ETHNIC AND RACIAL STUDIES

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Relational entanglements of coloniality and asylum: British-Somali colonial genealogies and the Glasgow Bajuni campaign

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ABSTRACT
This paper unpacks the ways in multiform colonialities of power, species of colonial power and genealogies of colonial power jostle for dominance at the contemporary UK asylum border. Grounded in the context of the Glasgow Bajuni campaign – an attempt to overturn minoritised Somali asylum seekers' refused "Disputed Nationality" cases – it argues (1) that existing "coloniality of citizenship" literatures can be extended by considering the roles of different "species" of coloniality (such as Protectorate colonialism) in the development of citizenship/migrantising regimes, (2) that "relational entanglements" theorisations should be applied to critiques of bordering/ citizenship processes and that (3) relational entanglements are highly contextually specific and full critiques of bordered injustice must incorporate these specificities in their analysis. Consideration of these critiques in combination, the paper argues, leads to precise identification of the multiple and intersecting injustices suffered by the Bajuni campaigners at the asylum border that would otherwise remain obscured.

Introduction

The ongoing circulation of colonial power in the bordered terrains of the contemporary UK state is increasingly well-documented, especially in relation to the UK's ever-contracting asylum system. Highlighting the cruelty, "slow" and bureaucratic violence, and endemic injustice of the current asylum regime (Mayblin, Wake, and Kazemi 2019), a growing body of evidence has shown how patterns of necropolitical violence, everyday "bordering", racial hierarchicalisation and abjectification, repurpose colonial strategies and continue the

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coercive and expropriative ends of British colonial power first developed in the era of Empire and colonial administration (Danewid 2019; El-Enany 2020; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2018). These findings are complemented by scholarship elsewhere which has unpeeled the colonial mask of citizenship processes, revealing the statuses of "citizen", "subject" and "migrant" as constructs, fabricated by the colonial metropole, and designed to facilitate or restrict access to the resources and location of the colonial centre (Benson 2021; Bhambra 2015; 2017; Karantani 2005).

These advances are significant because they position an analysis colonial power as a central component in the critique of the violence of bordering/migrantising processes at the (former) colonial metropole (Mayblin and Turner 2020). However, they are also open to criticism: first, on the grounds that they tend to track a particular trajectory of colonial power – that is, its circulation through the bordered and migrantising architectures of the state, or, that they focus upon the coloniality of the bordering/citizenship apparatus of the state, within the framework of its development *out of* colonialism. What this means is that there is less space given to consideration for how other distributors – and, indeed, other "species" (Perec 1997) – of colonial power shape the coloniality of power in contemporary bordered/migrantising environments, resulting in the (British) state and its predominant form of colonialism – "colonialism through colonial administration" (Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou 2015) – appearing to be the normative conduits of colonial power. If consideration is given to this space, it therefore inevitably leads to a series of questions to be answered: what, in this context, are other distributors of colonial power, and how do they related to bordering/migrantisation? And what is the relevance of other "species" of colonialism (such as Protectorate colonialism) to their dynamic?

The second critique builds on these foundations and notes that these approaches also tend to leave little space for the messiness of Empire, or for cross-bordered entanglements of power, co-option and complicity. Outwith the context of the asylum border, there are literatures that consider the extent to which colonial power facilitated the "provincialisation", the "creolisation" or the "Southern Othering" of the cultures and societies of the European metropole (Boatcă 2021; Chakrabarty 2000; Demir 2017); might the same not be asked of its bordering and migrantising processes? Might consideration be given to the ways in which the coloniality of bordered/migrantised spaces might be considered *relational*? What multi-locational genealogies of colonial power inform the norms of the asylum border? What systems of Othering or classification might have been co-opted from former colonies into the systems of the metropole? How do they contribute to the apparatus of the bordering/migrantising regimes?

To address these questions, I interweave theorisations of the "coloniality of power" and (post)coloniser border environments (Quijano 2000), with a close

analysis of the conditions experienced by a grassroots asylum campaign operating in Glasgow (UK) between 2013 and 2017 – the Glasgow Bajuni Campaign. This campaign was made up of a small group of asylum-seeking Somali-Bajuni men, an identity which refers to their south Somali origins and ethnic minority and "outcaste" status (Allen 2008; Mire 2020; Nurse 2013). The membership of the group fluctuated over time, but ranged between five and nine core participants. The paper is grounded in analysis of the campaign, and places the campaigners' own critiques of ethnic and bordered violence in dialogue with sociohistorical critiques of colonial power in Somalia and the UK.

Methods overview and statement of ethics

This latter element of the paper is drawn from ethnographic, participatory research with the campaigners. Undertaken as part of a wider research with Somali-Scots groups (Hill 2017), this paper builds on fieldwork I conducted with the Glasgow Bajuni Campaign between 2013 and 2017. During this period, I worked with the campaign in various capacities, including as a participatory observer of their day-to-day activities, a participant in their campaign, and as logistical support.

Working with the campaign presented a series of methodological and ethical challenges. First, with live asylum cases, living in precarious environments, and vulnerable to detention or deportation, the campaigners were a highly vulnerable group. Hugman, Pittaway, and Bartolomei (2011) have argued that research undertaken with vulnerable social groups must actively consider how research practices may enhance or create situations of harm of violence for participants both within and outside research settings. As appeal-rights-exhausted asylum seekers, the campaigners were also continually subject to violent bureaucratic procedures such as immigration interviews and applications (Bhatia 2015; Griffiths 2012), actions that are arguably reproduced by ethnographic fieldwork methods (Phipps 2013). In addition, the campaign was particularly concerned that their work would be viewed unfavourably by the Home Office, and have serious consequences for their lives (Hill 2017). These concerns therefore called for methodologies which did not simply anonymise data, but in some circumstances, did not directly record it. To undertake the research, we therefore worked together to establish a research ethics that was tailored to the campaigners' situation. We agreed upon a hybrid of participatory research and ethnographic participant observation, which allowed for methodological flexibility in the uncertain and changeable environment of appeal-rights-exhausted status. Based on this approach, this paper is therefore informed by (1) indirectly recorded, informal ethnographic interviews, (2) coded fieldnotes and observations and (3) anonymised, public blog articles written by the campaigners and (4) anonymised

documents related to the campaigners' asylum cases. Once collated, the data were coded against key themes identified by the campaigners as particularly pertinent to their cases (including "identity", "injustice" and "voice"), and then subjected to a secondary, detailed analysis by the researcher to identify the patterns and processes contributing to the campaigners' situations. Ethics approval for this fieldwork was granted by the School of Social Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in 2013. Whilst campaigners' ethnicity (Bajuni) and location (Glasgow) has not been altered, all other information about the campaigners has been anonymised and identifying details removed.

Contextualising the Glasgow Bajuni Campaign

Run between 2013 and 2017 by a small collective of young men, the Glasgow Bajuni Campaign sought to bring attention to their own going struggle with the UK Home Office to have their asylum claims recognised and accepted. Whilst the campaigners had each arrived in Glasgow through different routes and in different circumstances, they shared the experience that their asylum applications had been refused by immigration officials on the grounds of "Disputed Nationality" – a ruling which purported to pass judgement on their nationality (Somali), but which was also related to a judgement on their ethnicity (Bajuni).

"Somali-Bajuni" refers to an identity of a group historically marginalised from majority Somali social infrastructure. It is an identity claimed by the residents of the archipelago and surrounding coastline of the Bajuni Islands at the southern-most point of contemporary Somalia (Allen 2008; Nurse 2013). Bajuni ethnicity (but not Somali nationality) is also claimed by some residents of North Kenyan coastal settlements (ibid). Somali-Bajuni people are frequently identified as one of several "minority" Somali groups whose ethnic origins are not associated with hegemonic, Somali patrilineal infrastructures – an ethnicised, racialised and classed hierarchical system known as qabil ("clan") (Kapteijns 2004; Kusow 2004). Located outwith this hierarchy, and produced as racialised Others (Cassanelli 1988; Eno and Kusow 2014, 92), Bajuni people might be understood as what Mire terms "outcaste" (Mire 2020). There is also a more recent history of Bajuni people being associated with "Somali Bantu" identity, which, as Catherine Besteman has traced, is a term developed by international aid organisations in the aftermath of the civil war to describe a common experience of persecution across ethnically diverse Somali "outcaste" groups (Besteman 2012).

In Glasgow, and at the time of research, Country Guidance indicated that as an ethnic minority at risk of persecution in Somalia, Somali-Bajuni people were eligible for asylum in the UK (Allen 2013). This meant that Somali-Bajuni asylum applicants would be considered eligible for asylum on the basis of their national and ethnic identity, and the provision of evidence to support

their claims (Campbell 2012). However, though each of the campaigners had submitted evidence to support their claim to Somali-Bajuni identity in each of the campaigners' cases, immigration judges disputed their claims, and found that applicants were either "not Somali", or "not Bajuni", or neither Somali nor Bajuni, thereby precluding their asylum applications on either or both ethnic and national grounds (Hill, Nic Crath, and Clopot 2018).

Following the initial refusal of their cases, the campaigners had appealed against their decisions. However, at the time of research, all had reached the stage at which the Home Office considered them "Appeal Rights Exhausted", a status which, unless the applicant is able to produce "Fresh Evidence" to dispute the refusal, is the final stage of the refusal process (Craig 2012). As the campaigners were unable to provide any further evidence to support their cases, this status resulted in the withdrawal of their access to public funds, including asylum accommodation. With (then) access to a maximum of £37.50 on which to live, the campaigners were made destitute, forced to live on friends' sofas, in homeless shelters, or in perpetual fear that they would evicted from the accommodation in which they were living. On the campaign's blog, 18-year old Mohamed described his situation:

> I don't have any support for the moment, it's been 5 months now since Home Office stop supporting me. Since then, I end up being a beggar to the people and different Churches but now I am fed up with this situation. I think it is better for me to be killed by Al-Shabaab and those who used to torturing us before, back home there than just staying here and killed softly by hunger in the country which believe itself that have and support Human Rights. (Bajuni Campaign 2014)

Despite Mohamed's desire for his situation to cease, leaving the UK was also an option unavailable to the campaigners. Though the Home Office had attempted to "return" the campaigners to their "countries of origin", when approached, the countries identified (including Tanzania and Kenya) stated that they did not recognise the campaigners as their nationals (an outcome unsurprising to the Somali campaigners) (Fieldnotes: Glasgow, 2015). As a result, and in an utterly Kafkaesque situation, "removal" orders on the campaigners' cases were in perpetual, suspended motion, halted by the Home Office in acknowledgement that the (erroneous) nominated-countries of "return" did not recognise the campaigners as their nationals, even as it continued to insist in its communication with the campaigners that it believed them to be Kenyan or Tanzanian (Fieldnotes: Glasgow, 2015)

Unpacking colonial power and the Bajuni campaigners' asylum cases

The situation in which the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners were therefore left by the decision-making processes of the Home Office was therefore both

desperate and cruel. The combination of the day-to-day bureaucratic violence of the asylum system and the specific illogicalities of Home Office responses to their cases proved a particularly potent one, and made for cases which presented as particularly complex and messy, with little scope for resolution. However, it is nevertheless possible to trace a series of distinct patterns of violence that run across their experiences. The first of these are the injustices directly related to the UK's asylum regime which symbolically and socially pushed the campaigners to the edges – and out – of society. Whilst a number of literatures offer incisive critiques and explanatory frameworks for this collection of violences, including work on "everyday bordering" (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2018), the thread that has most effectively provided a line of connection between these critiques, and provided a targeted criticism of the biopolitical strategies at hand is that which includes the framing of bordered violence as a contemporary iteration of colonial power (see El-Enany 2020; Mayblin and Turner 2020).

Appeal rights exhaustion and the coloniality of the asylum border

This work has amassed a body of evidence (Bhatia 2015; Canning 2019; Farmer 2017; Griffiths 2012; Mayblin 2017) which documents how the UK's asylum system reproduces strategies of domination, population management and population erasure associated with (former) iterations of British colonial power. Certainly, for the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners, it is possible to make the case that, in their experiences of threatened and actual homelessness, the removal of the most basic forms of state support, enforced destitution and food poverty, the constant spectre of (possible) deportation, the atmosphere of surveillance propagated by daily or weekly Home Office "sign-in" demands, colonial-era methods of biopolitical control are (re)deployed as contemporary asylum measures. As in former-colonial administrations, these measures are disciplinary, and extractive, controlling who has access to the resources and protections of the (imperial) state, and punishing those "non-citizens" who have gained simulacra of access (El-Enany 2020; Hill, Meer, and Peace 2021). Indeed, and to quote Lucy Mayblin's (2017, 15) excellent work on the topic, these conditions must also be viewed as "technologies – [as …] methods of containment and restriction – [which] follow the very same pattern of mobility and immobility that began in the colonial period".

The litany of colonially-inflected strategies of containment, coercion and threatened expulsion therefore dispels any lingering impression of a *post*-colonial state, and highlights that the UK's asylum border is maintained through the reproduction and repurposing of well-worn strategies of colonial power. Meanwhile, scholarship on the "coloniality of power" places these processes within the context of a much wider symbolic, social and political colonial economy (see Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou 2015; Maldonaldo-Torres

2007). These theorisations map how colonial power continues to operate outwith the nominal "era of [European] colonialism", or "colonialism through colonial administration" (Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou 2015, 641), so that whilst critics are unlikely to find the comprehensive infrastructures of *colonialism* in place at the contemporary metropole, they are likely to find evidence of the operation of the "coloniality of power". This term, coined by decolonial theorist Anibal Quijano (2000), refers to "long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism" that include a global web of multiscalar power structures that are "still informed by racist/sexist colonial ideologies/discourses", which inflect "culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production" (Maldonaldo-Torres 2007, 243). It is useful in the context of the campaigners' experiences because it indicates that the interactions detailed above are not isolated instances of colonial violence by a cruel metropole, but are part of a long-established paradigm of colonial power, which runs its own racialised, political, social and symbolic economy of inclusion/expulsion, belonging/exile, life/death, which is deeply embedded in the crevices of the contemporary British state, and which adapts to its changing architectures of domination and rule.

In this context, the campaigners' Appeal Rights Exhausted status can be read as the embodiment and consequence of a the coloniality of power in the contemporary bordered terrain of the asylum system. Indeed, Mayblin, Wake, and Kazemi (2019, 5), drawing on Nixon (2011) argue that the status of "Appeal Rights Exhausted" is a tactic that argue deploys "slow violence", or, "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight [. . .] an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all". This form of violence, they suggest, materialises particularly in the conditions of Appeal Rights Exhaustion, in which the erosion of rights and opportunity occurs through "everyday" acts of injustice, inequalities and institutional ineptitude that accumulate over time, and provides the state with the most banal of tools through which it can exert total control over the "lives and (potential) deaths" of its most minoritised subjects in a way that (re)produces the necropolitical conditions of the settler colony in the contemporary metropole (Mbembe 2001). For the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners, the status inserted their lives into a perpetually suspended state of "necropolitical" being: Appeal-Rights-Exhausted, but not "deportable", neither able to freely live in Scotland, nor able to leave; deprived of the "right to live" and "right to die" (Mbembe 2001).

The coloniality of citizenship in Somali-Bajuni disputed nationality cases

The above analysis of the Bajuni campaigners' Appeal Rights Exhausted status, alongside the "slow violence" of their experience effectively maps

how the coloniality of power shapes their treatment by and at the asylum border. However, this analysis is only a partial one, and deals with but one of the facets of their case. What compounds the violence of the campaigners' cases is the tribunal judgement that results in their Appeal Rights Exhaustion – and specifically the judgement that renders their applications *Disputed Nationality* cases, a judgement that presented different difficulties for the campaigners, not in the least because it participated in subject-based and phenomenological violences which denied the campaigners' ethnic and national identity claims. Whilst it therefore undoubtedly was entangled in the coloniality of *bordering,* for the very fact that it also related to identity, origins and citizenship, the "Disputed Nationality" judgement also brought the campaigners' cases into the orbit of another "specie" (Perec 1997) of coloniality – the "coloniality of *citizenship"*.

Theorisations of the "coloniality of citizenship" refer to the mechanisms through which coloniality has shaped the extension/retraction of rights to the colonial metropole over time. Grounded in foundational work by Paul (1997), Karantani (2005) and Bhambra (2015; 2017), this framework identifies the roots of the coloniality of citizenship in the era of colonial administration, and in its immediate aftermath. For instance, Bhambra (2017) has mapped how, as the British state faced increasing challenge by the people it had colonised, it began to deploy strategies to restrict the claims of the residents of its colonies to British subjecthood or citizenship. This development was in part predicated on a colonial logic of expropriation, which sought to prevent colonial subjects from accessing the colonial wealth horded at the "imperial centre" (El-Enany 2020), but was also informed by the logic of the "racial state", which, at the prospect of "colonial subjects" gaining unfettered access to the colonial centre (and its stolen wealth), fermented a "moral panic" within the white political imaginary to curtail and restrict movement from (selected) colonies (see also Bhambra 2017). What resulted, through a long-running series of legislative acts, was the dilution, denial or removal of potential metropolitan rights from former colonial subjects, a process which enabled the British state to recategorise formerly colonised populations – "populations that would, historically, have been part of the body politic", that is, as citizens or subjects' – as "migrants" (Bhambra 2017, 402). This process is what Tudor (2018) has termed "migrantisation" – the act of "making migrants" of former colonial subjects with putative citizenship or subjecthood rights.

Where these processes initially occurred in the context of Empire and its aftermath, they are also present in the way the contemporary British state manages claimsmaking potential on the metropole. This has been evidenced in a particularly high-profile manner by the Windrush Scandal, in which citizens of former British Caribbean colonies have been routinely denied their rights to the British state (Slaven 2022), and more discreetly in other contexts,

such as Hong Kong, in which the gradual erosion of British Citizenship rights for former colonial subjects has transformed citizens into migrants within their own lifetimes (Benson 2021). These patterns of citizenship/subjecthood withdrawal are relevant in the context of the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' cases too, since Somalia was also subject to colonial administration. However, in the examples above, patterns of "migrantisation" are tied (a) to frameworks of settler colonialism, in which subjects of British colonial administration were considered the administrative responsibility of the British Empire (Hayman 2018), and (b) to the operation of one European power in a single territory. As neither of these are the case for Somalia, it is necessary to consider their distinctive impact on the "migrantising" processes to which Somali citizens were subject, and their ongoing implications today.

The coloniality of (British) citizenship and Somalia

During the colonial era, the Horn of Africa, including the territories that today are part of the Republic of Somalia, was divided between several European powers – in the north, British-administered British Somaliland, and in the south, Italian-ruled Italian Somaliland (McPherson-Smith 2021). Italian Somaliland, in which the Bajuni territories are located, was under Italian rule between 1889-1941, in which Italian colonisers operated a system of "racism and direct rule", including plantation slavery (Cassanelli 1988; Eno 2008; Tripodi 1999, 5). Between 1941 and 1950, Italian Somaliland was placed under British military administration until it became a UN trusteeship under Italian administration between 1950 and 1960. In the meantime, the northern Somali regions were administrated as a British Protectorate between 1887 and 1960, falling under a system of "indirect" and "informal" colonial administration (Hayman 2018), which "recruited" and "co-opted" local representatives to carry out administrative tasks in the service of Empire (Kapteijns 2004). In 1960, British Somaliland gained independence from its colonisers five days prior to Italian Somaliland, when both territories were unified to form the contemporary Republic.

As, during the colonial era, Somalia was divided between two European powers, and subject to two forms of colonial power (settler and Protectorate colonialism), colonial "migrantising" processes therefore present as distinctive from other genealogies of the coloniality of citizenship. First, in the southern Somali regions (in which the Bajuni Islands are located), Somali people would historically been considered Italian – not British – imperial subjects, and subject to the settler colonialism and direct administration of the Italian Empire. However, this status was nevertheless rescinded in the early 1900s as Mussolini's fascist government gained power and sought to remove racially minoritised people from the extended Italian imperial body politic (Scalvedi 2020), "making migrants" (Tudor 2018) of former subjects.

Second, in the northern Somali regions, British Protectoratism extended British colonial interests into the territories, whilst (and in contrast to the settler colonial model) absorbing minimal administrative responsibility for the region, for which it held local (Somali) power bases responsible. This had consequences for Somali colonial subjecthood rights, as British Protectoratism entitled residents only to British "Protected Person Status", a status which bequeathed the informal extension of British government "protection" to the holder – a diluted status compared to that initially held by British colonial subjects elsewhere.

These distinct colonial genealogies therefore positioned southern and northern Somalis in different colonial relationships to the (British) state. For southern Somalis, as *Italian "*subjects of Empire", there was very or precedent for claimsmaking on the British state. In this first genealogy of the coloniality of citizenship, Southern Somalis were thus "made migrant" by Italian colonialism, and maintained as such by the British. For northern Somalis, the "specie" of British Protectorate colonialism structurally maintained distance between Somali residents and the British colonial state. Here, then, it is possible to make the case that British-colonial citizenship processes in northern Somalia did not as much "make migrants" of Somali nationals as it did deliberately "maintain migrant" statuses.

Of course, in the contemporary settings in which the Bajuni campaigners are located, these distinct colonial citizenship genealogies are almost entirely obscured, the result in part of the "unification" of the Somali territories in 1960s, which enabled the British state to position the "maintained migrant" status as its lowest common denominator. However, unpacking these parallel genealogies is generative on several counts. First, it makes clear that the route through which the campaigners have sought to make claims on the UK state – the pathway of asylum – and their refusal, is neither inevitable nor normative, but rather is the long end result of a web of colonialities of citizenships that involves two European colonial powers (Italy and the UK), two forms of colonialism (settler and Protectorate), their inscription on two different Somali sites (Northern and Southern), and their interpretation by two (former) colonial metropoles, which accumulatively participate in the "multilateral project of the regional containment" of formerly colonised citizens by former-colonisers (Achiume 2019). Second, and with a focus specifically on British state responses to Somali nationals, it arguably reveals quite a high degree of continuity insofar as, 50 years after "decolonisation" in Somalia, the way in which the British state positions Somali nationals in relation to itself – i.e. as "always migrant" – has not substantially changed. This can be read as a strategic precedent that is predicated on British colonial habits in Somalia, and inflected with the logic of Protectoratism which habitually reduced Somali claims to the colonial centre through strategies of administrative distancing.

In this context, the state's assessment of the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' cases as Disputed Nationality can be read as a strategy that follows the distancing logics of the Protectorate colonialities of citizenship to "maintain" the Bajuni campaigners as "migrants" to the (former) colonial metropole. However, for the campaigners, the mobilisation of Disputed Nationality against their asylum claims did more than "distance" them – or "maintain" them as "migrant" – from the British state; rather, it also "migrantised" them from their country of origin. For instance, where previously the British state worked to "maintain migrant" status of Somali subjects by diluting and/or denying their *British* connections through "distancing" strategies, here it denies their *Somali* connections. By effectively depriving the campaigners of their Somali identity, the Disputed Nationality judgement thus erases the contextual foundations of their cases, and with it, any historical connections to the European metropole, and any subsequent genealogies of claimsmaking capacity. It also has an affective impact, since it is not only the deprivation of a bureaucratic asset, but the denial of an identity and a personal history. The campaigners felt this denial of their identity as a double loss, which legally and symbolically distanced them from the countries from which they had travelled and to which they had arrived.

Here, then, it is possible to make the case that for the Bajuni campaigners' asylum applications, the Disputed Nationality judgement is not only inflected with British-Somali colonial genealogies of Protectorate-influenced "distancing" strategies that encourage the state to "maintain" the campaigners as "migrant", but also that it builds upon these foundations to deprive the campaigners of other forms of citizenship. This is a strategy that is not without precedent within contemporary UK border terrains; for instance, Naqvi (2021) details the operation of the coloniality of citizenship in the Shamima Begum case, in which the state's decision to deprive Ms Begum of her citizenship – in this case, her British citizenship – destroyed the foundations of her claimsmaking on the British state. However, where in Ms Begum's case, the British state moved against a British national, in the Bajuni campaigners' cases, it felt entitled to move against Somali nationals, the long-running genealogies of Somali-British colonialities of citizenship making a habit of cast (e)ing out former colonial subjects, over whom it has no formal reach in contemporary settings.

Relational entanglements of British-Somali coloniality and the Glasgow Bajuni campaign

One of the features that comes through particularly strongly in the above analysis is the importance of contextual specificity in the analysis of the coloniality of bordering and citizenship in operation at the UK asylum border. In the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' cases the coloniality of power is not only

revealed as operating through the generalised reproduction of colonial strategies of "(b)ordering" and citizenship at the metropole (El-Enany 2020), but as incorporating highly contextualised patterns of the coloniality of power, as they materialise in Somali-British colonial genealogies. Moreover, this analysis highlights, the campaigners' experiences are not only the result of operation of the coloniality of power at/by the metropole, but also the result of the operation of colonial power *in the Somali context,* and the integration of *this* genealogy into the bordering and citizenship regimes of the contemporary metropole. In other words, the analysis highlights how the colonialities of power in operation in the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' cases are related across the contexts in which they occur, and are therefore relational. As such, the paper has need to consult an additional body of scholarship.

"Creolisation" and migration to the metropole

Located within the fields of post- anti- and decolonial theory, theorisations including "Creolisation" (Boatcă 2021), "Provincialisation" (Chakrabarty 2000), and the "Southern Othering of the Global North" (Demir 2017) have tackled the topic of relational connections between (former) sites of colonial power and former sites of colonisation. This scholarship critiques other bodies of work for writing of the operation of colonial power from the perspective of the dominant – or to paraphrase Boatcă, thinking from [conditions of] colonialism, rather than (to now directly quote Boatcă (2021, 393)), "thinking through and with invisibilised, peripheral formations, or thinking from coloniality". What this results in, this scholarship argues, is the "valorisation" of the (former) colonial nation state, and the positioning of the European metropole solely as the progenitor of colonial power, a heroic, self-contained, self-governing entity, which remains "unmarked" in and by the maelstrom of coloniality. In this context, the "bordering" and "migrantisation" of former colonial subjects is presented as "inevitable", since it delineates those touched by colonial power from those who are not.

"Relational" scholarship argues that the conceptualisation of the heroic and "unmarked" (former) colonial metropole is problematic on two key counts. First, it obscures interactions of culture, violence and power that create entangled societies in both (former) metropoles and former colonies. Here, and drawing on the colonial histories of the Caribbean, Boatcă (2021) mobilises the concept of "creolisation", which articulates how the multidirectional flow of people, culture, resources and power between (former) metropoles and former colonies fundamentally shaped the subsequent development of society in both sites. This allows for a reconceptualisation of (former) contemporary colonial centres not as a monolithic, valorised and decolonised postcolonial spaces, but rather as "relation[s] of entanglements" (Boatcă 2021, 392), which are "creolised space[s] by virtue of [their]

very entanglements with [formerly colonised] regions" (Boatcă 2021, 392–393). Second, the presentation of the contemporary metropole as detached from the wages of colonial power implies the metropole and former colonies are now divorced from each other by time and distance. However, scholarship argues, they must instead be framed as "structurally linked" (Boatcă 2021, 393) so that developments that occur in one context have the potential to shape the dynamics of the other.

This framework is particularly useful for unpacking the complexities of violence and power in operation in the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' asylum cases. Early in their cases, the campaigners observed a clear connection between the violences they experienced in their Appeal Rights Exhausted status and the patterns of violence, exclusion and dispossession generationally experienced by Bajuni people in Somalia. Writing in their blog, the campaigners adapted an Bajuni aphorism – "we are weak, we are pushed around by governments, we are just fishermen, but this is our land" (Nurse 2013) to their new circumstances: "we didn't ask God to make us Bajunis, but we are happy that we are Bajunis, even if we're […] small in number, but all we ask is to be recognised the way we are and where we are from" (Glasgow Bajuni Campaign 2014). The campaigners' adaptation of the aphorism retains elements of the original in the way that they identify their ethnicity as the cause both of their persecution and of their resolution to stand up to the violences exacted against it. It departs from the original in its identification of the source of violence: in the former (in Somalia), political exploitation and territorial invasion, in the latter, (in the UK) ethnic violence through the denial of their territorial and ethnic origins. In the campaigners' adaptation of the Bajuni aphorism, they therefore identify forms of violence which are distinct, but nevertheless experientially connected: where, in their opinion, their lived experiences exploitation and violence by extremists in Somalia, and the generational trauma of previous systemic violence against Bajuni people – what Mohamed terms the "soft" violence of his previous experiences – both contrast with the "slow" violence of the asylum border, and have points of familiarity in their operation and lived effects.

However, the adaptation implies, it is not only a sense of experiential continuity that connects these two architectures of violence; rather, they identify in the operation of power in both circumstances a point of ideological similarity, whereby both power forms use ethnic frameworks to target a minority group for expropriation, a process, as I discuss further below, which is embedded in Somali and British histories of colonisation and colonial power. Here, then, I might begin to make a case for the way in which colonial power in the campaigners' cases is "creolised". However, this point also has restrictions. Though theorisations of "creolising" processes are generative, they are grounded in the context of Caribbean histories of colonisation and decolonisation, which have social, historical and experiential specificities,

and in which patterns of European colonial domination – exerted through settler and plantation colonialism – are quite distinct from the patterns of colonial domination in the Somali territories, as I detail above. In the distinctive genealogies in which the Bajuni cases are embedded, there is therefore potential for different forms of entanglements to emerge, and for these to function in distinctive ways. Indeed, with their focus on the institutional, bordering and migrantising apparatus of the (former) colonial metropole, the campaigners' insights above point to a slightly different focus upon the relational entanglements of *systems* of rule or domination, that diverge from the focus upon social and cultural entanglements highlighted by "creolising" approaches. Following the campaigners' lead, the paper might therefore ask, how might the "creolisation" of bordering and citizenship infrastructures be theorised? And how might they be theorised without overstepping the contextual constraints of "creolisation"? More specifically, with the campaigners' cases in mind, what about their "Somalification"?

Relational epistemological violence

Another trend that presented itself across the campaigners' "Disputed Nationality" judgements was knowledge-based or epistemological violence, which predominantly materialised in state claims that the campaigners had presented insufficient evidence to support their cases. However, a closer look at these judgements reveals that it was not the case that the campaigners had presented an insufficient *volume* of evidence, but rather that the evidence they presented was not viewed as acceptable knowledge by the state (see Hill, Nic Crath, and Clopot 2018).

For instance, in the absence of identity documents, the Home Office instructed the campaigners to undertake (since discredited) "Language As Determination of Origin" (LADO) tests (see Craig 2012, Campbell 2012), during which applicants' identity claims were assessed against their knowledge of key elements of Bajuni culture: of Kibajuni – the language most frequently spoken by Bajuni people – of Bajuni Island geography, and of everyday Bajuni "culture". However, although the campaigners were able to supply information on each of these elements, they found that the ways in which the Home Office expected them to respond disqualified their evidence. One campaigner's case was dismissed on the grounds that he was unable to quantify geographical distance on the Islands, even though he was innumerate (and therefore unable to describe distance in terms of the metrics required). Another campaigner's case was dismissed on the grounds that he was not able to display sufficient knowledge of Kibajuni, because the court was unable to supply a Kibajuni-speaking assessor, a factor which the tribunal judge somewhat obtusely discounted:

> The appellant said that he was speaking in Kibajuni when he gave evidence before me. I found that to be an unsatisfactory way to proceed. As a Scotsman I can hardly know what language was being spoken. (Tribunal Document, Field-note, Glasgow 2015)

Overall, the campaigners' cases followed a pattern in which the linguistic and cultural "evidence" that they provided through LADO testing was treated as an uncertain indicator of their identity, not because they were unable to supply information, but because they were unable to supply information in the terms required by the tests (see Allen 2013). In other words, the campaigners' asylum refusals were the results of an epistemological clash, in which the knowledge-forms presented by the campaigners to support their cases were not considered to be knowledge-forms at all.

A phenomena with a well-documented colonial history, epistemological violence was mobilised by colonising powers to (a) extract knowledge from the colonies and (b) exert coloniser knowledge forms on the colonised (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Predicated on racist and ethnochauvanist logics, epistemological violence included the denigration of the knowledge-forms held by colonial subjects, the co-option of these knowledge forms by colonising power, and the imposition of coloniser knowledge systems on colonised subjects (Mpfou 2013). In Somalia, as scholarship has highlighted (Samatar 1989), epistemological violence was used by British colonial administrators both to undermine Somali subjecthood, and Somali knowledge forms. Characterising Somali people as "savage" and "superstitious", British colonisers simultaneously denigrated Somali political and knowledge systems, whilst co-opting them in the service of the Protectorate (Aidid 2015a; 2015b; 2015c). As the #CadaanStudies movement highlighted (see Mire 2016), epistemological violence has extended beyond the era of colonial administration in Somalia, into the contemporary production of academic and "expert" knowledge about the region, which has reproduced expropriative, racist representations and infrastructures in the pursuit of epistemological (and other forms of) dominance.

The epistemological violence the campaigners encounter at the border is therefore the product both of (1) contemporary UK border colonialities which transform the production of knowledge into technology of power that "manages" the entry of the Bajuni campaigners to the UK, and (2) of British-colonial/Somali genealogies of epistemic violence, which participate in the ongoing reproduction of Somali people as "savage", un-knowledged, civilisational "threats", and subhuman. The mobilisation of epistemological violence against the Bajuni campaigners' asylum cases is therefore both (1) generalised – caught in the broad sweep of the asylum border in which tropes about the "primitive characters" and "untrustworthiness" of asylum seekers are commonplace (see Griffiths 2012) – and (2) highly contextually specific, mobilising, reproducing and repurposing patterns of

epistemological violence with long histories of being used by the British (colonial) state against Somali people. This not only creates a multi-layered character to the operation of epistemological violence in the campaigners' cases, but also allows the two genealogies of violence to work in sympathy with each other, the objectives of the colonial metropole – the exclusion of racially minoritised (Somali) migrants from the British state – complementing those of the epistemic coloniality – the abjection and exclusion of Somali (Bajuni) people from claims to (British) subjecthood. Finally, these two genealogies are not only complementary, but rather are *relational*, so that the development of specific forms of epistemological violence in one context feeds the parallel development of epistemological violence in the other: characterisations of Somali people as "savage" or "superstitious" used to support immigration judgements that they are "uneducated" or "unreliable" narrators of their asylum claim; the consequence of which – asylum refusal – supports metropolitan/colonial characterisations of Somali people as "untrustworthy", and facilitates their marginalisation.

Somalification and the co-option of ethnicity as a technology of (colonial) power

What this analysis demonstrates particularly well, therefore, is not only the extent to which contextually specific genealogies of (colonial) power inform the bordering/migrantising processes to which Somali people are subject at the (former) colonial metropole, but the extent to which, because they are "structurally relational", they *direct* their trajectories. Here then, and if I adapt Boatcă's (2021) "creolising" concept, patterns of bordering/migrantisation that appear at surface level to follow flattened-out pathways of colonial power, are instead subject to processes of "Somalification"; that is, processes of racial (b)ordering with identifiable and ongoing roots in the genealogy of Somali-British colonial power. Indeed, once these processes are acknowledged, it is possible to distil their operation further, as I unpack in this final example.

Though the patterns of epistemological violence I discuss above had a significant impact on the campaigners, the entanglements of the colonialities of power in their cases were further distinguished by their ethnic minority Somali status – their *Bajuni* identity. Their ethnic minority identity, the campaigners argued, was a key factor in their need to seek asylum, because in Somalia, it positioned them as "marginal" and "minoritised" by some minority ethnic Somalis, and increased the likelihood that they and their homes would be targeted for violence. These claims were supported by academic and "expert" evidence, which noted that ethnic frameworks – and specifically those associated with qabil – "clan" – infrastructures were driving factors in historic and ongoing violence against Somali-Bajuni people (Kusow 2004).

Assessment of the campaigners' claims at the asylum border therefore predominantly focussed on the determination of their minority ethnic identity, understood primarily through the framework of "clan".

The positioning of qabil as the central explanatory frame for social and political fracture in Somalia has a distinctive, Somali-colonial genealogy (Kusow and Eno 2015). The qabil system has pre-colonial Somali origins, and might be understood as a system derived from Somali origin myths which organises and stratifies social status according to familial descent, race, religion, territorial location and occupation. However, though it derives from Somali systems of classification, it has also been shaped by the operation of colonial power in Somalia. Specifically, as Kusow (2004), Kapteijns (2001), and others have argued, British Protectorate colonialism co-opted and technologised exisiting "clan" infrastructures to mobilise existing ethnicity systems to "indirectly" manage Somali subjects. To do this, coloniser-administrators recruited ethnic majority Somalis in positions of power, who had vested interests in maintaining ethnic hierarchies, to do this work (Samatar 1989). As a result, Mire argues, Somali ethnicity systems were co-opted into "colonial visions of the nation state" (Mire 2017, 33), where Somali ethnocentric approaches to social status were inflected with colonial, racist and Orientalist approaches to Somali social relations (see Aidid 2015a; Aidid 2015b). Frameworks which focus on "clan" status, and the position of ethnicity as an "inherent" determining factor in the marginalisation of minority ethnic Somali groups therefore have a complex and entangled Somali-British-colonial genealogy, which, Mire (2017, 48) argues, is strongly invested in the hierarchicalisation of social positions according to ethnicity: "it is important to consider", she notes, "that the construction of the Other allows for a more substantial identity formation of the [hegemonic] Somali. Stories of powerlessness serve to highlight the stories of those who hold power – for both the Somali and the colonial archive".

In UK border administrators' focus on clan and ethnicity as the explanatory factors in the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' asylum claims, there is a case to be made here that "clan" frameworks do not just simply form the contexts against which the campaigners' cases are refused, but rather, that they are directly co-opted by immigration administrators as technologies of the border. For instance, by centring "clan" as the factor on which the campaigners' cases hinge, and by taking an approach to ethnicity that reifies ethnic infrastructures, UK border administrators mobilise Somali-colonial systems of ethnic classification, and reorientate them towards the purpose of border control, repeating a well-worn pattern of co-opting Somali-colonial ethnicity systems "into the colonial vision of the nation-state" (Mire 2017, 33). This facet of the Bajuni campaigners' cases therefore makes visible additional ways in which UK bordering/migrantising processes are "Somalified", first, for the *specie* of colonialism from which it takes its patterns of

power, or, more precisely, for the way in which the co-option of Somali systems of biopolitical management (qabil) by the contemporary UK state not only (re)mobilises the governing strategies of British Protectorate colonialism in Somalia, but also its vision of relations between Somali territories and the British metropole (as always, perpetually detached). Second, "Somalification" also occurs in the ways in which this very implementation of (Protectorate-inspired) coloniality of the border draws on Somali systems of ethnic hierarchicalisation and their ongoing entanglements with colonial power.

Finally, what this analysis makes particularly clear is this process of Somalification is structurally relational in the sense that both (Somali-colonial and British-colonial) systems have mutual interest in each other. There is also a specificity to this relational structure, where patterns of co-option and mutual complicity developed in the genealogy of British Protectorate colonialism in Somalia form the foundations of the contemporary operation of the coloniality of power at the UK border. Thus, in the examples above, each adopt the other's terms, lending weight to the categorisations and positions that the other perpetuates. This directly implicates both systems in ongoing in ethnically-specific processes of social violence in which their vested interests in various species of power are rooted in the (re)production ethnic minority Somali-Bajuni as "marginal" and marginalised. Reflecting on the dynamics of power in his own and his co-campaigners' cases, Mohamed observed:

> Just because they know that Somalis from mainland do not accept us as people from Somali[a], that's why Home Office [are] doing this to us, treating us like animals in the streets without their owners. You know what … I'm so tired with this kind of life … We are human too just like them, so why they doing this to us? (Bajuni Campaign, 2014)

Conclusions

This paper has sought to unpack the ways in which multiple and multiform colonialities of power, species of colonial power, and genealogies of colonial power jostle for influence and dominance at the contemporary UK asylum border. It has worked across established bodies of critique, including the coloniality of bordering the coloniality of citizenship, and theorisations of relational entanglements, not only to demonstrate the respective importance of each critique to complex issues of bordering and migrantisation in the UK asylum system, such as those arising in the Glasgow Bajuni campaign, but also to map how these colonialities and genealogies are coterminous and must be approached in combination rather than isolation.

In this context, it has sought to extend existing scholarship on the coloniality of citizenship by considering (1) how different "species" of colonialism, such as British Protectorate colonialism in Northern Somalia, have shaped

the course of the coloniality of citizenship, and (2) the impact of multiple European colonisers in one location upon the framing – and undoing – of claimsmaking on the contemporary metropole. However, finding that these critiques are limited when "thinking [predominantly] from colonialism" (Boatcă 2021), the paper also turns to theorisations of the "relational entanglements" of colonial power to consider how the messiness and complexity of the colonialities of bordering/citizenship propagates an ongoing, mutually constitutive dynamic between former sites of colonialism, and the colonial metropole. Here, and grounded in the Bajuni campaigners' cases, it finds that the "multilateral containment" (Achiume 2019) of the Global South by the North is informed both by the broad sweep of bordering, citizenship and foreign policymaking, and through the silent co-option of site-specific systems of coloniality, which create "relational entanglements" through systems of bordering/citizenship governance, as well as through culture and social relations. In this context, theorisations of "relational entanglement" are clearly generative; however, here too, the paper makes a case for contextual specificity, and demonstrates how an understanding of the "Somalification" of bordering/citizenship systems leads to precise identification of the multiple and intersecting injustices suffered by the Bajuni campaigners at the asylum border.

This final point, I think, is the crux of this paper. The complexity of the analysis in the pages above perhaps presents itself as something of an academic vanity project. Indeed, I think there is some validity to this critique – after all, the capacity to demonstrate the multiple colonialities of power in operation across British and Somali Bajuni history does very little to advance the Glasgow Bajuni campaigners' prospects in the UK asylum system. However, whilst they may not have practical utility, what these theorisations do achieve is to demonstrate that the campaigners' situations are not "simply" the result of the coloniality of the border, the coloniality of citizenship, epistemological or multisited ethnic violence alone, but that they are so tightly entangled in these processes that the campaigners themselves have very few places to which to turn to alleviate the violences they experience. Moreover, the unpacking of these colonialities enable an unmasking of sorts, so that the presentation of what appears to be a particular form of colonial power at the asylum border, is revealed as the consequence of multiform colonialities and their genealogies, the detailed unveiling of the colonialities of asylum and ethnic violence enabling a full critique of the accumulation of injustices thereafter.

Acknowledgements

of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* for providing a supportive environment across the challenges of maternity leave and precarious academia.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

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