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# India, Australia and South Africa: three case studies to understand colonialism.

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## **1. Introduction.**

### **1.1 Aims.**

My intention with this dissertation is to demonstrate that colonialism and imperialism are not dead and buried, they are very much alive even though we do not (or do not want to) notice. I would also like to raise awareness of the situation of the impoverished countries and to invite people to inform themselves and assist in the battle against colonialism and imperialism. For that, I will use three examples of countries colonized by the British that will serve as the basis for my thesis. Those examples will include their colonial past, their present state and a cultural product that is related to their colonial context. After that I will move on to talk about the consequences of colonialism and imperialism, their impact on current societies and on the three countries used as examples, the importance of postcolonial studies and finally, how and why we can fight against colonial mentalities.

To start off I will provide an appropriate definition of the main concepts present in this project, those being colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonization and the British Empire. Having these terms defined and a general background provided, I will move on to talk about the three examples that will serve as basis: India and Cricket, Australia and the Tent Embassy, and South Africa and the #RhodesMustFall movement. For each case I will include the respective summary of their colonial history in order to contextualize the coming cultural products. Cultural products that have become anti-colonial symbols of each nation. I will explain their origin, their aims and their relevance in present times. From that the consequences of colonialism and imperialism will follow, how they have modified the politics, environment, economy and culture of India, Australia and South Africa focusing on a particular aspect in which the colonial period has left its mark, also making reference to the countries victims of colonialism in general. The minds of the oppressed have also been severely altered by colonial acts, even to the point of corrupting their national identity and their individual personalities.

What comes next deals with the perseverance of imperialist mentalities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what dangers do they pose and what strategies are typically used by the imperialist powers to dominate and govern other countries from afar. In combination with this, the next section will be about the dangers of the lingering imperialist practises,

the potential threats they pose to the less developed countries but also to the rest of the world. To round up the dissertation I will try to explain how to identify the potentially dangerous colonial and imperialist mentalities and, once identified, how to combat them.

## 1.2 What is colonialism?

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2023), colonialism is “the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another”. *Collins Dictionary* (2023) says that colonialism is “the practice by which a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.” In the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (2023, para. 1) colonialism is defined simply as “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another.” What all of these definitions have in common is that colonialism is a way of conquering, it is a way of subjugation of the weak by the strong in order to become stronger and keep subjugating. This process is quite rarely done in a peaceful manner, rather, most of the times colonialism is exercised through violence or coercion, which are embodied by historical events such as massacres, enslavement or kidnapping. For the British, colonialism was a form of expanding civilization into foreign countries (whether they liked it or not), they believed that they were doing the colonized country a favour by taking their lands, their resources and their people, because that way the subjugated country would become “civilized”.

Colonialism has been around for millennia, it has been a common practice of empires, kingdoms and other forces since we have records. Despite its longevity, the causes of colonialism are still being discussed and investigated. Historians and other scientists cannot give a definite answer of its causes because of the large number of altering human and non-human factors involved. Some theories have been proposed as possible causes of colonialism. A few examples of those causes are ambition, curiosity and a need for exploring distant lands; economic reasons that push a country or Empire to conquer for profit, gold, cheap labour and new market options; political reasons born from nationalistic feelings, tensions and competition between nations; or strategic motivations to protect the military and trade interests (Schoeman, 2007).

### 1.3 What is postcolonialism?

Postcolonialism is the logical response to colonialism, it is a critical analysis of colonialism from a modern perspective which studies the impact of European conquests and occupations, both in the past and in the present, but also the cultures and history of the colonized people. Postcolonialism tries to dismantle the colonial mentalities that believe that invading non-western nations is beneficial in any way. It is also an attempt to fight any practice of colonialism in current times and amplify the voices of those affected by colonialism. It pays special attention to social issues like race, gender, religion or migration and studies them as potential starting points of colonialism and as key elements in colonial history. Robert J. C. Young (2009) defines Postcolonialism as:

the result of different cultural and national origins, the ways in which the colour of your skin or your place and circumstance of birth define the kind of life [...] that you will have in this world. Postcolonialism's concerns are centred on geographic zones of intensity that have remained largely invisible, but which prompt or involve questions of history, ethnicity, complex cultural identities and questions of representation, of refugees, emigration and immigration, of poverty and wealth [...]. (p. 14)

Postcolonialism functions as a speaker for those who were and are not able to speak up for themselves due to oppression, discrimination or any other way in which they are being silenced. It is not a saviour nor the solution to their mistreatment, but at least raises awareness of it to those who, willingly or unwillingly, turn their heads away to remain blissfully ignorant. It is a useful tool to fight colonialism and a reminder of the horrendous acts of the past, but it is also a window to other cultures and societies which have been historically left aside by the western elites. Postcolonialism shows us not only that we are not the perfect societies we think we are, but also perspectives that can help us reach a better understanding of our world and of our own minds (Young, 2009).

Postcolonialism defends the idea of an equal and just world with no cultural discriminations, disproportionate divisions or hierarchies in which some selected groups take advantage of their strength or capabilities to exploit others. Postcolonialism also proposes a change in education so that children and young generations have at least basic knowledge about the victims of colonialism as well as those responsible for it, so that they know there is more than white-ruled societies and western traditions. This educational proposal aims to teach the students how European culture was regarded as the norm in law, economics, science, language, art and more and the damage this idea caused. It also aims to change the way people think and behave so as to create just and

fair societies in which people from different cultures and backgrounds can coexist together (Young, 2009).

#### **1.4 What is decolonization?**

It is a set of political, social and cultural activities and events which encompass many internal and external factors (like foreign wars) that take place in a colonized country (Britannica, 2023c). Poka Laenui (2000) divides the process of decolonization into five subprocesses:

The first is rediscovery and recovery. Here, Leanui argues that the first step of a colonized country towards decolonization is the rediscovery and recovery of its traditional national culture and identity, that which has been suppressed by the invading power. It is the fundamental basis for further decolonizing movements and for the regeneration of national strength and confidence.

The second is mourning, a time when the victims of a tragedy are able to lament their situation. Some people experiencing this phase may immerse themselves in the study and exploration of their indigenous culture, while others may mourn in more violent ways, using words or actions to unload their anger into the symbols and/or citizens from the colonizing nation. Those going through this phase face the detrimental risk of stagnating in their hatred towards the colonizer by excusing it as justified violence, protecting themselves and fomenting their violent thoughts behind the label of victims.

The third is dreaming. This is described by Laenui (2000, p. 4) as “the most crucial for decolonization.” It consists of the developing and building of a new social order through debates, consultations and dreams. It is at this point when the colonized explore their hopes, ambitions, aspirations and expectations for the future. It is also when they inspect their own constitutions, policies and governments to ensure that they are no longer being influenced or commanded by the colonizer country. Or as Laenui (2000, p. 4) himself puts it: “Decolonization includes the reevaluation of the political, social, economic and judicial structures themselves, and the development, if appropriate, of new structures which can hold and house the values and aspirations of the colonized people.”

The fourth is commitment. After the path to follow is decided in the previous phase, now is the moment to actually walk down that path. Society must move in the desired direction stated by the combination of the voices of the people.

The fifth and last is action. After a consensus of commitment has been reached then corresponding action can commence. In this phase, the results are beginning to become a reality by the implementation of actions ranging from a call to reason to a resort to arms. Although the first solution that comes to mind when fighting colonialism is direct armed conflict, the best solution would probably be the adequate use of information, of the media and of international contacts, like speaking before a national congress (Laenui, 2000).

## **1.5 What was the British Empire?**

The British Empire was widely known as the conglomeration of colonies, settlements, protectorates, dependencies and other territories that were governed by the crown of Great Britain and its government between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Britannica, 2023b). Among the first conquests were many territories in the West Indies and in North America, where they first attempted to settle in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but it was not until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that they would successfully settle on American ground. By the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the British already had colonies in North America (including Canada) and most of the Caribbean Sea. From that point onwards, the rest of the world followed with British colonies being established in India, Africa, Australia and more places, making the British Empire the biggest in history. Most of these settlements were independent but still functioned as extensions of the British colonial machinery as they spread the British ideas and manners in their own ways (Britannica, 2023b).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the peak of the British Empire, controlling territories all around the world and dominating the trade routes and ports. Even though the empire had lost the American colonies in the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it had little repercussion in the rest of the colonies and in their global power and authority, in fact the imperial territories continued to grow. The British dominated part of Canada, the West Indies and a big chunk of Australasia (Marshall, 2001). In the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup>



century and through the 20<sup>th</sup> century the empire had begun to collapse. Some colonies had complete control over their internal affairs and became dominions, still part of the British Empire but with their own government. With time more and more colonies gained the status of dominion and eventually became independent from Britain, particularly after World War I. World War II put the last nail in the coffin of the empire as it debilitated Great Britain so much that it could no longer manage and maintain its colonies and dominions (Britannica, 2023b).

The British Empire left a permanent mark in history and in the countries it colonized, but also in those unreached by the imperial forces. The fact that nowadays English is one of the most spoken languages worldwide and is considered a global language derives from the British colonial period. In many countries, the economic systems and the organization of government, education, culture and even religion are heavily influenced by, if not directly copied from, the British. The resource-exploitation mentality is also inherited from the colonial British, provoking a careless manipulation of the natural resources that has led us to a climatic crisis (Marshall, 2001). Their empire left a legacy of trauma, violence and destruction that we still experience today.

## **2. Case studies: India, Australia and South Africa.**

In order to prove these ideas I need a foundation. This foundation is composed of three examples of countries colonized by the British, their history and three cultural products representatives of each history. The first is the Republic of India. The country had been occupied by the British since around 1747 up until 1947, when India and Pakistan became self-governing nations. During those centuries, the East India Company, responsible for the occupation of the Indian land, committed uncountable acts of violence including wars, assassinations and massacres with the goal of becoming the political and economic ruler. Since there were so many British people and that the British culture was so promoted (imposed in many cases), even more and more Indians started to pick up on British language, traditions, mentalities and sports. One of these sports was cricket, at first a tool to separate the elite classes from the lower classes, now the national sport of India, where it has the highest number of players in the world.

The second example is Australia. In Australia the British established their first settlement in 1788, but contrary to India, the country never got its independence. The

British completely took over the continent by almost wiping out the Aboriginal population. From the first encounter between British and Aboriginals, the latter had been treated as animals, as wild creatures that did not even know how to take advantage of the land. They were considered inferior, and because of that they suffered slaughters, kidnappings and other cruel acts for centuries. Because of this discrimination, in 1972 a small group of Aboriginals and supporters mounted a tent in front of the Parliament House (Canberra) as a protest. Since then, the group known as “Tent Embassy” fights for the rights of indigenous people.

The last example is South Africa where colonialism started around 1652. Colonialism was not limited to South Africa alone but the whole African continent suffered it. It was not only the British who tried to dominate Africa but the Dutch, Portuguese, French and German also wanted a piece of the cake, but in the end it was the British Empire who took control over South Africa. Once the dominance was established, the British made their own laws and rules among which was the discrimination of black people. This led to a period known as Apartheid, which lasted from 1948 to the early 1990s. The Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation that benefited the white elite. It consisted of the social division between whites and non-whites, restricting any non-white person from many places, services and rights. In recent years, many social movements against colonial legacy are gaining relevance. One of those movements is the #RhodesMustFall movement which tries to demolish statues that promote the figure of Cecil Rhodes, a British magnate, white supremacist and a faithful follower of Imperialism.

## 2.1 India and cricket.

The main responsible for the colonization of India was the East India Company (EIC), a private British trading company that got so large and powerful that it had its own army. It was during the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the EIC settled its first headquarters in India. Since then, the company would start gaining power and influence over the Indian population due to an increasing interest in trading with the EIC, but also because the local rulers, the Mughal Empire, had been losing power after several conflicts with Persia and Afghanistan. The idea of the EIC was to trade with the Indians and progressively gain enough market influence to become a pillar of the Indian economy. Once the EIC became powerful enough, it commenced using more war-like strategies such as bribing political figures, assassination, supplantation and direct armed conflict with those who dared to oppose their commands. Once they had the opportunity, the British also introduced new laws and reforms in education, politics, culture and in almost every other aspect of day-to-day life (Rahman et al., 2018). Their purpose was to change the Indian society from within, to transform Indian citizens into British citizens, at least in terms of opinions, morals and intellect, so that once they are transformed, they can assist the British with their cultural war. They wanted to “control Indians through Indians” (Rahman et al., 2018, pp. 14-15).

1857 marked a turning point as a great number of Indian soldiers in the British army decided to rebel against their superiors in the Sepoy Mutiny. The causes are not quite clear but theories include religious motives, planned independence attempt, or just general discontent about the salary and working conditions. Whatever the reasons, this mutiny caused the British crown to take over the Indian colonies in 1858, officially making India part of the British Empire and the crown jewel (Iyer, 2010). Still, the British kept applying the same techniques (some of which remain today (Rahman et al., 2018)) they had been applying in other colonies: divide and rule, ethnocentrism, religious suppression, native inferiority, colonial education etc. All of these techniques contributed to the creation of a British elite conformed by upper-class Indians, who looked Indian but behaved like British citizens. The Indian culture was classified as inferior and not as worthy as western culture (Macaulay, 1935). From this sense of superiority, the British, in an act of narcissistic compassion, decided to teach the native

Indians the English language and conducts to save them from “ignorance” and “barbarity” (Macaulay, 1935). Most of the Indians who had the chance took it, either because they saw an opportunity to become richer and more powerful, or because they feared what the British could do to them if they rejected. With the excuse of progress and civilizing the Indians, the British indoctrinated the powerful members of society into British customs so that they could serve their colonial purposes. This strategy was recognized by Thomas Babington Macaulay, a British historian, back in 1835:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (para. 34)

It was not until 1947 that India, through many attempts, achieved its independence from the British Empire after almost 200 years of British occupation. Probably the most notable figure involved in this event was Mahatma Gandhi. He was an Indian lawyer who decided to take the pacifist approach to decolonize his country. Because of his perseverance and his non-violent acts of rebellion, Gandhi became the head of the Indian movement for independence, using English as a tool to fight back the invaders. During their ruling, the EIC and the British Empire instructed part of the Indian population (mainly from the higher social classes) in the British culture. The Indians were taught the English language, British politics, manners, traditions and ideas. This, contrary to the expectations of the British, backfired on them as the educated Indians, enriched with such knowledge, began to think of their freedom, eventually fighting for their independence and reclaiming their land (Rahman et al., 2018). Armed with the English language and British teachings as their weapons, the Indian citizens organized several resistance and nationalist movements to get rid of the European invaders. To counter those movements, the British decided to use brute force and kill every nationalist and revolutionary. These aggressive measures only managed to empower Gandhi’s non-violent resistance which successfully drove the British away from India (Rahman et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, India still maintains some British cultural elements from the colonial period. One of those cultural elements is Cricket, a sport originally created in the south-eastern regions of England but which would eventually become the national sport of

India. When the English sport first reached India, it was only played by the British elite as a way of distinguishing people from the higher classes from those in the lower classes. Curiously enough, cricket was initially played by illiterate countrymen and the rural population of south-east England during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the upper classes became interested in the sport, most probably because of cricket's contribution to a sense of local pride and identity (but also because of gambling among upper-class Englishmen and the potential the sport had in a competitive scene (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005)), that they adapted it to their social context, transforming it into an elitist sport (Underdown, 2006). Progressively, cricket was turning away from its rural origins and moving towards the industrial cities with better facilities, equipment and a bigger (and more privileged) player base.

Cricket became part of the elite's identity, it was strongly connected with British politics, religion, class and even economy, with members of the nobility and high social status being invested in the sport. Being a competent cricket player was a representation of your social position and power, of your relation to God and your body, of your education, and of your national pride. In the minds of the British population of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cricket had become as important in society as schools and churches for its ability to teach ethics, morals, justice, discipline, loyalty and other values (Sandiford, 1983). Today, due to British colonial expansion, cricket is played in many countries around the globe including Australia, Pakistan, South Africa, the West Indies and, of course, the British Isles and India (Longmore et al., 2023). It was an important link between the colonies and their governing country, a vehicle for the transmission of British codes of conduct to the local population of other parts of the world (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005). While still being an elitist sport with most of its players coming from privileged backgrounds and upper-caste families, it has been gaining popularity among the lower classes as well, especially after the discovery that a few top cricket players came from humble backgrounds (Majumdar, 2010).

The sport was played for the first time on Indian territory in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the British elites appropriated it back in England. For many decades, it was exclusively played by the British, but in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some Indian religious group, the Parsis, decided to give it a try. The following decades saw an exponential growth in popularity of cricket all over India, with people from different

religious groups and social backgrounds being interested in playing it (Majumdar, 2013). It even became a way of peaceful rivalry between different religious, racial and social groups, who would set their disputes on the field (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005). Similarly to what happened with the English language and other British cultural elements, cricket was vastly promoted in the Indian country as a way to “civilize” the natives, convert them into British citizens and have the population under control, after all, cricket was a sport that required a certain degree of submission and orderly behaviour (spitting or swearing are not well received, disagreement with the match officials is forbidden etc.) making it perfect for the control of the masses (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005).

British patrons invested in the promotion of the game in the educational institutions and Gymkhanas of the country in order to find remarkable players who could join their cricket teams, and then, their colonial invasion (Majumdar, 2010). The players they were looking for needed not only to be outstanding players of cricket, but also to be educated, a quality that limited the recruitment process. The fact that they needed to be educated made it impossible for underprivileged Indians to join any cricket team and play it at a professional level. This was a strategic movement to discard all the non-educated Indians as they were considered of no value and troublesome, thus creating another social division between the upper and the lower classes (Majumdar, 2010).

Despite the racial segregation within the organizations and matches, cricket served to bridge British elites with Indian elites, both finding a common hobby in cricket and using it as a differentiating element to distance themselves from the lower classes (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005). However, those from less privileged families also had access to cricket, although not at a professional level or to professional equipment, and many decided to try it because it was an opportunity for those at the bottom of the social structure to be a little bit closer to those at the top. It was seen as a chance to move upwards in the social hierarchy, and later as a chance to culturally compete with the British. Cricket even had its own official organization which oversaw the sport and its members, the International Cricket Council (ICC). Created in England in 1909, it decided which countries were qualified to play official matches, but it being an English institution functioned as a branch of the colonial infrastructure (Kaufman & Patterson, 2005).

Today, cricket is still a restricted sport available only to those at the top of the social structure as a result of British colonial influence. But it is also a tool similar to the English language used by Gandhi to repel the British, in the sense that it was intended to be a weapon of colonialism but backfired with its assimilation into Indian culture. The Indian people now use it to play (and win) against the British at their own game, but most importantly, cricket is an element of integration and union among Indians. Bhaskar Roy (2002) claims it is “a passionate obsession” (p. 253) and compares it with the social phenomenon that football has been in Latin America. Similarly, the most popular cricket players are idolatrised and treated as national heroes, even surpassing political figures in popularity. The Indian population did not last to realize that apart from a vehicle for social mobility, cricket could also be “an effective reply to colonial exploitation” (Majumdar, 2001, p. 3402) that would provide a sense of pride, purpose and nationalism, especially after their victories over the British teams. Although being a classist sport, cricket is seen as a symbol of anti-colonialism and a national patrimony of India.

## **2.2 Australia and the Tent Embassy.**

The first contact of the British Empire was in 1770 when Captain Cook arrived on the eastern coast of Australia. It was not until 1788 that the first penal colony was established on Australian land, thus becoming the starting point of the colonization of the country. Those penal colonies were not inhabited by regular British population but by criminals whose crimes were mostly petty. Australia was intended to be a country-sized prison for British convicts who could not fit in the local jails. The criminals had a new opportunity to start a new life in Australia and earn their living by working hard, but this implied taking the land from the indigenous population by violent and cruel means. Upon arrival, the British sailors declared the land as empty following the dogma of *terra nullius*, which stated that if a piece of land was empty it was the people’s right to take it (Feltham, 2004). This way they did not have any legal obligation to protect or negotiate with the native population of such land. Even though the very first contacts between the colonizers and the Aboriginals were peaceful, they quickly evolved into devastating conflicts and battles that proved harmful for the native population. When

the Indigenous Australians noticed that the foreigners were there to stay, both factions became immersed in a competition for access to the land (Australian War Memorial, 2021). The period between 1788 and the late 1830s is known as the Frontier Wars. The Frontier Wars were a set of militarized conflicts between the Aboriginal population and the British colonizers who fought for the control of the Australian lands. Although the conflicts continued for many decades after, the end of the Frontier Wars is usually set around 1838 because it was the year when the last major British Army deployment occurred (Connor, 2002; National Library of Australia, 2023). These wars decimated the Aboriginal natives, weakening them for future conflicts.

These kinds of battles often resulted in victory for the British colonizers, who had more advanced weapons, armours and war tactics. The diseases they brought with them and other unintended consequences of settlement also killed thousands of Aboriginals, whose numbers were drastically reducing without pause at the time (Australian War Memorial, 2021). These circumstances lasted for many decades until the Australian government decided to implement some policies to try and stop the war with the indigenous population. The Protectionist (1800s to 1930s) and Assimilation (1940s to 1960s) policies were attempts to accommodate the Aboriginal inhabitants to the white Australia and its western traditions and ideas through the complete annihilation of their Aboriginal culture and background. The infamous Stolen Generations (1910s to 1970s) was another attempt to “save” the Aboriginals. The Stolen Generations were hundreds of Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families by the Australian government to protect them from a life of neglect. The Australians differentiated between pure blood Aboriginals and mixed blood Aboriginals. Those with pure blood were considered hopeless, with no chance of salvation, those with mixed blood were thought to be able to assimilate to civilization and survive (O’Loughlin, 2020).

The Aboriginal Protection Act of 1869 was one of the first legislations that legally allowed the removal of Aboriginal children from Stations or Reserves to transform them into white Australians, or rather, into servants of white Australians. The Board for the Protection of Aborigines, established in 1883, was intended to safeguard the integrity of any Aboriginal member by providing clothes, instruction, land, vehicles and other aids. To no one’s surprise, this ended up being just another name for the kidnapping of Aboriginals and their conversion to proper Australian citizens (O’Loughlin, 2020). The



forced removals implied the prohibition of any trace of Aboriginal culture in the kidnapped individuals. The goal was to get rid of the Aboriginal identity by any means necessary. Contrary to what was believed by the Europeans who first arrived at Australia, the Aboriginal population was not homogeneous, it covered a rich spectrum of groups, cultures, languages and around 500 unique Aboriginal nations. At the moment of defining identity, the Aboriginals based their criteria on the different religious beliefs and spiritual links to the land and environment. The first move of the British to eliminate that identity was to completely ignore the Aboriginal criteria and impose their own, thus classifying the Aboriginals as 'others', as savages without any psychological or physical attribute worthy of attention. This undervalued the indigenous population and positioned them well under the British in their made-up, personal scale of value (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990). Another similar policy was the Immigration Restriction Act from 1901. This act heavily restricted non-British migration to Australia as non-white immigrants and Aboriginals were seen as a threat to the stability of the nation. It represented the formal establishment of the White Australia policy (National Museum of Australia, 2023a), a policy that aimed to eliminate any non-white person in Australian territory.

Fortunately, the Aboriginal population was not completely wiped out and not every white person was against them. Some of the remaining Aboriginals and supporters initiated social and political postcolonial movements to reclaim the rights and the land that had been stolen from them. One of such movements was the erection of the Tent Embassy by four indigenous men (Billy Craigie, Tony Coorie, Michael Anderson and Bertie Williams) in 1972 (Feltham, 2004). Located opposite the National Parliament House in Canberra, the Tent Embassy is a form of protest for the horrendous acts committed towards the Aboriginals in the past, including the disregard for Indigenous land rights. It has also become part of the Aboriginal identity, an identity that has been key in their advancement for political rights, and it also was the "first truly national Aboriginal political protest" (Shoemaker, 2004, p. 111). This identity, in combination with a nationalist sense, were the fuel that propelled the fight for Aboriginal rights. The nationalist sense had grown from the seed planted many years ago by the protectionist policies that eliminated the Aboriginal's personal freedom, but which made the Aboriginals realize they were a race apart and unique. To this sense also contributed

having a common language (English), education and mass-communication, components that helped unite the Aboriginal community and achieve uniformity. Furthermore, the Black Panthers and the fight for civil rights in America also inspired the Aboriginals and black Australians, thus joining forces to fight for a common cause under a flag that represented both communities (Martinez, 1997).

With time, the Tent Embassy has been changing locations, erected by the protesters and removed by the police on several times, until 1992 when it was permanently established on its original site. The goals of the protesters have also undergone evolutions, now including not only land rights but also Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (National Museum of Australia, 2023b). The first demand of the Tent Embassy members at the day of its foundation was that the Australian government granted land rights to the Aboriginal people. This was a reaction to the Australia Day Statement by the Prime Minister at the time, McMahon, on the 26 January 1972, a statement which promoted the assimilation of Aboriginals into the (white) Australian society and denied their land rights. This idea was worryingly similar to the protectionist and assimilation policies from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that concluded in the near extinction of the Aboriginal civilization. Logically, the Aboriginals opposed this statement and the intentions behind it, and so the Tent Embassy was born. As more and more protesters joined the cause, their demands grew. On their second statement, and on top of land rights, they also demanded the retraction of the Australia Day statement and compensation for stolen lands (Robinson, 1994).

For a long time, Aboriginals have been fighting (literally and metaphorically) for their rights. Most of those fights led to failure, but some led to progress. Like the 1967 Referendum, in which 90.77% of the population voted 'yes' to include the Aboriginals in the constitution, thus being finally recognized as Australian citizens (AIATSIS, 2021). Or the Freedom Ride campaign of 1965, inspired by previous campaigns in the United States, when a group of students from the University of Sydney travelled through New South Wales in a bus to raise consciousness about the marginalization of Aboriginals and black Australians, and to stand up against racism and discriminatory laws. The group, named Student Action For Aborigines (SAFA), faced insults, offensive comments and gestures and attempts to stir up violence, but in the end, they managed to get rid of a couple discriminatory laws, like one that forbid Aboriginal children from the public

swimming pool in Moree, as well as raising awareness of inequalities and injustices (AIATSIS, 2022; Shoemaker, 2004). Nevertheless, the Australian government kept putting as many obstacles as possible in the way of the Aboriginal rights. On numerous occasions the Aboriginal petitions were denied, their political views ignored, and their social status lowered. Disappointment after disappointment, the Aboriginals grew tired of being neglected and overlooked and so created the Tent Embassy. With the Tent Embassy in place, the Aboriginals wrote a list of demands to the Australian government:

- 1- Complete rights to the Northern Territory as a state within Australia and the installation of a primarily Aboriginal State Parliament. These rights would include all mining rights to the land
- 2- Ownership and mining rights of all other Aboriginal reserve lands in Australia
- 3- The preservation of all sacred sites in Australia
- 4- Ownership of areas in major cities, including the mining rights
- 5- Compensation for lands that were not able to be returned starting with \$6 billion and including a percentage of the gross national income every year. (National Museum of Australia, 2023b)

The movement had gained the attention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, but also of national and international political figures. Local politicians, at first perplexed by the embassy, saw it as a threat to their authority and so tried to dismantle it by implementing laws that, among other instructions, forbid the erection of tents in front of the Parliament House. The Aboriginals countered those removal attempts by saying that they were the rightful inhabitants of the land and that an embassy was needed for indigenous people, as they were foreign and separate from the white Australians (Feltham, 2004). This ongoing back and forth between Australian politicians and Aboriginals was generating controversy to the point of appearing in the news and other media and led to violent revolts and clashes between the protesters and the police on more than one occasion. Rumours and other information about the Tent Embassy were being spread on the media and by word to mouth. Quickly, the embassy grew larger, accumulating more and more supporters who approached the movement with enthusiasm and an awoken consciousness (Feltham, 2004). The Aboriginal fight for their rights gained so much traction that in 2000, around 250,000 Indigenous and non-

Indigenous Australians walked together through the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the Walk for Reconciliation, a walk that demonstrated the awareness and grief of Australians for the colonial horrors suffered by the Aboriginals. It is one of the largest political demonstrations ever held in Australia to date and a great support for the Tent Embassy (National Museum of Australia, 2022).

The Embassy became the headquarters of the Aboriginal campaign to reclaim their rights, it was the meeting point of Aboriginal activists and the centre for protests. Although it had many supporters, it also had many enemies trying to take it down (National Museum of Australia, 2023b). Finally in 1992, 20 years after its first establishment, the Tent Embassy was permanently relocated on its original site, where it remains today as a symbol of anti-colonialism and as a symbol for Aboriginal rights and sovereignty, and where it inspires people all around the world in similar scenarios. The Tent Embassy served to transform the national and international perception that people had about the Aborigines and to introduce the Aboriginal community into Australian politics.

### **2.3 South Africa and the #RhodesMustFall movement.**

During the colonial expansion of the European empires, Africa became one of the many places to claim with many competitors fighting for a piece of the cake. It was one of the last territories to be reached by the imperialist hand with the majority of colonies settling towards the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century, much later than in any other nation (Webster et al., 2023). Due to the constant conflicts among the European powers and the African states, boundary lines were drawn (by the European powers) to separate the different tribes and colonies from each other. The problem was that these boundaries were often drawn arbitrarily, without paying attention to ethnic unity, regional ties, tribal preferences or even natural boundaries (Webster et al., 2023).

The Dutch, French, German, Portuguese and British were the most interested in acquiring a piece of African land so that they could exploit their resources and their people. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries they all battled to see who could claim dominance over as many territories and trade routes as possible. The Boers (descendants of the Dutch) gained control of most of the southern territories and even

had their own republic, known as the South African Republic (SAR), internationally recognized in 1852 with the Sand River Convention. The other European powers, most notably the British Empire, had great interest in those lands occupied by the Boers, especially after the discovery of diamond and gold mines in the location. This tension, born from dreams of wealth, gave place to two wars (in 1881 and 1899-1902) between the Boers and the British known as the Boer Wars (Britannica, 2023d). After winning the second Boer War, the British conquered the South African Republic and renamed it the Crown Colony of the Transvaal. In 1910 it was absorbed into the Union of South Africa but still was governed by the British. South Africa and Cape Colony were important locations for trade in Africa and for the rest of the colonies of the Empire. Once established, The British began implementing their own laws, education systems and ideologies through sheer force in order to make the city, and eventually the whole country, a contributing member of the Empire. They did not hesitate to heavily discriminate and exterminate the native population of South Africa justifying themselves by saying that they were inferior, savage, uncivilized or any other depreciating adjective (Nyamnjoh, 2016).

The British created an Apartheid State in which the white minority ruled over the black population, they turned racism into law. The origins of Apartheid can be traced to the National Party, a political party primary composed by Dutch descended Afrikaners and English-speaking white men who governed South Africa from 1948 to 1994. During those years, the National Party introduced policies against non-white people. One of those policies was the Population Registration Act of 1950 which divided the South African population into three categories: black, mixed race or white, with the Asian category being added later. This and other acts, like the Group Areas Act of 1950, dictated, based on the racial classification, where South African people could live, what jobs they could have, the type of education they could receive and other social and political limitations that favoured the white South Africans. Acts like these and the Apartheid State in general created tensions between the Europeans and the native Africans that would mostly conclude in violence (Britannica, 2023a).

A name that tends to come out every time there is a discussion about colonialism in Africa is Cecil Rhodes. He was a wealthy British explorer and an avid defender of white supremacy who is considered as one of the biggest representatives of the British

colonialism of Africa, even to the point of describing him as the owner of Africa (Fitzpatrick, 1924, as cited in Nyamnjoh, 2016) or the incarnation of British Imperialism (Nyamnjoh, 2016). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cecil Rhodes was known as ‘Colossus’, ‘White Devil’ and ‘Grand Imperialist’ due to his almost evangelical belief in the British Empire and promotion of Imperialism (Nyamnjoh, 2016). Being such an image of such a horrendous age, many people despise him for what he did and what he stood for. Despite Rhodes being the face of British colonialism in Africa, he and other colonizers and supremacists have been white-washed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they have been branded as benevolent contributors and philanthropists to clean their images and even have institutions, academic centres, libraries and scholarships named after them. This whitened version of history opposes that of the native Africans, who referred to Rhodes (and the colonizers in general) as criminals, conquerors and exploiters (Sooliman, 2019).

The hatred towards Cecil Rhodes and other similar individuals, brought some people together to resist the colonial mindset and to destroy as many pro-colonial manifestations as possible. One of these pro-colonial manifestations was a statue of Cecil Rhodes located in the University of Cape Town (UCT), where the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement originated in March 2015 to decolonize the campus. This hashtag was mainly used in *Twitter*, a social media app which provided “a platform for young black South Africans to express their views, align arguments, influence public opinion and debate issues facing a post-apartheid South Africa.” (Beukes, 2017, p. 198) In this sense, *Twitter* played a vital role for the #RMF movement as it was the main form for spreading the message. The app was also home for other similar campaigns such as the #FeesMustfall movement, which initially fought against the increasing university fees that would leave many young people at the doors of higher education, but in the end, it was another effort to decolonize the African countries (Beukes, 2017). These social movements, in combination with *Twitter*, helped to consolidate the alternative narrative of the younger generations as well as inspiring future national and foreign akin social movements that would make use of *Twitter* or any other social media.

The anger comes not only from the appraisal of colonial figures but also from the situations of many Universities, especially African universities in which there seems to be a perpetuation of discriminatory guidelines. The UCT was originally founded in 1829 and was intended to prepare English students for English examinations, but it did not

accept black students despite being located in a community with a black majority. Those universities of the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which did accept black students prepared them not for English examinations, but rather to become servants of the white population. During the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the universities in South Africa and other African countries were looked down upon as they were considered a threat to the white elites. Even the World Bank showed a negative attitude towards universities. The African universities were deemed as unnecessary as they did not contribute to the global markets or the national development. Of course, these ideas were implanted by western forces and figures of the global finance (NDLOVU-GATSHENI, 2017). The overall organization of South African universities has experimented very little change from the colonial period, with the majority of senior positions being occupied by white males, a Eurocentric curriculum or the lack of black female professors in 2015 (Ramaru, 2017). The statue of Cecil Rhodes was also considered as a symbol of gender discrimination, racism and white predominance within the university. The continuous frustration and contempt the statue provoked in the students and staff led to many retaliatory responses (like throwing faeces at it, among others) which eventually conducted to the #RMF movement and the removal of the statue.

But the frustration and contempt feelings come from decades back, when people all over Africa started uprisings, protests and other acts of rebellion to revolt against the lack of responses to the popular demands for change, and the purposefully provoked stagnation of the continent's economy and politics by foreign countries. Constant demonstrations through the years against rising food pricing and the cost of living, rigged elections and corruption, police brutality and immunity and academic dissatisfaction were the preamble to the #RMF movement. For many people involved in these protests, violence and the destruction of property seem to be the only effective means to gain the attention of authorities (Arnould et al., 2016). The #RMF movement was also an opportunity for black women and queer people to be part of a liberation movement, not as mere assistants but as active participants and as part of the body of founders. They were determined to make the #RMF movement a fight not only for racial equality but also for gender equality and inclusion. That is why, the removal of the statue on the 9 of April of 2015, was an enormous victory for black men, women, queer people and anyone who had been victim of colonialism. Sadly, those same women and queer

people fighting for their safety and rights were being discriminated and assaulted by members within the movement itself, making it a physical and psychological challenge to continue being part of the movement (Ramaru, 2017).

Before the removal of the statue, in South African universities white students tended to be privileged over black students with even top members, like chancellors or vice-chancellors, showing support of racial segregation or being scolded if they find themselves on the opposite side of the spectrum. Or as Adam Habib, the former vice-chancellor of the University of Witwatersrand puts it:

The Rhodes statue was simply a trigger point for a broader unhappiness about race, racism, and marginalisation at the University (of Cape Town). The universities, particularly the historical white ones, have been immersed in a bubble. They assumed that their intellectual atmosphere and their middle class constituencies protected them from a social explosion around race. But this was not to be because there is legitimacy to the criticisms of the students. How can there not be when there are universities 20 years after our democracy that still have more than two thirds of their students white? How can there not be unhappiness when there are universities that are organized around racialised federal principles, which when an incoming vice-chancellor tries to change, he becomes subject to attack by external right wing organisations including AfriForum and Solidarity? How can these students not feel offended when even in the more liberal and historically English speaking universities like UCT and Wits, the curriculum is not sufficiently reflective of our history or speaks to our historical circumstances.

Therefore, the movement's objective is not only to destroy imperialist statues, but also to fight back the remains of colonialism and imperialism, to disprove the manipulated white narrative of historical facts, to confront the socio-economic inequalities and to bring justice and dethrone those who have been favoured by the colour of their skin or by displaying discriminatory practices.

### **3. The aftermath of colonialism.**

Unsurprisingly, colonialism and the violent acts that came with it caused irreversible damage to the economy, politics, culture and minds of the colonized. Such was the impact of the British Empire in India, Australia and South Africa (among others) that even after many decades those countries are still experiencing the consequences of colonialism.

In Africa for example, the British forced the natives to produce goods only for the export market, making those products considerably cheaper than making them for their consumption in African nations as well (Settles, 1996). Since Africans were no longer permitted to produce goods for their own consumption, they had to import them from



somewhere else, namely Europe, making Africa “totally reliant upon Europe for their economic destiny” (Settles, 1996, p. 7). The British had total domination over what the African people would buy, sell, harvest and consume. As a result of selling low and buying high, the expenses of the African nations increased dramatically, which made many African countries much poorer than they were, which is why, after decades, most of them still have not economically recovered from the colonial past. This was a tactic of the British Empire to take control of the African economy by disguising it as colonial development. By forcing the local rulers to adapt to the British economic system and limiting their market options, the rulers began to lose control over their territories (Settles, 1996). The European powers did not want Africa to become just a “loyal customer”, they wanted it to become part of the system itself, another gear in the machine.

This indiscriminate manipulation of the economy of many African nations, “irrevocably altered the social structure of many African societies and set the stage for later problems in African economic development.” (Settles, 1996, p. 9). Today, Africa continues to suffer from the Scramble for Africa with economic, political, technological and industrial restraints and being generally impoverished, not because of the incapacity of the African people, but because of the greed and the Imperialist behaviours of the European powers. All the changes and modifications made to the entirety of the African continent during the colonial centuries had as an objective to exploit the land and the people, and provide benefits for the European colonizers. If the African industry had been cultivated and encouraged instead of corrupted and misused, the continent would be in a much better economic and technological position today (Settles, 1996). “Had colonialism never been imposed on Africa, its development would be significantly different and many of the problems that plague it today would not exist.” (Settles, 1996, p. 10)

India is another example of the struggle of a country to repair the damage done by the colonizers. In his paper, Iyer (2010) compares the postcolonial situation of the areas which were under direct command of a British governor and areas which were still ruled by Indian kings who served the British. Despite serving the British, those kings had more freedom and independence than the areas directly ruled by the colonizers. In this comparison Iyer (2010) finds that, in the postcolonial period, those areas which had

been directly ruled by the British have a much lower availability of public goods such as schools, health centres and roads. Such areas happen to “have 37% fewer villages with middle schools, 70% fewer villages equipped with primary health subcenters and 46% fewer villages with access to good roads in 1981 and 1991.” (Iyer, 2010, p. 703) Also, they seem to be similarly developed to the indirectly ruled areas in terms of agricultural investments and productivity.

In addition, when compared to native state areas, directly ruled areas have higher levels of poverty (40% higher) and infant mortality (33% higher) in the postcolonial period of the early 1990s (Iyer, 2010). From this data it is obvious that the colonial enterprise of the British in India left an open scar. Nowadays, many of the problems that India faces can be traced back to the colonial period, especially those problems relating to the availability of public goods. Nevertheless, during the postcolonial period and thanks to postcolonial policies, some of the differences between the directly ruled areas and indirectly ruled areas are narrowing. The literacy rate serves as an example. During the colonial period little more than 5% of the Indian population could read and write, but in the British areas this percentage was even lower. In the postcolonial period there is barely any literacy difference between the two areas (Iyer, 2010). Iyer concludes his paper by saying that “It is therefore possible to undo the effects of historical circumstances, though the results in this paper indicate that this process can take several decades.” (Iyer, 2010, p. 709)

Australia is not the exception. The moment the British navigators set foot on Australian land in 1788, they claimed the land as theirs and treated the Indigenous Australians as animals and enemies of the crown. Since then, Indigenous Australians have been suffering from massacres, kidnappings and social discrimination for centuries. Their land was taken away from them, their houses destroyed and their crops cleared to leave room for British houses and farming practises. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, having Aboriginal blood was still considered a defect, a contamination of the body that turned people into animals. Following the Protectionist Policy (1800s to 1930s), those who had Aboriginal blood flowing through their veins were relocated to reserves and missions, places designed to spiritually and culturally destroy the indigenous population (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016). Years after, another policy was created, the Assimilation Policy (1940s to 1960s). The goal of this policy was to adapt

the Indigenous population to the white Australia by removing any trace of their previous culture and substitute it with the Western culture and lifestyle (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016).

After so many decades of intolerance, violence and unfairness towards the Aboriginals it would be naïve to say that they did not create any trauma or repercussion. Kapellas and Jamieson (2016) state that “Historical experiences have not been forgotten by Australians and there is acknowledgment that what Australian governments of the past did was wrong” (p. 17). But today it is not rare to come across hate crimes against the descendants of the Indigenous population. Acts fuelled by the permeated racism from the colonial period. Nor is it rare to come across descendants of Indigenous Australians who are struggling to survive in a hostile environment that constantly pushes them aside. A large number of the remaining Indigenous Australians and their descendants, especially in the Northern Territory (N. T.), have resorted to alcohol abuse as a way to temporarily forget their past and their present as second-hand citizens. “Consumption of alcohol by Indigenous Australians in the N.T. may be partly attributed to the consequences of dispossession and disempowerment and by extension a symptom of generational trauma and grief.” (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016, p. 18). Their excessive consumption of alcohol derives from situations of poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing conditions, and poor education, but it can be ultimately traced back to a critical breakdown in Indigenous culture (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016).

Now, the only option left for the indigenous Australians is to adapt to contemporary Australia. “The events since colonisation have made it impossible for Indigenous Australians to return to a previous way of living.” (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016, p. 25). A possible solution to this problem can be achieved by investing in proper education, houses and infrastructure, creation of employment etc. These improvements will not fix the errors from the past nor cure the trauma created by the colonial policies, but they are a step forward into a better society (Kapellas & Jamieson, 2016).

#### **4. Colonialism and imperialism in the 21st century.**

In spite of human progress and advancements, colonialism and imperialism continue to exist today in the form of neo-imperialism with more subtle and varied

methods. A good percentage of the Western civilization still has colonialist and orientalist mentalities claiming that their societies are superior and their ideologies better than those from the East and less developed countries. Neo-imperialism is creating such an imbalance in the world economies that the only possible outcome is the destruction of the whole system.

The imperialist masters of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are trying to disguise themselves as saviours and heroes by 'helping' the poor countries with operations that maintain the weakened nation weak. Among these operations is the provision of economic 'aids', which instead of supporting the developing country they keep it dependant and indebted. Some of these 'multilateral aids' come from international organizations (like the International Monetary Fund, the International Finance Corporation, the World bank etc.) that, coincidentally, have the U.S. capital as their major backing (Nkrumah, 1965). But even if those 'aids' were actually intended to reinforce the subjugated country's economy, it would not be a solution to neo-imperialism. The only way less developed nations can improve themselves and achieve economic growth is by fighting against the external forces that keep it restrained, not through the generosity and loans from the imperialist superpowers (Nkrumah, 1965).

One more strategy of neo-imperialism is the propaganda spread through television, radio and news, which normally also includes religious messages. It is not difficult to find films loaded with heroic imperialist messages that reach the developing countries and take root in the minds of the most susceptible. Because of their lack of education and literacy, children and younger generations from the developing continents are the most vulnerable to the messages transmitted by the imperialist media (Nkrumah, 1965). Different radio stations and newspapers (mostly American or American-influenced) also have an interconnected network that expands to almost every corner of the world. Their work is to propagate imperialist and capitalist statements so that they permeate in foreign societies, without them noticing, with the hopes of turning them into valuable allies of the western forces (Nkrumah, 1965).

Fortunately, not everything is lost, there is still room for changes in the good direction. History has demonstrated that "the budding future is always stronger than the withering past." (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 42) Some major revolutions like The American Revolution of 1776, The Russian Revolution during the period of Intervention, and other

acts of counter-colonialism were predicted to fail yet they succeeded. For other revolutionary movements like those in Congo or Vietnam for example, people are optimistic about them and believe victory is possible. Something similar happens in other Asian countries, in Latin America and in Africa, where the natives are not willing to be dragged around by an invisible hand. All these victories have been reached thanks to cooperation and organization. Unity is the best weapon of the poor countries to counter imperialism, it "is the first requisite for destroying neo-colonialism." (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 45)

#### **4.1 Dangers of current colonialist and imperialist mentalities.**

The presence of neo-imperialism brings with it a lot of threats. First is the clear disproportionate imbalance among the world economies. The fact that global superpowers still exploit smaller countries leaves a depressing view of the future, a future quite probably filled with wars and conflicts generated from the resource exploitation and economic disequilibrium. Although in the short run it has proven beneficial for the imperialist nations, it is in the long run that it will turn catastrophic (Nkrumah, 1965). If neo-imperialism continues, it will make the developing countries incapable of creating a market that allows them to support their own industrialization. It will also make them unable to stand up against the oppressing trading circumstances imposed by the developed countries, thus transforming the poor countries into marionettes which only purpose will be to produce and serve their masters (Nkrumah, 1965). Once the exploited states reach this state of chaos and powerlessness, revolt and internal disputes become inevitable. Then, it is the neo-imperialist overlord that supplies the military funds necessary for such disputes to be over, but that end is rarely reached. More often than not, supplying military funds to a country immersed in a civil war or revolution will only make it escalate, to the point of completely submerging the affected country into social misery and ruin. Furthermore, part of those military supplies have a great chance of ending up in the hands of the enemy, making that military aid self-destructive (Nkrumah, 1965).

Nowhere has neo-imperialism proved to be an ultimately successful change to a country. What it has proven is the devastation of entire countries and their economies due to greedy foreign management. For example, the investment made by multinational corporations in search for cheap labour and raw materials, only accomplishes the enrichment of a few selected individuals in the poor countries while causing irreversible humanitarian and environmental damage to their populations. Generally, countries under the influence of imperialism are rich and full of resources, but they are oppressed and robbed by the global superpowers, thus restricting access to advanced production techniques that would improve the poor countries' economies (Taleb, 2020).

An interesting point made by Taleb (2020), is that there may be an over-accusation of the situation of less developed countries to neo-imperialism. He argues that this over-

accusation can distract people from problems that are not caused by neo-imperialism but are, in fact, caused by the indecent governance of those countries. Of course, neo-imperialism is responsible for a lot of the issues in poor countries but not for all of them. Some are the consequence of incompetent rulers that let themselves be moved by greed, hatred or fear. Those are the types of issues that should not be attributed to neo-imperialism. Taleb (2020) very well describes this effect in his article “Africa’s Backwardness: The anger of abusive reference to neo-colonialism.”:

Furthermore, this hypothetical threat of the imperialist forces and the call to fight against them are ineffective in a context where, in many cases, the problem is endogenous. When wrongly mobilized in poor countries as is often the case, the abusive or erroneous reference to neo-colonialist intentions can go beyond its objective of strengthening national unity and serve as an easy outlet, thus avoiding the search for the real causes of African underdevelopment, and delaying the solutions to the problems that hamper the building of the national society. (p. 147)

It is true that when we automatically point a finger towards Western nations and blame them for the circumstances of the vulnerable countries, we are missing the fact that the governments of the dominated territories are also partially to blame for their situation. After all they are responsible for the wellbeing of their people and their land and the development of their communities (Taleb, 2020). On the other hand, an important number of governments have taken improper decisions because they did not see a better option available. A reason behind such erroneous choices is that they tend to be desperately needed, short-timed solutions to a problem. The issue lies in the long-term consequences of those solutions that create more problems down the road. This impoverishes even more the affected country and strengthens their dependence on aids from the more financially stable countries.

Overall, neo-imperialism causes the gap between the rich and the poor to widen to unmeasurable proportions. This gives place to social and economic unrest, not only in the imperialized countries but in the most powerful nations as well as they compete to control as much part of the third world as possible. Those hard feelings can easily spark skirmishes and conflicts that can quickly transform into global warfare or into uprisings against the imperialist practitioners. Absolutely no one would benefit from such battles as they would leave every society involved broken and fractured.

Colonialism and neo-imperialism also have their impact on the minds of the colonized. After centuries of continuous oppression (still going on today) colonialism has

left its psychological mark in the form of dehumanizing aspects born from labour extraction and exploitation, justified by racist biological and psychological theories of the natives' character (Okazaki et al., 2008). Some experts say that the victims of colonialism and neo-imperialism internalize self-deprecating thoughts and hold negative attitudes towards members of their own communities (Okazaki et al., 2008). For example, people from Puerto Rico, Mexico and South Africa among other historically colonized countries, reflect attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that try to imitate those of the imperialist nations, while at the same time rejecting their own heritage culture and ethnicity (Okazaki et al., 2008).

## **5. Colonial mentalities: why and how to identify and fight them.**

Education is the basis of progress and the best weapon against colonial mentalities. An educated society is more aware of its situation and is more capable of countering invasive policies, it helps create a sense of unity and develop critical thinking, qualities that are indispensable in the battle against colonialism. In their essay 'Colonialism and Education', Oba F. Nwanosike and Onyije Liverpool Eboh (2011) summarized in a few lines the relevance of education:

Education has been universally accepted as the bedrock and engine of growth. It is a child's passport out of poverty. The highly prized possession that anyone can have is an education. It is the foundation for higher living standards and an important tool in the long term eradication of poverty. Education provides you with knowledge and information which in turn brings about desirable changes in the way you think, feel and act. The importance of education cannot be over-emphasized. (p. 44)

A detail about education is that originally, it was one of the means used by colonial powers to subjugate the native population of a country. Its intention was to demoralize the natives and made them think that they were inherently inferior to the British, who would then take advantage of them in order to expand their empire and generate more profit (Nwanosike, O. F. & Onyije, L. E., 2011). This technique did not function as the British expected and eventually, most of the colonized nations used the education provided by the British to expel the invaders and regain their lands back.

National identity is also a shield against imperialism. Reinforcing the cultural identity of a country makes it more united and more capable of defending itself from foreign forces. By opposing the ideological conceptions of 'center' and 'periphery' that



the colonial power tries to impose on the targeted country, a nation can resist the mental manipulation that attempts to demoralize and lessen the colonized people. Once the citizens of a country withstand the psychological attacks from the enemy, they are already victorious. Referring to the formerly colonized countries now independent, Kevin V. Mulcahy (2015, p. 2) says this about the importance of cultural identity: “The nation-building project for the newly independent is the creation of an authentic culture to replace that imposed by the colonial power. [...] For the decolonized, a policy of cultural reclamation is a necessary complement to political reconstruction.”

Colonialism has had destructive effects on the environment and the people but also on their culture. Formerly colonized countries should implement new policies that define a sense of national identity and that restore national culture in order to combat the impact of colonialism and neo-imperialism. This is often made in two ways, the first is to oppose to the culture imposed by the colonial power, and the second is the creation of a new national narrative that honours the historical past of the nation (Mulcahy, 2015). Along with global competitiveness, the protection of the native language(s) and the preservation of the historical heritage are also needed for the foundation of the national cultural identity and countering colonialism (Mulcahy, 2015).

## **6. Conclusion.**

Colonialism, or rather imperialism, is very much alive today. Having evolved into neo-imperialism, it has caused the devastation of the less developed countries in seek of economical profit, political domination and cultural subjugation. For centuries, it has caused irreparable destruction to the global environment, the minds of the colonized and the relations between countries from all over the world. Colonialism and neo-imperialism had had, and continue to have, disastrous effects on the developing countries by impeding their correct development and the even distribution of food, money, technology and more. The western elites, moved by their greed and sense of superiority, use their power to obtain profit from the poorer countries, thus creating a disproportionate misbalance between colonizers and colonized and enlarging the gap between the rich and the poor. They are also partly responsible for the environmental disasters that occur in the subjugated countries, the destruction of fauna and flora, the

extinction of many species of animals and the irreversible pollution of the air and water sources.

Although a priori this uncontrolled exploitation of resources and people is benefitting for the developed countries, it will cause the collapse of uncountable societies in the long run. It creates conflicts within and among nations, either because they are suffering from imperialism themselves or because they compete to conquer and control as many territories as possible. If imperialism persists in any of its forms, it will end up manifesting the need for intense uprisings that will cause civil wars which could even lead to a new world war. Imperialist practices only favour a small percentage of persons while the rest must suffer the consequences. Fortunately, there are many organizations and movements that try to prevent further exploitation of the people and the natural resources, like the Tent Embassy, the #RhodesMustFall movement or Ecocriticism and Ecofeminism, among many other campaigns, groups and individuals that fight for the same goal. Actions against colonialism and imperialism are vital if we want to avoid a climactic disaster and economical and political catastrophes. It is our duty as members of a globalized and interconnected world, to join forces to retaliate the imperialist mentalities before it is too late. This is not a problem for others to solve, we are also part of this, it is also our fight.

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