Racism, Postcolonialism, and North–South Relations: On double binds and invisible constitutions

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Introduction

This contribution provides an overview of the books, edited volumes, book chapters, and peer-reviewed articles published in English and German over the past two decades that examine the intersections between racism, the post-colonial[1] international order, and the evolution of North–South relations from the mid-20th century to date. In addition to work published in the large transdisciplinary research field of Postcolonial Studies, it discusses publications in International Relations (IR), International Political Economy (IPE), and Development Studies (DS) that are conceptually, methodologically, or empirically informed by postcolonial considerations and pursue a question that is pertinent to the relationship between racism and/or the post-colonial international order. Critical works dealing with multilateral legal infrastructures, global governance, and the international order in traditionally US-centric critical race theory are also included if they are relevant beyond the United States or highlight understudied phenomena.

I focus on work that rejects one-dimensional, Eurocentric, or color- and power-blind approaches to analysis in the disciplines listed above. I evaluate work that adopts a fundamental critique of racism or colonialism as an analytical lens to examine contemporary multilateral politics. This paper uses existing literature to demonstrate these interrelations in three arenas: (1) global politics (IR), (2) globalization, international institutions and multilateralism (IPE), and (3) development theory and practice (DS).[2] I begin by tracing how racism has been conceptualized in

1 According to Ato Quayson (2022), »the hyphenated version is often used to refer to the condition of life after the end of colonialism while the non-hyphenated version denotes the theory that attempts to make sense of this condition.«

2 Other relevant fields and subfields or themes were beyond the scope of this study, including Military & Security Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Diplomacy Studies, Migration, Diaspora and Asylum studies, as well as the provenance of norms in the international system more generally.

international politics over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st century based on newer reconstructions of the historical conceptualizations of racism in international politics.

I first evaluate how racism has become enmeshed in a conceptual double bind since the term was first used in the 1930s, and how this enables the (im)plausible deniability of racism in contemporary post-racial international politics, where racism is almost universally condemned and relegated to history, while it simultaneously shapes the present in fundamental ways. I then provide an overview of the literature on racism, postcolonial studies, and North–South relations from the aforementioned fields published in the new millennium. Based on this literature, I make three brief interconnected arguments in the final section: (1) race is overlooked and understudied as an organizing factor of the international order, (2) contemporary notions of what is considered global are in conflict with the notion of a post-colonial international sphere, and (3) North–South relations are international relations, not the sideshow they are often discussed as. I then outline two broad consequences that follow from these arguments: (1) critical conceptualizations of racism need to become established ontological, epistemological, and methodological variables in social science and (2) there are no shortcuts to decolonizing anything (including the social sciences).

Racism and (Inter)national Politics in the 20th and 21st Centuries

To contextualize the themes analyzed here, I revisit two articles that represent opposing sides of the state of the debate at the beginning of the 21st century. The first, though US centric, reflects the debate due to US hegemony in global discourses on racism. Winant's article titled »Racism Today: Continuity and Change in the Post-Civil Rights Era« argued that »our concept of racism has deteriorated« since the 1960s (Winant 1998: 757). Focusing on interpersonal and institutional racism, he observes a lack of what he calls »common sense« understandings of racism. For Winant, the prevalent idea that overcoming race through ideas such as color blindness is a product of the early liberal years of the Civil Rights Era. He rejects timeless and absolute standards for what constitutes racism because as a social structure, it evolves and rearticulates itself constantly (Winant 1998: 761). Instead, he advances the idea of racial formation, emphasizing »the ›work‹ essentialism[3] does for domination and the ›need‹ domination displays to essentialize the subordinated« (Winant 1998: 761). He maintains that in order to identify any social project as racist, one must demonstrate a link between essentializing representations of race and hierarchical social structures (Winant 1998: 763). According to Winant, racism

3 Winant notes that ›strategic essentialism‹ by racialized people can be a tool for anti-racist work.

is increasingly implicit, and much harder to identify than in the 1960s (Winant 1998: 764).[4]

Banton's (1991) reaction to Winant, titled »Debate: Racism Today: A Perspective from International Politics,« favors using a human rights framing to approach racism in the comparative terms necessary within an international political framework such as the UN. For Banton, Winant's theory of *racial formation* cannot be tested and is therefore politically useless, regardless of its other merits for social science analysis. Banton accepts the »rhetorical value« (Banton 1999: 614) of the word racism in mobilizing political action. However, he finds it necessary to »disaggregate the meanings vested in the word in order to formulate more precise definitions of the things which it groups together« for the purposes of social science and practical action against racial discrimination (Banton 1999: 614). He advocates the separation of political and scientific frameworks for studying the social science of ethnic and racial relations, which in his view is facilitated by the universal terms of a human rights approach. For Banton, the UN-formulated framework represents racial discrimination as a violation of legally defined human rights with assigned legal remedies, reflecting internationally shared values and references to which scholars should relate their ideas. Banton argues that racial studies writers have »been allowed to propagate personal values in the guise of social science« for too long, a situation that was redeemable by recourse to comparative, international study (Banton 1999: 614).

Banton rejects Winant's definition of racism (as a process of racial formation and a historically constituted and dynamic social relationship) as particular; Banton contends that a more comparative approach to racial discrimination is needed to understand racism today from an international perspective. Although both are social scientists, two opposing conceptualizations of racism underlie their debate: racism as an ideology (Banton) vs. racism as a social relationship (Winant). Banton's critique of Winant's US centrism is valid, since it problematizes its global hegemony, and suggests that US concepts of racism should not simply be extrapolated internationally. However, by focusing on a pragmatic, minimal-consensus conceptualization of racism (as racial discrimination) that is conducive to the articulation of measures to eradicate it via the UN, Banton obscures the (decolonial) critique of the universal values (epitomized by the UN framework) that he assumes are neutral and shared. Importantly, he also disavows the complex history of the US, within which the genealogies of racism are both transnational and transcontinental.

4 On Winant's *racial formation theory*, see also Bellu/Bellu/Tsianos in this volume.

The Double Bind

To explore these fundamental points of contention between Winant and Banton, I retrace the universalization of the concept of racism over the 20th century. A 2004 article by Barnor Hesse titled »Im/plausible Deniability: Racism's Conceptual Double Bind« is a rare attempt to do so concisely. A longer and more detailed account that covers more ground and relevant work from previous decades can be found in the updated second edition of *Racism* (first published in 1989) (Miles & Brown 2003). Hesse argues that the international concept of racism first articulated in the 1930s is characterized by an unacknowledged conceptual double bind, meaning that it is doubly bound to »revealing its imprints in nationalism« and simultaneously »concealing its anchorage in liberalism« (Hesse 2004: 9). He suggests that such conceptualizations of racism have historically recognized the extremist ideology of nationalism (racism as ideology) while denying its routine governmentality (racism as a social relationship co-determined by colonialism and imperialism). Rather than two separate concepts, Hesse reiterates that »there have been two distinct orientations [of racism], the hegemonic Eurocentric and the subaltern De/colonial, based on conflicting yet dialogical paradigmatic experiences of the referent of racism« (Hesse 2004: 9).

Hesse explores how the double bind fractures a hegemonic conception of racism as an ideology that forecloses a subaltern conception of racism as governance. Hesse's analysis is on two levels: The first is the level of racism as a social relationship, and how it shapes people's ability to identify racism within their interpersonal relationships. The second level is political and strategic; it is concerned with the ways in which the contemporary socio-historical Western context keeps the intellectual and hegemonic heritage of the concept of racism politically salient. Hesse agrees with Winant that the political discussion of the meaning of racism appears to have been concluded after the long decolonization era, the Civil Rights movement, and the Cold War. Manifestations of racism came to be seen as a residuum or pathology – »profound moral deviations« from the Western liberal and democratic values (Hesse 2004: 10). According to this view, racism became eschewed rather than constitutive of a representative polity, foreclosing any accountable references to slavery, colonialism, whiteness, Eurocentrism, or imperialism in the process. These are the very references that are necessary for a comprehensive lineage and mapping of racism in international politics.

The coherent narrative that racism is ideology crumbles when one stops privileging the paradigmatic experience that underlies its conceptual formation, and that relegates racism to its extremist or exceptionalist forms. As Hesse explains, »The Jewish experience of racism (sic!) under the German nationalist hegemony of fascism cannot easily subsume the preceding and contemporaneous *non-white* and/or *non-European* experience of racism under the American and European colonial fig-

uration of liberalism« (Hesse 2004: 14). Nevertheless, Hesse maintains that global definitions of racism in the 20th century universalized and internationalized a concept of racism based on »the particular paradigmatic experience« of nationalism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. According to this view, racialized people from colonial contexts could only be incorporated into the global community based on their approximation to this hegemonic conceptualization of racism. »In this way, the concept of racism is doubly bound into revealing (nationalism) and concealing (liberalism), foregrounding (sub-humanism) and foreclosing (non-Europeanism), affirming (extremist ideology) and denying (routine governmentality)« (Hesse 2004: 14). Racism's double bind is therefore not merely a contradiction, dilemma, or paradox; it is »a constitutively antagonistic conceptual dialogue« (Hesse 2014: 14) that leaves »unresolved paradigmatic difficulties« (Hesse 2004: 16). Hesse disavows the semantic and scientific over-determination of racism by Nazism because »what came to be called racism, particularly in terms of its violence, oppression, persecution and exclusions did not begin in Germany after the collapse of the Weimar Republic« (Hesse 2004: 18).

Importantly, countries that had ongoing imperial and/or colonial projects based on racist assumptions, including the USA and Britain, were tasked with developing and internationalizing a global anti-racist discourse, Hesse notes. He reiterates the critique of thinkers such as Aimé Césaire, who disparaged early human rights discourse by nations that showed no intention of giving up their colonies in the 1950s. For Hesse, »It is not just that what amounts to a Eurocentric concept of racism is in denial about the struggle over the conceptuality of the concept of racism. The universalization of a Eurocentric concept of racism is itself racist, because it does not question the conventionalization of the North American/West European colonial hegemony of international relations« (Hesse 2004: 20). As a consequence, the aforementioned deployment of racism as an international concept obscured the dehumanization that was inherent in colonialism and that paved the way for a »de/colonial« conceptualization of racism (Hesse 2004: 20).

If Nazism was seen as a profound disruption of the global order, Hesse contends, the colonial configuration constituted the liberal order of the 20th century. »Within and against that context, a Eurocentric concept of racism emerged, concerned with confronting these excesses of ›race‹ thinking, not their European and American colonial formations« (Hesse 2004: 20–21). In Hesse's reading, the decolonial concept of racism advanced by thinkers such as Fanon argued that cultural racism was proliferating in the unremarkable techniques of social governance on a global scale. In this view, a conflict arose between the definition and social embeddedness of racism as an ideology vs. a technology of governance. While the former conceptualization has become mainstream, the latter has been marginalized well into the 21st century. Consequently, »racism has a much more conventional polity design, in terms of practices, relations and institutions than the Eurocentric concept is capable of

revealing« (Hesse 2004: 23). In reference to its own modern genealogy, Hesse considers race to be »the institutional embodiment of European colonial governance« (Hesse 2004: 24). It follows that scenarios of Western political regulation, marked by European and American technologies of race, require a conceptualization of contemporary racism in the colonial genealogy of racialized governmentalities rather than in the intellectual history of racialized ideologies.

Post-racial Paradoxes

According to Sayyid's (2017) *Post-racial paradoxes: Rethinking European racism and anti-racism*, a post-racial understanding of racism has emerged in the 21st century. Initially popularized in the US, the idea of a post-racial dispensation soon spread to Europe and the rest of the world, riding on soft power and the hegemonic, discourse-shaping attributes of these two regions. Sayyid describes the post-racial as »a strategic situation not in which racism has been eliminated or even put under *sous rature*, but rather a situation in which the tension between a condemnation of racism and its continued perpetuation and practice is contained« (Sayyid 2017: 11). This presents serious problems for anti-racism, which for some scholars has proven unsuccessful »as a social, cultural, and political force« (Hage 2016). Sayyid (2017: 11–12) explains the fate of anti-racism as follows:

> »When nobody calls themselves racist, the temptation not to treat racism as a form of false consciousness is hard to resist, since, without individuals and institutions that self-identify as racist, it is difficult to marshal the elements that constitute racism. Thus, without racists, racism becomes a phantasmagoria. Racism is everywhere and thus it is nowhere.« (Ebd.)

This generalization and lack of specificity has made anti-racism unable to provide analytical leverage, thus weakening its use as an instrument of justice.

For Sayyid, the post-racial concept is useful for analyzing contemporary racist logics as well as overhauling the dominant understandings of racism. The idea of a post-racial era is central to his articulation of a new global historic bloc that can repeatedly condemn racism as common sense while denying the constitutive nature of racism to contemporary politics at the national and international levels. By historic bloc, Sayyid is referring to »a configuration of ideologies, institutions and other social forces that span cultural and economic fields to shape and institutionalize a vision of the world and an individual and social comportment to it« (Sayyid 2017: 17). In this view, the historic bloc is shorn of the residual economism of Gramsci's original account, providing a useful means of theorizing about international governance. Rather than offering a national reading of the post-racial, Sayyid focuses on the transnational politics of racism. »The neoconservative historic bloc is organized around the refrain that Western culture and values play an axiomatically progres-

sive role in the world – and they must continue to play such a role – and those core values are based on free markets and free societies of free individuals.« According to this view, since racism is associated with restrictions on individual freedom, the implication is that since Western societies are democratic, they have stopped being racist (Mbembe 2019: 17; Sayyid 2017).

Sayyid concludes that hegemonic conceptions of the problem of racism are always attempting to move from racism to post-racism without an intervening period of hegemonic and self-implicating *anti*-racism. In this intervening period, the colonial co-constitution of racism would need to be acknowledged and addressed as part of anti-racist efforts on a political level. This would mean a far-reaching consensus that:

> »Racism was and is intrinsic to the formation, consolidation and continuation of a world order that had its beginnings in the ›long sixteenth century‹. The enunciation of Europeanness has persistently been expressed through the conceptual formulation and circulation of the category of racism, and thus its contested nature reflects the conflict about the nature of European identity, and not simply the phenomena that it seeks to analyse.« (Sayyid 2017: 20)

Thus for Sayyid, understanding racism and colonialism as co-determinants opens up the possibility not only of seeing it through the prism of racial states, but also viewing these states as part of a racial international order (Sayyid 2017: 20). Sayyid subscribes to Mouffe's understanding of politics as a »set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political« (Sayyid 2017: 21). If this is the case, then the challenge of the post-racial would be to abandon racism as a form of politics as opposed to »a strategy of passive revolution that absorbs demands and in the process transforms them into constitutive elements of the discourse of white entitlement« (Sayyid 2017: 23).

Methodological Separatism

In his description of the conceptual evolution of racism in the 20th century, Hesse does not engage with debates on anti-Semitism. Instead, he disregards the distinction between anti-Semitism and racism entirely, seemingly accepting the ideologically distinct German notion of *Rasse* as equivalent to US dominated notions of race for the purposes of his argument. There are, however, important differences between racism and anti-Semitism. While colonial racism marks the *Other* as an inferior non-being, whose ›backwardness‹ and ›premodernity‹ warrant domination, ›the Jew‹ is considered »superior, hypermodern, intelligent, and superrational« in the anti-Semitic worldview (Arnold 2018: 190). Anti-Semitism proposes a counterpoint to this imagined superiority. According to this world view, *the Jew* cannot be

racialized like the *Other* as they are considered a form of *counter-race* – a *third figure* in the *us* vs. *them* relationship that fundamentally threatens the order of modernity (Arnold 2018: 190). According to this view, debates on racism and anti-Semitism, particularly in post-migrant Germany, are often seen to be in conflict (or competition) with one another; there are few integrated analyses of the intersections and differences between them – a phenomenon she calls »methodological separatism« (Arnold 2018: 189).

While the consequences of methodological separatism might appear to be only relevant to domestic German debates, their impact is far-reaching and transnational. For example, in 2020 a rare blend of methodological separatism and methodological nationalism culminated in the escalation of an otherwise unremarkable occurence. In what has come to be known as *Causa Mbembe* in Germany (Mbembe-Gate, author's translation), Germany's federal commissioner for Jewish life and the fight against anti-Semitism, Felix Klein, accused the prominent Cameroonian historian and leading post-colonial thinker Achille Mbembe of anti-Semitism. This accusation triggered a highly polarized debate in which some accused Mbembe, his defenders, and postcolonial studies more generally of »anti-racist anti-Semitism« (to borrow Arnold's term). Mbembe's defenders claimed his accusers were guilty of »anti-anti-Semitic racism.« Both accusations fulfil strategic political and discursive functions in Germany (Arnold 2018: 196). While the former is used to cast Israel as an aggressor in the region and a perpetrator of »colonial practices,« the latter is used to reframe mainstream anti-Semitic attitudes in post-war Germany as »imported« by refugees from Muslim countries (Arnold 2018: 196).

While both Mbembe-Gate and the fundamental conflict at its root remain unresolved,[5] attempts have been made to bridge this gap in the German context. Writing well before Mbembe-Gate and without reference to Hesse or Sayyid, Biskamp (2017) addresses everyday interactions in the context of German debates on anti-Muslim racism in *Racism, Culture and Rationality: Three Racism Theories in the Critical Praxis*. Concerned with the relationship between racism and rationality, and seeking to determine which representations of culture can be deemed racist, Biskamp compares two conceptualizations of racism discussed above: (1) racism as an ideology or form of false consciousness, and (2) racism as a relationship of social domination or discourse. He analyzes how both conceptualizations assess Kant's theory of race, and how they position themselves in discussions of anti-Muslim racism. He finds that the focus on consciousness in the first approach renders the dynamics of

5 Some observers consider postcolonial studies in Germany to be structurally anti-Semitic. Evidence of this sentiment precedes Mbembe-Gate (see Mendel & Uhlig 2017) but was significantly reinvigorated after (Mendel & Cheema 2020). A similar, sweeping debate emerged after an anti-Semitic artwork was discovered (and removed) from Documenta fifteen (2022). The latter debate was ongoing at the time of publication.

power and discourse that sustain racism invisible. Conversely, by renouncing any positive concept of reason or rationality, the second approach deprives itself of an important foundation, resulting in a reductionist form of critique. To address this gap, Biskamp proposes to combine the strengths of both approaches, and to conceptualize racism as systematically distorted communication. This conceptualization permits the analysis of the dynamics of power and discourse without renouncing an emphatic understanding of reason and rationality (Biskamp 2017).

To understand the global genealogies of race in the 21st century, Hesse and Sayyid provide incipient frameworks that explain the pervasiveness of the idea of racism as an ideology in various political and social contexts, and why it underlies multilateral conceptual articulations of racism. According to Hesse, a thorough understanding of the codification of race within the international system during the 20th century is a crucial basis for any analysis of racism in the current multilateral system of states. Sayyid argues that the notion of the post-racial is an attempt to exorcize Europe's defining role in leveraging racism to shape global and national politics and governance for centuries. However, both Arnold and Biskamp present important analyses of methodological separatism and racism as systematically distorted communication, respectively. Because it is predicated on a single nation state (Germany) with a unique history, Arnold's approach cannot sufficiently account for the broader global structural dimensions of racism and coloniality, but it does raise pertinent questions about the implications of imagining Germany as a post-colonial space. On the other hand, Biskamp's communication–theoretical approach could indeed apply in multilateral contexts, as it can be used to explicate actors' (racist) rhetoric more systematically, thereby sharpening critiques of racism in a post-racial context. Biskamp's approach also gives the aforementioned critique the transparent and replicable scale and rationale that Banton argued was missing from Winant's work (Biskamp, personal communication, February 3, 2021; Krebs & Jackson 2007).

The Invisible Constitutions of Global Governance?

In this section I examine the literature on racism in international or multilateral politics before turning to work addressing post-colonialism and/as North–South relations. I borrow provocative titles from each strand of the literature to broadly signify the tenor of the work discussed. The questions raised in the previous section about the conceptual life of racism in multilateral politics have important implications for social science analysis of racism, post-colonialism, and North–South relations in the contemporary global order. On the one hand, they collectively ask whether racism and post-colonialism could be considered invisible constitutions to the current multilateral order. On the other hand (and on another level), they partly explain

why German-speaking social sciences – which largely draw from critical and/or political theory and *Ideengeschichte* (a history of ideas) that conceptualizes racism as ideology – struggle to articulate significant contemporary analysis or criticisms of racism, let alone treatises that apply to a post-colonial, multilateral context. The questions raised in the previous section also explain why thinkers who are crucial to the decolonial conceptualization of racism, such as Frantz Fanon, have remained largely unknown or confined to the role of revolutionaries and theorists of violence, rather than being read as (political) theorists of colonial violence and decolonization in Germany and elsewhere (Kerner 2016: 73).

A working hypothesis is that social science studies published in English have explored these questions more widely than work published in German. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is methodological nationalism. To be clear, Germany is neither demonstrably more nor less susceptible to methodological nationalism than other countries. However, I demonstrate here that its publishing ecosystem continues to produce work that appears to be shielded from (if not impermeable to) conceptual and theoretical debates abroad pertaining to racism and colonialism. The language difference and/or cumbersome translations of *foreign* concepts, as well as differing historical and socio-political contexts are often cited as reasons for this (Eckert 2018). At the same time, both reluctance and euphoria meet homegrown theoretical analyses of racism and colonialism/coloniality (Castro Varela & Dhawan 2005, 2015; Conrad et al. 2002, 2013; Kerner 1999, 2012). The English-language social science literature suffers from its own methodological nationalisms, which are most evident in their failure to take seriously the epistemological and methodological critiques and continued perpetuation of parochial *globalisms* (Anderl & Witt 2020). This is reflected in the bulk of studies on topics such as the role of the US in IR, but surprisingly little research on Global South topics (for example the Bandung Conference, the New International Economic Order, and South–South IR).

Thus the bulk of the literature I evaluate here was published in English after 2000. I limit the scope of this review due to both space constraints and because there has been a steady rise in the number of publications that explicitly discuss racism over the last two decades, which indicates how (concepts of) racism and the parameters of discussion are changing. This is particularly the case with the proliferation of transnational Islamophobic politics and the securitization discourses that followed the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, as well as the proliferation of right-wing populism in all major democracies. While these dynamics are beyond the scope of the current contribution, this is an important shift in the 21st century discussion of racism, post-colonialism, and North–South relations.

Strategically Reluctant Use of the R-word: Racism-critical Literature

»Race and Racism in International Relations: Retrieving a Scholarly Inheritance« revisits the personal, socio-political, and intellectual contexts that have articulated the critique of race and racism within IR in the last two decades (Shilliam 2020). Bringing an intergenerational cohort of scholars together in collective reflection, Shilliam sets out to »interrupt the well-meaning yet ultimately disabling rush to account for race and racism as if it has never been accounted for before in IR« (Shilliam 2020: 153) in the wake of global Black Lives Matter protests in 2020. Highlighting how discourses on racism are marginalized within the discipline, he argues that:

> »Power is efficacious when it is institutionalized. Institutionalization requires structures that exceed the energies, reach, lifetimes and memories of individuals. Power is inherited and disposed of inter-generationally. Subjection requires the cutting of lines of inheritance and the consistent resetting of energies, ideas, memories and strategies to year zero.« (Shilliam 2020: 153)

However, Shilliam points out that the 2010s were marked by a proliferation of monographs, conferences, panels, and workshops focusing on race and racism. But for Shilliam, this tradition of critical inquiry is as old as the discipline itself (Shilliam 2020: 153).

Race and International Relations, a special issue edited by Persaud and Walker (2001), included contributions on »Race Amnesia and the Education of International relations« (Krishna 2001), »Hermeneutics of Race in International Theory« (Grovogui 2001), »Theorizing the Racialization of Global Politics« (Watson 2001), and the »Invisibilization of Race in American IR« (Vitalis 2001). These contributions marked an intensification of discussions of racism in IR and IPE as well as in political and social theory at the beginning of the 21st century. The study of race and racism in the new millennium relies on the development of a »more effective racial theory« (Winant 2000) that formulates a comparative historical sociology of race, and cultivates a deeper understanding of the micro and macro linkages that shape it, while recognizing the pervasiveness of racial politics in contemporary society (Winant 2000).

Another bastion of racism-critical literature at the time was DS, from which much of the literature on race and racism in international politics emerged in the coming years. White (2002) conceptually linked race and development in »Thinking Race, Thinking Development,« which was followed by a monograph *The Power of Whiteness: Racism and Third World Development* a year later (Goudge 2003). The edited volume *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations* investigated the intersections between race, gender, and class in the international realm and in IR theory, and examined their implications for structuring world politics. It also addressed the impact of representation on power relations, the relationship between global cap-

ital and power as well as resistance and agency against global power asymmetries (Chowdhry & Nair 2005). The following year, Uma Kothari edited a special issue that proposed a research agenda for thinking about race in development (Kothari 2006). It included contributions that cast racism, migration, and development as the foundations of planetary order (Duffield 2006), analyzed anti-racism, deconstruction and overdevelopment (Power 2006), investigated racism in representations, relationships, and rituals of the development industry (Crewe & Fernando 2006), and questioned whether the »gender lens« serves as a racial blinder in development theory and practice (White 2006).

In IR, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* interrogated the continued validity of W. E.B. Du Bois' notion of a global color line a century after it was first articulated (Lake & Reynolds 2008). The following year, the monograph *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (McCarthy 2009) highlighted the central role that conceptions of human development played in answering challenges to legitimacy through a hierarchical ordering of differences. Similarly, David Lake (2011) addressed the question of hierarchy in IR in an eponymous book, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, which demonstrated that states rely on active and varying historical hierarchies to exercise authority over one another though shying away from exploring the role of race or racism. As newer research has shown, historical racism is constituent in the formation of hierarchy, and this affects foreign policy and patterns of international conflict and cooperation (Koddenbrock 2020). Racism was explicitly and implicitly discussed in both IR and DS, although mainstream disciplinary currents were not actively engaging on the issue.

Four momentous works on racism in DS and IR were published in 2013. While Bell (2013) and Henderson (2013) investigated race and IR theory in innovative and boundary-pushing articles titled »Race and International Relations« and »Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory« respectively, Wilson (2012) published *Race, Racism and Development: Interrogating History, Discourse and Practice*. Wilson's book placed racism and constructions of race at the center of her exploration of the discourses, structures, and practices of development. She combined insights from postcolonial studies and critical race theory with political economy, and proposed incisive analyses of the relationships among development, race, capital, embodiment, and resistance in historical and contemporary contexts. Another edited volume premised on the global color line was published in 2014, *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Color Line* (Anievas et al. 2014). The authors re-articulated the central analytical importance of race and racism in IR in three parts. The first part parses out the conceptual elements of race and racism in IR, while the second looks at concrete cases of racism at the international level. The third part reflects on how the global color line can be overcome.

There was sustained engagement on race and racism in 2015–2020. Importantly, debates about the Eurocentric conception of international politics explicitly mentioned race and racism rather than alternative, less controversial euphemisms such as Eurocentrism or identity. A powerful article by Sajed (2016) critiqued John Hobson's (2012) distinction between scientific racism and Eurocentric institutionalism in *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*; Sajed proposed a fluidity between personal subjectivity and theory and the possibility of reconstituting the international order. Analyzing the same book, Olivia Rutazibwa identified a strategic reluctance to use the »R-word« as a lens to understand the post-1945 world. She highlighted the function of analytical categories that implicitly or explicitly render (parts of) reality for a certain purpose (Rutazibwa 2016). She instead advocates the strategic use of the »R-word.« *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Vitalis 2017) revisited the roots of American IR, arguing that the overlooked »Howard School of International Relations« had theorized feasible alternatives to dependency and domination for Africans and African Americans throughout the early 1960s.

Seemingly following the call to use the R-word strategically (Rutazibwa 2016), the German social science journal *Peripherie* published a special issue on Global Racism (Bendix et al. 2017). During the issue's publication, members of the editorial team disagreed along the lines of the double bind discussed above, prompting the editors to publish a five-point clarification of the definitions and conceptual boundaries in anticipation of debates on racism in Germany among the journal's readers (Ziai & Bendix 2017). Floris Biskamp's article discussed above appeared in the issue (Biskamp 2017).

Finally, the edited volume *Empire Race and Global Justice* was lauded as the first to explore the racial and imperial dimensions of normative debates over global justice (Bell 2019). Yet only the chapters on »Race, Corporations, Universalism: The Domestication of Race in International Law« (Pahuja 2019) and »Race and Global Justice« (Mills 2019) directly reference race; none discusses racism thoroughly. Work on race and racism in international politics proliferated during the first two decades of the 21st century. While there is still reluctance to use the *R-word* explicitly, the wealth of publications during this period advances our understanding of racism in the international system. However, compared to the wealth and breadth of literature on post-colonialism and North–South relations, to which I now turn, there is still much ground to be covered.

Whose World, Whose Order? Postcolonialism and the North–South Relations Literature

Postcolonialism beyond Historical, Cultural and Literary Criticism (2000–2010)

The beginning of the new millennium was marked by a concerted effort by political scientists and social/political theorists to free postcolonialism from its origins in textual criticism and mobilize it for material political and social analysis. Pal Ahluwalia's *Politics and Post-colonial Theory* was one of the first monographs to take on this challenge. He argues that Eurocentric theory failed to understand politics in post-colonial contexts, and that postcolonial analysis can help describe the complexities that define the nation state, civil society, human rights, and citizenship. Importantly, the book contains one of the earliest explorations of globalization as a post-colonial relationship; it concludes that institutional inflection in structures inherited from colonialists induced a significant reconstitution of local and global subjectivities (Ahluwalia 2001). Ankie Hoogvelt's *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* went even further to propose that there were varied responses to the new regional political economies created by globalization. Focusing on historical trends such as the anti-globalization movement and newer theories in development studies, Hoogvelt (2001) identifies different post-colonial responses in each of these regions.

Ina Kerner's *Feminism, Development Cooperation and Postcolonial Critique: An Analysis of the Fundamental Concepts of the Gender and Development Approach* was a pioneer in the German-speaking context (Kerner 1999). Kerner argued that the gender turn led to the acknowledgement of differences and power relations between women and accelerated the search for political strategies that recognized these dynamics. This view recasts gender rhetoric in the development context as a strategic move to develop tactical arguments for intra-institutional confrontations in patriarchally structured multilateral development organizations. McEwan's (2001) *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Development: Intersections and Dilemmas* took a similar approach. She reviewed the primary issues underpinning postcolonial approaches to development alongside the emergence of postcolonial feminisms to explore the debates generated by these approaches within development studies, as well as their dilemmas and criticisms (McEwan 2001).

An eponymous article suggested in 2002 that the development discourse was on a »collision course« with postcolonial theory (Biccum 2002). Articles across the discipline were increasingly skeptical of the underlying assumptions of interventions abroad that seemed to continue in the colonial tradition. For instance, »The Political Theory of Trusteeship and the Twilight of International Equality« observed that reinvigorated interest in trusteeship was a way of responding to problems related to international disorder and injustice (Bain 2003). Exploring the reasons for the resur-

gence of a contested idea in a society of states formally constituted by the juridical equality of its members, Bain (2003) examines the procedural ethics of trusteeship, prevailing beliefs about independence in international society, and the type of association in which trusteeship might be morally sustainable (Bain 2003). Wilde (2008) explicitly linked trusteeship to its colonial origins in *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away*.

The challenges of the post-war order, coupled with increasing globalization, preoccupied political science scholarship in Germany at the turn of the 21st century. German political scientists historically referenced the Cold War and focused on democratization and statehood as opposed to analyzing power relations and colonial continuities in national and international political institutions. The *Third World Yearbook* illustrates this approach. The 2003 edition, titled *Globalisation and Developing Countries*, analyzed the effects of globalization on important developing regions and sectors, as well as perceptions of globalization by Third-World governments and social groups. The volume, which only explicitly names China and India, provided sweeping analyses of huge and diverse regions, including Africa and South-East Asia. This problem-centered approach to North–South relations continued for several years, evidenced by a pronounced global governance approach from 2005 onwards. Examples include *Globalisation as a Political Challenge* (Behrens 2005) and *Contested Global Governance: Concurrent Forms and Issues of Global regulation* (Brand & Scherrer 2005).

The publication of the first introduction to postcolonial studies in German by Nikita Dhawan and Maria do Mar Castro Varela in 20015 marked a sea change in German social sciences. The first edition of *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction* introduced key texts of postcolonial critique, including concepts by Gayatri C. Spivak (subalternity), Edward Said (Orientalism), and Homi Bhabha (hybridity) as well as key terms and controversies, shattering the myth that postcolonialism was irrelevant for Germany. The book demonstrated that the universalist aspirations of many German enlightenment thinkers laid important groundwork for colonialism and its narratives. The book was released around the same time that the alter-globalization movement increased curiosity about the continuities of European colonial expansion and highlighted the need for a different kind of critical theory, especially in the German context. The authors remained wary of an essentialist reception of postcolonial theory, emphasizing the importance of sustained debate within postcolonialism. The book is currently in its third edition (Castro Varela & Dhawan 2015).

The Paternalism of Partnership, a Post-colonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid (Baaz 2005) provided an original though analytically reluctant investigation of Northern donor agency personnel in Tanzania. Exploring how identities (whiteness) manifested in the practices of development aid, and how calls for an equal partnership between the North and South are often starkly different in practice, the book reflected on the longstanding critique of the Eurocentrism of development,

as well as (racist) discourses through which both donors and partners or recipients were cast (Baaz 2005). Uma Kothari's edited volume *A Radical History of Development Studies* traced the history of the subject from the late colonial period to the focus on poverty reduction that marked the dawn of the new millennium and the launch of the Millennium Development Goals. The authors looked at the evolution and changing roles of development institutions, and explored historical continuities and divergences in development discourses (Kothari 2006). Discussions of post-colonialism and development continued to define the decade, notably *The Postcolonial Politics of Development* (Kapoor 2008).

In addition to shaping the ideas that underlie contemporary universalist notions of development and progress, the colonial encounter was central to the formation of international law, and particularly its founding concept – sovereignty. *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Anghie 2005) showed that traditional histories in IR present colonialism and non-Western regions of the world as peripheral concerns (one of the first books on African IR was published only 5 years ago, see Murithi (2015)). By contrast, Anghie maintains that since the 16th century, international law has been driven by the *civilizing mission* – that is, the project of governing non-European peoples. According to this view, the economic exploitation and cultural subordination that resulted were constitutive for the discipline (Anghie 2005).

North–South Relations: Colonialisms and Approaches to Overcome Them (Grau et al. 2006) was the first volume published in German that explicitly combined North–South relations with postcolonial critique. The editors contended that the notion of North–South relations eschewed the unequal power relations and the asymmetric international division of labor that has shaped the world since European expansion. Another monograph, *Between Global Governance and Post-Development: Development Policy from a Discourse Analysis Perspective* (Ziai 2006), introduced the concept of post-development to German readers. Ziai maintained that an awareness of historical conditionality, contingency, and politics is a prerequisite for understanding as well as for processes of emancipation from colonial historical power relations.

In IR, *Decolonizing International Relations* (Gruffydd Jones 2006) brought together the most prominent scholars in IR and international law concerned with the decolonization of knowledge together in one volume. This work explicated the ways in which IR has consistently ignored questions of colonialism, imperialism, race, slavery, and dispossession in the non-European world (Gruffydd Jones 2006). Similarly, Chaturvedi and Painter (2007) questioned the ambiguous concept of the world order in »Whose World, Whose order? Spatiality, Geopolitics and the Limits of the World Order Concept« – a response to Sørensen's (2006) »What Kind of World Order? The International System in the New Millennium,« which defines the world order at the turn of the millennium as an interregnum. Chaturvedi and Painter distinguish between two principal meanings of the term *world order*: one analytical and descriptive

(order as non-randomness) and another value laden and normative (order as stability and the absence of violent conflict). They contend that debates about world order often blur these two meanings. In this view, the reification of asymmetric North–South relations obscures the underlying relations of power.

Vijay Prashad historicized North–South relations in two monographs on the Third World and the Global South. The first, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (Prashad 2008), presented this history as both a utopian concept and a global movement. For Prashad, the demise of the Third World as a project rather than a place produced an impoverished international political arena. The sequel, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* (Prashad 2014), proposes that since the 1970s, the countries of the Global South have struggled to build political movements. Here Prashad conceptualized the Global South not as a *geographical space*, but as a concept that signified their collective protest against neoliberalism.

Towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, many political scientists were evaluating the impact of the neoliberal power politics of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. *German North–South Politics and the Development Dispositive in the Age of Neoliberal Globalisation and a New World Order* (Ziai 2007) examined Germany's bilateral relationships with countries in the Global South. He used the term *new world order* to signal a shift in North–South relations in the new millennium. In sharp contrast, even towards the end of the decade, the contributors to *Shifting North–South Relations: New Perspectives on the State and Democracy in World Politics* maintained a descriptive, prescriptive, and state-centric approach to North–South relations that was largely oblivious to colonial continuities (Burchardt 2009; Irwin et al. 2008). Ziai argued that since its reorientation at the end of the 1990s, German development claimed to pursue global structural policy, i.e., to shape global structures in a way that benefitted the countries of the periphery. However, he shows that the transformation of development policy after the end of the Cold War and the rise of neoliberalism reveals that the »development dispositive« emerged from colonial discourses and practices and was transformed into a globalization dispositive under the historically changed conditions of the 21st century. Ziai further elaborated this argument in *Development and Global History from Colonialism to the Sustainable Development Goals* (Ziai 2017).

Rethinking Modernity/Rethinking Postcolonialism (2010–2020)

Proposals for a connected and global approach to historicizing and conceptualizing North–South relations, and modernity itself, were put forward in the new millennium. *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Bhambra 2007, 2009) presented a fundamental reconstruction of the idea of modernity in contemporary sociology based on the idea of connected histories. Bhambra criticized the abstraction of European modernity from its colonial context and the way in

which concepts of modernity disregarded non-Western *others*. The book implicated the disciplinary roots of social theory in its analysis (see also Dhawan et al. 2016; Go 2016). *From Imperialism to Empire* (Randeria & Eckert 2009) marked the entry into the new decade by framing these wider concerns within the globalization debate, which was very popular in Germany at the time. Essentially, they argued that globalization was merely a continuation of historical processes. Both authors had already contributed a pioneering critique of Eurocentrism in Germany in 2002, when the first edition of their book *Beyond Eurocentrism* was published. Their second edition (Conrad et al. 2013) represented a major overhaul *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010* (Hobson 2012) traced the history of Eurocentrism back to the 18th century. Two other critiques of modernity focusing on the decolonial analysis of *Transnational Justice, Human Rights and Democracy in a Postcolonial World* were published under the titles *Decolonizing Enlightenment* (Dhawan 2014; Dhawan et al. 2016) and *Negotiating Normativity* (Dhawan et al. 2016). A revised and updated second edition of Dhawan and Castro Varela's *Introduction to Postcolonial Theory* was released a decade after its initial publication (Castro Varela & Dhawan 2015).

Amid these indictments of modernity and the proliferation of postcolonial theory that marked the first decade of the new millennium, *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital* stood out (Chibber 2013). Chibber's critique, which draws on the radical Enlightenment tradition, was the most comprehensive response to postcolonial theory yet. Focusing on the Subaltern Studies project (the school of thought that brought forth theorists such as Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and Dipesh Chakrabarty), Chibber argued that their foundational arguments were based on a series of analytical and historical misapprehensions. He proposed that it was possible to affirm a universalizing theory without succumbing to Eurocentrism or reductionism, relativizing the influence of postcolonial theory as a critique of Eurocentrism in contemporary international politics. The debate continued for the next few years, prompting several responses from some of the scholars that Chibber addressed in his critique. Much of this debate was published in *The Debate on Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (Warren 2017).

These debates reinvigorated the academic landscape in post-colonialism and North–South relations as demonstrated by the wealth of publications from 2015 to 2020. While some publications during this period revisited the 20th century to make new claims about the history and politics of a contested global order, others appeared to use all the buzzwords without meaningfully engaging with their conceptual implications. For instance, the League of Nations – the first global organization established in 1920 to facilitate international cooperation and peacekeeping – has enjoyed sustained scholarly interest. While scholars had already begun studying the international implications of US President Wilson's legacy, few had connected it to colonialism and anti-colonialism in the way that *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* did

(Manela 2009). Manela argues that emerging nationalist movements appropriated Wilsonian language and adapted it to their own local culture and politics as they launched into action on the international stage. *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* shows that the connections and continuities between imperialism and the flagship multilateral institutions of the 20th century were more profound (Mazower 2009, 2013). In this context, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Pedersen 2015) is both highly informative and conceptually curious. Pedersen's argument that the League's mandate system had serious consequences because it altered governance and placed imperial rule under intense public scrutiny, allowing anti-colonial nationalists to exploit new rights of petition to make independence claims, is a gross understatement. However, Pedersen's argument that the Permanent Mandates Commission sought to limit the imperial powers' claims to sovereignty while safeguarding their economic rights overlooks how racism and imperialism were constitutive to the Commission's mandate, as well as how colonial continuities within the institution and anti-colonial agency have been flattened in the retelling of the League's story.

Multiple studies of anti-colonial agency have been published in the last 5 years. *Meanings of Bandung: Postcolonial Orders and Decolonial Visions* (Phạm & Shilliam 2016) represents an important step towards analyzing the post-war order from the vantage point of the non-aligned movement or the Third World, the history of which was forgotten in the 1980s and 1990s after the term was replaced by *Global South* and a seemingly derogatory rhetorical usage of the phrase *third-world country* emerged. *Meanings of Bandung* gathered reflections on the Bandung Conference, which brought together African and Asian leaders in Indonesia in 1955. The volume treats the conference as the seminal event of the 20th century that announced, envisaged, and mobilized for a decolonized global order. The book conceptualizes Bandung as a cultural and spiritual moment in which formerly colonized peoples came together as global subjects with multiple entanglements and aspirations to deliberate on a just settlement of the colonial global order. From this perspective, Bandung represents an inquiry into the meaning of the decolonial project, and as such, the enunciation of a different globalism that contrasted with liberal and neoliberal globalisms (Phạm & Shilliam 2016; Slobodian 2018).

Similarly, publications such as *Worldmaking after Empire, the Rise and Fall of Self-determination* (Getachew 2019), or *Sweet Talk: Paternalism and Collective Action in North-South Trade Relations* (Singh 2017) explore unexpected (and understudied) interactions in the international sphere between Asia, Africa, and the Black Atlantic to reveal a dearth of complexity in the study of North–South, and worse still, South–South relations. Other contributions have shown how the US reacted to the potent South–South alliances that brought forth Bandung and the New International Economic order (Sargent 2015); how the post-colonial state is still grappling with the institutional heritages of colonialism and coloniality (Niang

2018); how trade relations are still unduly burdened by colonial asymmetries (Singh 2020); and how postcolonial studies can be consistently marshalled for analysis in political science (Ziai 2016). Finally, even a subject that has long been controversial in IR and IPE is finally being addressed. »Reparations, History and the Origins of Global Justice« (Forrester 2019), a contribution in *Empire Race and Global Justice* (Bell 2019), signals a bright future for post- and decolonial scholarship. If the political theory of global justice, as Getachew (2019) argues, emerged from the failure of the new international economic order, it follows that global justice can also be framed in redistributive material terms, as Forrester does. The debate, however, is still incipient and will require substantive conceptual resources to advance. In most of the work on post-colonialism and North–South relations reviewed above, racism is always implicit, but is rarely named and explicitly interrogated at length. This points to several issues, including strategic reluctance, fear of controversy, the structure of the peer-review system, and university research infrastructures. While almost all of these issues can be traced back to racism as a social relationship that largely rests on colonial domination, the point of such an endeavor would not be to merely point fingers or conceptually inflate the concept of racism, but rather to better understand the pervasiveness of certain norms, structures, and patterns of agency. The agenda for studying racism in social science is not necessarily to provide a toolkit for anti-racist political or activist work (although it can be); more importantly, it is to accurately name, describe, and conceptualize relational socio-political phenomena. In the case of international politics, the disciplinary habit of excessive (and often unnecessary) abstraction makes it seem that racism, widely understood as merely interpersonal, has no effect on international politics, which is a powerful myth.

Conclusion

Three interconnected arguments emerge from this cursory review of the literature. First, the literature shows that while racism is currently enjoying sustained attention in the disciplines discussed above, it is still largely overlooked as a constitutive factor of the hierarchical international order and woefully understudied as an inherent element of global governance. Prior studies (e.g., Getachew 2019) have hinted at these aspects while pursuing other research questions.

The second argument is that contemporary understandings of *global* and *international* struggle significantly with the notion of a single post-colonial international sphere within which both formerly colonized and former colonizing countries interact (Anderl & Witt 2020). An emerging body of literature articulates a comprehensive and shared understanding of international politics within a post-colonial world, but it is significantly compromised by methodological nationalism. The most obvi-

ous manifestation of this is the stark asymmetry in research foci and regional studies prioritizing the international relations, development, or trade policies of certain countries and regions, particularly the US and Europe, as well as India, Brazil and China, at the expense of other countries and regions. Asia, Africa and South America, and even eastern Europe or the Caribbean, are often subject to sweeping generalizations even within the critical or postcolonial literature. As such, in international politics, the unexpected is unfamiliar, and there is currently a woefully inadequate understanding of how a global diversity of state and non-state actors shapes the international sphere (and the motivations behind their actions).

Third, the literature shows that the term *North–South relations* is both geographically and conceptually ambiguous and problematic. While it was initially useful to highlight the dearth of inquiry into international relations between the Global North and Global South after alternative terms such as *third world* became obsolete, the phrase is now used in a manner that flattens international hierarchies (even within categories such as Global North/South) and obscures the diversity of contexts within the geographical spaces it attempts to describe (Hutchings 2011). This ambiguity has far-reaching consequences for the validity of North–South relations as IR, chiefly its status as a sidekick to *real* IR. While doing away with the category would be the IR equivalent of »throwing the baby out with the bathwater,« being more specific about the context under consideration in each case will ensure that North–South (or South–South and South–North relations) analyses are valued and visible within the IR community, and help overcome the preoccupation with specific regions and countries.

This literature review reveals two consequences for the study of racism, postcolonialism, and North–South relations. First, to address the status quo (racism as overlooked and understudied in a global context), and in full awareness of the convoluted histories of racism and science, a critical (national and international) genealogy of racism is needed on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological levels of social science. The literature demonstrates an urgent need for shared frames and references when discussing racism within the global system of states, as the term exhibits large context-specific conceptual variations for historical reasons. During this exercise, underlying assumptions in standardized international definitions of racism that have become hegemonic will warrant particular attention.

The second consequence drawn from the literature is that there are no shortcuts to decolonization: the intensification of scholarly activity around the term *decolonize* should more thoroughly account for the ways in which colonialism is an ongoing relationship that thrives through self-reproduction – particularly in (and through) academia itself – and how this dynamic undermines all decolonization efforts. As recent debates show, and accounting for the fact that the scholarly community represents a huge field of contestation, large portions of the disciplines discussed here remain passive observers to scholarship on racism and decolonization precisely be-

cause they are *unconvinced* by the constitutive dimension of racism and colonialism in specific disciplines/shared realities today. This applies independently of the personal, racial and colonial implications of scholar's individual biographies. Racism-critical and postcolonial scholars are often compelled to provide an ›advance payment‹ in terms of historical facts and arguments before making their actual theoretical contributions. This is a deposit that is rarely recompensed because colonial history and postcolonial terms and frameworks of reference remain news to leading scholars in the social sciences to date.[6] This presents race-critical and postcolonial theorists in the disciplines discussed above with significant dilemmas that I will parse as questions: does one build a decolonial library *while* the colonial one is regularly renovated and replenished using the same pool of resources, or is it more expedient to transform the colonial library into a decolonial one, wagering on the librarian's cooperation? If the master's tools will not dismantle the master's house, as Audre Lorde said, then an explanation of why most work in this review was behind paywalls or between exorbitantly priced hardcovers is owed. Whether one can really go beyond the master's tools remains debateable.

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6 Basedau's article in the African Studies journal *Africa Spectrum* titled »Rethinking African Studies: Four Challenges and the Case for Comparative African Studies« (2020) is one such example. Although scholars have repeatedly and emphatically highlighted the colonial continuities of the discipline of African Studies, the author, a professor and distinguished African Studies scholar, does not cite any of these criticisms – or mention the terms *racism*, *colonial*, or *postcolonial* even once in the entire article.

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