Chapter 4
Black Luxembourg

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In the Grand Duchy, Black Lives Matter's (BLM's) impact has manifested itself on various levels of society, from rallies gathering together large numbers of people to artistic contestation tactics and the appropriation of public spaces, the mapping of buildings with colonial links, the defacement of monuments, and the renaming of streets, to mention just a few. All this happened in the context of uncovering Luxembourg's colonial past, which is directly connected to Belgian colonization (see Chapter 2) (Moes 2012).

Although the early BLM movements had already pushed bottom-up and top-down discussions on racism, no political measures had been put in place until the impact of BLM in 2020. The events of that summer were a sort of "wake-up call" and a sudden turning point, with Black people raising their voices against unequal conditions in modern postcolonial societies in Europe, including in Luxembourg. Additionally, newly created associations of People of African Descent (PAD), such as the feminist and antiracist associations Finkapé and Lëtz Rise Up (discussed below), have taken the lead and intensified their antiracist activities, shifting the conversation on race and racism from folklore to activism. As a result, the silencing of the colonial past has been broken.

At the European level, an earlier study entitled "Being Black in Europe" (BBE), carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and published in 2018, had placed Luxembourg at the top of the list of European countries where perceptions of racism are very high. This is a serious matter in a country where almost half of the population are immigrants (Statec 2020). Finland is the only country where these perceptions are higher (Pauly 2019: 5). The BLM movement and the BBE study have fostered a wave of rallies as well as debates at conferences, including one that focused on "Being Black in Lux-

embourg" (BBL) and prompted studies on racism, a subject that previously had not been on the country's public radar.

In addition to calls for projects by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region, the government also ordered the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER) to conduct an unprecedented national survey on the experience and perception of racism among populations of color. Ordered by the Chamber of Deputies and coordinated by the Ministry, with the participation of Centre d'Étude et de Formation Interculturelles et Sociales (CEFIS), the data was made available in the three official languages of the country – Luxembourgish, French and German, plus English and Portuguese – and collected through a national online survey in 2021.

The poll was sent to random residents and asked: How widespread is racial and ethnic discrimination in Luxembourg? Which groups of people are mainly targeted? In which contexts and situations do residents perceive discriminatory acts and treatment? Where and how can action be taken to combat these issues? The team included only one Black person, whose participation in designing and evaluating the questionnaire was not very representative of the diverse voices of the Black community. In an interview, he pointed out that the LISER survey/study "does not reveal that there is very marked ideological racism in Luxembourg," and that, if compared "with the indicators of other countries, the figures in Luxembourg are less alarming than in neighbouring countries" (Queirós 2022).

This statement raises at least two questions concerning the study: Would the results have been more accurate if other Black experts were involved? And was the inclusion of only one Black researcher another form of "tokenism" and an attempt to soften and smooth over the results of the evaluation? Yet, it is important to underline that Luxembourg is taking its first steps toward opening up discussions on these hitherto avoided topics. However, there is still much to be done to bring new lines of reflection, as long as all parties are included in the search for the transformation strategies that are needed in order to eradicate racial oppression.

The study's findings were presented in March 2022 at a press conference attended by the Minister of Family Affairs and the researchers involved in the study. According to LISER, the data collected "will be used to identify the sectors in which specific actions are necessary" and will be "taken into account in the formulation of policy recommendations to combat racism and

discrimination." However, to a certain extent, the study suffers from a lack of critical and disentangling voices that would better help society at large understand and unravel longstanding discrimination affecting Black people in Luxembourg. In an interview with the newspaper *Paperjam*, Sandrine Gashonga, the president of Lëtz Rise Up, underlined the wish that "discrimination based on race be treated as a transversal problem that concerns different ministries, mainly those of education and justice."[1]

As for the context of Europe in general, the category of race in Luxembourg is "seldom openly expressed in language" (M'charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014: 471) in political and societal discourses, either written or spoken. Before the BLM movement, discussions about race and racism were taboo, despite longstanding racial discrimination against Africans and their descendants. Thus, the question of race has been an "absent-presence" (Law 2004) in Luxembourg, which "may temporarily appear in plain sight in a particular practice only to then disappear again beneath the surface" (M'charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014: 471).

Nevertheless, for Antónia Ganeto, the president of Finkapé, despite resistance from Luxembourg governors, "the lines were moved, the taboo was slightly broken, and the denial is less present."[2] One would like to believe that the BLM movement has served as an additional stimulus to awaken Luxembourg's white population to the selective (in)visibility of Black people in the country, as well as to their struggles for the recognition of their past and future. We believe that, for Luxembourgish society in general, and especially for the community of African origin, the BLM movement has created an awareness and a need to reflect on their experiences and their positioning in the country, something that has not happened before. The Black population felt encouraged by this global movement to demand space for listening, taking measures, and introducing changes to ensure equal respect and recognition as part of Luxembourgish society. As we shall see below, there have been some catalytic moments of robust racial contestation embodied in the creation and activities of associations with African imprints, the use of art to

1 Translated by the authors. In the original: "les discriminations contre les personnes racisées soient traitées comme un problème transversal qui concerne différents ministères, notamment ceux de l'Éducation et de la Justice" (Frati 2020).

2 Translated by the authors. In the original: "Elle a permis de faire bouger les lignes. Le tabou est un peu cassé, le déni moins présent" (Frati 2020).

tackle "hidden" colonial links, as well as the organization of conferences and studies whose main topic is race and racism.

Traces of Black Representation in Urban Landscapes

In Luxembourg City and beyond, there are several street names and monuments honoring white Luxembourgers who were deemed important for their participation in colonization and who made a name for themselves from their colonial involvement. Although no monuments celebrating colonialism were torn down in the capital, contesting tactics were employed by protesters, collectives, and associations to denounce colonialism, calling for the decolonization of minds and (urban) landscapes. In their attempt to disentangle the Grand Duchy's past colonial connections and everyday racism under the motto "Lëtzebuerg dekoloniséieren" (Decolonize Luxembourg), Lëtz Rise Up collaborated with the activist artistic collective Richtung22 to document colonial memories emplaced in the city's landscape. Both organizations are presented in more detail below.

Their campaign tracked 28 spaces, including public buildings, private companies, and parks, that were linked to colonialism and grouped them into three main categories. The first group consisted of colonial routes of racism: for example, the location of Villa Louvigny and of the human zoos which took place in February 1900, and Charly's Gare, which was linked to the railway in the Congo. The second focused on colonial economy and wealth: for example, the neocolonial Boulevard Royal and the Cercle Cité, where colonial propaganda exhibitions were held in the presence of Prince Félix and the Grand Duchess Charlotte in 1933 and 1949 and where a conference was organized by the Fédération Internationale des Coloniaux et Anciens Coloniaux (FICAC or International Federation of Colonial and Former Colonial Civil Servants), of which Luxembourg was a member. The third group includes institutions located in the Athénée building, which is linked to the participation of Luxembourgers in the colonial war in Congo, and the German Dresdner Bank and its cooperation with the apartheid regime in South Africa. As these sites show, Luxembourg was active in European expansion although it did not have any colonies. Through a free guided tour – the first of which

took place on June 26, 2021 – people would get to know these unknown links to colonialism.[3]

Furthermore, several monuments are located on the country's border with Belgium and illustrate Luxembourg's involvement in Belgian colonialism. In Arlon, for example, the statue of Leopold II was defaced by protesters.[4] Additionally, a group of activists from Richtung22 made an intervention on a bronze monument that depicts the profile of Nicolas Cito (1866–1949), a Luxembourgish colonial engineer who participated in Belgian colonization. The bronze is set above a fountain on the wall of a former primary school, now a high school in Bascharage, his childhood hometown. The monument was created to honor him as one of the so-called colonial pioneers (Clarinval 2021) who directed the construction of the railway line that connected the region of Matadi to Léopoldville (now Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1898 (Moes 2012).

The activists placed the monument behind a panel with a round upper opening, leaving Cito's head visible, but relegating him behind bars that allude to a prison window, thus indexing his colonial crimes and responsibility for "the 5,500 forced labourers who died during a railroad construction – of which Cito was the chief-engineer" (Spirinelli 2020; cf. Moes 2012). The lower part of the panel contained an updated text that commemorated the victims of these crimes. This plaque covered the official text, which celebrated Cito's colonial deeds. Below the updated text there was the Black fist, an iconic image of BLM. Additionally, the activists poured little red drops below the water tap, symbolizing blood.[5]

3 Lëtz Rise Up et Richtung22 unissent leurs forces dans une campagne comprenant des visites guidées à travers l'histoire occultée du pays: (https://www.letzriseup.com/d%C3%A9colonisons-le-luxembourg)

4 King Leopold's involvement in colonialism is explained in detail in Chapter 2.

5 Aktion gegen Denkmal in Niederkerschen, *Luxemburger Wort*, June 15, 2020 (https://www.wort.lu/de/lokales/aktion-gegen-denkmal-in-niederkerschen-5ee78528da2cc1784e35fb67)

Figures 4.1a and 4.1b: Original and updated images of the Nicolas Cito fountain in Bascharage. Sources: B. Tavares, August 19, 2021; Luxembourger Wort, June 15, 2020

The collective redesigned the monument as an act of "remembrance of European colonial culture" that has oppressed Black people in Africa, in European societies, and beyond (Clarinval 2021). Although the artistic redesign proved ephemeral – the contextual rectangular panel was removed shortly afterwards – the intervention has contributed to sensitizing society toward the oppression and brutality that monuments in public spaces often represent. The Luxembourgish historian cited above, Fabio Spirinelli, said in his insightful article that, as a student at the former primary school, he was not taught about the colonial meaning this monument carries and consequently simply did not know who Nicolas Cito was. Thus, Spirinelli underscores the importance of updating original monuments and street names, as exemplified by the artistic collective Richtung22. He calls for more public education about "colonial regimes, their racism, violence and plundering" (Spirinelli 2020). Perhaps, a recontextualization of colonial history would also be a sound educational tactic.

Indeed, there are still a number of buildings in the capital linked to Luxembourg's participation in colonization, with their histories unknown to the wider public. However, there was no public outcry until the BLM pro-

tests in summer 2020, when the organizations mentioned above started contesting these buildings' colonial links and connections. An inventory made by Richtung22 and Lëtz Rise Up, for example, identified a building called Cercle Municipal, in the center of Luxembourg City. It was used for meetings, colonial exhibitions, and propaganda by the Luxembourgish Colonial Circle (CCL), an association founded in 1925 by colonial officials that met regularly under Prince Félix and the government of the time. The association supported Luxembourg citizens in their colonial activities in Congo. Now, the property is used by officials for meetings with international partners. A second location is the former KBL (Kredietbank Luxembourg) building, now taken over by Quintet Private Bank. Its owners collaborated in financing the illegal sales of arms during the apartheid regime in South Africa.[6] However, research into colonial connections is still in its early stages.

Meanwhile, names such as Nelson Mandela appear as street names in other cities in the country, for example in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg's second largest city and one of the most multicultural. The municipal council decided to rename Rue des Boers[7] after the prominent South African leader in 2014 following a proposal from the leftist party Déi Lénk, a few days before the opening of an exhibition about Mandela at the National Resistance Museum in the city. The museum traces the history of Luxembourg under Nazi oppression from 1940 to 1945, from the perspective of the resistance movements. The exhibition "Nelson Mandela: From Prisoner to President" ran from April to September 2014 and was curated by the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg.

6 For more examples, see Richtung22 and Lëtz Rise Up webpages.

7 Rue des Boers was named in the 1920s after the white settlers who supported white supremacy during the apartheid regime in South Africa (https://www.luxtimes.lu/en/luxembourg/esch-alzette-mandela-street-debate-continues-602d3d71de135b92363a4cd7)

Figures 4.2a and 4.2b: Original and covered images of the entrance to the former Mohrenapotheke or Pharmacie des N*. Sources: B. Tavares, May 10, 2021; Luxembourger Wort, August 21, 2020

Another building in the center of the capital became infamous for its problematic representation of Black people (Figure 4.2a). This building, which opened in the early 1800s, is called "M*apotheke" in German, or "Pharmacie des N*" in French, and is hard to ignore due to the ceramic representations of two African men standing at its doors. The "M*apotheke" was registered in 1803 by Alfred Lenoël (1774–1849), a Luxembourgish pharmacist. The German understanding of the word "M*" does not leave room for ambiguities and doubts as to its racist meaning (see Chapter 1). In 2007, the current owner, Claude Hostert-Pfeifer, renamed it Pharmacie Ginkgo as she considered the old name "inappropriate for the era in which we live" (Hostert-Pfeifer 2021). This echoes Spirinelli's assertion:

> [M]eanings of monuments need to be considered synchronically and diachronically. They can have different meanings to different people at a given time, and their meanings can change over time following a re-evaluation and sensitization. (Spirinelli 2020)

The two images were covered up in July 2020 (Figure 4.2b), presumably by officials. However, in contrast to the intervention against Cito's monument

by Richtung22 mentioned above, it could be argued that this covering of the ceramic representations of the two African men constitutes a further act of official neutralization and invisibilization of Luxembourg's colonial links.

Over the years, some initiatives have taken place at the official level. For instance, in 1974, a street in Buschrodt (a village in the northern district of Diekirch) was named after Nicolas Grang (1854–83), who was born there and who was a colonial lieutenant, later promoted to a commander, in the Belgian colony of Congo. However, the street was renamed Um Schéckelt in July 2020. According to Marie-Paule Anzia, a physiotherapist on the former Rue Nicolas Grang, the name change is a consequence of the BLM movement in Luxembourg. The therapist explained in a telephone conversation that the municipality decided to rename the street because Grang had participated in the colonization of Congo and had "done things he shouldn't have." Anzia explained that the new name of the street, Um Schéckelt, refers to the idea of "*lieudit*" or "*lieu-dit*," a French term for a small geographical area bearing a traditional name. An official from the municipality of Buschrodt, stated that, as far as she is aware, the name Schéckelt has no particular meaning but is linked to "a name from the village's historic past." These two interpretations lead us to believe that changing the street name was a result of the protests all over the world, including in Luxembourg, but also an attempt and a strategy to neutralize the Luxembourgish connection to the colonization of Congo – something that, before BLM, was completely ignored by the great mass of Luxembourgish society. The renaming process was overseen by the village's mayor and the historian Régis Moes, who is the curator for contemporary Luxembourgish history at the Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art (MNHA) (Heindrichs 2022).

As a result, the plaque honoring Nicolas Grang was transferred to the MNHA to be part of the 2022 exhibition on Luxembourg's colonial presence in Congo (Clarinval 2021). The temporary exhibition (April–November 2022) provided an overview of Luxembourg's little known colonial past. It allowed the public access to testimonies from private and institutional collections in the form of objects, artworks and photographs, advertising brochures, and press articles. By recalling historical facts and presenting numerous portraits of Luxembourg people involved in the colonial period, the MNHA displayed the complexity of colonial relations. Furthermore, nine people from today, whose lives are closely connected to Luxembourg and shaped by its colonial past, told their personal stories in interviews with the museum.

Even though the colonial era in a narrower sense has been over for more than 60 years, many citizens still experience its effects in their everyday lives. The MNHA's exhibition thus illustrated that Luxembourg does indeed have a colonial past.[8]

"Colonizing without Colonies": Luxembourg's Presence in Congo

In the public realm, only a few social actors recognize the Grand Duchy's active participation in colonization, as it did not have its own colonies. Some place the blame for the systematic suppression of Congo, which lasted until 1960, solely on the Belgians (Moes 2010; 2012; Spirinelli 2020). Others recognize that thousands of Luxembourgers enrolled in the Netherlands' military during the colonization of Indonesia, formerly known as the Dutch East Indies. According to the historians Bosma and Kolnberger, in the second half of the 19th century, young Luxembourgers

> saw enlisting in the army as part of their life cycle: serving in the Dutch East Indies for a relatively short period before returning home to start their own families, establish a business, or look for permanent work. (Bosma and Kolnberger 2017: 568)

In fact, the presence of Luxembourg in Congo manifested itself via the recruitment of young Luxembourgers as administrative colonial staff for Belgium. This occurred to such an extent that, in 1922, Luxembourgers gained the same status as Belgians in the colonies. It was declared by the Belgian colonial regime that those who aspired to work in the colony should have Belgian or Luxembourgish nationality (Mukuna 2020).

In addition, colonial propaganda and lobbying intensified in Luxembourg through local colonial associations, such as the CCL mentioned above. In collaboration with white Belgians, members of the CCL organized conferences and campaigns at Luxembourgish schools to incentivize new graduates to pursue colonial careers (Moes 2012; Mukuna 2020). One objective was to find posts for the surplus of highly educated Luxembourgers within the

8 "Luxembourg's colonial past", March 8, 2022 (https://www.mnha.lu/en/exhibitions/luxembourgs-colonial-past)

Belgian administrative colonial staff in Congo. Thus, recruitment of Luxembourgers was often financed by the government. The case of the engineer Nicolas Cito remains emblematic of the way in which the country has dealt with its colonial past.

A noteworthy illustration of Congo's presence in Luxembourg is embodied in the person of Jacques Leurs; he was the son of a white Luxembourgish father, a colonel in the Belgian Congo who worked in the rubber industry (cf. Hausemer 2018), and a Congolese mother named Tchaussi. In 1912, he became the first Luxembourger of African descent when he was brought to the country at the age of two to be educated and live with his grandparents. The filmmaker and writer Fränz Hausemer highlights that the move "constitutes a return of colonies never before experienced by the inhabitants of this country without colonies [i.e., Luxembourg]" (2018: 50). In his 2017 documentary film entitled *Schwaarze Mann: Un noir parmi nous* (A Black among Us), Hausemer recounts Jacques' experiences as an Afro-Luxembourger. It is based on interviews with Jacques' widow, Léoni Leurs, a white Luxembourgish woman, who describes the various racist challenges they faced as a interracial couple. According to Hausemer (ibid.), Léoni Leurs highlighted that the reason why she did not have a child with her husband was because "he would not have tolerated someone screaming at his son in the street: Here comes the N-word."[9]

After his graduation, Jacques Leurs became a well-known figure in the railway industry despite his exoticization. When World War Two ended, he became first secretary of the board of directors of the Luxembourg Railways and was active in the national association and in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. He also participated in politics and social activism in the Grand Duchy at that time. His biography and social status remind us of his German contemporary Martin Dibobe (see Chapter 1). Despite all of his contributions, however, there has been no official effort to honor Leurs' life with a plaque or a street name in Luxembourg's public space. Beyond a tendency to romanticize his life, the documentary portrays Jacques Leurs' challenging existence as "the first Black person in Luxembourg," which was complicated even further with the Nazi occupation in 1940. He was fired from his job at the railway company and had to resist the additional societal and political pressure to break up with Léoni Leurs that was enforced by the

9 Translated by the authors. In the original: "Do kënnt den N*."

racial laws introduced by the National Socialists in Luxembourg that same year (Hausemer 2018). The struggles Leurs faced due to his Blackness still exist today, albeit under a different guise.

It is important to note that countries such as Luxembourg, much like Norway (Chapter 5), and Poland (Chapter 8), are not deemed colonial powers; indeed, they did not officially possess colonies. Thus, they define and brand themselves as "colonial outsiders" (Purtschert, Falk, and Lüthi 2016). However, it is too narrow to understand colonialism as mainly a chronological or geographical marker. As Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia (2006) put it, such an understanding is deeply problematic, as colonialism works transversally in time and space. Stoler (2016: ix) reminds us that there is a need to tackle "the temporal and affective space in which colonial inequities endure and the forms in which they do so." This view points to ruptures and continuities in the "colonial presence," which manifests in persistent racial inequities, immigration, and language regimes, to mention just a few.

There is a need to move beyond reductive national perspectives and to focus on colonial endeavors and practices across nation states and societies, whether or not they were deemed former colonizers. Several postcolonial and decolonial scholars and theorists have posited the continuity of colonial hegemony, "long after the departure and end of official colonialism" (de Souza 2017: 189). Thus, one should also acknowledge that colonization created knowledge and representation systems that became the basis of Eurocentricity with which the world was defined. In this sense, colonialism constantly involved the attempt to impose culture and customs onto *Others*, whether as a result of a belief in the racial and/or cultural superiority of the colonizing power; due to an evangelical desire to spread particular religions or cultural practices; or as a mechanism for establishing and consolidating political control as a core feature of our current global landscape (Butt 2013: 892).

The lived experiences of Black populations across several life domains (work, education, politics, etc.) have proven that colonial legacies are present and longstanding, not only in presumed "classic" colonial metropoles and colonies such as France, Portugal, and the UK and their former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, but also in those countries that self-proclaim and position themselves at the "colonial margins" (Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné 2015). Studying this will cast a light on "how colonial bodies of knowledge and practices have been borrowed, remoulded and disseminated

within the scientific communities, everyday cultures and political arenas of these states" (ibid.: 7). All the colonial outsiders and their cities that were not considered colonial metropoles benefited (and still benefit) economically and politically from their entanglements with the more obvious colonial European powers. This was manifested through military and missionary involvements, trade, and the lobbying for colonial associations and careers, as in the case of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg has long been "marked by the scarcity of critical knowledge of colonialism as well as of acts of resistance against the persistence of colonial practices in postcolonial times" (Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné 2015: 4). As elsewhere, the BLM movement and the assassination of George Floyd have contributed to opening up more nuanced debates concerning racial inequalities. Together, Lëtz Rise Up, Finkapé, and Richtung22 have been at the forefront of uncovering Luxembourg's colonial past and spurring dialogue about it. To a large extent, these debates consist of a re-evaluation of monuments in public spaces designed to awaken today's society to the longstanding negative effects of colonialism and how it is manifested and embodied in these monuments. This is paramount in the construction of a better and fairer society. Thus, these associations can be considered catalysts that reveal Luxembourg's past and its contemporary forms of discrimination and inequality.

Cultural Associations with African Imprints

During the early 20th century, the presence of Luxembourgers in Congo did not trigger the mass immigration to Luxembourg of Congolese people, nor of any other Africans, as was usually the case with other colonial countries. The immigration of Italians swelled in the 19th century to support Luxembourg's iron and steel industries. After it had begun to decline due to Italy's economic growth, guest worker agreements between Portugal and Luxembourg were revised, intending to stop Cape Verdeans coming to Luxembourg through Portugal (Laplanche and Vanderkam 1991; Jacobs, Manço, and Mertz 2017; Tavares 2018). However, it is worth noting that, when Cape Verdeans started to come to Luxembourg in the 1960s, they held Portuguese citizenship before Cape Verde became independent from Portugal in 1975. Back then, the race category was officially and explicitly used to stop them entering the Grand Duchy (Laplanche and Vanderkam 1991; Jacobs, Manço, and Mertz 2017).

These agreements stipulated that only "*portugais de souche*" (white/European Portuguese) would be allowed to enter the country (Laplanche and Vanderkam 1991: 38; Jacobs, Manço, and Mertz 2017: 13). At that point it was made explicit that a person's race and ethnicity were the leading criteria for entering or being denied access to the state. After that, if Cape Verdeans did enter Luxembourg, it was only via family reunification processes or by crossing the borders secretly. Today, Cape Verdeans form the largest African group in the country (Statec 2020). However, they are constantly received with displeasure, as the government and society have exhibited racist ideologies that, to a certain extent, have influenced Luxembourg's perception toward Cape Verdeans, reflecting an iconic resonance of colonial imprints.

In line with the BBE study, the social worker Mirlene Monteiro, a Luxembourger of Cape Verdean origin and a member of the antiracism association Finkapé, presented the results of her study of second-generation Cape Verdeans in Luxembourg. According to her research, Cape Verdean descendants consider themselves Luxembourgers, despite having to deal with their sense of belonging being questioned by those who consider themselves "real" Luxembourgers. While trying to downplay the results of the BBE study, the Luxembourgish Minister of Family and Integration, Corinne Cahen, pointed out in a debate that she was shocked by Monteiro's results, which prove the existence of racism in the Grand Duchy, and invoked her personal experiences of discrimination based on her Jewish background. Another young Luxembourger of African descent, who has experienced racism both at school and at work, said that she was also shocked by the minister's feigned ignorance of the longstanding issue of racism in the Grand Duchy.[10]

With the exception of Cape Verdean immigration, little is known about Africans in the country. There is no study devoted to understanding immigration from mainland Africa to the Grand Duchy, despite the significant presence of Black people in its urban landscapes. Black Luxembourgers are quite noticeable thanks to their entrepreneurial spaces, such as small grocery stores, restaurants, and hair salons (Tavares 2018: 183), and associations, as well as in public spaces. In 2019, official statistics counted 11,411 African residents in the Grand Duchy (Statec 2020); this number is mis-

10 For more information on this debate, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh282gIa8ww

leading, however, because dual citizenship, which many PAD hold, was not taken into account. In fact, if we included those with dual citizenship, the number of Cape Verdeans alone would be approximately the same as the number of all Africans recorded in the official statistics (cf. Jacobs, Manço, and Mertz 2017; Tavares 2018). Given these figures, it is no surprise that Cape Verde is the only African nation represented by an embassy in the Grand Duchy.

Nonetheless, there has been a proliferation of cultural associations with African imprints in Luxembourg. Currently, there are more than 50 that deal with the most pressing concerns of their community members, such as accommodation, unemployment, and official paperwork (Gerstnerova 2016: 7; cf. Tavares 2018). Often, these associations are used as a gateway to get by and embrace the discursive tropes of "integration." However, until recently, the ways in which the associations can operate to solve their members' existential socioeconomic problems to a large extent have been at the intersection of exoticization and commodification of their cultures – for example, during the annual Festival des Migrations.

This event, which began in 1983, is organized by the Comité de Liaison des Associations d'Étrangers (CLAE).[11] Associations connected to Africa, South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe, as well as to Portugal, are prominent during the festival. Most of the organizations involved are of African descent, while associations representing the USA, France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium are hardly seen. This is an interesting contrast, since the latter four countries represent the largest groups of immigrants in Luxembourg after the Portuguese. This paradoxical insight helps us better understand who is perceived as a "migrant" and who is not. The festival brands the host country as multicultural, multilingual, and inclusive, although there are persistent unequal policies preventing social mobility for residents born or with heritage from outside the country: for example, several government jobs (which are more prestigious and better paid) are limited to European citizens (Gerstnerova 2016).

11 CLAE was funded by the Ministry of Family and Integration in 1985. It is an association that campaigns for citizenship rights of residence, for the recognition and enhancement of cultures resulting from immigration, and for an open and united immigration policy in Luxembourg and in Europe. https://www.clae.lu/

Beyond Statec's numbers, however, information concerning Black Luxembourgers is limited. The little there is stems from newspaper articles covering issues relating to the "cooperation for development" that has existed between Cape Verde and Luxembourg since the 1990s (cf. Tavares 2018). Negative stereotypes of PAD, drug dealing, refugee crises, and deportation, for instance – are common in these reports, suggesting that there is still a pejorative image of Black people in the country. Academically, the experience of Africans in Luxembourg has remained uncharted terrain, despite longstanding experiences of racism and inequalities affecting mostly Black people in the Grand Duchy. Indeed, the BBL conference debate has further catalyzed nuanced public discussions about the country's links to colonialism. In its wake, several other debates and conferences in diverse sectors of society followed, organized by Lëtz Rise Up and Finkapé.

Finkapé started as an informal platform in 2019 and became a nonprofit association before BLM spurred calls to action in 2020. Literally, the name Finkapé means "stick foot tight" in Cape Verdean Creole; it can be loosely translated in English as "grit one's teeth" – the act of summoning up one's strength to face unpleasantness or overcome a difficulty. As written on its website, the name suggests the determination to struggle for a better life. The organization was created to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination and inequality PAD suffer. Since its inception, it has been active in denouncing the racism that members have experienced in their interactions, from school to work.[12] In an interview, Finkapé's president Antónia Ganeto stressed its engagement in tackling four intersecting axes of structural racism that affect Black people: "education, work, housing and gender". [13] In terms of its ideological background, she defined Finkapé as an antiracist, Afro-feminist, and decolonial association, committed to opening spaces of visibility, raising awareness, and bringing a critical point of view to challenges and pejorative ideas related to the Black population. Although very new, Finkapé has organized several activities – conference debates, training, and strikes – in collaboration with other institutional actors from the government and civil society, including Mirlene Monteiro.

12 "Finkapé. Le réseau Afrodescendant Luxembourg vous souhaite la bienvenue! (https://www.finkape.lu/)

13 Antónia Ganeto (the President of *Finkape*) in discussion with author Bernardino Tavares Facebook and telephone, Luxembourg city, Luxembourg, August 2021.

Lëtz Rise Up, founded in September 2019, aims to promote social transformation. This includes the restructuring of public institutions and the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices linked to racial and religious identity. For its members, however, social change starts with individual change and the self-awareness that they are being racialized in their own country, although their communities have been contributing to Luxembourg's development for centuries. To that end, in collaboration with Richtung22, Lëtz Rise Up has organized guided visits around the capital to highlight places linked to colonialism, as mentioned above. Beyond colonial memory, it focuses on education and legislation, which the organization believes are core areas in the fight against discrimination. Furthermore, this association collaborates with other public institutions, such as the University of Luxembourg and the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, to bring together international experts on questions of institutional racism.[14]

What these two associations have in common is an activist, feminist, and political approach to unraveling racism and other forms of discrimination that are ingrained in the structures of society and polity. They are mostly composed of people of African origin and their descendants, who, in collaboration with stakeholders, are trying to disentangle racism and create a fairer society. The two associations have very similar objectives and philosophies. Both walk the same road to combat racism, gender bias, and other areas of discrimination, such as religion, sexual orientation, employment, and disability. Additionally, both of them stress the intersectionality of these forms of discrimination and inequality.

Unlike the two feminist and antiracist organizations, Richtung22 is a majority-white non-profit association founded by artists, filmmakers, and theater enthusiasts in 2010. Its aim is to regularize artistic professions and ensure fair working conditions. The collective is composed of students and young people from different professional backgrounds who use art, especially theater and cinema, as a social tool that they believe should be "inte-

14 "Understanding Institutional Racism in Comparative Perspective: From Lesson-drawing to an Agenda for Change," April 20, 2021 (https://eb6303ed-cff9-44f6-b5f4-16f0790b4040.filesusr.com/ugd/c7f16c_c762766a1e1a4ef18e52f13ffb85f0ba.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3XBMtJ3gsOkF1FIVrbrN5z1rDcw1mug1RlhhHiUc_9mOIde2Q9OHdA9Mk)

grated in the discussion [of social issues]".[15] In 2020, the BLM movement did not escape its attention. Richtung22 collectively reunited a group of local artists to symbolically arrest one of the most prominent Luxembourgish figures of Congo's colonization, the engineer Nicolas Cito as mentioned above.

The establishment of these organizations means more future participation for Black Luxembourgers, who have already had two high-level political representatives. Both of Cape Verdean origin, the first is Natalie Silva, who was born in 1980 in the Grand Duchy and is the only Black mayor in Luxembourg, heading the town of Larochette. Silva stresses her belonging to the country, wondering about the "exceptionalism of her position," even after more than 60 years of Black presence in Luxembourg. Meanwhile, Monica Semedo, a former member of the Luxembourg Democratic Party, was elected in 2019 to represent Luxembourg in the European Parliament. Born in 1984, she said in a March 2022 debate:

> Mr. President, in my high school there were three black students out of more than 1,500. I was the first black TV host in Luxembourg, but not many were following, unfortunately. Once a boyfriend's mother told me "many black people are criminals, but you are different." No, I am not different. I am not an exception. There are many like me, and they deserve to have a fair chance to succeed. We have to get rid of the racist stereotypes, deconstruct prejudices and represent the full diversity of our society at all levels. We need equal access and opportunities for all in culture, education, media and sports, because they play an important role in the fight against racism. They have the power to change minds and to drive social inclusion.[16]

This does not necessarily mean that the Black population and their contributions are well perceived or well recognized. Moreover, these two Black women are not representative of the Black community in its entirety. According to

15 "Richtung 22: un film, une discussion, un coup de pied dans la fourmilière", May 3, 2013 (https://www.wort.lu/fr/culture/richtung-22-un-film-une-discussion-un-coup-de-pied-dans-la-fourmiliere-518400e1e4b08d4e6de0bdbb)

16 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-07-INT-1-131-0000_EN.html

Nancy Fraser (1995), redistribution "is tied to a vision of justice which means to achieve social equality through a redistribution of the material necessities for an existence as free subjects, while the conditions for a just society come to be defined as the recognition of the personal dignity of all individuals" (Honneth 2001: 43). To a certain extent, political (and societal) discourses have instrumentalized these women's positions to celebrate diversity associated with immigration in general.

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