maintaining an attentive demeanour with an open posture and staying relaxed, whereas verbal listening strategies entail paraphrasing, reflecting and summarising what the interviewee says to make sure that the researcher does not misrepresent the respondent’s views (Ayres, 2008). According to Ayres (2008), “active listening demands a neutral open attitude toward the speaker so that even remarks that are shocking or distressing are understood - not judged - by the listener.” In this study, active listening stimulated “the narration of experiences that would remain unexpressed” in a traditional hierarchical interview situation (Essed, 1991, p. 62). Furthermore, both active listening and interactive interviewing facilitated a ‘natural conversation’ between the researcher and the respondents, and that in turn has enriched the study’s data (Essed, 1991).

It is worth noting that being black African and male also facilitated an open exchange between the respondents and I. Respondents felt comfortable talking to me about their experiences, and research participants often referred to me as ‘brother’ during the course of
the interviews. All the interviews, except four, were conducted one-on-one. In one of the four interviews which were not conducted one-on-one, I used an interpreter to conduct the interview. The interviewee suggested an interpreter, and fortunately the interpreter was a professionally trained interpreter and a friend of the interviewee. Be that as it may, “the use of interpreters means that the interviewer is unable to know for certain how the question has been translated and what information is being included in the response” (Lawrence, 2007, p. 156). Another disadvantage in using an interpreter is that the interview process takes longer than an average interview. However, out of the 24 interviews conducted in the course of data collection, only one interview was carried out via an interpreter. Thus, the potential disadvantages of using an interpreter had no significant impact on this research.

With the other three interviews where there was more than one person present in the interview, I would arrive at a respondent’s house to discuss their lived experience, and “would end up carrying the discussion in the presence of other family members” or friends (Lawrence, 2007, p. 152). Before commencing the interviews, I always reminded the respondents that I would prefer it if the interviews were done one-on-one, without an extra person in the room, but the response I received in these three cases was that they had no problems sharing their lived experience with me in front of their friends or family members. The interviews with these participants flowed naturally. The fact that their friends or members of their family were present during interviews seemed to make these research participants feel safe and relaxed. It also gave credibility to the data because sometimes they confirmed some of their experiences with the family/friends who were present in the interview.

Similarly, I reminded the participants that I interviewed at coffee shops about privacy and confidentiality issues and made it clear that I preferred conducting the interviews either at their homes or at a place where a certain level of privacy was guaranteed. However,
these interviewees responded by saying that they had no problem talking to me in a public place, and further, they pointed out that it was more convenient for them to meet and talk with me in a public place than at their homes.

I started all the interviews by first explaining the purpose of my study and by discussing issues around confidentiality, and then, if a respondent had no questions regarding the rationale of my research, I asked research participants to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix D). I always began the actual interview by asking respondents to tell me the year in which they first arrived in Australia or in New Zealand. I followed that question by asking why they immigrated to these countries, and from there we discussed some of the adjustment challenges that respondents initially grappled with. Beginning an interview in this way encouraged respondents to get into a conversational mood and it always helped respondents to settle into a narrative rhythm (Lareau, 1989). Only one research participant demonstrated an unwillingness to open up to me. It is worth noting that this particular respondent was interviewed in the privacy of his home in Auckland without friends or members of his family present during the interview. This respondent answered questions regarding his lived experience very briefly, and he looked tense every time I asked him questions related to racism. However, when I spoke to him about issues related to black masculinity, parenting, and women’s role in New Zealand, he eased up and even volunteered information I had not asked for.

All the interviews were formally conducted on a single occasion, and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (Shakespeare-Finch, & Wickham, 2010). Two research assistants helped with the transcription of the Australian interviews. One research assistant transcribed two full interviews and thereafter could not continue with the job. The second research assistant transcribed the remainder of the Australian interviews. The research
assistants had to sign a confidentiality form (see Appendix E) before commencing with transcription. I transcribed all the New Zealand interviews myself.

6.6 Coding

To analyse the data, this study used manual coding. This means that no sophisticated computer software programmes were used to code the data, instead features of Microsoft Word were used to highlight and code transcribed interviews. Coding entails reducing data into categories based on patterns or themes (McDougal III, 2014). I coded the data with the specific aim of looking for patterns and themes in the data. Coding was done in several research phases. Firstly, it was done during the development of the interview schedule. That process was based on a reading of the literature, as well as on the theory that informs the thesis. This first phase of coding was done utilising the pre-established coding scheme (McDougal III, 2014). I then went out to the field and conducted interviews. I then revisited my codes based on the information that emerged in the interviews. I refined and further developed the codes. This is consistent with Miles and Hiberman’s (1984) view that if a researcher develops codes prior to fieldwork, he/she must be ready to bend the codes if, in the light of data, the codes look inapplicable, overbuilt, empirically ill-fitting, or overly abstract. One of the advantages about creating codes before field work is that it forces the researcher to link research questions to the data (Miles & Hiberman, 1984).

After I finished collecting the data, I transcribed the interviews. Listening to the interviews while transcribing them compelled me to regularly update and refine my codes. After the completion of the data transcription, I closely read over the transcript several times “taking note of significant or interesting aspects of the data” (McDougal III, 2014, p. 276). The rationale that informed my coding is shaped by Bryman’s (2004) view that there is no
correct approach to coding one’s data. Be that as it may, I took the following steps, which are borrowed from Bryman’s (2004) coding process, to developing my codes:

- I started coding while reviewing the literature. This pre-established coding scheme was shaped by the theoretical structure of the project.
- I coded as I collected the data for the study. This allowed me to deepen my understanding of the data.
- I read and re-read the transcripts looking for themes.
- I closely read through the transcripts again, but this time I highlighted and made marginal notes about significant remarks or observations. I developed these notes into themes.
- I reviewed the pre-established coding schemes in relation to the transcripts.
- At this point, I considered general theoretical ideas in relation to codes and data.
- I then outlined connections between theoretical concepts and the categories I had developed. Moreover, I pondered on how these connections related to the literature.
- Although I began with many codes, in the end and in the light of the data, I filtered out some of these codes. This coding process helped keep my coding in perspective.

In searching for themes, I used the following criteria to generate codes: repetition, similarities and differences, missing data and theoretical material (McDougal III, 2014). According to McDougal III (2014), a researcher should be looking for repetition of topics and subject matter. Similarities and differences illustrate how research participants express the same or different ideas in unique ways (McDougal III, 2014). Missing data is equally significant because “what is not said is just as important as what is said, and this can present an opportunity for the researcher to ask about the kind of information that respondents omit”
(McDougal III, 2014, p. 275). However, Ryan and Bernard (2003) caution that themes which are discovered in this manner need to be carefully and closely scrutinized to ensure that researchers are not finding only what they are looking for.

Thus, to avoid seeing only what the theory predicts, all the themes that were developed based on theory but which were not supported by the actual data, were eliminated in the end (McDougal III, 2014). It should be pointed out, however, that the practice of not utilising theory as part of developing themes is not the solution. Theory avoidance brings the risk of not making the connection between data and important theoretical research questions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Therefore, the themes that are utilised to theorise and interpret the data in the next four chapters came both from the empirical data and from prior theoretical understanding of the literature (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The themes are as follows: Africa vs modernity; neighbourhood life; being Australian/New Zealander; parenting; black masculinity; being a refugee; personal racism encounters and vicarious experiences of racism; employment and workplace issues; school experience; tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism.

6.7 Ethics
On 16 August 2013, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approved this research for a period of three years. All the documents that were either sent out to potential participants or were signed (for example, the consent forms) by the respondents clearly stated that the research project was approved by the UAHPEC for a period of three years. The reference number for the application of ethics clearance was clearly highlighted in all the documents that were given to potential participants. It was made clear to potential participants that participating in the study was completely voluntary. Potential respondents were given the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix F), which
was read out aloud to them and explained verbally to participants before the start of the interviews.

It was explained to the participants that the interviews were going to be audio-recorded and that they would be asked to consent to this. Participants were told not to feel obliged to share anything they did not feel comfortable discussing. Further, it was pointed out to respondents that they had every right to terminate the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable, or if they did not like the direction which the interview was taking. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw their participation from the study at any time, provided that they advised me of this prior to 01 June 2014. Additionally, it was made clear to participants that while every effort would be made to protect their identities in the research findings and subsequent publications or reports, there still remained a chance that they could be identified. Before every interview, participants had to sign an informed consent form.

During the course of this research I had to negotiate a few ethical issues. For instance, four interviews were not conducted on a one-on-one basis. Although the participants told me that they were happy to have their friends and family members present in the room during the interviews, I made sure that participants knew that I preferred the interviews to be conducted one-on-one because of the personal nature of the themes covered in the interviews. One interview was conducted via an interpreter. I made sure that the interpreter signed a confidentiality form, however. Similarly, I made sure that the research assistants who helped with the transcription of the Australian interviews signed a confidentiality form prior to transcribing the interviews. Furthermore, after discussing this matter with my supervisors, we agreed that the research assistants (New Zealanders) would only transcribe interviews that were conducted in Australia. The rationale behind this view was that this would help further protect the identities of the Australian respondents.
Although all the interviews were transcribed verbatim, the notion of a ‘verbatim’ transcript has been problematized by numerous qualitative researchers (see: Edwards & Lampert, 1993; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). According to Holstein and Gubrium (2003), a verbatim transcript is often limited to a faithful reproduction of the oral record. The conventional interpretation of a verbatim transcript overlooks the idea that non-verbal communication is not captured on audiotape records, and thus the audiotape itself is not strictly a verbatim record of the interview (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Furthermore, verbal interaction follows a logic that is different from that followed by written prose: people often talk in run-on sentences, and the concept of sentence does not translate well into oral tradition (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Thus, researchers are often compelled to make judgement calls during the transcription process about where to begin and end sentences (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

According to Holstein and Gubrium (2003), the judgement calls that researchers often make during the transcription of data range from deciding whether or not to insert a full stop or a comma in transcribing an oral speech, to making sense of broken sentences, interruptions and other communication features that characterise dialogue. Another challenge faced by qualitative researchers when it comes to transcription are issues related to grammar and language. These include factors such as the clarity of speech and the accent of speech used by interviewees who speak English as a second or third language. Verbatim quotes of interviewees who speak English as a second or third language make for difficult reading (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). More importantly, “the potential for respondents (or classes of respondents) to be made to appear inarticulate as a result of the liberal use of verbatim quotes in the published results of a study has important ethical implications” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).
In other words, one of the unintended goals in the use of unedited verbatim quotes in a research study is the portrayal of participants as inarticulate Others. This work is mindful of the racially coded meanings of articulate and how they function to reproduce racist ideologies (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). The long-standing racist imagery of Africans in the West is that people of African descent are inarticulate and unintelligible. The African imagery of ‘linguistic babble’ (Sheller, 2003) has historically been used in the West to cast people of African descent as backward outsiders. Among other things, this research project disrupts these racist myths.

With the foregoing in mind, respondents’ quotes in this study were skilfully edited in the interests of providing a readable text. However, the gist of what was said by respondents was not altered in any way. The editing of the respondents’ quotes was done after the coding and the analysis had taken place. In fact, the editing of the respondents’ quotes was done during the write up of the final draft of the whole PhD thesis.

Another ethical matter that I had to negotiate was the issue of developing and establishing friendship with some of my research participants. For instance, one respondent in Australia later asked me to be a research advisor for their African organisation. I explain that in principle I had no problems with being a research advisor as long as the organisation knew that I was first and foremost an academic, and that I was not interested in influencing the ideological direction of the organisation. I then helped edit the English of some of this respondent’s organisational documents. After a few weeks, the respondent stopped calling or writing emails to me. I felt very uncomfortable about this silence because I felt it was partly due to my lack of enthusiasm for the developing friendship that the respondent stopped calling. The main reason that the respondent stopped calling though has to do with the fact the he is based in Australia, while I am based in New Zealand, and we do not travel across
the Tasman frequently. The geographical divide between the two countries made it difficult to sustain any relationship.

Lareau (2011, p. 313) cautions that it is a delicate process to establish relationships with respondents “while simultaneously maintaining the critical analytic framework necessary to undergird” a sociological analysis. Be that as it may, Lareau (2011, p. 313) concedes that “there are neither easy answers nor one-size-fits-all guidelines.” An essential first step for researchers, though, ought to be that of directly acknowledging the emotional cost of doing research on people who come from poor and economically marginalised social groups (Lareau, 2011).

6.8 Reflexivity

According to Hertz (1987, p. vii – viii), “reflexivity implies a shift in our understanding of data and its collection - something that is accomplished through detachment, internal dialogue, and constant (and intensive) scrutiny of ‘what I know’ and ‘how I know it.’” Reflexivity entails an ongoing conversation that challenges researchers to be fully conscious of the ideology and politics of those we research (Hertz, 1987). It is against this background that I argue that I did not uncritically accept all the statements of the respondents, however, it was vital that “I fully respected their points of view” (Essed, 1991, p. 67). Thus I took the accounts of racism seriously and I showed genuine interest in the participants’ ordinary lived experiences (Essed, 1991). This attitude on my part allowed me to ask the interviewees to “qualify specific statements and to go into details without inducing defensive reactions from their side” (Essed, 1991, p. 67).

This self-awareness compelled me to acknowledge my social position as a researcher and a black African male. To counter any bias resulting from my social position, I made sure that the research questions that went into the interview schedule were informed by the
literature. Interestingly, some of the questions in the interview schedule were generated and formulated based on literature which utilises a resettlement discourse, that this thesis does not subscribe to. As described earlier in this chapter, I coded the data based on theory and on the emerging empirical data itself. To guard against producing distorted accounts of research participants’ lived experiences, I outlined a connection between theoretical concepts and the themes that I developed from coding the data, and I then explored how these connections related to the literature (Bryman, 2004).

The decision to privilege some accounts over others in this research project was informed by the selection of an empirical problem – respondents’ lived experiences - and the theoretical framework of the study (Hertz, 1987). Underpinning this process is the idea that:

> It is the researcher, not the research participants, who frames the research topic, asks the questions, figures out the probes, decides what information to record, selects what to analyse, chooses the quotes to highlight, and does the writing (Lareau, 2011, p. 330).

Be that as it may, I do not claim that the stories that I document and discuss in the following chapters are autonomous truths, but neither do I share cynic’s nihilism that qualitative sociological research is a biased irrelevancy (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1987). My view is that research findings “acquire significance in our intellectual community only when you have reflected on, interpreted, and theorised your data” (Bryman, 2004, p. 411). That is what the next four chapters attempt to do.

The discussion of data is presented in the form of ten themes that emerged from reading the literature, and through the data collection and coding. Although there are
exceptions, there exists a tendency in literature to write about black Africans from a refugee background without giving black Africans a platform to speak for themselves. This thesis deviates from this practice by reconstructing participants’ perspectives through the use of extensive quotes.
Chapter 7 - Social Community in Melbourne

7.1 Introduction
This chapter is based on the discussion of five themes, namely: Africa vs modernity; neighbourhood life; personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism; tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism; and being Australian. The aim is to rigorously engage with the data by theorising it and framing it within a sound structural and historical analysis. According to the literature, employment is the most important ‘indicator of integration’ for people from a refugee background. This thesis takes a different view to this claim. Social community is the most important potential contribution to the well-being of immigrants (Gintis, 1972). The debate in this chapter is underpinned by the foregoing assumption, and the discussion begins by exploring the ‘Africa vs modernity’ theme.

7.2 Africa vs modernity
One of the key findings under this theme is that respondents often made sense of their new lives in Australia through the creation of an ‘Africa vs modernity’ binary category. Participants used the Africa vs modernity binary category to reflect, as well as to compare and contrast their past experiences, with their new lives in Australia. Dominant discourses are inconceivable without the development of binary construction (Susen, 2014). Thus, respondents made sense of their new life in Australia by constantly constructing binary categories of the West and the Rest, rural versus urban, tribal versus cosmopolitan (Hall, 1992; Susen, 2014). The quotes highlighted in this section reveal that within ideological frameworks, binary categories are invariably value-laden, expressing the interests of the dominant social groups in society (Susen, 2014).
The Africa vs modernity binary category, in particular, presents numerous intellectual problems: for example, it encourages participants to discuss their African experiences from an ahistorical vantage point. For instance, Tony, originally from Ethiopia, is of the view that he appreciates the help that the Australian government gives to black Africans because Africans are “very slow”. When asked to explain himself, Tony put his comment in perspective by pointing out that:

You are from South Africa, so maybe you had a chance to complete your primary and secondary schooling. Most of us never had that opportunity. And the Australian government understands that, and they keep that in mind when assisting us. For example, the government helps us access affordable housing.

It is true that many black Africans from a refugee background have had their formal education disrupted due to political conflict and other socio-economic factors. However, the claim that black Africans from a refugee background are simple-minded is inaccurate. The misperception that black Africans from a refugee background are unintelligent is often used by mainstream societal institutions to discriminate against black Africans. One of the key discourses that shape the uncommodified blackness image is the discursive view that, owing to alleged inferiority, black Africans have never invented anything. To use Cesaire’s (1969, p. 72) insight, uncommodified blackness refers to “those who invented neither gunpowder nor compass”, “those who tamed neither steam nor electricity”. It should be noted that when Cesaire wrote those words, he was talking tongue in cheek against the glorification of technology by the European and the bloody conquests of people of colour by colonisation (Kunene, 1969).
This thesis acknowledges that living in a Western country does improve the life chances of African immigrants. For this reason, it accepts the point that Tony is making in the quote above; that point being that Australia provides black Africans with better life chances and educational opportunities. In accepting Tony’s point, however, this study aims to purposefully disrupt tropes that borrow from long-standing discourses about the alleged imbecility of Africans.

Further, although this study accepts the accuracy of the points made by respondents in the quotes below, it nevertheless historicises those quotes while subjecting them to a structural analysis. For example, according to Steph, who was originally from South Sudan but lived in Kenya pre-resettlement, the biggest change in his life since arriving in Australia in 2005 was:

I went straight to university, to La Trobe University… So the big change for me is that I had an opportunity to access university education. There are lots of employment opportunities in Australia compared to Kenya. Although Kenya was also good, but Kenya has fewer employment opportunities, and similarly in Kenya I never had an opportunity to attend university. So my life in Australia has been good in that sense.

Austin, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), echoed Steph’s sentiments.

What I like the most about Australia is that this is a developed country and one can access good education relatively easily. Back in Africa, we had unfulfilled dreams and unmet needs. That is no longer the case here in Australia. Let me tell you the truth – the government subsidises education. Here, you choose. You say, ‘Okay I want to do this, I want to do that.’ And it’s good. … And Australia is a safe and stable country. The
security, in general, it’s okay. …You know, you can travel by car from Melbourne to Sydney without encountering troubles along the way. You do not have to worry about running into bandits on the way. And yes, I like that - education, security, the social aspect.

The quotes above utilise the ‘Africa vs modernity’ binary category to highlight the advantages of living in a Western country. The implicit message is that living in a Western country has a modernising effect on the de-historicised Other (Fikes, 2009). In other words, the Africa vs modernity binary category rehashes the long-standing discourse that contact with whiteness, irrespective of the emotional costs involved, is the lifeblood of blackness (Hughey, 2014).

It is a historical fact that political conflicts and civil wars in Africa have had a devastating impact on African education. Thus, it is understandable that Tim, originally from South Sudan, pointed out that:

The biggest change for me was the availability of employment and education opportunities. When I arrived in Australia, I had a high school diploma, but no university education. So I enrolled at an Australian university and completed my B.A. degree. At the moment I am doing a Master’s degree. That is the big change in my life. In this country, there are so many opportunities, life is relatively easy. I can support myself by getting a job, or if I can’t find a job, then the government will financially support me.

What is missing in the quotes highlighted above is an historical narrative that explores the global political and economic factors that have contributed to the under-development and
destruction of an education system in Africa. For instance, it is a historical fact that the post-colonial development of education in Africa was undermined by Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on African governments (Federici, Caffentzis, & Alidou, 2000). According to Olukoshi and Zeleza (2004, p. 2):

> powerful international forces promoting a neo-liberal agenda and led in the African context by the World Bank had suggested, literally, that Africa had no need for universities because the return on investment which it received from its expenditure outlay was both too low and unjustifiable.

It is important to interpret the quotes above with this history to highlight the key factors that have contributed to the status quo in Africa. It is vital to historicise the quotes above in order not to inadvertently recycle and perpetuate long-standing Western assumptions that conceptualise whiteness by contrasting it with Africa’s presumed backwardness (Gooding-Williams, 2006). It was Hegel who once wrote:

> What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World’s History (Gooding-Williams, 2006, p. 36).

This thesis is premised on the view that “historical understanding is the background to all understanding” (Willis, 1993, p. 42). C. Wright Mills (2000) put it best when he wrote that sociology deals with problems of biography, history, and their intersections within social structures. It is for this reason that this thesis contextualises respondents’ views about the
friendly quality of the Australian society within the broader Australian discourse of ‘mateship’.

For instance, Charles, originally from the DRC, argues that Australia is:

a friendly country. Where I am from, people walk down the street without care for other pedestrians. People push each other, bump others without saying sorry or without taking care. In contrast, people in Australia always say sorry or thank you, whatever they do. The biggest words in Australia are ‘sorry’ and ‘thank you’. Australia is very, very friendly country.

There is a difference between politeness and respect, and between tolerance and acceptance. The discourse of mateship, which historically shaped social interaction and social relations in Australia, is often deployed to mask the distinction between tolerance and acceptance. According to Dyrenfurth (2007), mateship is one of the egalitarian qualities of the bush-derived ‘Australian Legend’. Mateship involves an acknowledgement of comradeship between two or more working men (Dyrenfurth, 2007). Further, “in Australia ‘mate’ can also mean: ‘a mode of address implying equality and goodwill; freq. used to a casual acquaintance’” (Dyrenfurth, 2007, p. 213).

Originally conceptualised around whiteness, the discourse of mateship has evolved to include assimilated or ‘integrated’ Others. Mateship dovetails perfectly with the liberal ideology that shapes multiculturalism. Consequently, the 21st century notion of mateship is a discourse that views society as consisting of culturally different individuals who are unaffected by both history and societal institutions, and the discourses that bind societal institutions. In other words, the discourse of mateship does not disrupt white normativity.
Rather, mateship often functions as a kind of social blindness and colour blindness, an inability to think critically about whiteness and white privilege (DiAngelo, 2011).

Scottie, originally from Sierra Leone, talked to the foregoing analysis of mateship. According to Scottie, although Australia is a friendly country, people of colour generally face far more socio-economic challenges than white Australians:

Well... Australia is safe so far. There's peace here so far. If you work hard you can get it. You just need to have much courage because it's not easy. It's a very difficult country. People think ‘Oh, It's a good country, fantastic, it is a good country, it is a peaceful country, it is a land of opportunity’, but it all depends on how you paddle your canoe. Yes, there are people here with high qualifications, yes they can get job like that which is good, but there are others who can't. There are people who have been here for donkey’s years and they still haven't got like a permanent job so it's difficult …so yeah, it is s a bread and butter, milk and honey country but you just have to find a way to get that share of the honey, and find out how you can get that share of the bread and butter.

Scottie was the only participant who framed the friendly quality of the Australian society within a critical race analysis. Participants like Kenny, originally from South Sudan, individualised the social problems that black Africans experience in Australia. For example, according to Kenny:

being a young African man in Melbourne, it’s a good thing. For me – I have seen a lot of good things in Melbourne, and I’ve done a lot of good things, because I have good people around me. And that makes me do the right things. If you’re around a bad environment all the time, like some other young African guys, they probably tell you
they hate Melbourne, because of the situations they put themselves into. So most of the time I tell them that life is a choice, so you get to make that choice whether you want to hang out with the right crowd, or the wrong crowd. I’m hanging out with the right people, so it’s a good experience for me.

The logic that shapes the foregoing analysis is the liberal view which says that black Africans ought to thrive in a social environment that valorises whiteness. This liberal analysis conveniently ignores racism and instead assumes that black and white people have the same realities and experiences (DiAngelo, 2011).

Ultimately, in theorising the quotes from the research participants, this study purposefully disrupts dominant ahistorical narratives that situate Africa outside of modernity. This study further highlights the ways in which some respondents portray Africa in an ahistorical view. One of the discursive strategies of constructing the uncommodified blackness image is through an ahistorical reading of Africa. Since no one lives outside of discourse, it is possible that respondents uncritically and unconsciously accept certain aspects of the ahistorical reading of Africa.

It is conceivable to highlight the good quality of life that African immigrants have access to in Australia without uncritically romanticising the Western way of life, or inadvertently perpetuating binary constructions that sustain the image of uncommodified blackness. At this juncture, it is worth noting that Africa, too, has a long history of traditional ethics that shape how people ought to socially interact. Before the colonial period, African ethics influenced the moral conduct of individuals in terms of attitudes toward life. African ethics encompassed notions of human dignity and respect, “within the understanding that an individual’s humanity interconnects with the dignity and humanity of others” (Muyingi, 2013, p. 561). This is called the Ubuntu philosophy. According to Muyingi (2013), the
traditional African outlook of Ubuntu is premised on the values of humanness, caring, respect, and compassion aimed at ensuring a happy community life. In other words, the moral possibility of Ubuntu is inherently related to human happiness and social fulfilment within a community (Muyingi, 2013). According to Gianan (2011, p. 63), the Ubuntu philosophy is articulated in the maxim that is a component in the lived experience of the African community: “‘a person is a person through other persons.’” Ramose (1999, cited in Eze, 2008) explains that Ubuntu is a socio-ethical imperative of African people, and is not restricted to Bantu-speaking peoples, but is also included in the worldview of other ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa who share similar ideals to those embodied by Ubuntu.

7.3 Neighbourhood life

In this study, only one respondent reported having a friendly, neighbourly relationship with his neighbour. The rest of the participants found social community in Australia unfriendly and unwelcoming. The contrast between the quotes about the general friendliness of Australians in the previous discussion and the quotes about unwelcoming and unfriendly Australian neighbours highlights, among other things, the complexity and the ambivalence that characterises respondents’ immigration narratives (Kusz, 2010).

For instance, Charles, who in the previous discussion claimed that “the biggest words in Australia are ‘sorry’ and ‘thank you’”, conceded that he finds it difficult to get along with his neighbours due to their different social values:

Neighbourhood life is a problem. Australians are not interested in getting to know their neighbours. They don’t care who you are. Sometimes a neighbour will greet you. But people generally people keep to themselves – you mind your own business, they mind their own business. Sometimes you can be lucky and have a good neighbour who takes
an interest in you. In my case, I have been unfortunate because I have a neighbour I
never see. But I get phone calls from the city council saying that my neighbours are
complaining about my friends who have parked their cars in their parking spaces. Why
can’t the neighbours call me and talk to me about this issue? There is no good
relationship. It’s not like back home… There is no… some neighbours are friendly, and
some of them are not.

According to Austin, Australia is ‘very individualistic’:

Australians believe in the saying ‘mind your business.’ The duty of care is there, but
it’s not expressed in the same way as in Africa. Australians are concerned about their
own issues. With regards to neighbourhood life, yes, you may live in an area for ten
years without ever getting to know your neighbour. Neighbours greet each other on the
streets. In contrast, in Africa when somebody moves in in your neighbourhood, it’s
your responsibility to make that person feel welcome.

What the above quotes talk to is the individual liberalism that characterises Australia, which
can be traced back to the colonisation process of Australia. As pointed out in chapter four,
when the British settlers claimed sovereignty over Australia they rationalised the colonisation
process through John Locke’s philosophy. Macpherson (1962, p. 231) writes that the core of
Locke’s individualism is the contention that every person is naturally the sole proprietor of
his or her own person and capacities – “the absolute proprietor in the sense that he owes
nothing to society…” Naturally, this contradicts traditional African ethics of Ubuntu.
According to Kwamwangamalu (1999, cited Muyingi, 2013, p. 564), Ubuntu is a philosophy
that advocates a community-based mindset “in which the welfare of the group is greater than
the welfare of a single individual in the group.”
Van Dyke (1977) once wrote that since liberalism primarily focuses on the relationship between the individual and the state, it cannot be trusted to “deal adequately” with the question of status for ethnic communities and how these communities socially interact. According to Van Dyke (1977), the social practices of ethnic communities raise questions about the suitability of the liberal individualistic prescription, and most importantly, they suggest that liberalism needs supplementing.

Respondents grappled with this issue on different levels. For example, as far as Tony is concerned, there is “no culture anywhere” in Australia; rather Australians have a “way of life”. Tony adds that he bases his observation on the fact that he has lived in different African countries with different cultural values to his own, but found it relatively easy to adapt to those African societies in comparison with his Australian experience.

Scottie attempted to trace the roots of the problem:

The culture that we have back home is the communal. Over there it's a communion, it's the community; over here it's a society. There it's communion because we care for each other, you can knock at a neighbour’s door in the middle of the night… so there's a communion there, a community over there and it’s that communion, it’s that community that is missing when you come here which is more of a society here, here it's more of a society, it's an individual thing, nobody cares for one another…

This thesis builds on Van Dyke’s (1977) criticism of liberalism to argue that as much as modern societies have liberated the individual from traditional ties of class, religion, and kinship, this freedom goes hand-in-hand with a sense of disenchantment (Nisbet, 1962). Put differently, modernity has weakened the established social context and replaced it with “a
kind of suburban horde” (Nisbet, 1962, p. xv). The modern social arrangement is characterised by the absence of secure interpersonal and social relations which formerly gave meaning and stability to communal existence (Nisbet, 1962).

However, according to Larry, who describes himself as a community leader, the solution lies in encouraging African communities in Australia to celebrate their African heritage:

So the sense of community, and the communal way of doing things no longer exists in Australia. But the question is: ‘how can we really fit in in this country without losing our cultural values?’ We could celebrate Africa Day, Sudanese Day. We could make sure that we preserve our native languages by coming together as a community and forming African organisations that serve our cultural needs.

Although based on good intentions, the foregoing does not address the racial dynamics of the social situation. One of the discourses used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness in Australia is based on the view that black African refugees are unsuited to the Western way of life, and therefore are unable to ‘integrate’ (to use Kevin Andrews’ insight, the former Immigration Minister) into Australia. Native-born Australians do not view the respondents as legitimate residents. Furthermore, the discursive focus about the alleged inability of black Africans to integrate into Australia engenders the shoring up of racial boundaries in the broader society (Myers, 2005).

It is worth noting that one respondent in this study reported that he has a good, neighbourly relationship with his white Australian neighbours. Scottie explained that he has a good relationship with his neighbours:
I link up with my neighbours very well, I'm very friendly, I’m very open. Like I said I don't see racism here, I don't feel discriminated against here. No, I get along very well with my neighbours. They are European, white people... but ...we have a good connection and we greet each other.... So yea...we get along very well. I don't see discrimination, I don't; when they have events or a party going on, they put an invitation in my letterbox.. If I have something coming up myself, I'll put an invitation in their letterbox, and if they are not going to make it, you know, they can give me a call or drop a reply saying they can't make it, yeah... I live well with my neighbourhood…

This is the kind of social relationship that many black Africans would like to have with their native-born Australian neighbours. To use Brett and Moran’s (2011) insight, black Africans in this study did not define being part of a social community in terms of government policies, but, rather, in terms of the quality of social interaction with other social groups in Australian society. And, in the main, the neighbourhood experience of participants was characterised by hostility, and sometimes racism. This further reveals that the discourse of mateship and the rhetoric about multiculturalism serves to manufacture the illusion of a post-white Australia policy and thus hide the normative whiteness that shape the everyday life in Australia. These discourses enable white Australians to be both superficially friendly, and at the same time, distant, hostile and even racist to blacks who are associated with the image of uncommodified blackness, without experiencing any cognitive dissonance.

7.4 Personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism

Only three respondents among the Australian cohort argued that racism was not a social problem in Australia. The majority of the research participants in this project experienced
racism in all spheres of society - in the labour market, in the educational sector and in society as a whole. This theme, however, mainly explores the everyday racism that respondents encountered on a social community level.

Rodman, one of the research participants, described the subtle and indirect racism black Africans are subjected to in Australia as “the 21st Century” version of racism. Rodman further explained that the 21st century version of racism is invisible:

You cannot see it. But when you apply for private accommodation and you meet all the financial and character requirements, you will still struggle to secure private accommodation. No one is going to say to you ‘since you are a black African, I will not rent out my property to you.’ What will happen though is that when you submit your application, no one will get back to you.

According to Tim, this kind of racism also manifests itself on public transport, such as the train or the tram:

For example, when you are travelling to work or you are going somewhere to attend to your private affairs, and you sit next to someone on the tram. That person will get up and go stand or sit somewhere else as soon as you sit next to them. And you will remain sitting on that seat all by yourself.

What comes to mind after reading the quote above is Fanon’s (1986, p. 109) opening sentence to chapter five of ‘Black Skin, White Masks’: “‘Dirty nigger!’ or simply, “look, a Negro!” The image of uncommodified blackness has narrative significance for it portrays the Negro refugee as “historically received legends and stories about Negroes tend to portray them” - as causing fear in white people (Gooding-Williams, 2006, p. 9).
When asked to reflect on why someone would avoid sitting next to him on public transportation, Tim said:

I don’t know, I don’t know. This is very common. Look, whether it is racism, or whether it is because they don’t know you… On the public transport service you can sit next to anybody… as long as you are not racist to anyone or pose a threat to anyone. But here in Melbourne, some passengers do not want to sit next to a black person. It is really confusing. Because you are a human being like everyone else. I don’t know why they do that. It has negatively impacted the community. We are not sure if this has to do with racism or if this is a cultural misunderstanding. But I don’t think it is a cultural misunderstanding because in multicultural society, people should be able to share a seat on a public transport. To refuse to share a seat with someone on a public transport comes across as racist to me. And that hinders social networking and the integration of people into society.

The defining features of everyday racism include invisibility and deniability (Hill, 2008). Consequently, racism is both everywhere and nowhere, consisting largely of silences and the careful failure to notice social interactions that are shaped by the logic of whiteness (Hill, 2008). At this juncture, it is worth pointing out that in his research in North America, Anderson (2011, p. 6) reports that “systematic observations on trains show that the anonymous black male is often the last person others will sit next to.” According to Anderson (2011), black men of all social classes understand that most whites avoid them on public transportation. He adds that a black male puts white people off “just by being black, and the younger he is and the more ‘ghetto’ he looks, the more distrust he engenders” (Anderson, 2011, p. 7). As already pointed out in the introduction of this thesis the image of
Commodified blackness in Western countries has two discursive sides to it - fashionable blackness and criminogenic blackness. Uncommodified blackness, on the other hand, has only one discursive side – deviance and all the alleged pathologies that go hand-in-hand with deviance.

Thus, Kenny, one of the younger respondents in this study, says that as a young black man in Melbourne, mainstream society views him as a thug:

I speak from my experience, and from the experiences of people that I’ve met. Some people – if I’m walking down the street in a white suburban area, they’ll look at me like ‘this guy’s a gangster and he’s a thug.’ They’ll just judge me without saying a word to me. I’ve faced that so many times.

According to Pager (2011), black men are routinely associated with criminal activity in the minds of whites. These negative social perceptions of black men have resulted in the ‘New Jim Crow’ in North America, writes Alexander (2010). The media representation of uncommodified blackness in Australia portrays the Negro refugee as ‘bad’ and ‘mean’ (Fanon, 1986).

Kenny recounted an anecdote to show how being perceived as bad and mean has impacted on his life. He says one night he was in Melbourne city centre and was making his way home:

Yeah, after midnight. I was going home. I was in the city. And then, all of a sudden, I see this white guy coming towards me, mid-thirties. I was trying to move out of his way, but he blocked me. I tried to go the other way, he again blocked me. I looked at him and I was like, ‘What’s up man, what’s your problem?’ He says to me, ‘You think you’re a gangster, huh?’
Kenny responded to the man by saying that:

Yeah. I was like, ‘Dude, listen. You don’t know me, I don’t know you, please just move out of my way and let me go.’ And he says, ‘what are you gonna do? What are you gonna do? You look like you’re a gangster, wearing all these black clothes and stuff, you’re a gangster, huh?’ And then I told him, ‘man, listen. I know what you’re looking for right now. But I’m not going to give it to you. You know, you see all these cameras up here, watching. They can’t hear what conversation that we’re having, but they see the action part of it. So I know what you want to achieve right now. You want me to beat you up, so tomorrow it can be all over the news – a Sudanese man beat this guy up and took his money or whatever for no reason. And you’re not gonna get that from me, man.’ He looked at me like, ‘Is that all?’ So we do face that a lot.

As the quote above reveals, Kenny is aware that Australian discourse casts Negro refugees, Sudanese in particular, as towering seven feet ‘brutes’ who symbolise danger and primitiveness. Moreover, Kenny knows that these anti-black stereotypes are used to justify the racist violence that is intermittently meted out to blacks as part of routine efforts to display the power of whiteness (Leonard, 2004). Whites find it easy to scapegoat blacks or to accuse blacks of criminal acts in order to unleash the institutional power of systemic whiteness (Crosset, 2007).

It is against this backdrop that racist discourses about Sudanese have resulted in the racial profiling of black Africans in Australia. For instance, Scottie pointed out that “I have seen things like that, where like young Africans have been harassed by the police.” Scottie further
adds that if the police see a group of young black Africans walking together, they often search them for no reason:

Yeah, this practice... the police harassing young boys, yeah, young Africans. They were really targeted by the police here for nothing, you know. The police would see Africans walking in a group, and they would immediately want to search them or separate them. For what? Personal interest?

Tim shared a similar story. He says if the police in Melbourne see “a group of black children sitting together, the police will approach them and search them, looking for any excuse to arrest them.” According to Scottie, this practice has caused a lot of debate in Melbourne. He says, for example, there was a major seminar at Melbourne University on this very topic. Kevin, who describes himself as a community leader, says that “one time we had a meeting with the Sunshine Police Department” to discuss some of these issues.

The experiences of participants reveal that the discourse of whiteness casts the Negro refugee as the embodiment of everything that is the opposite of whiteness. Through the image of uncommodified blackness, black Africans are portrayed as being synonymous with crime, deviance, poverty and a number of other social problems (Jackson II, 2006). Put differently, uncommodified blackness is the repository for the Australian fear of crime (Russell, 1998).

Kenny highlighted the double standards that Australian societal institutions apply when dealing with black Africans:
But you don’t see a black person complaining about a white person beating them up – nah, you don’t hear that shit. I know what’s going on around here. A lot of young black Africans get beat up by the police. And a black person’s word against the police in the courts? Come on man, you will never win. My friends’ younger brother, he got beat up by the police and they killed him. They broke his ribs and he couldn’t breathe. His rib punctured his lungs, and the kid was killed. And the next day they went to his parents’ house and they said the kid committed suicide – fell from six floors up. No, the kid didn’t commit suicide! If he fell from six floors up, he would have broken a lot of bones in his body. It wasn’t like that. The ribs were broken. And what happened to the police? Nothing.

What Kenny is highlighting in the above quote is how institutions, in this case the police, protect white racists who carry out racist violence against black Africans. What Kenny is saying is that armed with pistols, tasers, pepper spray, batons, handcuffs, and white privilege to boot, racist police brutalise black Africans with impunity. Since the image of uncommodified blackness is synonymous with crime and deviance, white racists conclude that black Africans deserve to be subjected to police surveillance, racial profiling, harassment, and sometimes police brutality (Mensah & Firang, 2010).

7.5 Tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism

Four respondents in this study used what this thesis refers to as ‘the denial of racism discourse’ to either rationalise or downplay acts of racism. For example, Charles is of the view that it is neither a matter of prejudice nor racism when white Australians avoid sitting next to a black person on public transport:
But some of my friends seem to think when a person avoids sitting next to them on the train that means the other person is being racist. I personally do not think that is racism. I’m not sure how to make sense of it though. I still need to research it so that I can understand the source of problem. But as far as I am concerned, it is not racism. If someone verbally attacks me or refuses to serve me because I’m black, then that would be racist. In such a situation, there will be proof to show that such a behaviour is racist. But if you stand up and walk away the minute I sit next to you on public transport, I do not think that is racism.

It is striking how Charles’ argument echoes the widespread white discourse that requires racism to be defined in a way that white people can see and understand before it may be granted validity (DiAngelo, 2011). The way in which this discourse is often deployed by mainstream society is by accusing people of colour who object to being subjected to subtle forms of racism of misinterpreting the incidents, and then compelling them to “accept the perpetrator’s statement: ‘race had nothing to do with it’” (Sue, 2010, p. 74).

Tony, who is a taxi driver, used this logic to talk about drunk racists who often subject him to racist harassment:

They often say things like, ‘you black cunt, go back to wherever you came from.’ If the guy saying that is drunk, there is nothing you can do about that. You are supposed to leave him alone. You are just meant to focus on your work. Actually, if people are drunk and verbally attack me and call me names, I try not to make a problem out of the situation.
Part of being tolerant of the ‘error’ of racism requires blacks to work hard at not killing the joy of white people by crying racism (Ahmed, 2008; Essed, 1991). Thus, in the quote above, Tony finds alcohol to be the problem, and not the racist behaviour. Tony’s stance on the matter is consistent with Sue’s (2010) research findings which revealed that to minimise a racist offense, people of colour may, occasionally, deny the demeaning impact of racist behaviour. The way that this is achieved sometimes is by accepting racism as part of the natural order of social reality (Feagin & Sikes, 2013).

For instance, Larry points out that racism “is part of life”:

Well, people think that they can’t get jobs because of racism. But people need to look at themselves honestly to understand why they can’t find jobs. They must ask employers for feedback when their job applications are not successful. Based on the feedback they receive from employers, they must make efforts to improve on whatever weaknesses they may have.

Steph blames black Africans from a refugee background for racism. He pointed out that: “apart from uneducated refugees, economic African migrants who have education qualifications have no problems finding work in Australia.” Steph added that:

Educated migrants easily adjust to Australia and find work relatively easy. I’m talking about doctors and engineers. But because refugees are uneducated and come to Australia in large numbers, they struggle to find employment. The problem has nothing to do with being African per se.
It is worth noting that research shows that skilled black African migrants in Australia experience a different kind of racism. For example, in their article, *Negotiating Diasporic Black African Existence in Australia: A Reflexive Analysis*, Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013) recount their lived experience in Australia. Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013) describe themselves as “migrant academics” who have not openly experienced the “structural racism in the labour market that other black African migrants (may) have…” However, they point out that their lived experience in Australia is characterised by being “Africanised” and Othered (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013). In other words, despite their professional credentials, in Australia they are subject to the “‘white gaze’, with all of its prejudicial embodiments and connotations …” (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013, p. 69).

Racism in Australia is not a social problem that is faced by black Africans from a refugee background only. It is correct to point out that whiteness does not view all people of colour in the same light. It is also true that factors such as class and education have the potential to minimise, but not eradicate, the impact of racism. The existence of racism in Australia is therefore a widespread problem across society, and this has been acknowledged in a series of Australian government reports (Dunn, Forrest, Pe-Pua, et al. 2009).

### 7.6 Being Australian

Respondents in this project struggled with the notion of being Australian. The following quote from Rodman captures the tension that comes from trying to develop an Australian identity: although Rodman loves Australia and he sees Australia as his home; “the other people don't see me as an Australian.” According to Rodman:
When they see a black man like myself, they ask ‘where are you from?’ I’m not going to change my skin colour. I’m proud to be black, I’m proud to be African. I’m Australian also. I’m an Australian citizen. My son, who is 17 years old, was born in this country.

Nevertheless, even though Rodman’s children were born in Australia they are constantly asked “Where are you from? Where were you born?”:

My children respond by saying we are Australians. When people ask ‘where are you from’, it means they are saying ‘Australia is not your home’. My children tell me ‘daddy, everybody asks us where are we from.’ They always respond by saying ‘we are Australians’, because they were born here.

The social function of the uncommodified blackness image is to cast black Africans as alien, out of place, perpetual-refugees irrespective of how long they have been in Australia. Through the perpetual-refugee syndrome trope, Rodman and his children are excluded from the mainstream conceptualisation of what it means to be Australian. The questions “where are you from”? Or “where were you born” are meant to communicate the view that Rodman and his children are “not one of ‘us’ but one of ‘them’” (Lippi-Green., 2011, p. 288). Despite being subjected to the perpetual-refugee trope on a regular basis, Rodman insists that he is Australian:

white Australians don't see us as Australians. But we are... just like they are Australians, we are also Australians. We consider them to be Australians, but they don't regards us as Australians.
It is against this backdrop that some research participants in this study defined being Australian in terms of citizenship. For example, when asked if he considered himself an Australian, Tim responded “yeah, because I am an Australian citizen.” Tim further elaborated that he considers Australia home because he cannot go back to South Sudan, his country of birth, due to political instability:

I call Australia home because I live here. That does not mean I’m satisfied, but I have no choice. There is no other alternative.

Tony, who had been living in Australia for eight years at the time of the interview in 2014, said that he was not entirely comfortable calling himself an Australian:

Eight years is a long time.... some people who have lived in Australia as long as I have consider themselves to be Aussie. But I don’t see myself as an Aussie. I have my own culture. So as long as I have my own culture, I can’t say I’m an Aussie.

Tony makes it clear that he feels at home in Australia though. “I feel like Australia is my home. And maybe my kids, they might view themselves as Aussie.” The foregoing quotes reflect participants’ diaspora consciousness, which includes racial, national and transnational intersections (Zeleza, 2009). Transnational migration is the process by which immigrants develop and maintain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc 1995). Transnational migrants are “not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside” (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995, p. 48). However, at the same time, they maintain social connections, conduct
economic transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrate (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995).

Kevin, one of the research participants, argued that irrespective of whether he is an Australian citizen or not, mainstream institutions will always view him as an outsider:

I will always be African. Because, when police walk past my shop and they see me and they ask, ‘who is the owner of the shop?’ I say, ‘Me.’ They say, ‘Oh, it’s an African shop.’ You know what I’m saying? I will always be identified as African, whether I am a citizen or not. At the end of the day, yes, we accept Australian citizenship, we respect the citizenship, we love Australian citizenship, but I will always be African – no matter what.

Kevin’s quote highlights a personal struggle with mainstream society’s refusal to include black Africans in the conceptualisation of what it means to be Australian. The Australian mainstream discourse centres on the indexical capacity of racialized visibility to determine who is Australian and who is not (Fikes, 2009).

Only three respondents in this research project were comfortable calling themselves Australians without foregrounding their legal immigration status. For example, Charles pointed out that not only is he an Australian citizen, but he is Australian too:

I’m an Australian citizen. I don’t think that I will ever go back to Africa. All my kids are Australian, I call myself an Australian father. I’m a father of Australian children. So I don’t think I’m Congolese. Today I’m Australian.
Referencing the Australian colonial history, Kenny pointed out that he feels comfortable calling himself an Aussie because “the real Australians are black.” The British colonisers labelled Aboriginal peoples black. Thus, George Gawler, who was the governor of South Australia between 1838 and 1841, said in his address to Aborigines in Adelaide in 1835:

“Black men. We wish to make you happy. But you cannot be happy unless you imitate white men” (Moses, 2000, p. 94). Kenny is referencing this history when he says that “real Australians are black”. Most importantly, Kenny uses this history to highlight the shared history of colonialism and the struggle against white supremacy between Aboriginal peoples and black Africans. The awareness of this history gives him the confidence to claim commonality with the indigenous people of Australia.

Kenny further explained that Australia “is more than home to me, man”:

I can’t see myself living anywhere else. I went and visited Sudan last year. I liked it, but I can’t see myself living there, because I haven’t lived there for as long as I have lived here. So Australia is my home. … So, yeah. I am an Australian, and they’re just going to have to accept that.

Scottie defined himself in dual nationality terms:

I live in the present. I'm Australian-African. I'm living here. I work here. My goals are set here even though there are other goals for back home, but yeah....I'm living in the present, I'm Australian-African. I put Australian first… when I go back to Africa I'm African...
The quote above from Scottie indicates that some black Africans in Australia are making attempts to develop an identity based on their African diasporic and transnational migrant status. Since only one respondent in this research project talked to this process, it is hard to gauge how widespread this is in Australia. What is clear based on the quotes above is that black Africans in Australia are engaged in a social process to give name to their lived experience and social identity. Standing in their way is the monstrous image of uncommodified blackness which effectively places black Africans from a refugee background in a zone of nonbeing (Fanon, 1986) – “a zone neither of appearance or disappearance” (Gordon, 2007, p. 10).

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed five themes, namely: Africa vs modernity, neighbourhood life, personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism, tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism, and being Australian. The findings under the ‘Africa vs modernity’ theme clearly show that respondents are thankful for and appreciative of the good quality of life in Australia, as well as the improved life chances that come with residing in a Western democratic country. Be that as it may, research participants in this study found social community in Australia unwelcoming and alienating because their lived experiences have been characterised by racism and xenophobia.

Ultimately, this chapter challenges the ubiquitous sanitising immigration narratives that have failed to highlight the complexities and ambivalences that emerge from immigrants’ experiences of xenophobia and racism (Kusz, 2010). Additionally, one of the key findings in this chapter is that through the discursive trope of uncommodified blackness, respondents are routinely Othered and discriminated against in their daily lives. Further, since nobody lives outside of discourse, some respondents in this project uncritically and unconsciously accepted
certain themes that make up the body of knowledge about the image of uncommodified blackness. The quotes discussed in this chapter show that the production of the uncommodified blackness image cannot be dissociated from the production of institutional and social practices (Susen, 2014).
Chapter 8: An analysis of roles that respondents struggled to play in Melbourne

8.1 Introduction

In any society, individuals develop a sense of who they are based on a large part on the roles available to them (Gintis, 1972). Therefore, if the roles that are accessible to individuals undermine and contradict a person’s sense of who they are in terms of that person’s interpersonal activities in family, community, work and in other significant societal institutions, then such a situation will engender a sense of alienation in that person (Gintis, 1972). As already discussed in previous chapters, an alienated individual “not only does not feel a part of the social order; he has lost interest in being a part of it” (Nisbet, 1962, p. viii). With the foregoing in mind, this chapter interrogates some of the tensions and conflicts that respondents experienced when playing roles they felt undermined their sense of who they are. The chapter is based on five themes, namely: parenting; black masculinity; being a refugee; employment and workplace issues; school experience.

8.2 Parenting

Respondents in this project highlighted their struggle to adapt their parenting styles to the prevailing Australian child-rearing methods. Kenny, one of the younger respondents in the study, explained what the source of the problem is:

Say for example, if a parent wants to discipline his or her child… being an African, it’s normal to use corporal punishment if a child is misbehaving. But what happens is that here in Australia, children tell on their parents if they get subjected to corporal
punishment. And then the next day, you see the father in court, an intervention order issued, and this and that. I know one parent who actually got locked up over this issue.

Respondent Charles has been involved in projects that aim to change the parenting style of black Africans in Australia:

African parents think that the younger generation who grew up in this country is disrespectful. The children do not obey their parents. And that is the cause of the conflict between parents and children. Since African parents do not understand the Australian system, social workers and the police intervene in order to resolve the conflict.

The quotes above reflect a clash between two different child-rearing practices - the African parenting style and the Western child-rearing practices. The quotes show that some African parents struggle to play the established Australian parental role with its own set of Western social and legal rules designed to cultivate conformity within the kinship sphere (Wells, 1970). What further complicates and distort the situation is that some respondents are of the view that the Australian societal institutions undermine their parental authority. For instance, Tim, a parent, blamed the Child Protection Services for child-parent conflicts that many black families are experiencing in Australia:

The Child Protection Services is hostile to African parents. The organisation does not respect the law, they just come and remove African children from their families without due process.
According to the Victoria State Government policies (n.d.), the Child Protection Services’ mandate includes taking matters “to the Children’s Court if the child's safety within the family cannot be guaranteed.” Moreover, the Child Protection Services have the authority to supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children’s Court. Parents like Tim resent the power that Child Protection Services has over them.

Rodman, who has four children, explained where the disconnect lies between the Australian system and African parents. According to Rodman, parenting in Africa is different because “in Africa, children see every adult as an authority figure.” What Rodman is alluding to is the African parenting style which is expressed in the African proverb: “it takes a village to raise a child.” The African parenting approach is informed and shaped by Ubuntu - a “communitarian morality” (Muyingi, 2013). Based on Ubuntu, all the adults that are members of a community are viewed as responsible for the children of that community. Thus Rodman recounted the following story:

I remember when I was still in high school. I experimented with a drug and I used to hide it from every adult in my community. I hid my smoking habit from every adult because I knew if they saw me smoking they would scold me, irrespective of whether they were my parents or not. I considered every adult to be my teacher and my parent. Back in Africa, parents showed us love, they educated us and they disciplined us when we misbehaved. Australia is different because parents are not allowed to discipline their children when they misbehave.

Rodman further explained that when some African parents use corporal punishment as a technique to discipline their children, it is not used to hurt or injure their children in any way. In an attempt to make his point clearer, Rodman told a story of a Somali man who utilised
corporal punishment to discipline his son for engaging in truancy. This man was then summoned to an Australian court, facing child abuse charges. According to Rodman, the man explained to the judge that he neither hated nor was he abusing his son:

he said to the judge ‘look, I'm a parent, I came here all the way from Somalia. I struggled to get here and if I hated my son I would have left him behind in Somalia to be another victim of the ongoing fighting there.’

Tim made a similar argument:

The question I have for the Child Protection Services is this: on what basis are they saying we are unfit to parent? Because when we were at refugee camps protecting our children, they were not there. African children were surviving with their families without Child Protection Services. That is until we brought them to this country.

It is fascinating that Tim and Rodman use their experiences of surviving and escaping refugee camps to argue that they are, in fact, competent parents. This is so because mainstream society argues that the same experiences show that blacks associated with the image of uncommodified blackness are unsuited to the Western way of life, and are generally not good parents. The production and the use of historical narratives expose the mechanisms of power and whiteness, and the relationship of whiteness to the production of history and its social use (Nixon, 2015).

Participants also highlighted the external socio-economic factors that disrupt the family dynamics of many black African families in Australia. For example, some parents in this study blamed Centrelink for providing black African youth with access to income support. According to the Victoria Youth Protocol (2003), “Centrelink is the Commonwealth
agency responsible for the administration and provision of income support payments.”

Respondents feel that the payment that African youth receive from Centrelink emboldens black African youth to disrespect their parents because they know that they can rely on Centrelink for income if their parents ask them to move out for disregarding family rules.

Kevin explained the crux of the problem:

Back in Africa, the youth do not have access to a government benefit every fortnight. In Australia, as soon as teenagers turn sixteen, they are eligible for a government benefit. African children are not used to this practice. And parents expect African youth to contribute their benefit to the household family expenses. When African youth refuse to contribute to the family expenses that creates conflicts. Another problem is that in Australia, parents are expected to talk to their children, to beg their children. In Africa we discipline children. We tell children what is best for them.

According to Austin, black African youth access “easy money” from Centrelink. Consequently, “some African teenagers tell their parents they no longer have authority over them because they know they can rely on Centrelink for income.”

Research shows that many black African families in Australia have to contend with socio-economic factors such as under-employment, racism and low social class status. Trying to make ends meet through low-paid jobs, while attempting to fit into a parental role that some respondents feel contradicts their values created feelings of frustration for some of the research participants in this study (Lareau, 2011). Furthermore, as the quotes above reveal, in families where financial resources are chronically strained, family conflicts about who in the family should have power and control over the government financial assistance can have serious, far-reaching consequences (Lareau, 2011).
The Africana perspective on family, which shapes the intellectual framework of this study, emphasizes the impact of external factors such as economic policies, unemployment and racism to explain the source of many problems that black African families have to grapple with in Western countries. Additionally, as explained in chapter three, this thesis argues that prevailing child-rearing practices in any society often reflect the values of the dominant ruling class. Thus, in some Western countries the dominant child-rearing practices were propagated by social workers and other experts in the 19th century (Stearns, 2003). According to Bertrand Russell (1970), during the nineteenth century when parental authority felt threatened, subtler methods of quelling insubordination came into vogue. The invention of a new child psychology became one of the heralded tools that parents resorted to (Russell, 1970). Some of the new methods included child-rearing practices that championed reasoning with children instead of relying on punishment to enforce good behaviour (Stearns, 2003). It should be noted that modernity and suburban living which facilitated looser social ties with extended family and other members of the community made parents receptive to the opinion of experts (Stearns, 2003, p. 58):

Looser ties with other family members, including parents, left more fathers and mothers wondering about the validity of their disciplinary choices. Suburban living allowed families to glimpse varied styles of discipline - from strict to permissive - but without full community sanction for any one style. The need for individual decision making increased, and with it, some new uncertainty.

Similarly, in Africa, child-rearing practices have changed over time due to colonial influences and other socio-economic factors. This thesis uses this history to argue that neither the African parenting style nor the Australian child-rearing practices are “the only” way or “the
right” way to raise children (Lareau, 2011). Different communities differ in how they raise children. This is what the respondents in this study are arguing. This research project further highlights the historical fact that the use of corporal punishment as a technique to discipline children is a contentious issue in Africa just as it a contentious issue in countries like Australia and New Zealand.

8.3 Black masculinity

Parenting is not the only role that respondents struggled to fit into within the broader Australian kinship sphere. Some research participants in this study voiced unhappiness with the male gender roles available to them in Australia. For instance, as far as Rodman is concerned, the source of the problem is what he perceives to be a gender role reversal between men and women in Australia. He pointed out that in Africa “the man is the head of the family. But, in Australia, the man is not the head of the family.” The consequences according to Rodman are that:

The wives want to tell men what to do. They say you have to do this and that … blah, blah. And that is difficult for African men to deal with because we do not know how to cook. It’s true I can make coffee or tea, but nothing else.

Austin agreed with Rodman’s analysis and further argued that the Australian system “is the opposite of African culture. Because in Africa, the man is the head of the family. In Australia, the woman is seen as the head of the family.”

It is important to historicise the traditional African gender dynamics that research participants continually reference when rationalising their positions. As has already been
pointed out in the previous chapters, African feminists argue that the struggle to overcome gender hierarchy has a long and rich tradition in African societies (Mikell, 1997). For instance, the anti-colonial struggle provided an opportunity for African women to become political and thus to make demands on the state and society as a whole for the full inclusion of women in society as autonomous subjects (Mcfadden, 2005). According to Mcfadden (2005), the engagement of women with African and European patriarchies during the struggle for independence is widely reflected in the history of Africa.

Granted, the fact that the struggle for women’s rights in Africa rose alongside nationalist movements meant that African women had to fight a “two-pronged struggle” (Chadya, 2003). This is because for the most part, the anti-colonial struggle overshadowed the feminist struggle because women were encouraged to concentrate on nationalist goals first (Chadya, 2003). However, this is not unique to Africa. The nation-building process has often identified the needs of the nation with the needs and aspiration of men (McClintock, 1991). In every nation state, women have been traditionally cast as the “‘bearers of the nation,’ its boundary and symbolic limit, but lack a nationality of their own” (McClintock, 1991, p. 105).

Hence in his exploration of the founders of the Australian nation, La Nauze (1968) identifies male politicians only. In an article entitled *Who are the fathers?*, La Nauze (1968, p. 334) wrote that:

I am concerned to identify the Fathers of the Constitution… The Referenda of 1898 and 1899 were Yes-No choices, and the final choice for Yes left the Australian people holding a baby. Who the Mother was, and whether we are investigating a case of affiliation or polyandry, I leave to political sociologists to determine.
In 2010, Baird wrote an article highlighting the trajectory of female politicians in Australia. According to Baird (2010), ever since the first woman was elected to Australian parliament in 1919, political women in Australia have been encouraged to debate, defend or dodge the question of their gender, depending on the electoral environment and their political parties. The point in highlighting the foregoing history is to show that the nation-building process is gendered (McClintock, 1991).

Moreover, men all over the world are “fed daily a fantasy diet of male” power (hooks, 2000, p. 121). In Australia, white masculinity is constructed as embodiment of hegemonic masculinity (Collins, 2004). In Western countries like Australia, the tangible rewards that come with achieving hegemonic masculinity include access to economic and political power. In other words, in Western countries men express their hegemonic masculinities by dominating the public sphere. Men in Western countries exert power over others through the control of public societal institutions. Since black African men have limited access to public societal institutions, the participants saw the private sphere as a place in which they should have complete dominance. Therefore, participants blamed Australian societal institutions like Centrelink for undermining their positions at home. For example, Austin argued that social institutions like Centrelink recognise women as “the leader of the family”:

Centrelink recognise women as the head of the family. They make women responsible for family finances. As a result, some women abuse their positions, and that is the source of the problem. Because some women tell their men ‘I’m the one. My word is law.’ And that is causing a lot of marital problems for African families.
Steph, who described himself as a community leader, is of the view that the real problem is that black African women in Australia misunderstand the difference “between family responsibilities and women’s rights”:

In African culture, men and women play different roles in a family. In Australia, there is no strong family structure. So when refugees are resettled in this country, they are briefed on Australian culture. But everybody is only interested in their individual rights and not their responsibilities. That causes problems. For example, when an uneducated woman says to her husband ‘I have rights, get out of my house.’ Well, what happens to the family? Children also move out of the house later on, and that splits the family apart. That destroys the family. No one supervises the children, and no one helps the children with their homework because the mother is uneducated. The children end up in jail.

The quotes from Steph and Austin reveal a sense of powerlessness that participants in this study experienced in their quest to achieve a positive masculine image. Participants blamed African women for their feelings of powerlessness and, in some cases, blamed societal institutions for encouraging African women to undermine participants’ patriarchal authority. However, the elephant in the room - so to speak - is whiteness. In Western countries, a black male’s path to expressing masculinity is littered with blocked economic opportunities, the pitfalls of racism and discrimination (Majors & Billson, 1992). Black African men from a refugee background have been pathologised and cast as violent and full of rage through the image of uncommodified blackness. The liberal perspective is that if men in general are beasts, then black men associated with the image of uncommodified blackness are “true brutes” (Gardner, 1995). Thus, mainstream discourse largely focuses on how to tame the
brute instead of a focussing discursively on how to deconstruct whiteness. Respondents in this research project grappled with some of these factors on different social and psychological levels with varying success.

8.4 Being a refugee

Respondents in this research project were of the view that the label refugee is used in mainstream Australian society to Other black Africans. For example, Scottie explained that mainstream Australia uses the label refugee to exclude black Africans and “to keep them down.”

Larry added that the label refugee has been transformed into a “dangerous weapon” to hurt people:

> It is incomprehensible that someone who has been in the country for ten or twenty years is still called a refugee. That is why I say the word refugee is used to hurt people, it is used like a weapon. It has become a dangerous weapon that people use to fight with.

Respondents find the label ‘refugee’ offensive because they argue that mainstream Australia associates being a refugee with being ignorant and stupid. Charles explained that as far as mainstream Australians are concerned, being a refugee means being uneducated:

> That’s the belief. If you’ve been in the refugee camp, people think that you’re very slow; your mind is limited. You’re stupid, you have to sit down and learn from the beginning. That’s how people perceive refugees. It’s not true; it’s not true information. Just because someone lives in a refugee camp does not mean someone is stupid. No.
The quotes above show that as far as respondents are concerned, the label refugee is utilised to portray black Africans as “essentially broken”, pathological and insensible (Hughey, 2014). In other words, the word refugee has become a literary trope to construct a racialized deficient Other who has to be instructed on the ways of modernity (Hughey, 2014). The discourse of the racialized deficient Other is the core on which the construction of the uncommodified blackness image occurs.

Kevin blames the media for spreading an inaccurate image of refugees:

Well, when people hear the word refugee – few people know exactly what that means. Australians think that refugees are people who come to this country to take away opportunities from Australians.

Ignorance and domination are often ideologically connected, “as ignorance may be ‘actively constituted or reproduced as an aspect of power’” (Feenan, 2007, cited in Steyn, 2012, p. 10). Hence, one of the defining features of oppressive societies is that they do not openly acknowledge themselves as oppressive (Alcoff, 2007). Similarly, through ignorance, some whites will solely attribute their financial success to their own hard work without acknowledging the contribution made by white privilege. Further, citizens of Western nations - countries that benefit from the global political order - are often ignorant of the dialectic relationship that exist between rich and poor nations.

Tony, one of the respondents who works as a taxi driver in Melbourne, pointed out that one of his unofficial job duties is to educate the public about why refugees leave their countries of birth and come to Australia. Tony recounted the following story:
Well, I meet a lot of people in my line of work. And they always ask me: ‘why are Africans and other immigrants being smuggled into our country?’

Tony pointed out that some of his clients showed empathy for people from a refugee background. According to Tony, “some people understand the political situation that compelled people to leave their countries of birth. They say if refugees and other migrants had a good life in their countries of origin, they wouldn’t come to Australia.” However, some of his clients were of the view that refugees “take away job opportunities and make the country overpopulated.”

Since whiteness assesses the quality of space by the absence of blacks (DiAngelo, 2011), whenever blacks are present in historically white spaces whites enthusiastically buy into the perception that they are being crowded out, leading to ‘white fright’ and the domino effect of white angst often leads to white flight (Myers, 2005).

Participants like Charles argued that Australians ought to be more open-minded and understanding towards refugees because, after all, their forefathers came to Australia as convicts:

What I do not like is that even after being resettled in Australia they keep referring to us as refugees. Why? Australia was built by convicts. But the offspring of those convicts are not called ‘convicted generation’.

Scottie made a similar point:
Why I'm against the refugee label is that it is used when they are talking about Africans. They don't even call us Africans anymore. They always say 'Oh… from a refugee background.' There are also refugees who come here from Europe and there are refugees who come from Asia, from the Middle East but because they have fair skins, they blend in easily with the majority, you know, the Europeans, so they are not labelled ‘refugee background’. But Africans, even if you're not from a refugee background, we are all labelled refugees.

The quotes illustrate that respondents feel that the word refugee is often used to communicate to black Africans that they do not racially belong in Australia. They reveal that although black Africans are viewed as a ‘visible minority’ group in Australia, research participants feel that the label refugee is used to communicate to them that they are, in reality, socially invisible. By being cast as refugees, respondents argue that they are portrayed as illegitimate social Others. One of the social functions of the uncommodified blackness image is to enforce the notion that black Africans from a refugee background will forever remain stateless – in other words, perpetual refugees. The perpetual refugee trope portrays black Africans as illegitimate residents, irrational and primitive people who for one reason or another have been playing tom-toms in refugee camps or in an African bush for decades, living outside of modernity.

Ultimately, the quotes highlighted in this section reveal that respondents regard the perpetual refugee trope as an outlandish hoax meant to perpetuate anti-black stereotypes of supposedly simple and unschooled Africans, while at the same time, black Africans are expected to be ‘good Negroes’ (Fanon, 1986) and not challenge the dissemination of the perpetual refugee discourse.
8.5 School experience

Racism in the form of racist taunts, racist harassment and racist bullying is widespread in Australian schools. Kenny had first-hand experience of racist harassment in Australian schools as he was a teenager when he first arrived in Australia in 2003. According to Kenny, he experienced “a lot of racism” in high school:

There was a lot of racism. There was a lot of … I mean, all the negative stuff. But that’s how they work, you know? Because they just didn’t know where we were coming from, they didn’t have any knowledge of who Sudanese people are, or who these black people are.

When asked to give an example of a negative school experience, Kenny pointed out that:

Negative experiences, man. I faced that every day in life. Back then at school… an example is, if another black kid got into trouble – there was only a few black people in the school, right… They don’t accuse anybody else, just you, you know – you’re the black kid, you probably did that.

As has already been pointed out in the previous chapter, the image of uncommodified blackness revolves around the racist notion of deviant and criminogenic blacks. Thus, what mainstream white society regards as uncommodified blackness is always suspect, consistently under scrutiny, and can be used as a scapegoat for all the social ills in society. These discursive strategies are part of the larger discourse to discipline, control and police uncommodified blackness in the broader society.
Two respondents in this study blamed the former Australian Immigration minister, Kevin Andrews, for the misperception that black African children are problematic. Kevin Andrews remarked in 2007 that African refugees were difficult to ‘integrate’ into Australian society. According to Steph, a former community leader, the comments by Andrews had a negative impact on the school experiences of black children. Steph explained that after Andrews made the comment about black Africans, some teachers used that as an excuse to treat black children differently. Steph pointed out that some teachers interpreted Andrews’ comments to mean that black Africans were a difficult people to deal with.

Tim talked about the widespread bullying that black African children are subjected to at Australian schools. According to Tim, black African children “get bullied too much, too much.” Tim further pointed out that teachers and other children at school portray African kids as being violent:

For example, if a black kid has a disagreement with a white kid, a teacher will side with the white kid. Some teachers even say ‘black African children are violent.’ It does not matter if a white kid said something bad to the black kid. Teachers do not even bother investigating conflicts, they just assume black kids are a problem.

In other words, the racist harassment that black children experience at school is often rationalised by school teachers by casting black children as being inherently aggressive and deviant. Reddy (1994, p. 130) writes that one of the long-standing stereotypes about black children in Western countries is that “all Black boys of a certain age are bad…”

One Australian respondent used violence to defend himself against racist bullies at school. Kenny said that he beat up other kids if they teased him about being black or African. He explained that he did not want to involve his mother when it came to matters like that:
Because I like to handle things by myself. There are certain things that you can get your mum to do, but a lot of things you can’t. So, me being an older – the first-born child - I like to handle things on my own. And if I can’t get a good outcome, then I might involve somebody else.

When black students use self-defence against racist bullies, whiteness tends to depict that as violence on the part of the black students. For instance, whiteness often utilises Kenny’s response to racist bullying to confirm racist depictions of uncommodified blackness as being overly physical and out of control, prone to violence, driven by instinct, unruly and inherently dangerous, and therefore “in need of civilizing” (Ferber 2007, cited in Leonard, 2012, p. 12).

It should also be pointed out that, according to participants, some schools do not treat complaints about racism seriously. For instance, Tim argued that when African parents approach schools to get an explanation for a racist incident, ‘we are told we are the ones who are bad.’ Part of the white discourse and white social performance is the racist assumption that blacks, unlike whites, “cannot be objective on racial issues and will favour their own no matter what” (Reddy, 1994, p. 131).

It is worth noting that three research participants in this study saw racist bullying as unimportant or had rationalised it as “part of growing up”. For instance, according to Austin, “even in Africa there is bullying. The difference is that in Africa it is not discussed openly. And there is no legislation against bullying in Africa.” Larry attributed bullying to “misunderstanding and lack of respect”.

The fact of the matter is that racist bullying and racist harassment is part of the school experience for many black African children in Australian schools. Racist bullying of African children in Australian schools is a social practice that is shaped by discourses used to
construct the image of uncommodified blackness. Furthermore, the discourses that are deployed to construct the image of uncommodified blackness form part of the hidden curriculum at Australian schools. The notion of a hidden curriculum refers to the discursive values and norms that shape school knowledge and the overall educational experience. In Australia, the hidden curriculum revolves around the celebration of whiteness. Since uncommodified blackness is conceptualised as being the antithesis of whiteness, it is therefore regarded as deserving of being harassed and terrorised by other children. For black Africans students to thrive in such an environment requires them to constantly adjust in order to accommodate whiteness and racist bullies.

8.6 Employment and workplace issues

Western societal institutions often use factors such as nationality, English proficiency, race and immigration status to rationalise social inequalities, as well as to force migrants to work “in society’s dirtiest, hardest, and most dangerous jobs” (Chomsky, 2014, p. 25). The way in which this impacts on black Africans is that employers deploy statistical discrimination about black Africans from a refugee background, through asserting that they might be uneducated or that they do not speak “good English”, and then based on these assumptions, make hiring decisions without reviewing the credentials of an individual applicant (Wilson, 2011). Put another way, employers in Western countries like Australia utilise the uncommodified blackness image to filter out black African applicants.

Tim recounted how statistical discrimination has negatively impacted his chances of accessing a high-paying, good job in Australia. Although Tim has a university degree, he is of the view that the only jobs that are easily accessible to him are manual labour jobs:
As a black person I can get a job working at a meat factory or some other physical job. If I were not black I would be able to get a big job in a different industry. There are many black people with university degrees who are unemployed in Australia.

Steph, who graduated with a B.A. degree from La Trobe University, says that after he graduated he could not find employment in his field. So, since he has responsibilities, “I had to take any job I could find. So I got a job at a hotel.”

It is worth noting that Steph arrived in Australia in 2003, whereas Tim arrived in 2005. They are not newly arrived migrants. What this partly reveals is that whites in Western countries hoard economic opportunities in order to exclude ‘outsiders’, but also to protect themselves from market competition (DiTomaso, 2013). Given the unpredictable global economy, whites find ways to protect themselves against the increasing volatility of the economy. One of the ways in which whites protect themselves is by favouring each other in the labour market, “and the net result is the perpetuation of white privilege in an environment of racial liberalism” (DiTomaso, 2013, p. 8).

Research participants in this study intuitively understand these racialized socio-economic forces. For instance, Steph pointed out that:

Well, everything here in Australia is about social connections. So if you rely on websites to look for employment opportunities, you are likely to be unsuccessful in your job hunt. But if you know someone or through a personal connection, you might be successful in your job hunt.

According to Kenny, the way it works in Australia is you have to know “the right people”: 184
And sometimes even if you have a degree or a diploma, without knowing the right people, forget it! You got to know the right people to get a job. Being an African or coming from a third world country, people don’t trust you like that with their jobs, they don’t give you jobs like that, unless they do know you or they’ve heard something good about you.

High-paying, good jobs in Western countries are often accessible via social networks. Information that is not circulating through public channels is often spread through social networks (Royster & Steinberg, 2003). In Western countries, whites are generally surrounded by and are included within networks with well-placed contacts who can provide significant assistance with relatively little effort (Royster & Steinberg, 2003). On the other hand, the social networks of people from a refugee background largely consist of other people from a refugee background. This means that when respondents search for employment they rely on contacts who are not well-placed in socio-economic institutions in Australia. Respondents in this research project understand that their social networks partly contribute to their unsuccessful efforts to access high-paying, good jobs in Australia.

However, two respondents in this study blamed black Africans for their own precarious economic situation. According to Kevin, black Africans struggle to find employment because they are uneducated:

They don’t want to go to school, because they rely on the money they get from Centrelink when they turn sixteen years old. So they get used to the benefit money. When they turn eighteen, they become factory workers. Factory work leaves them with very little time and energy to pursue education.
Larry further pointed out that as far as he is concerned, there is no discrimination in the labour market in Australia:

If you do not have the work experience, employers will not hire you. If you have the experience, employers will hire you straight away.

However, both the literature and analysis provide a compelling argument that powerful economic and social positions in Western countries are largely inherited, and not achieved through effort and strong character (Rivera, 2015). This is not to deny that social mobility does not happen in Western countries. However, the rates of social mobility are often low for immigrants, and even lower for Africans from a refugee background. The image of uncommodified blackness further complicates the situation. As far as white institutions are concerned, uncommodified blackness is made up of the irrational (Fanon, 1986). The notion of a professional job and the concept of the irrational fundamentally contradict one another. Thus, respondents in this thesis, irrespective of their qualifications, end up working at meat factories or as waiters at hotels – jobs that do not require sophisticated thinking skills.

8.7 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, respondents talked about the improved life chances that come with residing in Australia. This chapter shows that, notwithstanding the idea of improved life chances, all societies have their own way of reproducing inequality. For instance, the discussion under the theme of employment shows that class inequality in Australia is reproduced and maintained indirectly, and that is, via social networks and white privilege. Researchers in the field refer to these social advantages as forms of social capital, “because
each can be cashed in for access to valued symbolic and material rewards, such as prestigious jobs and high salaries” (Rivera, 2015, p. 4).

In addition, the findings in this chapter reflect the notion that peoples’ social status in society shapes their place in it (Rivera, 2015). According Max Weber, social status is one of the ways in which power is distributed in society (Kieran, 2004). According to Kieran (2004, p. 86), “status privileges can co-exist with wealth but there can also be important discrepancies.” In other words, factors such as race and gender can diminish status irrespective of one’s class position. In Australia, black Africans from a refugee background are discursively cast as uncommodified blacks which means they are associated with low social status, among other things.

As reflected in the quotes highlighted in this chapter, participants felt that being labelled a refugee meant that one was regarded as ignorant, and therefore deserved to be tutored on how to be modern. Research participants felt that the male gender roles available to them further confirmed their perception that society viewed them as being unworthy of the patriarchal status and respect that is accorded to white males through their occupation of powerful socio-economic positions in society. Participants felt that this negatively impacted their relationships with their spouses because they argued that the male gender roles that they were compelled to fit into in Australia deprived them of patriarchal power that they felt was their due.

Similarly, participants argued that Australian societal institutions undermined their parental authority and had therefore limited their authority to discipline their children. Mainstream child-rearing practices in Australia reflect the norms and the values of a white urban middle class. The construction of uncommodified blackness renders African parents unfit to parent. Moreover, the parental situation is often distorted by socio-economic factors
that lead to conflicts about who in the family should have the power and control over financial assistance from the government.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that participants’ lived experiences reveal that they feel that they are powerless to control central aspects of their lives (Gintis, 1972). When individuals feel that they have no power to influence decisions that directly impact their lives and their families, those individuals will inevitably tend to feel unhappy and alienated (Gintis, 1972). Additionally, when societal institutions deny certain groups access to personally fulfilling social relationships and economically rewarding roles in the economy, the individuals and social groups affected by such a situation will inevitably feel excluded and alienated from such a society. The quotes highlighted and discussed in this chapter confirm this theoretical observation.
Chapter 9 - Social community in Auckland

9.1 Introduction

New Zealand is celebrated for its sociability. The country is known for its friendliness and hospitality (Pratt, 2006). This study traces the roots of the country’s sociability to the colonial discourse of the ‘Better Britain’. The British settlers originally conceptualised New Zealand as a ‘Better Britain’ where there would be little distinction between the classes, and where inter-personal relationships would be characterised by a friendly, relaxed and informal attitude (Pratt, 2006). Thus, the country’s national identity was constructed around a white mythology of a classless society, and it was envisaged that handshakes and greetings to strangers would become a feature of the country’s social etiquette (Pratt, 2006). The nation-building project, shaped by the ‘Better Britain’ trope, cultivated a “crushing conformity” in broader society that brought about the desired results – social cohesion (Pratt, 2006, p. 553).

Further to this, immigration policies that favoured white immigrants were deployed to maintain the social cohesion of the new nation, while simultaneously, strengthening the white project of building a ‘Better Britain’ for white settlers. Pratt (2006) further adds that New Zealand’s geographical remoteness and isolation has always made the small country anxious about its national identity. Consequently, the culturally or racially different Others and those who refused to conform were regarded as a social threat.

This settler state history shapes the social order and social life in New Zealand. Therefore, this chapter frames and analyses respondents’ lived experiences in the community within this history. The chapter is structured around five themes, namely: Africa vs modernity; neighbourhood life; personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism; tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism; and being a New Zealander.
9.2 Africa vs modernity

The common thread that binds together the respondents’ quotes discussed under this theme is the similarity with which respondents invariably and uncritically compared Africa’s underdevelopment with New Zealand’s political stability and economic development when talking about their past and present lives. As discussed in the previous chapters, this is consistent with the logic of the construction of the binary category of the dominant discourse of the West and the rest (Hall, 1992; Susen, 2014). The fact that respondents uncritically subscribed to this discourse and utilised discursive strategies from it reflects the notion that discourse has institutional force (Mills, 1997). In other words, discourse impacts the way that individuals think and act, irrespective of an individual’s racial background (Mills, 1997).

Thus, Charlie who is originally from Ethiopia, contrasted New Zealand’s political stability with Ethiopia’s political instability. Charlie, who at the time of the interview was 72 years old, was a member of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP) before he left Ethiopia to seek refuge in Sudan. The EPRP took part in the Ethiopian revolution that saw the monarchy abolished in 1974. However, from 1977 till the late 1980s, Ethiopia became engaged in a military conflict with Somalia. The United States and the Soviet Union used that conflict as a proxy for their Cold War, and thus supported these countries’ war efforts financially and militarily. The Ethiopia-Somalia conflict produced millions of refugees. Charlie was one of those refugees.

However, when Charlie talked about his past, this is not the history he foregrounded. Instead Charlie observed that:

Life in Africa is full of hardship. The war that began in 1978 has not stopped. There is always war in Africa. People in Africa live in poverty, human life is cheap. It is
terrible. New Zealand is a very, very nice country. It’s a good country, the government looks after its people. There are no bad people.

Charlie added that:

If I were still living in Africa, the chances are that I would be dead by now. When I visited Africa after being here for ten years, heaps of people that I know had died. People find it hard to survive in Africa. That is why Africans are trying to get to Europe. Heaps of my friends are trying to get to Europe.

Charlie’s analysis of the situation on the continent is accurate. However, as a sociological study, this thesis historicises that analysis by highlighting the historical fact that Cold War politics sustained the political conflicts that have led to the current political state of affairs in many African countries (see chapter two). This study foregrounds the history and the impact of the Cold War in Africa in order to avoid perpetuating long-standing colonial discourses that view Africans as being stuck in time, situated outside of modernity, and therefore trapped in a state of ‘perpetual childhood’ (Miller, 1985). This study is premised on the analysis that discourses do not exist in and of themselves, “they are tied to broader networks of information and thus as something that appears to operate in isolation from other discourses” (Fikes, 2009, p. 154).

When Charlie argues that New Zealand is different to Africa because New Zealand is more technologically advanced, we can appreciate where Charlie is coming from, but at the same time, we can preface Charlie’s comments by highlighting the dialectic between Western countries’ economic development and Africa’s under-development (see Rodney, 1981). It should be emphasised that this study acknowledges what Charlie’s comments aims to
communicate, which is that, for him personally, living in a Western country has positively changed his life.

The quote below from Wade, originally from South Sudan, communicates a similar message:

I come from a war-torn country and so I have never had a chance to go to school. I lived for many years in a refugee camp in Kenya. In the refugee camp, I couldn’t see any future for myself and my children. Living in New Zealand has provided me and my family with a lot of opportunities.

It should be emphasised that the foregoing sentiment was echoed by all the research participants in this study. Although respondents struggled to access employment at times (see the following chapter), all the research participants expressed gratitude for having an opportunity to positively change their life chances and their children’s life chances in New Zealand. Hence, Bruce, originally from the DRC, pointed out that although he cannot afford to pay university fees, he can access a student loan from the New Zealand government if he wants to pursue a university degree. He added that in New Zealand, “if you cannot afford university fees, you can apply for a student loan from the government. That’s why I like New Zealand, education is accessible to everyone.”

What is missing from the participants’ narrative is the historical fact that New Zealand has benefited from white supremacy in the form of support from the British Empire. Additionally, like other Western countries, New Zealand has been a beneficiary of the global industrial economy (Chomsky, 2014). African countries, on the other hand, have been plundered through colonialism and via numerous economic policies that have largely
benefited Western countries while simultaneously destroying African economies in the process.

This is not the history that participants used to frame their thoughts. Instead, through the use of the Africa vs modernity binary category, participants foregrounded the generosity of the New Zealand government. Wade is of the view that the New Zealand government is generous because although he had never paid taxes in New Zealand before he arrived, “when I arrived in this country, the government gave me a benefit to start my life.” John, also from South Sudan, described how the public healthcare system in New Zealand has benefited his family:

The public healthcare system in this country is really good. My wife almost died while giving birth to my youngest son, but competent New Zealand doctors saved my wife. New Zealand is very advanced when it comes to medical healthcare.

In his book, *Infections and Inequalities*, Paul Farmer (2001) writes that although we live in a period of unprecedented wealth and technological advancement, the global economy has not spread those economic gains and technological advancement to ‘Third World’ countries. According to Farmer (2001), this unequal distribution of resources and wealth negatively impacts on the medical resources available in ‘Third World’ countries. Farmer (2001) further notes that we live in a world where infections pass easily across borders, while resources, including cumulative scientific knowledge, are blocked at customs. Thus, medical literature is replete with evidence that the world’s burden of disease disproportionately affects black Africans (Burkle, 2007). However, many Africans are well aware that the poor health situation in Africa exists largely due to colonialism, imperialism and global inequality.
Some participants commented not only on the socio-economic advantages of living in New Zealand, but also highlighted the friendly quality of New Zealanders. Paul pointed out that he used to have a New Zealander neighbour who was neighbourly towards him. Paul explained that the neighbour used to own a van that he used to help transport Paul’s groceries and supplies to Paul’s house. It should be noted that the consensus among respondents was generally that New Zealanders are friendly and welcoming. For instance, echoing Paul’s sentiment about New Zealanders, John observed that “Kwis are very friendly. If you need help, they will help you.”

The Kiwi identity is historically a narcissistic white settler construction grounded in the colonial myth of a ‘Better Britain’ (see: Cosgrove, & Bruce, 2005; Falcous, 2015; Pratt, 2006). The Kiwi identity reflects several discursive themes such as fairness, a ‘do-it-yourself’ attitude, and concepts of ‘punching above our weight’, ‘fiercely determined’, yet ‘modest and lacking pretension’ (Cosgrove, & Bruce, 2005; Falcous, 2015). Sir Edmund Hillary, the first white man to reach the summit of Mount Everest, is the embodiment of the Kiwi identity (Cosgrove, & Bruce, 2005).

When John argues that Kiwis are friendly, he is rehashing the prevailing themes about whiteness in New Zealand. Paul, who is originally from Ethiopia, employed the same discursive themes to make sense of his past and his current life in New Zealand. For instance, Paul pointed out that a good quality about New Zealand is that “unlike in Africa, there is no inequality in New Zealand.” Paul explained that as far as he is concerned, in New Zealand there is very little class distinction between social groups. He argued that:
In Africa, people know who is poor and who is rich. In New Zealand, the government
gives you a house and the benefit. In Ethiopia, poor people live in poor areas and you
can tell that they are poor because of the clothes they wear.

One of the long-standing colonial myths is that New Zealand is unique and egalitarian
(Cosgrove, & Bruce, 2005; Pratt, 2006). As pointed out in the opening of this chapter, one of
the discursive myths of the ‘Better Britain’ was that New Zealand would be a country where
there would be little distinction between the classes (Pratt, 2006). Although prevailing
discourses serve the interests of the dominant group, they are often presented as natural,
truthful and reliable representation of reality, and thus “as vehicles for symbolically mediated
experiences of authenticity” (Susen, 2014, p. 94).

Chris, originally from the DRC, utilised the same ‘friendly Kiwi’ discourse to talk
about the New Zealand police. According to Chris, the New Zealand police are friendly and
civil when interacting with members of the public, although he admitted that he had
“personally have never dealt with the police; but I think they are fair-minded.” Chris bases
his assessment of the New Zealand police on a comparison with his past experiences with the
police back in the DRC:

We viewed the police and the army back in the Congo as our first enemies. If you see a
police or a soldier at night, you knew you had to hide or run. But in New Zealand,
that’s not the case. A friend of mine told me she got stopped by the New Zealand police
for speeding. The police pulled her over and politely asked to see her ID. The police
even asked her why she was speeding. My friend could not believe that the police could
be that civil and polite to her when she was clearly in the wrong. For us, that is
something new, it’s unbelievable.
The ‘dialectics of mentions and silences’ (Trouillot, 1997, p. 43) produce discourses that do not foreground the fact that New Zealand incarcerates Māori at a higher rate than Europeans (Pratt, 2006). Webb (2011) adds that the incarceration rate of Māori has been on the increase since the last century. The dialectics of mentions and silences reflect the notion that discourses are in constant conflict with other discourses, and this shapes peoples’ selections of which narratives to foreground when talking about the world around them (Mills, 1997).

Be that as it may, the point that participants wanted to get through in this theme is that compared to the poor quality of life they had in their countries of origin, their lives had improved significantly in New Zealand. The quote below from Jordan, originally from the DRC, captures this point:

> There are times you feel welcomed in New Zealand. For example, the way that the country welcomes refugees at the airport. You arrive in this country with nothing, but the government gives you a house and the benefit. And you think my own government back home could not even do this for me. You meet good people too, volunteers from Refugee Services. They help you settle in, they enrol your kids in local schools, and anytime you have a problem, they assist you. Some of those volunteers become your friends for life.

9.3 Neighbourhood life

One of the least discussed paradoxes of the ‘friendly Kiwi’, ‘Better Britain’ discourse is that the same discourse was historically employed to construct social cohesion and conformity, which “made critical debate and intellectual argument difficult and awkward: the society that was so open and transparent also became closed and opaque” (Pratt, 2006, p. 552). According
to Pratt (2006), this is the paradox of a friendly and welcoming but also a conformist and punitive society with high imprisonment rates. Participants struggled to reconcile these residual features of a narcissistic, colonial whiteness with the ‘friendly Kiwi’ image. The contradiction of being openly welcomed as a migrant by the government and government agencies, while living next door to aloof, sometimes hostile neighbours left research participants disillusioned.

Most participants in this study found it difficult to be part of social community in New Zealand. For instance, Paul pointed out that he feels excluded and unwelcomed in his neighbourhood. According to Paul, the social distance between him and his neighbours is due to cultural differences. Consequently,

I have no social life. I am watching TV 24 hours a day because I have no one to talk to.

I eat, watch TV, sleep. It doesn’t make sense.

Bruce, who does not hesitate to call himself a New Zealander pointed out that some neighbours are friendlier than others. Bruce further pointed out that he only talks to neighbours who are interested in talking to him. According to Bruce, some neighbours are not interested in being neighbourly. Bruce shared the following anecdote to illustrate his point:

I remember when I was still working at…[name deleted]. I came back from work, that day my shift ended at 9pm. When I got home, two of my neighbours were sitting outside talking. I greeted them, and they replied by saying ‘fuck you!’ . Since that day, I do not greet those two neighbours.
One of the common themes in the lived experience of participants is the discovery that blacks associated with uncommodified blackness are regarded as outsiders who are unworthy of respect, an awareness which produces a form of self-exile (McCulloch, 1983). The quotes above from Paul and Bruce reflect this process. However, Trevor’s experience, (originally from Burundi), reveals that self-exile does not protect black Africans from being scapegoated and harassed by neighbours. According to Trevor, one of his neighbours once accused him of bumping and scratching his car. The neighbour came to Trevor’s house and made wild accusations about Trevor and his friends allegedly scratching his car:

He came here and said one of my friends scratched his car. I asked him ‘how do you know for a fact that one of my friends scratched your car?’ I told him that maybe another neighbour scratched his car. He was trying to take advantage of me because I’m the only African here. He kept insisting that it is one of my friends even though he had no proof. He would come to my house and become aggressive with me.

Trevor explained that the neighbour pushed him around:

He would push me around. He would come to my house around 8pm… I would see him coming, shouting ‘hey [name deleted]… where is my money? You have to pay me for what your friends did to my car.’ I told him I did not have money to pay him. He demanded that I sell my TV and my furniture so that I could pay him. It made me laugh but it also made me sad. He threatened me by saying that his wife was a manager at Housing New Zealand and so if I did not pay him, I would find myself homeless. This was intimidation. And when I couldn’t bear it any longer, I reported him to Housing
New Zealand and the police. Housing New Zealand evicted him and the police asked me if I wanted to press charges against him.

Trevor was happy with how the situation was resolved by Housing New Zealand and the police. The police issued a restraining order against the neighbour. Be that as it may, Trevor’s experience highlights the notion that, traditionally, individuals who are routinely subjected to public harassment are often the target of discrimination elsewhere in society too (Gardner, 1995).

Another participant who has experienced harassment from a neighbour is Paul. According to Paul, his neighbour was xenophobic and racist towards him:

He was always verbally abusing me. He was very racist. One day he was drinking with his friends and when I came outside, he hit me with a glass bottle in the face. I was bleeding and so I called the police. But the police did not arrest him. They just moved me to a new house. They relocated me to New Lynn from West Coast Road.

In the Western imagination the black body is deemed something to be harassed, hounded, flogged, insulted (Bogle, 2003), and in some cases killed – “just for fun” (Yancy, 2012). It is against this backdrop that the neighbour who assaulted Paul was not arrested on the spot by the police. Although Paul was relocated by Housing New Zealand to New Lynn, he points out that the neighbour was not charged with assault by the police. Paul rhetorically asks:
Why was he not arrested? He verbally abused me, calling me a ‘fucking immigrant’.

He punched me for no reason. He hit me with a glass bottle in my face. And the police didn’t even ask him too many questions at the time. Why was he not arrested?

Among other things, what the quotes above show is that respondents struggle to create a safe family life in certain parts of Auckland. The responses to research participants in these parts of Auckland range from grudging accommodation, to surveillance, to violence (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). One of the discursive strategies used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness is to scapegoat black bodies in order to call on institutional powers to discipline and punish black bodies for the good of society (Leonard & King, 2010).

Some respondents’ experiences of social community were shaped by overtones of cultural difference rather than raw xenophobia and racial animosity. For instance, Blake points out that he feels culturally distant from his neighbourhood because he does not have neighbours who share his worldview. Although he has been invited to neighbourhood parties he observes that when he attended these parties he did not particularly feel like he was part of the crowd.

Wade is of the opinion that the source of the problem is that New Zealanders are not socially welcoming like Africans. He says that, for example, he has been living for ten years next to a neighbour who he only greets occasionally when they meet at the post box. Charlie contrasts New Zealand’s notion of social community to the Ethiopian notion of social community:

Ethiopia has a very kind and generous culture. In our culture we love each other, we share meals as a family and with our neighbours. In New Zealand, a husband and a
wife do not share, they individually buy things for themselves separately. That is not how things are done in Ethiopian culture.

John talked to this point too:

New Zealanders are not sociable like Africans. For example, today is a Saturday and where I come from, men come together on a Saturday and talk about stuff. In New Zealand you have to wait for people to invite you. In Africa you do not have to wait for invitations. This is what I find to be a big challenge in New Zealand. It prevents us from integrating into society and building social networks.

Charlie and John compared and contrasted the African notion of social community to New Zealand’s social practices in order to make sense of their world. Through this exercise, Charlie and John highlighted how social community in New Zealand made them feel out of place - in short, alienated. To counter the sense of alienation, while simultaneously creating a sense of ‘homeplace’ in a foreign country, some of the respondents in this study socialised mainly with other immigrants or other black Africans. In the African diaspora discourse, the construct of homeplace creates the capacity for dealing with the sense of alienation that sometimes is engendered by residing in a foreign country (Harris, 2011).

Respondents who get along well with their neighbours pointed out that neighbourhoods that are culturally diverse in terms of demographics tend to be more welcoming than culturally homogenous neighbourhoods. For instance, Jordan noted that:
In Mt Roskill, you find a lot of immigrants. And that brings the community together because you share a similar background. My former neighbour was from Tonga and they were very good neighbours. They left for Australia. An Ethiopian family has moved in and we get along with them very well. We also have neighbours who are Māori, and they have family relatives who are into Black Power. We get along with them very well.

Similarly, John’s neighbourhood is culturally diverse and he finds the neighbours friendly towards him. He recounts an incident which happened at one of the social gatherings to which he was invited at by his neighbours. At this particular social gathering, a person that John had never met prior to the social event remarked to him that “there are heaps of black people in New Zealand.” This comment led to a heated political discussion between John and this other person about who belongs in New Zealand. According to John, the discussion got out of control and so he tried to disengage:

I said ‘look you don’t know me, ok, so don’t talk to me’. And then my neighbour intervened, he wanted to beat up the guy. My other neighbour also wanted to beat up the guy. They asked the guy to leave.

John was touched by how his neighbours intervened and supported him over the other person. What John’s experience shows is that supportive social situations engender feelings of being part of the community. Additionally, social environments that are affirming and that provide a sense of acceptance towards immigrants reduce feelings of social exclusion and alienation (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Such supportive milieux are vital for creating safe and welcoming neighbourhoods for immigrants, particularly for immigrants of colour.
The findings of this study show that only two respondents in Auckland had welcoming and friendly neighbours. Although the rest of the research participants’ experiences of social community in Auckland varied, the quotes highlighted above reveal that, irrespective of varied respondents’ experiences, “the dimension of race usually hovers in the background” in how neighbours responded to research participants in this study (Feagin & Sikes, 2013, p. 252).

9.4 Personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism

All the respondents interviewed in Auckland indicated that they struggle with everyday racism in their day-to-day social lives. For instance, according to Jordan, “as a community leader, the problems that we deal with range from assisting Africans who have neighbours who do not like immigrants, to dealing with cases of immigrants’ homes that are vandalised by xenophobes.” Since the image of uncommodified blackness is portrayed as one that is out of order and does not belong, it therefore is seen as one that is deserving of being terrorised.

In some cases home-owners and real estate agents simply refuse to rent houses to black Africans. Bruce told a story of a friend who was discriminated against by a prospective landlord:

A friend of mine, a Congolese guy, he got married last year. So he and his wife were looking for a house to rent. He made an appointment over the phone to meet up with a prospective landlord. Upon seeing him, the landlord said ‘I cannot rent out my house to you. I thought you were a white person.’

According to Bruce, his friend has a New Zealand accent and so he ‘sounds white’ over the phone. Bruce’s friend arrived in New Zealand at a young age as a refugee and grew up in the
country. Drawing on the concept of ‘linguistic profiling’ allows us to better understand what happened to Bruce’s friend. According to Dyson (2012), since outright racial discrimination is legally banned in Western countries, language has become an important vehicle in the denial of access to resources to blacks, particularly housing. Citing American research, Dyson (2012, p. 56) asserts that:

‘rental agents now use linguistic cues over the phone to assign prospective renters to racial categories and then vary their behaviour systematically to discriminate on the basis of inferred race.’ Compared with Whites, Blacks were ‘less likely to get through and speak to a rental agent, less likely to be told of a unit’s availability, more likely to pay application fees, and more likely to have credit worthiness mentioned as a potential problem for qualifying for a lease.’

Through the language ideology, uncommodified blackness in New Zealand is associated with the inability to speak standard English and hence deserving of being excluded. However, the quote from Bruce reveals that even when black Africans can speak English very well, “the Negro remains a Negro” (Fanon, 1986, p. 173), meaning that, irrespective of how highly educated or accomplished a black African is, whiteness has a “firmly fixed image of the nigger-savage” (Fanon, 1986, p. 198).

The 21st century version of that image is that of uncommodified blackness. It is through this image that the cultural practices and cultural tastes of black Africans in New Zealand are viewed. Chris recounted a story of how some New Zealanders find African music offensive:
I think it was in 2007 / 2008… I stopped at a traffic light. I was playing loud music in my car with the windows closed. A car pulled up in a lane next to me. The driver was a woman, and she looked at me and she said something. She kept talking while looking in my direction. I ignored her. But she kept talking. So I rolled down my window to hear what she was saying. I asked if she was okay. That’s when she started swearing at me and told me I was not allowed to play my kind of music in New Zealand.

Chris was playing African music at the time of this incident. Chris explains that he apologetically explained to the person that New Zealand was a free country and so he could play whatever music he chose:

I said ‘sorry, but I live here now. New Zealand is a free country and so I can play whatever music I like’. She replied ‘no, you are not allowed to play that kind of music here, go back home, go back home!’ And as soon as the traffic lights turned green, she threw a coffee cup in my direction. The coffee splashed all over my window and she sped off. Maybe she thought I was going to go after her. I don’t know why she did that.

One of the key findings of this thesis is that black Africans in New Zealand are forever in combat with the image of uncommodified blackness. Through the discursive themes that are used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness, the musical tastes and cultural practices of black Africans are regarded as vulgar and uncouth, and therefore deeply offensive to the sensibilities of Westerners.

John recounted an anecdote which highlights ways in which the image of uncommodified blackness shapes the thinking even of some people who work with refugees. According to John, his colleague said demeaning things about black Africans: “It was a Kiwi
woman. She said ‘oh, all these refugees come here and they do this and they do that.’” The 
woman in question was complaining about black African youth who she claimed had broken a toilet in her workplace. The woman further claimed that black African refugees:

need to be taught how to go to the toilet, that’s what she said. I asked ‘didn’t they use toilets before they came to New Zealand?’ And she said ‘what are you talking about?’ I told her ‘maybe you are the one who doesn’t know how to go to the toilet’. So don’t talk about refugees.

The myth that shapes the thinking of John’s colleague about black African refugees is “the most dangerous myth of race” - a narrative of normal and natural white paternalism (Hughey, 2014, p. 7). Through this myth, uncommodified blacks are constructed as a people who need to be taught by benevolent whites how to behave and who also require tutoring from whites on how to be ‘modern’. In such thinking, whiteness emerges “as an iron fist in a velvet glove, the knightly savior of the dysfunctional ‘others’ who are redeemable as long as they consent to assimilation and obedience to their white benefactors of class, capital, and compassion” (Hughey, 2014, p. 8).

Jordan attempted to define the logic of whiteness:

I don’t know the English word for it, but in French we call it ‘complexe de supériorité’ [superiority complex]… people who think that they are better than others. They think that their race is superior compared to other races. That’s really a big problem.

According to Jordan, one of the ways in which the white superiority complex has a damaging impact on black people is that white people often perceive blacks as being “stupid, someone
who doesn’t know anything, a beggar and a thief. So they attach every evil to being black.”

Research participants in this study explained ways in which the image of uncommodified blackness affected their lives. Manu, for example, talked about being racially profiled at the Auckland International Airport:

> Although you have a New Zealand passport, the customs official still want to double check to make sure you are who you say you are. So they ask ‘have you got other documents from New Zealand? Like a drivers licence?’ Other people, like whites, are not asked to produce other documents, they are let through without questions.

John is of the view that racial profiling at Auckland International Airport is one of the biggest problems facing black Africans living in Auckland. “A lot of my colleagues have been detained at the Auckland International Airport,” John said in his interview. Blake pointed out that black Africans have in the past attempted to get to the bottom of this issue:

> We organised a meeting and we invited a representative from Immigration New Zealand to come and explain to us why Africans were being profiled at the airport. The person from Immigration said that they searched people randomly at Auckland International. They ‘randomly’ always chose black Africans!

Racial profiling occurs when societal institutions hold negative social views of people of colour. One of the racist views that Western societal institutions subscribe to is that uncommodified blackness is potentially dangerous and criminal. Thus, Western societal institutions often view a black man “as though he has a deficit; he has a hole to climb out of before he can be trusted as an ordinary law-abiding person” (Anderson, 2011, p. 19).
Consequently, some societal institutions in New Zealand view it as correct that black Africans are continually subject to close scrutiny, which renders them vulnerable to harassment for any infraction, real or imagined (Anderson, 2011).

9.5 Tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism

Another key finding of this study is that some participants subscribe to the dominant white discourse of the deracialised, colour-blind Western society. The quote below from Chris shows how this functions in reality:

As a person living in a Western country, I do think about racial discrimination. But I do not put myself in social situations that have a racist dynamic. I do not use force or violence to avoid such situations. I only use humour to disengage from racist situations. If I realise that a situation has the potential to become racist I defuse it by joking around.

When asked to elaborate further, Chris gave the following example:

At university I have white friends. Some of them like saying things like ‘hi, my black friend.’ So in reply I say ‘my pink friend.’ From there everyone jokes around and an uncomfortable situation is replaced by a playful atmosphere.

Among other things, what is significant about Chris’s quote and all the quotes discussed under this theme is that they contradict the popular belief that blacks “jump much too quickly to a cry of ‘racism,’ in reality the opposite reaction is more likely the case” (Feagin & Sikes, 2013, p. 25). Hence, some respondents did not have a problem with being closely scrutinised
at airports for example, provided that they were treated with dignity during the process. Trevor for instance observed that:

When I went to pick up a friend of mine from the Auckland International Airport, I understood that my friend was going to be searched for hours before the customs cleared him through. They are very strict at the airport, especially when it comes to people they do not trust.

Trevor explained that:

There are terrorists in this world. Africans and Arabs have a worldwide reputation of carrying out terrorist acts. So if you are African and your plane lands at the Auckland International Airport, they are going search you thoroughly. No one is going to push you around or abuse you, but they will take their time to search you and ask you questions. What can I say, they are doing their jobs. That can’t be discrimination.

The stereotype of Africans and Arabs as terrorists is a construction of the white imagination aimed at restricting the mobility and the freedom of travel of people of colour. In the Western imagination, the freedom to travel is the birthright of Westerners (Chomsky, 2014). Trevor, however, deemphasises these acts of racism towards black Africans. People of colour understate racist acts towards them for a number of reasons. For instance, some black Africans feel that they must work hard to sustain the racial comfort of others, because the subtext in mainstream discourse on immigration says that “the duty of the migrant is to let go of the pain of racism by letting go of racism as a way of understanding that pain” (Ahmed, 2008, p. 11).
Some respondents rationalised racist acts by arguing that racism is part of the natural order of things. Wade rationalised his problem at work by pointing out that: “I could say I’m being discriminated against, but that’s the nature of the workplace. You will always have problems at the workplace, it does not matter where you work.” Similarly, John explained that:

Even in South Sudan, where I come from, we discriminate against other tribes. As a result, there is a lot of nepotism in South Sudan. Although South Sudan is supposed to be one nation, we still discriminate against other tribes. Foreigners who go to South Sudan are treated like we are treated here in New Zealand. It’s human nature to discriminate against people who are not part of your group.

Chris added:

Back home in the DRC, we discriminate against ‘pygmies’. Although they are regarded as indigenous peoples of Central Africa, we discriminate against them and they are marginalised and have no political power. So the way we treat the ‘pygmies’ is the same way that white people treat us. If we do not like the way in which white people treat us, then why do we discriminate against the ‘pygmies’?

It is worth noting that non-sequitur responses about discrimination or racism often rationalise or minimise the impact of racism by pointing out that discrimination and racism happens all over the world. Such responses are part of the liberal discourse which reproduces the comfortable illusion that race and its problems (DiAngelo, 2011) are part of the human condition and, as such, are intractable. This research project does not subscribe to the perspective that views discrimination or racism as something ‘natural’. Nor does this study
subscribe to the liberal discourse that argues that, historically, racism was a result of the prejudices “of a few others” and is therefore increasingly disappearing as an upshot of our advanced modernity (Feagin, 2010, p. 5). Acts of racial discrimination are always embedded in the deep structural foundation of a society (Feagin, 2010).

However, respondents like Chris are of the view that the problem is with black Africans in New Zealand. As far as Chris is concerned, black Africans “hang around with the wrong crowd and when they get subjected to discrimination they want to blame the whole country.” Chris further accuses some black Africans of ‘playing the race card’:

I was working late at university once. I was at a computer lab, a computer lab for engineering students. Only engineering students are supposed to use that lab, and students have to punch in a door code to get inside the lab. During exam time, students are allowed to use the lab till 12 midnight. This particular night a Chinese lady was in charge. And a black guy from Sudan, an old guy, came to the door and tried to get people’s attention to open the door for him. The lady in charge went to talk to the guy. She asked ‘are you an engineering student?’ The guy replied ‘what do you mean?’ So the lady in charge asked the guy to produce his student ID. That is when the guy became aggressive and pushed the lady. He said ‘why are you asking me for an ID? You have no right to ask me for an ID.’ The lady explained that she was in charge of the computer lab. The guy responded by saying ‘is it because I am black? Is that why you are asking to see my ID?’ The guy added ‘is this room only for Chinese people or white people?’ That is when I stood up and objected to the guy. I said ‘don’t say things like that.’ I told him that there was no point in being aggressive with the lady because she was only doing her job. I told him that the rules state that only engineering students are supposed to use that room.
As far as this research project is concerned, it is the consistent pattern of bad treatment, “not only of oneself but of one’s relatives and friends, by whites that is the basis for the black victims’ interpretation of a particular incident as probable racial discrimination” (Feagin & Sikes, 2013, p. 53). Moreover, the source of the problem is Western societal structure which over-values whiteness, and not people ‘who go around accusing’ others of racism (Essed, 1991).

9.6 Being a New Zealander

Respondents in this research project defined ‘being a New Zealander’ in terms of citizenship, as opposed to defining ‘being a New Zealander’ by referencing feelings of attachment to the broader mainstream culture. Further, except for one respondent, none of the participants highlighted a sense of affinity with the imagined white mainstream community that gives shape to the national identity of the New Zealand settler state.

For example, Trevor explained that:

I have a New Zealand permanent resident visa and after a number of years I will be eligible to apply for citizenship. When I get granted citizenship I will feel at home.

Chris was the only respondent who did not reference citizenship in making his claim of being a legitimate New Zealander. Chris argued that “Yes I do feel like I belong here. I do feel like I am welcomed in New Zealand; I call myself a Kiwi.” However, the majority of the research participants were ambivalent about calling themselves New Zealanders. Wade argued that although he considers New Zealand his home, he is African. He rhetorically asked: “I am an
African, how could I call myself a New Zealander? Although I have a New Zealand passport, I am African.”

The views of participants on this topic reflect what this study terms a diaspora consciousness. As explained in the previous chapters, diaspora consciousness is a crossborder social phenomena, which for many migrants results in the struggle to reconcile the past with the present (Zeleza, 2009).

Michael explained why he feels ambivalent about calling himself a New Zealander:

When I arrived in Mangere, we were told that we would be part of the society. But people in the broader society treat us like we are outsiders. I do not feel like I belong in this country, instead I feel like I am imposing myself on society.

Uncommodified blacks are at best viewed as sojourners, and at worst, as perpetual-refugees, and an overburden on white society that must be removed. And, as far as the latter logic is concerned, whiteness can endure everything but the burden of uncommodified blackness (Leonard, 2006). Blake, a research participant, recounted an anecdote of his encounter with this white logic.

Blake argued that he does not feel like he belongs in New Zealand “100 per cent” because members of the public often ‘Other’ him by calling him names. Blake has been called Idi Amin by members of the public he has no relationship with. “I think I was in Hamilton, I can’t remember. But people started calling me ‘Idi Amin!’ I said ‘what?’” Idi Amin was a dictator who ruled Uganda with an iron fist from 1971 to 1979. It is worth noting that he came to power with the full support of Britain; but fell out with the British after taking over the Ugandan state. Thus Amin was portrayed in the British press as an example of
“primordial Africa, a primitive brute in plain language, an anthropological oddity in academic jargon” (Mamdani, 1993, p. 266).

The Idi Amin reference is part of the larger discourse that is utilised to construct the image of uncommodified blackness. The social function of the uncommodified blackness image is to:

projects the image of Africa as ‘the other world,’ the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. (Achebe, 1961, p. 1785).

Blake further made a distinction between living in New Zealand and being a New Zealander. He said that it is not a big deal to live in this country. However, to develop a sense of belonging in this country depends “on whether or not New Zealanders accept me and my family.”

According to Blake:

New Zealanders express themselves candidly on talkback radio. If you listen to the radio you will realise that New Zealanders have a problem with immigrants. Not only African immigrants. They also complain about Chinese people.

It is interesting that Blake uses talkback radio to strengthen his claims about New Zealanders because right-wing former politician and talkback radio host Michael Laws said on air on the same radio show previously referred to: “what are these people [referring to Somalis] doing in our country? I don’t want them. Who the hell asked me if I want them? Get them out!” A listener then phoned in and recounted the following story to Laws:
I was driven out of my rented Housing New Zealand home by a Somalian refugee. Prior to that I had nothing against refugees. In fact I taught English to them voluntarily. Not paid. But this one certainly put me off. I’m 65 years old and I’ve been living in this flat for about 10 years, which I loved. And a Somalian refugee came to live underneath me. And as you say all his hangers-on and everybody, family, and what have you… and every night they will play music, and shriek and scream all night. And at 7 o’clock in the morning they went to bed because they weren’t working of course. So this went on and on and on. I asked politely at first for them to stop it. In the end I complained. I actually wrote to the then… Minister of Housing, and in the end we went to court and they got an eviction order, but it was never acted upon by Housing New Zealand. And so he stayed there and went on …and exactly the same behaviour… so in the end I gave up, I asked for a transfer which was another battle but I eventually got it now and I am happy where I am.

Blake is well aware that these individual negative experiences are sometimes used by whites to justify anti-black sentiments against all black Africans. In Blake’s words: “if one black person does something bad, then the whole community is held accountable for that.” Blake provided another example to strengthen his argument. He said that he used to work at a retail store and one morning a customer asked him out of the blue what was wrong with his sister. He replied “which sister?” The customer said that he was referring to a Somali woman who hijacked a plane that was flying from Blenheim to Christchurch. The customer went to get a copy of the newspaper to show Blake what he was talking about. “I told him I didn’t know anything about that situation.”
Paul is another participant who is of the view that New Zealanders are not open to the idea of African migrants residing in New Zealand. Paul, however, made it clear that the attitude of some New Zealanders does not reflect the policies of the New Zealand government, because as far as Paul is concerned, the government is generous towards black Africans. According to Paul, the New Zealand government:

Gives black Africans a benefit and a house. The New Zealander government tries to meet the needs of Africans. I like the New Zealand government, I especially like the democracy and freedom in this country. Although I was not born here, I am eligible to vote.

Paul is attempting to reconcile the paradox of a welcoming and economically supportive and liberal welfare state with a hostile and conformist settler society. Ultimately, the contradictory nature of narcissistic, colonial whiteness compelled participants to define being a New Zealander via citizenship. Thus, John pointed out that:

As far as I am concerned, I belong in this country. If other people do not accept me, then that’s their problem. I believe this is my home, and that’s the end of the story. I work here and pay taxes and I do everything that other citizens of this country do.

9.7 Conclusion
The research findings discussed in this chapter show that respondents, overwhelmingly, are excited by the available life opportunities that come with residing in a Western democratic country like New Zealand. The lived experience of participants, however, reveals that the improved life chances that exist in New Zealand come at a social cost. For instance,
quotes from respondents show that some black Africans struggle to create a safe family life in certain parts of Auckland owing to neighbours being hostile to them and their families. Interviews with research participants revealed that they experience racism at the neighbourhood level.

Furthermore, respondents talked about their struggle with racism in public places. Some respondents in this study talked about being racially profiled at the Auckland International Airport. Three respondents who describe themselves as African community leaders argue that racial profiling of black Africans at the Auckland International Airport is one of the biggest problems facing black Africans living in Auckland. This study argues that these negative experiences partly contribute to feelings of not belonging and the sense of alienation that participants highlighted when defining being a New Zealander. In this thesis, the concept of alienation is utilised to highlight the social processes embedded within Western liberal democracies that generate human alienation across societal institutions as a whole – “and how that alienation is often most severe for those” who are regarded as outsiders, newcomers, refugees, and immigrants (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2004, p. 307). To echo Oldenquist (1991, p. 93):

I define alienation as missing community: I am alienated from my workplace, economy, neighbourhood, or school, if, in a situation in which it would be expected of me to view it as ‘mine’ and have a sense of community, I do not. [italics in the original]
Chapter 10 - An analysis of roles that respondents struggled to play in Auckland

10.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates some of the roles that respondents in Auckland struggled to play in their lives. Whatever struggles respondents encountered in performing their roles occurred within the context of the racial dynamics of visibility and invisibility (Gordon, 1995). These issues are discussed in this chapter via five themes, namely: parenting; black masculinity; being refugee; employment and workplace issues; school experience.

10.2 Parenting

The “husband-wife-children triad in Africa should not be characterised as a ‘nuclear family’ since this unit does not provide socialisation, economic production and emotional support by itself in isolation” (Hill, 1998, p. 17). Rather, the extended family model is the African family, whereas the ‘nuclear family’ model is the European family (Hill, 1998). All the research participants in this study understood family from this perspective.

Another theoretical assumption that informs this study is that different family models encourage and value different child-rearing styles. The normative parenting style in New Zealand reflects the values of white middle class parents, and not the values of Māori for example (see: Herbert, 2011).

Respondents in this project struggled to reconcile their parenting styles to the Western way of raising children. For instance, Michael observed that parenting is a “burning issue” among black African parents in New Zealand:

Parenting is a big issue. In Africa, if a child misbehaves, parents discipline a child. But if you discipline a child in New Zealand, a child will call the police on you. And this
has caused a lot of family conflicts. A lot of African children have been removed from their families as a result. This is hell for many parents.

According to John, what has helped him adjust his parenting style is a New Zealand government project known as Positive Parenting. John pointed out that the programme:

- Teaches parents how to parent children in a positive way. The programme encourages parents to communicate with their children instead of using force.

The ideology of whiteness propagates the view that African parenting styles are inherently harsh and oppressive, whereas Western middle class child-rearing practices are positive and nurturing. This is often achieved via the presentation of the cultural narrative of whiteness (in this case Positive Parenting) that speaks in the ‘double-voiced’ discourse (Gillman, 2007). Meaning, whiteness often talks about societal values and norms in a manner that denies racial differentiation (Gillman, 2007), while it foregrounds white child-rearing values in the process.

John, however, was adamant that the government programme, Positive Parenting, could be beneficial to African parents. As far as John is concerned, African parents have to listen to their children and attend to their children’s needs. This is not always the case, according to John. Consequently, this leads to family conflicts, and some African children end up dropping out of school and getting in trouble with the law, John pointed out.

John blamed African parents for this situation, and argued that for five years the New Zealand government attempted to educate African parents about the benefits of Positive Parenting, but some parents took Positive Parenting Programmes for granted.
Manu explained why he and his wife do not pay attention to the government’s prescription about parenting:

That’s why my wife and I regard our private home as Congo. When we are inside this house, we behave like Congolese parents. When we are outside, we behave like New Zealand parents. But New Zealand cultural values do not guide our behaviour in the privacy of our home. If we did that our marriage would not last.

At this juncture, it is worth pointing out that within African parenting styles the matter of corporal punishment is as contentious an issue in Africa as it is in most societies. African societies take seriously the wellbeing of children in the same way that other societies do. Thus, for example, the Women in Nigeria (WIN) organisation has in the past campaigned against violence against women and children (Amadiume, 2000). When Manu says that he and his wife subscribe to the Congolese parenting style, that does not necessarily mean that they advocate corporal punishment. Among other things, it means that they emphasise Congolese values and cultural norms in their child-rearing practices.

Moreover, the difference between African families in New Zealand and African families in Africa is that many African families in New Zealand are unable to draw social support from diverse ‘fictive kin’ and extended family as they would if they were living on the continent. In the African diaspora discourse, ‘fictive kin’ are non-related people who perform important family functions (Hill, 1998). African family networks are made up of extended family as well as ‘fictive kin’. These family networks are “necessary for the survival” of the African family (Hill, 1998, p. 18). In the absence of such supportive family networks, participants struggled to play their parental roles effectively.
Trevor had an interesting analysis of what it means to parent African children in New Zealand.

I appreciate the way New Zealanders parent their children. I do not support the idea of using corporal punishment when disciplining children. Some children do not listen when you talk to them, but you do not have to harm that child. You can give that child a light smack on the hand to show disapproval. You see the children who come to New Zealand from Africa at the age five or six or seven, they do not listen when an adult talks to them. African children who were born in this country behave like other New Zealand children, they listen when an adult speaks. If you say to them don’t behave in such a manner, they will listen to an adult. But the kids who were born in Africa do not listen to adults and therefore should be given a light smack to change their behaviour.

It is interesting that Trevor makes a distinction between African children born in New Zealand and African children who were born in Africa but came to New Zealand when they were ages five, six and seven. Trevor is of the view that the latter group is problematic and a challenge to parent, whereas the former group behaves like New Zealanders and listens to reason. Trevor’s logic is strikingly consistent with mainstream society’s view of whiteness that foregrounds the importance of disciplining and punishing defiant uncommodified blackness (Leonard, 2006).

This thesis is not interested in prescribing child-rearing methods to any parent; instead the objective is to problematize the notion of parenting by pointing out that the notion of a universalised parenting style is a myth. Furthermore, this study challenges studies that valorise the cultural practices of the white middle class (Lareau, 2011).
10.3 Black masculinity

Most of the respondents in this study voiced unhappiness with the male gender roles that they are expected to play within the kinship sphere in New Zealand. For instance, Charlie argued that men are not respected by women in New Zealand:

Women in New Zealand play the role of a boss. Men are expected to obey women. If a man does not obey a woman, then a woman has every right to kick the man out of the house. Even if a husband wants to touch his wife and the wife does not want to be touched, she will say ‘you are trying to rape me.’ In Africa, the man is the head of the family. In Africa, people are religious and therefore do not behave like this. In Africa, people understand that the bible says that Adam was created first, and Eve was created from Adam’s ribs and Eve respects Adam. In New Zealand there is no respect for Adam, and that is not a good thing.

Interestingly, Charlie is originally from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian state is the oldest in Africa, and the history of Ethiopia shows that “Ethiopian women as a whole have been marginalized even in the midst of the drastic reforms and government changes toward democratization that have occurred in the 1980s and 1990s” (Berhane-Selassie, 1997, p. 183). However, throughout the history of Ethiopia, women have always challenged patriarchy. For example, the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women’s Association (REWA) which was established by the Marxist-Leninist government of Mengistu Haile Miriam in 1974 advocated for women’s issues in Ethiopia (Berhane-Selassie, 1997). This history is highlighted to demonstrate that gender hierarchy in Africa is a continually contested issue. Additionally, this thesis prefaces the analysis of respondents’ views with this history to dispel the perception that African
women learnt about resistance to patriarchy for the first time when they came to New Zealand.

The male respondents in this study blamed the New Zealand government for supposedly giving women a lot of power over men. Blake observed that gender roles in New Zealand are “upside down”:

But where we come from, the man is the head of the family. In New Zealand, the government empowers women. Some women have become arrogant as a result. They know they have power and they use that power. And this causes a lot of marital problems between couples. It leads to broken marriages, I know of four or five broken families.

According to Bruce, the social gender roles in New Zealand have negatively impacted African families:

When African women arrive in New Zealand, they discover that women are given a lot of power. They realise that they have liberty to do whatever they want to do. African women forget that back in Africa a man is the head of the family. This is a big problem and it leads to broken marriages. I know of three broken marriages.

To reiterate, African feminists contradict the foregoing historical reading of African societies. African feminism traces the logic of exploitative patriarchal structures in African countries to the colonial introduction of a new capitalist economy, the imposition of racist government
systems, religious and state laws, changes in marriage African practices and gender relations (Amadiume, 2000).

The foregoing history was absent in participants’ narratives, however. It is against this backdrop that Bruce argued that it would be better to marry a white woman if he had to marry someone from New Zealand. When it was pointed out to him that perhaps a white woman would also refuse to play a subordinate role, Bruce replied that he would be more accepting of a white woman behaving in that way than he would be with an African woman:

If a white woman behaves like that, then she is doing something that is consistent with her culture. But Africans have different cultural values. When African women arrive in New Zealand, they want to forget about African culture.

Black feminists have always argued that it is misleading to view white feminism as the only legitimate feminism. It is a historical fact that Western feminism emerged from universal struggles of resistance such as the slave trade and colonialism (Eisenstein, 2004). It should also be pointed out that financial matters and the lack of access to financially rewarding employment distort the source of family conflict within African families living in New Zealand, and add to the power struggles between respondents and their spouses. For example, Blake talked about how financial disputes within the family negatively impact on husband and wife relationships in New Zealand:

The marital problems begin when women are employed in jobs that pay them a higher salary than their husbands’ income. That leads to disputes about who decides how the family income is spent. And if a woman calls the police in the middle of the dispute,
then the police will not ask any questions, they will simply arrest the man. It doesn’t matter if a woman started the argument, the police will just take the man away.

John noted that the precarious financial situation that many African families find themselves in also impedes the wellbeing of African families:

The problem arises when husband and wife have separate bank accounts and receive the benefit in those separate accounts. For example, if a man wants to send money to his family back in Africa and the woman does not want the man to have access to her bank account, that causes problems in the house. That leads to arguments and before you know it your children or your wife will call the police on you.

John is arguing that Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) encourages spouses to set up separate bank accounts to receive their benefits, and this often creates financial disagreements in African families about how the money ought to be spent. John gives an example of how setting up separate bank accounts for wives and husbands contributes to family conflicts about sending remittances to Africa. The sending of remittances back to Africa is a significant item in the household budget for many African families residing in the West. Research shows that for some African countries remittances exceed foreign direct investment (Kifle, 2009).

The foregoing discussion reveals that, as far as the respondents are concerned, the gender roles available to them in New Zealand contradict their masculine identities. Respondents feel that societal institutions like WINZ further destabilise their families because participants claim that these institutions empower women and prioritise women’s needs over men. In the final analysis, the quotes discussed under this theme communicate the respondents’ sense of powerlessness. This thesis argues that since respondents in this study
know that “they have very little power” to influence the public sphere in New Zealand, they seem to expect that the private world, “the world of home and intimate relationships, will restore to them their sense of power, which they equate with masculinity” (hooks, 2000, p. 121).

### 10.4 Being a refugee

Research participants objected to being called refugees. According to John, New Zealanders use the label refugee to stigmatise people:

New Zealanders use the word label to stigmatise people. All New Zealanders know about refugees are the bad and tragic things that are associated with refugees’ pasts. New Zealanders do not care how long you have been in the country, all they know is that you are a refugee and therefore you don’t know anything.

John is of the view that New Zealanders regard refugees as ignorant people who are outside of modernity. These discursive strategies are part of the mainstream discourse that is deployed to construct the image of uncommodified blackness, which casts black Africans from a refugee background as peculiar and “not human enough” (Gordon, 1995, p. 6).

The image of uncommodified blackness that mainstream New Zealanders utilise to view participants is meant to normalise the widespread trope that black Africans from a refugee background are broken and need to be redeemed by kind Westerners (Hughey, 2014). Such imposing patronage enables Westerners to emerge as messianic figures that can bestow the fruits of modernity on the black African (Hughey, 2014). The discourses that are used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness are effective because they avoid any blatant dispatch of white supremacy. Instead, these discourses rely on an implicit message of white
paternalism and anti-black stereotypes of racialized deficiency and antediluvian attitudes (Hughey, 2014).

Manu further added that all black Africans in New Zealand are considered to be poor and refugees, irrespective of their backgrounds:

First of all, New Zealanders think that all African men are poor and that’s why they come to New Zealand. That’s what New Zealanders think about Africans in general. They think all Africans are poor and refugees. It doesn’t matter if you did not come to New Zealand as a refugee and have never experienced war, when they see an African they immediately think refugee. By putting you in the refugee category, they underestimate you as a human being.

As pointed out in the introduction, the image of uncommodified blackness centres around blacks who are poor and from Africa, people who supposedly have never invented anything and therefore are deep in the irrational (Cesaire, 1969; Fanon, 1986). Among other things, the image of uncommodified blackness functions to reassure mainstream whites’ feelings of superiority (Bogle, 2003).

According to Chris, the New Zealand public holds these views about refugees due to ignorance about Africa:

People often ask me ‘do you have houses where you come from or do people live in trees?’ Some people are not trying to be malicious when they ask those kind of questions. It’s just ignorance, they don’t know anything about your country and that’s
why they ask those kinds of questions. If you say to a New Zealander, ‘I’m from Congo,’ they will say ‘Where is that?’ ‘I’m from Benin.’ ‘Where is that?’ ‘I’m from Burkina Faso.’ ‘What is that?’ So they just don’t know. And the media broadcasts images about Africa that show starving people, people who live in misery. So when the general public sees Africans on the streets, they associate Africans with those images.

Blake added:

What New Zealanders know is what they see on TV. They associate black Africans with wars and poverty. When they see a black African in real life, they assume that you are poor and uneducated and you are from an African bush. New Zealanders sometimes ask me ‘do you own an elephant back home?’ or ‘Do you live with lions back home?’

This work problematizes the notion of ignorance. According to Bailey (2007), a vital aspect of the epistemologies of ignorance is the realisation that ignorance is often an active social production. What people know is often shaped by their social location (Bailey, 2007). This idea of ignorance is a central element of this work, “a non-knowing, that is not contingent, but in which race - white racism and/or white racial domination and their ramifications - plays a crucial causal role” (Mills, 2007, p. 20).

10.5 School experience

Four respondents in this research project reported that their children had experienced racist bullying in New Zealand schools. The rest of the respondents either had no children or their children were too young to attend school. The parents of school-going children in this study pointed out that behind the ‘fair go’ rhetoric, racist harassment, racist bullying and Othering
social practices are taking place against black Africans at schools. It is worth noting that the idea of ‘fair go’ is one of New Zealand’s key phrases that describe the country’s values (Rashbrooke, 2013).

Jordan recounted the following story:

The bullying of children at schools is a big problem. In the beginning it was difficult to send African children to school. Parents had to fight with their children to get them to go to school. African children refused to go to school because they were being teased and called names. My son came back from school a few times with bruises on his face. I went to the school and complained to the principal. I was told ‘your son has not said anything to us about this. But we are going to look into it.’ The school failed to resolve this issue. I went to see the principal three times. After that I took matters into my own hands. I enrolled my children in a karate class. And I told them if the kids at school give you a hard time, beat them up. And if you get in trouble for defending yourselves, I will advocate for you. And I told my son that it is his responsibility to protect his sister at school. I told him if you see anyone threatening your sister, beat them up.

According to Jordan:

A lot of African children are subjected to bullying in New Zealand schools. Children are traumatised and the teachers are not doing anything to protect them. It hurts to see your child crying because they are being called names. My son came back from school one day and asked me ‘dad what can I do to straighten my hair because other kids at school say I have monkey hair? They say my hair is too hard and too short. So what can
I do to make my hair grow?’ That is a difficult conversation to have with your child. To make things worse, the child refused to go back to school.

Racist bullying is part of the discursive strategy of the broader discourse utilised to construct the image of uncommodified blackness. Young children are not immune to discourses circulating in society. Children learn early on that whites and black Africans are portrayed differently in society. Through media portrayal of whites and blacks, white children develop negative images of racial others, but also positive images of themselves as whites (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

As the quote from Jordan reveals, some children in New Zealand associate black African hair with ‘monkey hair’. The monkey trope derives from a long-standing racist stereotype that depicts blacks as being apelike. Since whiteness is partly constructed based on the racist assumptions that blacks are animals, schools in New Zealand find it difficult to take seriously the perspective of black Africans that being likened to an ape is racist and offensive. Since schools do not take the complaints of African parents seriously, African parents feel compelled to encourage their children to resort to violence to defend themselves against racist bullies. For instance, John’s daughter was subjected to racist jokes and racist harassment at school, the teachers did not take his complaints seriously:

I met with the principal who told me they were in control of the situation. But the bullying did not stop. So I told my daughter that she needs to defend herself against bullies. She got in a fight with three other girls after that.

Part of the hidden curriculum at New Zealand schools is to provide black Africans with extra lessons in frustration and the power of whiteness (Lareau, 2011). Thus, the schools do not
take complaints of racist bullying seriously. Furthermore, the quotes above reveal that some respondents initially subscribed to the belief that most teachers are non-racist and that non-racists would become antiracists and intervene when presented with evidence of racism (Reddy, 1994). However, research in Western societies shows that non-black school officials seldom acknowledge how prevalent racial discrimination and racial bullying are in their schools (Reddy, 1994).

Ultimately, what the quotes under this theme also reveal is that a school provides “a captive audience for harassment”, to use Gardner’s insight (1995, p.58). Microassaults in the form of racetalk are used as social weapons of choice to harass, bully, demean and to Other black students. Moreover, when it comes to black African students, the goal of the hidden curriculum which is largely shaped by the image of uncommodified blackness is to encourage African students to accommodate “the terms the system sets down for survival” (Schmidt, 2000, p. 148). And the terms are clear, whiteness “possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black” (Fanon, 1986, p. 45).

As far as Blake is concerned, the solution to the problems faced by black African children in New Zealand lies in educating children in New Zealand about Africa. According to Blake:

I told the teacher you have to teach them about Africa. I suggested that the school develop a course to teach children about African culture, food and music. I suggested that through such a course the other kids will learn about Africa. The course also encourages African children to not be ashamed of being African.

Specific incidents of racial discrimination often trigger a personal and collective sense of powerlessness among black people, and thus when black people begin anti-racist educational
initiatives it often gives them “a sense of accomplishment” (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Anti-racist education initiatives should also involve encouraging non-black teachers to overcome their denial “about the seriousness of racial prejudices, emotions, and discrimination in their own lives, the lives of their friends and relatives, and the larger society” (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001, p. 29).

10.6 Employment and workplace issues

Inequality in New Zealand has been on the rise for the past three decades, since 1982 (Easton, 2013). It is worth noting that this is the period during which neoliberal economic policies were introduced to New Zealand. According to Giroux (2014), neoliberal policies promote privatization, commodification, free trade, and deregulation. This is the socio-economic environment within which respondents in this study are located.

Participants not only have to contend with these socio-economic realities and the social status of being working class, but they also have to deal with socio-economic institutions that over-value the abilities of whites over black Africans. Thus, respondents pointed out that this is partly why job-seekers with non-English names find it difficult to access employment in New Zealand. According to John, it is not only people with black African names that are struggling to find employment, but Asians too. “Any non-English name will make it difficult for you to get a job. Asians also face the same challenge,” said John.

According to Wade, even black Africans who were educated in New Zealand struggle to find employment. As a community leader, Wade pointed out that he has had to deal with a lot of these issues. Wade is of the view that New Zealand employers have a way of screening out black African job seekers. He explained:
People who studied and received their degrees at New Zealand universities struggle to access employment in this country. This is despite the fact that New Zealand employers always say they want to hire people with Kiwi qualifications. But if you have that, then they will ask ‘have you got Kiwi work experience?’ Employers will look for any excuses not to hire Africans.

According to Wade, if potential employers cannot use the excuse of a New Zealand qualification or lack of New Zealand experience to weed out black Africans in the job application process, they will use the absence of an English accent as an excuse to not consider a black African candidate. Blake agreed with Wade’s observations. Blake applied for a job at one of the Auckland Corrections Facilities, and he was invited to attend an interview as part of the hiring process. At the interview:

I was told that ‘you are going to have a problem if we hire you.’ I was told that since I do not sound like a New Zealander, the prisoners are going to use that against me by saying that they do not understand me. So they said ‘we can’t hire you on that basis.’

One of the key findings under this theme is that respondents’ lived experience entailed struggling against linguistic profiling, among other things. According to black linguists, perceptions of intelligence “are often deeply interwoven with perception about language, or specific dialects and accents within a particular language” (Baugh, 2003, p. 155). Thus, social groups that are viewed as not speaking the correct standard English are denied access to economic opportunities and positions of power and privilege (Winford, 2003). The image of uncommodified blackness casts black Africans from a refugee background as individuals who ‘butcher the English language’, to use Bogle’s (2003) phrase. And, since New Zealand
institutions regard English proficiency as a sign of a ‘successfully integrated’ immigrant, black Africans who speak English with an accent are generally viewed as people who are failing at ‘integration’.

Participants in this research project pointed out that even in situations where their English proficiency was accepted as ‘good English’ and where they were therefore offered employment, they still had to negotiate anti-black stereotypes in the workplace. For instance, Jordan who worked at a New Zealand bank for five years was forced to leave because of racism. Jordan recounted some of his daily experiences at the bank:

If there was a drop of water on the bathroom floor, I got blamed for that. People would come to my desk and ask ‘why did you make a mess in the bathroom?’ It didn’t matter if I hadn’t been to the bathroom the whole day. And if someone used the microwave in the kitchen to warm up their food and in the process made a mess, I got blamed for that too.

As already pointed out in the previous chapters, one of the long-standing racist stereotypes about black Africans is that they need to be tutored on how to be modern. In Jordan’s case, his colleagues scapegoated him for transgressions of social norms due to their racist assumptions that uncommodified blacks need to be instructed by Westerners about kitchen etiquette, and on how to use the bathroom. These stereotypes engender a situation whereby black Africans are employed as a last resort (Anderson, 2011). Moreover, these stereotypes are used to rationalise the over-supervision of black employees at the workplace. The over-supervision of black employees by managers at the workplace typically goes hand-in-hand with negative evaluations of the work of black employees (Feagin & Sikes, 2013). Thus, if
black workers make mistakes, reactions occur swiftly and are probably more severe (Essed, 1991).

Manu explained how this happened at his workplace:

I resigned from my previous job because of stress. For example, if I made a small mistake that everybody else makes regularly, the boss would remind me of my mistake every single day. Even if the mistake did not warrant issuing a written warning, the boss kept reminding me of my mistakes. I feared losing my job.

Manu is of the view that his manager constantly reminded him of his mistakes to control him and to remind him of his vulnerable position as a worker in the company. These examples reinforce the notion that employers sometimes use mistakes done by black employees to “confirm racially biased suspicions” (Royster & Steinberg, 2003, p. 178).

Some research participants in this study pointed out that their experience at the workplace consisted of being bullied by supervisors, as well as being subjected to racist jokes by colleagues (Essed, 1991). For example, Michael who worked at one of the retail stores in New Zealand shared the following anecdote. Michael was belittled and harassed by a colleague:

Every day he called me names. This one time I was in the bathroom and washing my hands. He came in and pushed me saying ‘why are you using the paper towels to dry your hands?’ He said that ‘I have heard that black people are very stupid and what you are doing confirms that.’ I told him that there are lots of smart black people in the world and so he must stop making generalisations about black people.
The harassment did not stop there.

He wrote on my name badge that I was gay. I reported this to the management because I am not gay. The management did not take me seriously. But I told management that if they did not take my complaint seriously, then I would resign and report the guy to police for harassing me.

Michael was eventually transferred to a different work station. But the colleague who was bullying him would seek him out and continue with the harassment. In the end, Michael resigned from the retail store because he felt that his managers were not doing enough to protect him. The harassment and the withholding of the rituals of civility were meant to communicate to Michael that he is not entitled to the small courtesies of everyday life which are routinely accorded to other people (Gardener, 1995). Uncommodified blackness is, after all, unworthy of respect and dignity in the public imagination of the West.

Paul is another participant who went through a similar experience. Paul worked for five years at a hotel in Auckland. Paul left the hotel because of racist harassment from one of his colleague. According to Paul, this colleague:

Doesn’t like ‘fucking immigrants’. Every time he sees me he is abusive, telling me ‘this is my country’, blah, blah, blah. I reported him to the management and they made sure that we did not work the same shift.

Paul and Michael’s experiences of workplace harassment also illustrate that a black body sometimes triggers xenophobic reactions from co-workers and remains a sufficient cause for chronic racist behaviour among Westerners (Jackson II, 2006). Further, black bodies are
expected to receive racist insults and harassment without resistance. The expectation is that black bodies have to remain stoic, generous and selfless. In short, uncommodified blacks are tasked with the responsibility of de-escalating racist conflicts (Bogle, 2003).

In the final analysis, the quotes discussed under this theme show that many black Africans from a refugee background come to New Zealand with great expectations thinking that this is a welcoming country where through hard work, they will achieve economic success. However, participants find the racial climate in New Zealand to be “replete with gendered forms of racism and blocked opportunities” (Smith, 2010, p. 265). The fact of blackness, to use Fanon’s (1986) phrase, is maintained and perpetuated via the image of uncommodified blackness in New Zealand. Gatekeepers, in the form of employers, deploy the image of uncommodified blackness to rationalise their decision to steer black Africans from positions of power and pay. The discursive strategies that are often utilised by employers include the language ideology, the lack of ‘Kiwi experience’ or the need for immigrants to have ‘Kiwi qualifications’.

10.7 Conclusion

This thesis does not frame the employment challenges faced by respondents as owing to their reluctance or failure to ‘integrate’. Rather this study foregrounds the view that societal institutions create an arena in which individuals operate, and therefore that institutions have the power to limit the socio-economic benefits individuals can access in society (Albert & Majavu, 2012). The quotes from respondents show that participants struggle to access economic opportunities in New Zealand. Research participants argued that even black Africans who grew up and studied in New Zealand still struggle to access financially rewarding jobs in New Zealand. This thesis theorised this situation as being partly due to the
image of uncommodified blackness which portrays black Africans as being generally incompetent and irrational.

In the final analysis, participants’ lived experience is shaped by societal institutions and the discourses that bind those institutions. Through various discourses, societal institutions facilitate possibilities through conveying common preferences, values and habits (Albert & Majavu, 2012). This theoretical assumption manifested itself, for example, through participants grappling with the matter of parenting. The findings show that most respondents in this study found it hard to reconcile their own African parenting style with the prevailing child-rearing practices in New Zealand. Similarly, participants found it socially challenging to express their masculine identities in New Zealand.

The core argument of this chapter is that dominant discourses serve the interests of the dominant social groups. In other words, dominant discourses are produced by and for those in dominant social positions (Susen, 2014). Every discourse is “impregnated with the structuring power of social positionality” (Susen, 2014, p. 92). Thus, the social function of discourses used to construct the image of uncommodified blackness serve to rationalise the demonization and the marginalisation of black Africans.
Chapter 11 - Discussion and Conclusion

O my body, make of me always a man who questions! - Frantz Fanon

11.1 Introduction

As pointed out in Chapter One, this thesis is concerned with investigating the lived experience of black Africans by looking at: 1) the social life of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand, and 2) investigating the social roles and institutional roles that are available for black Africans to play in these two countries. In other words, the over-arching question that shapes this research project is: how do societal institutions in Australia and New Zealand impact the lived experience of black Africans from a refugee background? This research project grappled with these questions by reviewing the Australian and New Zealand literature in Chapter Four and Chapter Five respectively, as well as by analyzing and critically discussing the data in Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine, and Chapter Ten. Therefore, this concluding chapter aims to tie all the research findings together and highlight the similarities of these two countries. It is worth pointing out that this chapter is supported by my data analysis, the theory that underpinn the study, the literature review, as well as the historical and structural analysis of these two countries.

The function of critical sociology is to elucidate the extent to which dominant discourses serve, but above all, protect, legitimise and conceal the interests of the dominant groups in society (Susen, 2014). To this end, this study identified various discourses that are utilised to construct the image of uncommodified blackness which serves to primitivise black Africans from a refugee background. It was further shown that these discourses are rooted in the hegemony of whiteness - an ideology that is rationalised by socially constructed and
material conditions (Jackson, 2006). The hegemony of whiteness, “where a hegemon-literally a power”, gives weight to whiteness (Jackson, 2006, p. 623):

There certainly is an accumulative power to whiteness, but the amount of force or power that whiteness carries or conveys in a given discursive moment will vary according to how it is discerned within a sphere of meaning (Jackson, 2006, p. 623).

Thus, hegemony is used in this study to refer to an organised collection of meanings and social practices, dominant cultural values and actions which are lived (Apple, 2004). The key research finding of this study is that the lived experience of participants has been and remains constructed by whiteness (Rabaka, 2015). To use Fanon’s (1986, p. 34) insight, research participants in both Australia and New Zealand are compelled in numerous ways to wear the uncommodified blackness image “that the white man has sewed for him.”

The discussion of findings shows that the development of the image of uncommodified blackness is achieved in similar ideological ways in both Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, the findings of this study reveal that the image of uncommodified blackness impacts on and shapes the lived experience of respondents in both Australia and New Zealand in almost the same manner. This contradicts the dominant view that Australia is ‘more racist’ than New Zealand, or the prevailing assumption that New Zealand is more liberal than Australia. The discussion below highlights ways in which the image of uncommodified blackness is deployed by means of identical discursive strategies to Other participants in these two countries.
11.2 Africa vs modernity

According to Susen (2014), dominant discourses are unthinkable without the creation of binary categories. One of the key research findings of this study is that participants made use of ‘Africa vs modernity’ as the overarching binary category that they utilised to understand their life histories. Thus, when making sense of changes in their lives, participants contrasted the political stability found in Australia and New Zealand to Africa’s political conflicts and under-development. Participants from both Australia and New Zealand essentially echoed one another on this topic. This is not surprising given the historical background of participants - after all, they all left their countries of birth because of civil wars.

Be that as it may, the ‘Africa vs modernity’ binary category is an ahistorical concept. Thus, participants talked about Africa’s underdevelopment without highlighting the impact of colonisation and the global economy on African societies. Research participants lamented Africa’s civil wars without underlining the ways in which the Cold War fuelled civil wars in Africa.

Moreover, the ‘Africa vs modernity’ binary category is rooted in the long-standing racist discursive strategy of casting Africa as “‘the other world,’ the antithesis of Europe” (Achebe, 1961). Consequently, participants contrasted the friendliness of Australians and New Zealanders to the supposedly uncouth and aggressive qualities of Africans. In New Zealand some participants pointed out that the police are fair-minded agents of the state, whereas the police in Africa are allegedly corrupt and a law unto themselves.

Research participants subscribe to this binary category because, among other things, dominant discourses “hinge on hegemonic sets of interrelated values and assumptions, whose power-laden constitution is supposed to remain largely unnoticed by those whose interests they do not represent” (Susen, 2014, p. 97). It is worth noting that the ‘Africa vs modernity’
binary category is one of the Negritudesque themes that thinkers such as Cesaire (1969), Fanon (1986) and Rodney (1981) spent their professional lives deconstructing.

11.3 Alienation

The discussion of research findings reveals that participants in both Australia and in New Zealand are socially isolated. Neighbours are not neighbourly towards them, and sometimes neighbours are overtly hostile or racist towards participants. To use Ruffin II’s (2004) phrase, participants in both Australia and New Zealand felt like ‘uninvited neighbours’. In Auckland, two participants were harassed and threatened by neighbours and one participant was subjected to violence.

The majority of participants talked about the lack of social support and mutual aid between neighbours in Australia and New Zealand. Consequently, participants often contrasted the Western idea of individualism to the African notion of community. Research participants pointed out that they did not derive any pleasure from social life in Australia or New Zealand. Overall, research participants were in agreement that mainstream society in both Australia and New Zealand is characterised by a lack of sociability – that is, the practice of social life for its own sake (Kropotkin, 1998). Sociability curtails unnecessary social competition and conflict, and instead cultivates compassion and solidarity (Kropotkin, 1998). According to Kropotkin (1998), people who live in communities that practice mutual aid and value sociability have better chances of social and economic survival in life. Conversely, a society that is characterised by conflict and the lack of social cooperation encourages social distance among its citizenry. Research participants in this project felt that in their own situations, the conflict between themselves and their neighbours, as well as the lack of social cooperation in their neighbourhoods was fuelled by a racial dynamic of the situation. In other
words, participants felt that predominantly white neighbourhoods were unwelcoming and even hostile.

On the other hand, participants who were happy with their neighbourhood social situations often lived in neighbourhoods that were demographically diverse. In fact, participants felt that neighbourhoods that are diverse in demographics were often more welcoming to migrants and people of colour. Interestingly, neighbourhoods that are diverse in terms of demographics in Western countries are often associated with poverty and criminal elements. The quality of space in Western countries is measured in large degree through the absence of undesirable people of colour, which includes uncommodified blacks (DiAngelo, 2011). The logic that underpins this perspective is that people of colour do not belong in “white spaces at all” (Myers, 2005, p. 163). Thus, mainstream whites in Western countries subscribe to the view that immigrants of colour should go back to ‘where they belong’ (Myers, 2005).

Social isolation and alienation is one of the major Negritudesque themes. According to McCulloch (1983), the writings of the Negritude movement present alienation as an essentially racial problem emanating more from the experience of lived racial experience than from being of a different class or nationality to the majority.

11.4 Antediluvian values

Discourses are self-referential (Susen, 2014). To put it bluntly, discourses are self-fulfilling prophecies, “for they are founded on values and principles whose validity they aim to confirm in terms of their own normative standards and codes of legitimacy” (Susen, 2014, 94). The literature shows that whiteness in both Australia and New Zealand uses a racialized discourse to question the quality of parenting of people viewed through the image of uncommodified blackness. Through various tropes, the image of uncommodified blackness is
deployed to cast black African families as being stuck in primordial times when children and women were enslaved to the whims of male patriarchs.

Therefore, government agencies and various societal institutions in Australia and New Zealand subject black African parents to a racialized critical gaze (Britton, 2013). Participants from both Australia and New Zealand pointed out that they feared that the police or the social workers would come and take their children away if they did not practice parenting the ‘correct way’. Some Australian participants argued that the Child Protection Services adopts a critical view of black families and thus over scrutinises black families in a search for transgressions. African parents in New Zealand are encouraged to demonstrate their parental competence by incorporating Western child-rearing practices into their existing parental styles. This is achieved via the New Zealand government’s Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents programme.

One of the key findings of this research is that, in both Australia and New Zealand, external socio-economic factors disrupt and further contribute to family conflicts. African families from a refugee background tend to be working class and often rely on the government benefit to make ends meet in both Australia and New Zealand. Thus, participants in both Australia and New Zealand found themselves in situations where their family financial resources were chronically strained, and that triggered family conflicts about who in the family should have power and control over the financial assistance coming from the government. Moreover, the fact that African families in these two countries were unable to draw social support from extended family as they would were they still in their countries of birth, further complicated the family situation.

All parents negotiate their parental roles via idealised standards that are culturally prescribed, and, “in doing so, their subjectivity is produced through the playing out of gendered, classed and racialized socialised norms” (Byrne, 2006, cited in Britton, 2013,
One of the findings of this study is that the socially valued position of a good parent is less available to parents who are viewed through an image of uncommodified blackness (Britton, 2013). The parenting style of uncommodified blackness is constantly scrutinised and found to be deficient in both Australia and New Zealand.

Therefore, one of the social functions of the image of uncommodified blackness is to reinforce the racist view that white middle-class Westerners practice parenting better than black Africans from a refugee background. Within this framework, societal institutions in both Australia and New Zealand are then marshalled to compel black African parents to adopt white middle-class child-rearing cultural priorities in their parental repertoire. Since participants in this research project are neither middle-class nor in possession of intimate knowledge of white middle-class cultural priorities, they found it difficult to play their parental roles in these two countries. However, various Australian and New Zealand government family programmes have been put in place to ‘educate’ African parents on how to successfully incorporate white middle-class child-rearing practices in their parental repertoire.

Ultimately, what is defined as good or bad parenting is socially constructed and dependent upon the specific social and cultural context in which parenting occurs (Britton, 2013). The social and cultural contexts in both Australia and New Zealand impose white parental values, while simultaneously socially censoring any parenting styles that deviate from this context. To successfully ‘integrate’ into Australian and New Zealand society, African parents are compelled to renounce their African values, since those are associated with ‘life in the jungle’ in the public imagination (Fanon, 1986).
11.5 Being a refugee

Research findings show that in both Australia and New Zealand, participants are of the view that the label ‘refugee’ is deployed to Other black Africans. An Australian participant argued that the label ‘refugee’ is used as a social weapon to degrade and dehumanise Africans. This is because, as a New Zealand participant explained, African refugees are associated with the tragic and dehumanising effects of civil wars. Consequently, all the participants were in agreement that African refugees are associated with violence, nescience, philistinism, and with being poor and uneducated. Some participants blamed the media for perpetuating these inaccurate images of African refugees while others blamed the West for being ignorant of African affairs, and thus for failing to educate their citizens.

Participants lamented the notion that they found it almost impossible to effectively challenge this hegemonic presentation of Africans from a refugee background. There is a direct and abiding connection between the maintenance of whiteness in Western societies and the institutionalisation through the media of specific images, representations of race, and of blackness that support the domination and exploitation of all black people (hooks, 1992). Thus, research participants in this project yearned for liberatory spaces in which they could imagine and describe themselves in ways that are oppositional (hooks, 1992) to the oppressive image of uncommodified blackness.

The key finding under this theme is that participants experienced considerable distress upon learning that they could not control the ‘black look’ – “how we see ourselves… or how we are seen…so intense that it rends us” (hooks, 1992, 4). The consequences of that emotional torment include repressed rage, feeling dispirited and broken-hearted, and experiencing bouts of paralysing despair (hooks, 1992). To counter these disruptive and destructive emotions, black Africans need to think critically about race, representation and
images (hooks, 1992). This work attempts to contribute to efforts that challenge and subvert the colonising image of uncommodified blackness.

**11.6 Personal encounters with racism and vicarious experiences of racism**

The key finding under this theme is that, both in Australia and New Zealand, the everyday construction of the uncommodified blackness image is carried out in strikingly similar ways. For instance, in both countries, participants are seen as perpetual refugees, dysfunctional and dirty Others who ought to be taught how to use a bathroom and be avoided in public transport. In both Australia and New Zealand, participants are regarded as potentially dangerous and hence New Zealand participants were racially profiled at Auckland International Airport. Australian participants, on the other hand, faced regular police harassment and were also racially profiled by the police.

Uncommodified blackness in the white imagination is dangerous, destructive, and dirty (Leonard, 2012). Whiteness views uncommodified blackness via two discursive strategies, namely: pity and contempt. The former perspective argues that without the white civilising influence, uncommodified blackness would spin out of control into unmitigated barbarity (Hughey, 2014). The latter perspective, on the other hand, regards uncommodified blackness as inherently inferior to whiteness, with the view of this perspective being that blacks are pathological, dangerous and an intrinsic social problem in need of discipline and punishment (Leonard, 2012).

Pity and contempt are long-standing colonising discourses that whiteness has historically utilised to portray blacks in the West. As pointed out in the introduction, although the colonising discourse that whiteness has historically employed to portray black Africans is wide-ranging, it nevertheless centres around the perspective that blacks are both savage and
yet the most docile people (Bhabha, 1994). Thus, in the white imagination, uncommodified blackness becomes the embodiment:

of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces. In each case what is being dramatized is a separation - between races, cultures, histories: within histories - a separation between before and after that repeats obsessively the mythical moment or disjunction (Bhabha, 1994, p. 82). (italics in the original)

The dominant theme in participants’ interviews is that, as far as they are concerned, in the public white imagination of Australians and New Zealanders, the defining feature of uncommodified blackness is that this type of blackness has fallen “back into the pit of niggerhood” (Fanon, 1986, p. 47). In such a state of affairs the white saviour script (Hughey, 2014) is activated, with a sophisticated version of the ‘white man’s burden’ discourse being advanced to rationalise the activation of the white saviour script. The updated version of the white man’s discourse does not openly espouse white supremacy, but subtle links white bodies to goodness, civility, and professionalism (Leonard, 2012), whereas uncommodified blackness is linked to a deviance that must be compelled to aspire to Western values and the supposedly liberatory Western project. As already pointed out in previous chapters, the Western liberal project was after all founded on slavery (Eisenstein, 2004). According to Eisenstein (2004, p. 74), “by opening the West to its historic before, we relocate eighteenth-century democratic theory to its exclusionary white privilege, its exploitative capitalist class relations, and its unforgiving patriarchal masculinism.”
Since whiteness sets the discursive terms of the debate, the foregoing analysis is conveniently removed from Western history (Chomsky, 2004). Moreover, through a revised and a sophisticated version of the white man’s burden discourse, whiteness establishes the premise of discourse with regards to African refugees. The white man’s burden discourse casts whites and other Westerners as redeemers who go out and redeem uncommodified blackness that they claim is by its very nature is in need of redemption (Hughey, 2014). Thus, the everyday construction of uncommodified blackness in both Australia and New Zealand is normalised via the deployment of the white saviour trope, as well as through the sophisticated version of the notion of a white man’s burden.

11.7 Racist bullying

Racist bullying in both the Australian and New Zealand school system forms part of the hidden curriculum. The educational experience of participants’ children revolved around being teased about being black, being subjected to racist harassment, and essentially being socialised for a life characterised by belittlement and a lifelong discursive association with all forms of anti-black racist stereotypes.

In Australia, participants pointed out that African children are routinely scapegoated for all kinds of problems. According to participants, teachers in Australian schools regard black children to be deviant and criminogenic. Thus, teachers side with racist bullies in some cases. Similarly, New Zealand participants argued that teachers do not protect African children against racist bullies at New Zealand schools. Participants talked about their children refusing to return to school after being racially harassed and bullied. In both Australia and New Zealand, participants were of the view that schools did not take the issue of racist bullying seriously.
A key finding under this theme is that Australian and New Zealand schools do not take racist bullying seriously because one of the most important functions of the hidden curriculum in Western schools is to inculcate in people associated with uncommodified blackness a sense of powerlessness against whiteness. The ideology that underpins the hidden curriculum of schools in Australia and New Zealand is the hegemony of whiteness. The foregoing is based on the notion that schools, which serve as important institutions for social reproduction, are geared toward perpetuating the status quo and the established social order (Susen, 2014).

Therefore, the racist bullying of participants’ children indicates that, in order for these African children to be successful at school, they would need to accommodate racist taunts and adjust to racist harassment from other school children. The racist taunts borrow from the long-standing Negroid discourse. It was the Negroid discourse that compelled the Academie of Bordeaux to organise an academic competition in 1741, which asked: ‘What is the physical cause of the color of Negroes, of the quality of their hair, and of the degeneration of both?’ (Miller, 1985, p. 21). Although the Negroid discourse is associated with largely discredited racial science, it still shapes the commonplace thinking of whites about uncommodified blackness. White children at Australian and New Zealand schools deploy discursive tropes from the Negroid discourse to set themselves apart as racially superior to uncommodified blackness and thus performers of the social practices associated with whiteness (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

11.8 Social capital and language ideology

Within Western countries, the idea of social capital means, among other things, a person who conforms to middle-class white norms and cultural values. People who embody middle-class white norms and values are rewarded with high status and prestigious jobs. Individuals who
are regarded by social institutions as lacking in social capital are forced to work in low-wage, exploitative jobs. In Australia and New Zealand, those individuals are people associated with the uncommodified blackness image.

Consequently, although several Australian participants had university degrees from Australian universities, they still struggled to access professional employment. Participants understood that jobs that were available to them involved manual labour or employment in the services sector. Further, participants understood that in most cases Australian employers hired black Africans for professional jobs only when powerful white people vouched for them.

New Zealand participants, on the other hand, pointed out that employers often use the excuse that black Africans lack New Zealand qualifications or New Zealand work experience to filter out Africans in the employment application process. Additionally, the literature shows that in some cases the language ideology is deployed to rationalize the under-employment of black Africans in New Zealand. As pointed out in chapter three, through the language ideology, Western countries require citizens to speak a state-mandated language in the public realm as a condition for full participation in the wider society (May, 2011).

Consequently, society’s gatekeeping institutions in Australia and New Zealand use notions of social capital and language ideology to exclude participants from socio-economic opportunities. The managers of societal institutions in these two countries are well aware that social capital and social class are not protected statuses under the law, whereas outright discrimination is illegal (Rivera, 2015). Furthermore, commonplace thinking about social capital makes it seem right and just that the labour market favours people who embody middle-class white norms.

Since the image of uncommodified blackness is regarded as one that lacks social currency, it is taken for granted that blacks who are associated with that image will be
disadvantaged in the labour market and in broader society. Thus, blacks who are associated
with the image of uncommodified blackness, specifically black Africans from a refugee
background, are encouraged to ‘integrate’ into mainstream Australian and New Zealand
society. Additionally, in both Australia and New Zealand, speaking ‘good’ standard English
without an accent is not only associated with modernity and whiteness, but serves as the
symbol of an ‘integrated’ immigrant (Lippi-Green, 2011).

Fanon (1986) once wrote that the Negro in the Antilles comes closer to being a real
human being in direct proportion to his mastery of the French language. This study argues
that black Africans in Australia and New Zealand are elevated above their alleged primitive
status only in proportion to their mastery of the English language, and adoption of white
values and Western cultural standards (Fanon, 1986).

11.9 Tactful blindness or choosing not to see racism
One of the dominant discourses is the view that the globally triumphant ideology of the early
21st century is liberalism, which has supposedly helped to ‘disappear’ racism in the world
(Susen, 2014). A vital function of dominant discourses is to persuade all members of society
that social ills such as inequality, racism and poverty have all been ‘disappeared’ (Susen,
2014). It is against this discursive backdrop that the subtext of the immigration discourse in
Western countries subtly communicates to refugees of colour that they need to work hard at
sustaining the racial comfort of the dominant groups in society if they wish to ‘integrate’
successfully.

It is within this social climate that some participants in this research project were
tolerant of the ‘error’ of racism, and viewed it as inevitable in any situation characterised by
different cultural groups having to live side by side. For instance, a participant from New
Zealand pointed out that he never escalates racist situations, but instead diffuses those with
humour in order to create a playful climate that makes everyone involved comfortable. Some New Zealand participants argued that discrimination is inherent to human beings. These participants pointed out that Africans in Africa discriminate against other Africans too. Similarly, a participant from Australia pointed out that racism is part of life. Another participant questioned his friends’ claims that it was owing to racism that white Australians refused to sit next to them on public transport. As far as this participant was concerned, racism should, by its very nature, be expressed overtly. A participant who had been a taxi driver in Melbourne for the past six years excused racist behaviour by some of his clients by blaming the alcohol his clients had clearly imbibed.

One of the features of everyday racism is that it is “attributionally ambiguous”, meaning that when people experience everyday racism they find it difficult to be certain whether the negative treatment they receive is owing to their race or another reason (Deitch, Barsky, et. Al, 2003). In Western countries, everyday racism is deployed via subtle humiliating acts and the belittlement of blacks. These include racist jokes which are often presented as innocuous, but in reality are meant to keep blacks in their ‘place’ (Beagan, 2003). For instance, in their study of everyday racism in Australia, Walton, Priest and Paradies (2013, p. 75) found that white participants did not view potentially offensive comments as racist “because they did not include malicious intent [or] were not based on based on hatred…”

Equally important is the white misconception that since Western mainstream culture celebrates and mimics commodified blackness, this automatically translates into whites divesting of whiteness. It is never contemplated that a friendly outlook towards commodified blackness can co-exist with racist thinking (hooks, 1992). The racist idea is that whites are somehow smarter, and have better values than blacks (hooks, 1992). In the final analysis, although the commodification of blackness is about generating profits, its discursive function
is to promote the view that racism has been eliminated in line with the notion of the ‘American Dream’ (Leonard & King, 2010). On the other hand, the discursive power of the uncommodified blackness image is its ability to frame its discursive articulations (Leonard, 2012) about uncommodified blackness as articulations relating to modernity and the liberatory values associated with the West against the allegedly oppressive social practices of the ‘Third World’. There is no coherent geographical location of ‘the West’. Rather, the West is a state of mind, “a set of privileged cultural values” (Eisenstein, 2004, p. 74). The notions of the West and modernity are often used as discursive tropes to hide the homogenising power of the privileged cultural values associated with whiteness and the West, while simultaneously demonising values and practices associated with the Third World (Eisenstein, 2004).

Uncommodified blackness is regarded as being the antithesis of whiteness and the West. Moreover, it is within such a social climate that blacks who are associated with uncommodified blackness are seen as needing tutelage about modernity. Within the immigration discourse, whites and other Westerners take it upon themselves to ‘teach’ blacks how to behave towards their children and their spouses, how to be civil, how to be a ‘good neighbour’, how to speak ‘good English’, and how to integrate into Western society. This is a paternalistic task that whites and other Westerners gladly and uncritically take up because the logic is that whites and other Westerners ‘know better’ (Leonard, 2012). This perspective is rooted in the long-standing Western colonial discourse that justified European colonisation, and which was used to rationalise that it was necessary for whites to occupy positions of paternalistic authority over people of colour in the colonies (Hughey, 2014). The 21st century version of this discourse is sophisticated and complex mainly because it is subtle and attributionally ambiguous.
11.10 Being Australian / Being a New Zealander

One of the social functions of discourse is to establish mutually shared cultural codes, including common reference points, and those in turn become markers of collective identity (Susen, 2014). A historical analysis of Australia and New Zealand reveals that, despite the continued presence of their indigenous peoples, both countries’ national identities were constructed around whiteness following colonisation. Thus, immigrants who do not embody white norms and values are regarded as a threat to social cohesion or in the Australian and New Zealand government parlance, ‘not integrated’.

The dominant theme in interviews from both Australia and New Zealand is that participants felt that mainstream white society cast them as outsiders. Thus participants in Melbourne pointed out that they and their children were constantly asked ‘where are you from?’ Likewise, New Zealand participants were of the view that the broader society largely regarded them as refugees and therefore not legitimate New Zealanders. Hence, participants defined being an Australian or a New Zealander by emphasising their legal immigration status – citizenship - rather than by highlighting their emotional attachment to the broader mainstream culture in the two countries.

Curiosity about participants’ geographical origins, as well as the idea that participants are part of the visible minority in Australia and New Zealand, speak to the larger discourse on nationality and race. The discursive conflation of nationality with race serves to reinforce the notion that “the world is naturally divided into countries” and that certain races ‘belong’ in certain countries (Chomsky, 2014, p. 23). It is further assumed that some people ought to remain in the countries they were born in (Chomsky, 2014). In reality, countries, the nation state, citizenship and state laws are all socially constructed (Chomsky, 2014).

The discursive conflation of nationality and race as it pertains to Western countries serves to perpetuate white privilege, among other things. According to Chomsky (2014, p.
19), “the world’s wealthy nations have created islands of prosperity and privilege, and those who live in these islands have an interest in preserving them - and in justifying their own access to them.” It is against this backdrop that the under-employment and unemployment of black Africans in Australia and New Zealand largely goes unproblematised in mainstream society. It is within this climate that it is seen as just that highly educated Africans should work as taxi drivers or as manual labourers if they want to ‘integrate’ into Australia and New Zealand. The discourse makes it clear that the options available to black Africans are either to endure these indignities and ‘hope for the best’, or go back to Africa. Consequently, although there are exceptions, there exists a tendency in literature on African refugees to write uncritically about the ‘resettlement process’ as being characterised by a loss of status.

Interestingly, some New Zealand participants argued that the grass is economically greener on the other side of the Tasman Sea. Although the Australian economy is bigger than the New Zealand economy, and therefore potentially offers more economic opportunities, the literature reveals high levels of unemployment and under-employment among black Africans from a refugee background in Australia. In both Australia and New Zealand, part of the social function of the everyday construction of uncommodified blackness is to rationalise the exclusion of black Africans from positions of prestige and power. Additionally, as participants pointed out, the discursive emphasis on refugee status when referring to black Africans serves to underscore the view that black Africans are essentially outsiders and therefore supposedly have no reasonable and legitimate claim to the economic resources of these two countries.

11.11 Conclusion

The fundamental task of this work has been the intellectual struggle to break with the hegemonic modes (hooks, 1992) of researching and theorising black Africans from a refugee
background in Australia and New Zealand. To quote Keynes (1935, p. viii), the composition of this project “has been for the author a long struggle to escape, and so must the reading of it be for most readers if the author’s assault upon them is to be successful, - a struggle of escape from habitual modes of thought and expression.”

Drawing on the works of Fanon (1986) and the Negritude, as well as the intellectual field of race and representation, this project utilised the image of uncommodified blackness to interrogate the ways in which racial meaning of black Africans from a refugee background is constructed and understood in Australia and New Zealand. It investigated the manner in which the image of uncommodified blackness is, at best, utilised to view black Africans as pathological visible minorities with the potential to ‘integrate’ into mainstream Australian and New Zealand societies, or at worst, to exclude black Africans on the grounds that they are damaged and dysfunctional Others.

It further underscored various discourses that are utilised in the everyday construction of uncommodified blackness. This work returns the colonising gaze of uncommodified blackness image via ‘Black Looks’ – a critical gaze, one that ‘looks’ (hooks, 1992) to catch whiteness red-handed, to paraphrase Nietzsche (1992). En route, it neither erects new idols nor repays badly the theoretical teachers (i.e. Fanon and the Negritude) of this work by remaining only a pupil (Nietzsche, 1992). Although this work figuratively wields and theorises with a hammer (Nietzsche, 1992) – through the concept of uncommodified blackness image - the objective of this work is not just to critique the status quo, but “is also about transforming the image, creating alternatives [and] asking ourselves questions about what types of images subvert” (hooks, 1992, p. 4) the colonising image of uncommodified blackness.
11.12 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore:

1. The concept of the uncommodified blackness image as it relates to African women.

2. The concept of the uncommodified blackness image as it pertains to identity construction by black Africans in New Zealand and Australia.

3. Ways in which young black Africans disassociate themselves from the uncommodified blackness image in Australia and New Zealand.

4. Other alternative theoretical concepts to the hegemonic resettlement and integration discourse.

5. Any other issues facing black Africans in Australia and New Zealand by utilising conceptual paradigms that speak directly to the experiences of black Africans in the diaspora.
APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Faculty of Arts

What are the resettlement issues facing black African men from a refugee background in New Zealand & Australia?

You can help us find out!!!

- Are you a black African man from a refugee background who has lived in New Zealand for more than two years?
- Should you accept this invitation, you will engage in an individual private interview with me. Interviews are expected to take up to 90 minutes and will be arranged at a time and place that suits you.
- You have to be 18 years and older to participate in this project though!

Research shows that some of the resettlement barriers that black African refugees struggle with in New Zealand and Australia are unemployment, financial difficulties, racism and social isolation. Do these research findings resonate with you? We are interested in hearing about your resettlement story.
Call Mandisi Majavu at 64 21 163 9981
Email: mmaj015@aucklanduni.ac.nz

- After we receive your information, we will call you to set up a meeting where we will explain to you the nature of the project and the goals of the study.

- Contacting us now does not mean that you must participate; you always have the choice not to participate or to remove your name from our list of volunteers.

- Feel free to call or email us!

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761.
Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON **16 AUGUST 2013** for (3) years, **Reference Number 9392**
APPENDIX : B

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Faculty of Arts

INTERPRETER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Project Title: A comparative exploration of the resettlement experiences of black African refugee men living in Australia and New Zealand

Researcher: Mandisi Majavu

Supervisor: Dr Tracey McIntosh

Interpreter:

I agree to serve as an interpreter / translator for the above research project. I understand that my role as an interpreter is to facilitate communication between the researcher and the research participant who do not speak or understand the same language. All information discussed between the parties is considered to be confidential. Therefore, all information discussed in the interview must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researcher and his/her supervisor(s).
APPENDIX: C

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Faculty of Arts

Questions for Individual Interviews

The questions below are there to basically guide the interview, and to encourage research participants to reflect on their experiences in a meditative discussion.

**Introduction:** Thank you for taking part in this study. As I have already explained I am going to be audio recording this interview. Please do not feel obliged to share anything you do not feel comfortable discussing. Feel free to terminate the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable or you do not like the direction which the interview takes. Also, you do not have to answer any particular question.

The interview will take about an hour and a half. Do you have any questions for me before we start?

1. **Family background**
   - When did you first arrive in this country and have you lived here ever since?
   - Are you here with your family? Are you married? Do you have children?
   - How is your well-being? Are you happy in this country? Please explain.
   - How has your life changed since you arrived in this country?
   - How has your family life changed since you arrived in this country?
- What are your hopes for the future? - personally and family-wise.
- What do you like most about this country?

2. **Resettlement**

In your opinion, what does it mean to be a black African refugee man in this country?

Tell me about your positive resettlement experiences? Meaning government support / support from neighbours / volunteers / finding employment / education opportunities.

- What kind of life opportunities enriched your resettlement experience?
- How do your neighbours relate to you and your family? Are they friendly?
- Is your family happy in this country? Are your children enjoying school? Do your children have friends? Do you have Australian / New Zealander friends?

Tell me about some of the negative resettlement experiences you have had to grapple with.

- Talk to me about a personal experience in which you were treated with least respect than other people. What happened and how did that make you feel? How did you deal with that? What did you learn from such an experience?
- How do you perceive race relations where you live? Meaning, are people generally happy to interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds? Give an example to illustrate your point.
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you were being racially harassed/abused/insulted or threatened? What happened exactly? How did you handle that? What did that experience teach you?
- Have you ever moved into a neighbourhood where neighbours made life difficult for you and your family? What happened exactly? How did you resolve the situation?
- Have you ever been unfairly prevented from moving into a neighbourhood because the landlord refused to rent you a house / flat? What happened and how did you deal with that?

3. **Masculinity issues**

- For you personally, what does it mean to be a black African man living in New Zealand / Australia?

- As a black African man living in New Zealand / Australia, have you had to change how you do things in order to adjust to this country’s way of life? Please explain.

4. **Employment**

- What kind of job do you do?

- Do you like your job?

- How did you get the job?

- How would you characterise your work environment? Meaning do you feel that your co-workers respect you and treat you with dignity? Give an example to illustrate your point.

- What is the relationship like between you and your boss / manager? Please explain.

- Talk to me about a positive racial experience you experienced at work? What happened and how did that make you feel?

- Talk to me about a negative racial experience you experienced at work? What happened and how did you handle that situation? Was that an isolated incident or do you find that these sorts of encounters happen repeatedly?

- How long have you been unemployed?
5. **General**

- Are you and your family religious?
- What do you think of the fact that New Zealand / Australia is a secular country? Meaning, religion is regarded as a private affair in this country?
- How has living in a secular country impacted on your life and your family?
- Do you feel settled in this country? Meaning, do you feel that this is your home now? Do you feel like you belong here? Please explain.
- What has been a huge resettlement barrier/challenge for you? How has that impacted on your experience as a refugee in this country?
- In what ways do you find New Zealand / Australia welcoming or not welcoming to black African refugees?

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830/83761.

Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 16 AUGUST 2013 for (3) years, Reference Number 9392
CONSENT FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

**Project title:** A comparative exploration of the resettlement experiences of black African refugee men living in Australia and New Zealand

Name of researcher: Mandisi Majavu

I, .............................................., have read the Participant Information Sheet and I understand the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I voluntarily agree to take part in this research

- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded

- I understand that participation in the one-on-one interviews will take up to 90 minutes

- I understand that I am free to leave the interview at any time, and do not have to answer any questions that I do not want to
- I understand that I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time
- I understand that while every effort will be made to protect my identity in the research findings and subsequent publications or reports, there still remains a chance I could be identified
- I understand that should I desire a copy of the audio recording or a copy of the transcript, this will be made available to me
- I understand that should I desire a summary of the key research findings, this will be made available to me
- I understand that only the researcher will transcribe the audio recording
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me provided that I let the researcher know by 01 June 2014
- I understand that data, as well as this Consent Form will be kept for 6 years on University of Auckland premises, after which they will be destroyed.

____________________

I wish / do not wish to have a copy of my interviews.

I would like / would not like a summary of the key research findings in email / by post.

Email address:

Postal address:

Name ___________________________ Signature ___________________________

Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 16 AUGUST 2013 FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 9392
APPENDIX: E

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Faculty of Arts

Project Title: A comparative exploration of the resettlement experiences of black African refugee men living in Australia and New Zealand

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Researcher: Mandisi Majavu

Supervisor: Dr Tracey McIntosh

Transcriber:

I agree to transcribe the audiotapes/videotapes for the above research project. I understand that the information contained within them is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researcher and his/her supervisor(s).

Name: _____________________________
Signature: __________________________

Date: ______________________________
APPENDIX: F

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Faculty of Arts

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET:

Project title: A comparative exploration of the resettlement experiences of black African refugee men living in Australia and New Zealand

Researcher introduction
My name is Mandisi Majavu, and I am enrolled as a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. I was born and grew up in South Africa and I am interested in researching settlement outcomes of black African refugee men living in New Zealand and Australia.

Project description and invitation
I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. The aim of the project is to investigate and compare the resettlement experiences of black African refugee men living in NZ and Australia. I am interested in talking with black African men about whether settling in NZ and Australia has changed their lives in a positive way. I am interested in discussing what being African means for black African refugee men living in these two countries.
Should you accept this invitation, you will engage in an individual private interview with me. Interviews are expected to take up to 90 minutes and will be arranged at a time and place that suits you. To participate in this project you have to be 18 and older, and you have to have been living in either country for at least two years. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, your story may be used as data for this research project. I will audio record the interviews as this will allow me to ensure accuracy and integrity in my representation of your interview; however, this would only be done with your consent. The digital files of the audio recordings, as well as a copy of the transcript, will be made available to you on request.

All audio data and transcripts of your interview session will be stored securely on password-protected computers at the University of Auckland for six years. The digital files of the audio recording and data will be treated as highly confidential. Only I and my supervisors will have access to this material. After the period of six years, the digital files of the audio recording and data will be deleted from the computers and from the digital audio recorder. All the transcripts, as well as any files containing the data will be deleted in the same way. Paper files containing research data will be shredded.

**How your story will be used:**

The data collected from interviews will be used to write my PhD thesis, and for writing academic journal articles as well. Also, I intend to present the research findings at conferences. When my thesis is completed and passed, a summary of key findings will be made available to you.
Anonymity and Confidentiality:

All information you provide in the interview session is strictly confidential and you will not be named in the research, or in publications or in any reports about the research. Every effort will be made to protect your identity in the research findings and subsequent publications or reports. I will explain all of this to you, prior to signing the consent form, so you are fully informed of any consequences if you do choose to sign and participate in this project.

Counselling Services:

In the unlikely event that an interview participant shows or articulates distress in the course of an interview then they will be referred to appropriate counselling services. For example, in Auckland, the Auckland Refugees as Survivors Centre provides counselling services for the treatment and rehabilitation of survivors of torture and trauma. In Melbourne, Australia, there is the Monash Refugee Health and Wellbeing which aims to protect and promote the health of people of refugee backgrounds living in Melbourne.

Your rights as a participant:

You are not obliged to accept this invitation to participate. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Withdraw from participation in this project at any time, and you can request that any data that is related to you be withdrawn up until 1 June 2014, after which the final report will have been written.
- Decline to answer any particular question in the interview
- Ask any questions about the study at any time
- Have your interview files and transcript returned to you
- Be given access to a summary of the key findings when the project is concluded
- Ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview
Contact details:

If you have any questions or would like any more information about the project, please contact Mandisi Majavu or Dr Tracey McIntosh:

Primary Supervisor

Dr Tracey McIntosh

Sociology Department or Researcher / PhD Candidate

University of Auckland Mandisi Majavu

Private Bag 92019 Department of Sociology

Auckland 1142 Ph: 09 3737 599

Ph: 09 3737 599 ext 85123 mmaj015@aucklanduni.ac.nz

t.mcintosh@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 87830/83761.

Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON **16 AUGUST 2013** for (3) years, Reference Number 9392
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