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Decrypting Crypto-Colonialism and unveiling the Mask of Innocence : Switzerland's Covert Colonial Designs and Continuity in Africa.

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Abstract

Switzerland, an example of neutrality and peace, is among Western European countries least associated with colonialism. Switzerland has engineered and promoted a favorable public opinion of itself to the African continent. This article suggests, however, that the history of Switzerland in Africa is much less strange to colonialism than its image. Swiss soldiers, companies and individuals—often with either the explicit or implicit consent of the Swiss authorities—participated in and benefitted from the colonial ventures of European powers in Africa. At the same time, Switzerland pursued its own colonial projects that consisted of profitable trade relations and exporting the Swiss Weltanschauung (world view) tantamount to Western racist pseudo-scientific ontology. Notwithstanding, the Swiss modus operandi, which worked in the shadow of bigger players and combined business with aid and colonialism with humanitarianism, concealed the role of Switzerland in the construction and maintenance of the colonial world order. For the same reason, Swiss colonialism was not targeted by the movement of decolonization, much the same way the metropoles of colonial rule were and thus had the possibility to continue. By projecting coloniality, the colonial matrix of power and postcolonial thought, this paper contributes to the existing intellectual debate on colonial complicity (including racism) of Switzerland. We unearth the mechanism through which Swiss colonialism manifested and the mutated form it has taken in the aftermath of the decolonization process.

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Résumé

La Suisse, un exemple de neutralité et de paix, fait partie des pays d'Europe occidentale les moins associés au colonialisme. La Suisse a su créer et promouvoir une opinion publique favorable à son égard en Afrique. Cet article suggère, cependant, que l'histoire de la Suisse en Afrique est beaucoup moins étrangère au colonialisme qu'elle l'est à son image. Des soldats, des entreprises et des individus suisses – souvent avec le consentement explicite ou implicite des autorités suisses – ont participé aux entreprises coloniales menées par les puissances européennes en Afrique et en ont tiré profit. En même temps, la Suisse a poursuivi ses propres projets coloniaux qui consistaient à établir des relations commerciales profitables et à exporter la "Swiss Weltanschauung" (vision du monde) qui équivaut à l'ontologie pseudo-scientifique raciste occidentale. Néanmoins, le modus operandi suisse, qui fut employée avec succès dans l'ombre des grands acteurs et qui combina le commerce avec l'aide et le colonialisme avec l'humanitarisme, dissimula le rôle de la Suisse dans la construction et le maintien de l'ordre mondial colonial. Pour la même raison, le colonialisme suisse ne fut pas ciblé par le mouvement de décolonisation, à la différence des métropoles du régime colonial, et eut, par conséquent, la possibilité de se poursuivre. En projetant le colonialisme, la matrice coloniale du pouvoir et la pensée postcoloniale,

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cet article contribue au débat intellectuel existant sur la complicité coloniale (y compris le racisme) de la Suisse. Nous mettons au jour le mécanisme par lequel le colonialisme suisse s'est manifesté et la forme mutée qu'il a prise à la suite du processus de décolonisation.

Mots-clés : Crypto-colonialisme, colonialisme sans colonies, colonialité, matrice de puissance coloniale, néocolonialisme, pensée post-coloniale

Introduction

Colonialism is usually understood as the domination and exploitation of one country by another (Evans & Newnham, 1998, p. 10). There are two easily identifiable parties: the colonized and the colonizer. In the colony of occupation, the colonized are in the majority, but was always administered by a foreign power (Lüthi et al., 2016, p. 3). The concept of colonialism tends, therefore, to remain within the limits defined by the borders of the respective colony and metropole. As we argue, however, colonialism should be seen as part of a more complex, multifaceted holistic system that goes beyond the boundaries of the metropoles and their colonies. Coloniality, rather than colonialism, we concur, helps to project the hidden, but in plain sight of Swiss colonial complicity, and as demonstrated in subsequent sections, postcolonial thought is complementary to this effort. The impression of white innocence that generally characterizes Switzerland—never in possession of a colony, "neutral" and generally associated with humanitarian activities, —extricated it from the wrath of decolonization that swept across Africa in the second half of the 20th century. Even more so is the fact that, albeit colonialism might have ended and decolonization was successful in a juridico-political sense, it did not guarantee complete decolonization (Capan, 2016, p. 4). This myth of a postcolonial world has an ambivalent sequel. For those colonial authorities that had formal colonies in Africa, this "mythology of the decolonization of the world" is a continued opportunity to keep non-Europeans under crude Euro-American exploitation and domination (Grosfoguel, 2011). In Nkrumah's conviction, it is exploitation and domination without responsibility (Nkrumah, 1967, p. xi). For those with no formal ties to colonial territories, it is a continuation of "invisible coloniality." Here coloniality transcends classical racism and it still remains the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed (Quijano, 2013, p. 24).

It is our conviction that this form of invisible coloniality radiates a system of "colonialism without colonies" which ultimately manifests as crypto-colonialism; and by projecting coloniality, the colonial matrix of power and postcolonial thought, this paper contributes to the existing intellectual debate on the colonial complicity (including racism) of Switzerland. To do this, the paper is structured into four parts. The first section examines some of the works of scholars on coloniality and the matrix of colonial power. Here we argue that racism and colonial complicity which still punctuate the Swiss society is understood through these frameworks. The second part summons the cannons of postcolonial thoughts to complement coloniality and the matrix of colonial power to discussing modern day internal Swiss racism. While coloniality provides the holistic understanding of the pervasive continuum of the colonial matrix of power which auspiciously captures Swiss colonial complicity, it is the interdisciplinary tenets of postcolonial thought that inspires and provides the intellectual cannons to investigate and appreciate the phenomena of "colonialism without colonies", and specifically crypto-colonialism. Postcolonial counter-narrative to this Swiss exceptionalism within Switzerland itself is provided in this section. Postcolonial studies postulates that from a historical perspective, the present cannot be analyzed without taking colonialism and its lingering effects into consideration. To amplify the position of the authors, the third section dives into Swiss colonial endeavors in Africa, albeit their formal non-possession of colonies. Swiss colonial complicity is explored in this section. It reviews the various ways in which Switzerland was not only involved in the colonial endeavors of other European countries in Africa, but also practiced its own form of colonialism (i.e., crypto-colonialism). The fourth section demonstrates how the global image of Swiss innocence as a colonial outsider, removed Switzerland away from the target list of the decolonization process. The implication, this section notes, is that crypto-colonialism, instead of being swept away by the waves of decolonization, was paradoxically rather given a new impulse by the resulting rearrangement or change in the global political landscape. Switzerland was rather perceived by the new independent states of Africa as a stranger to imperialism, a sympathizer with their cause and a humanitarian actor; a positive image that affords it a convenient position between the former colonies and metropoles. Finally, in the concluding section, a series of questions are raised regarding the continuity of Swiss colonialism.

Crypto-colonialism: coloniality and colonial matrix of power

For a contextualized and comprehensive study of what has been termed "raceless racism", "colonialism without colonies", or crypto-colonialism, all in reference to Switzerland as this paper postulates, coloniality and the colonial matrix of power—as put forward by the Peruvian Sociologist Anibal Quijano and augmented by scholars like Walter Mignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel and Ndlovu-Gatsheni—are espoused with postcolonial thought. These

concepts help to illuminate what we call the "colonial guilt" that has been deliberately dumped into the proverbial bin of history, in what Gandhi calls colonial amnesia. Coloniality and the colonial matrix of power help to understand the various dimensions of long standing domination and exploitation. This resonates with the Black Feminist Sociologist, Patricia Hills Collins and her concept of "vectors of oppression or matrix of domination", albeit its applicability to coloniality or yet, to Kimberle Crenshaws's "intersectionality'. Ndlovu-Gastheni (2013), quoting Maldonado-Torres, wrote that:

> Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday" (p. 38)

In Capan's view, coloniality enables an understanding of the present as a continuation of the colonial forms of domination (Capan, 2016, p. 4). Writing about the same time as Maldonado-Torres and on the same issue of coloniality, the Peruvian Sociologist, Anibal Quijano, remarked that;

> during European colonial world domination, the distribution of work of the entire world capitalist system, between salaried, independent peasants, independent merchants, and slaves and serfs, was organized basically following the same 'racial' lines of global social classification, with all the implications for the processes of nationalization of societies and states, and for the formation of nation-states, citizenship, democracy and so on, around the world (2013, p.25)

This is a profound illustration of the relationship between capitalism and racism, both of which feed into an analysis of the white innocence of Switzerland that often is perceived not to have benefited from the colonial enterprise. In that same vein, he is quick to disambiguate this assertive position when he wrote that "so, coloniality of power is based upon 'racial' social classification of the world population under Eurocentered world power. But coloniality of power is not exhausted in the problem of 'racist' social relations. It pervaded and modulated the basic instances of the Eurocentered capitalist colonial/modern world power to become the cornerstone of this coloniality of power" (Quijano, p. 25). To this position, Grosfoguel (2011) is of the opinion that coloniality represents a "colonial situation of cultural, political, sexual and economic oppression or exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic group by dominant racial/ethnic group in the presence or absence of colonial administrations". This well captures our appreciation of power in the aftermath of politico-juridical independence. Even more telling, is the argument put forward by Grosfoguel (2011), that the novelty to the idea of coloniality of power is the perspective on how *race and racism* have become the organizing principles that structure the multiple hierarchies of the world systems. On this point, there seem to be a striking semblance with postcolonial studies. (Lüthi et al., 2016) noted that the place of race in the rise and sustenance of colonialism cannot be overstated to such an extent that the self-perceived innocent European nations reproduced images that aligned them with the colonial powers than the colonized. The self-perceived colonial outsiders participated in colonial practices through the replication of racist and dehumanizing worldviews which are very demonstrative of the most effective means of colonial power (Lüthi et al., 2016, p. 4).

Post-colonial thought and racism in *raceless* Switzerland

Throughout this analysis it has been established that race and racism are conspicuous principles that structure the multiple hierarchies of the world systems. It therefore makes sense to reconcile this idea with the concept of coloniality of power then ultimately contextualize Swiss white innocence in such discourse. Grosfuguel (2016) explains that

> coloniality of power is the entanglement of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies ("heterarchies") of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures.

Relatedly, within the Swiss public space there seems to be a lingering production of implicitly racially coded, spatio affective borders that construct subjects marked by racial difference as not belonging to, or as threats towards European nation-states (Michel, 2016, p. 400). There is a consciously deployed narrative of an under articulated history of colonial racialized discourses. In a more profound manner, Michel maintained that

Swiss postcolonial politics privilege a conviction of the absence of a colonial past and the denial of the presence of a racial dichotomy

presence of racial dichotomy (Michel, 2016). Take for instance, in September 2001, when a member of the official Swiss delegation and Minister for Human Rights at the Swiss Mission to the UN, Jean Daniel Vigny in Geneva supposedly said that "Switzerland has nothing to do with slavery, slave trade and colonialism" (Purtschert, 2011, p. 173). This subtlety of Swiss racism is even what makes it more dangerous. The discursive narrative of *Swissnes* as external to (post-) colonial history and racism conceives that country as a post racial state. The dire implication of this White Swiss innocence, however is that colonial complicity, race and racism are invisible, inaudible and as much as possible absent in the political and cultural milieu of Switzerland (emphasis added, El-Tayeb, 2011). As Michel (2016) contended, this denial facilitates the production and reproduction of *raceless* racism. It also amplifies the imperativeness of coloniality which survives colonialism and the colonial matrix of power that reveals the plethora of ways in which domination and exploitation manifest.

While coloniality brings to bear the continuing reproduction of a racially coded Swiss (as part of the vectors of power and domination), the theoretical tenets of postcolonial thought or critique, provides resistance to the mystifying amnesia of colonialism and the colonial aftermath (Gandhi, 2019, p. 4). The will to forget, as remarked by Gandhi (2019) has a historical course and it is motivated by political and cultural factors. The response of post-colonial thought is to revisit, remember and actually bring to light the colonial past. It questions Euro-Atlantic as the locus of enunciation that churns dominant narratives, and calls for developing tolerance for contradiction especially those produced elsewhere or other universals (Capan, 2016, p. 8). Postcolonial thought has embedded in its epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2013, p.2) as well as epistemic privilege (Go, 2016), subaltern knowledge production or what Grosfuguel (2011) calls "body politics of knowledge". Scholars of coloniality have unequivocally reiterated the elusiveness of independence as a political product of the decolonization process; and that is why as a concept, coloniality is holistic and a continuing process that shows how forms of domination and exploitation manifest through the colonial matrix of power.

What postcolonial studies focuses on are the forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world in what Grosfuguel (2011) terms global coloniality. According to Young (2016, p. 16), these coercive means of domination include race, gender, nationalism, class and ethnicities which he clusters as the politics of anti-colonialism and neocolonialism. As demonstrated in subsequent paragraphs, Swiss innocence is characterized by either one of these politics of neocolonialism or broadly speaking submerged into the colonial vectors of oppression, yet at the same time demystifying this elusive impression of innocence is in itself a postcolonial architecture, whether in the colonial or postcolonial timeframe. In a more instructive manner, Cabral (1969) argues that the pursuit of liberation after the achievement of independence (Young, 2016) is the objective of postcolonial studies or critique; and liberation in this context as we argue is augmented to include disobedience of the epistemic privilege of the global north, whose discursive narrative is anything but the *universal* truth. Postcolonial studies has recalibrated the framework that addresses the tenacity of colonial structures and power relations in countries that have a self –perception of never been formal colonial powers and this re-orientation puts lustre on how both colonial and postcolonial constellation are negotiated, reproduced and re-encoded and how they are related to contemporary myriad manifestations of racism (Lüthi et al., 2016, p. 2).The term colonial complicity[1] (developed by a group of postcolonial feminist researchers) is testimony to postcolonial critique's valorization of approaches to expose participation in hegemonic western discourse and their universalistic modes of thought and dominance.

Importantly, while coloniality provides the holistic understanding of the pervasive continuum of the colonial matrix of power, –which auspiciously captures Swiss colonial complicity, – it is the interdisciplinary tenets of postcolonial thought that inspires and provides the intellectual cannons to investigate and appreciate the phenomena of "colonialism without colonies". Postcolonial studies has inspired terms related to "colonialism without colonies" which include colonial outsider[2], colonial exceptionalism[3], and contingent colonialism[4]. When Purtschert et al. (2016, p. 8) used the term "colonialism without colonies", they insisted that it represented two main ideas. In one breadth, it is the idea that as far as cultural, economic and epistemic aspects of colonialism

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[1] The term as was originally used by Ulla Vuorela for Finland has more to do with participation in the creation of colonial knowledge and imaginary. (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p.8). As Purtschert et al (2015) stated through postcolonial lens, the term complicity implies participation in hegemonic western discourses and their universalistic modes of thought and practices of dominance (p.4) and Ulla Vuorela (2009) also adds that especially for countries outside western centres, complicity presents a means of approaching the ideal set by these centres of powers and a desire to 'belong. For the purpose of this paper however, colonial complicity refers to any form of cooperation with the European powers regarding their colonial endeavors.

[2] Purtschert et al. (2016)

[3] Loftsdóttir, & Jensen (2016)

[4] Arnold (2013)

are concerned, there is a conspicuous striking continuity between the former traditional colonial powers and those that have not been officially in charge of colonies. Just as countries that were not formally colonized were, notwithstanding, affected by colonialism (e.g., Liberia), European countries that never formally possessed colonies also benefitted from, and participated in, colonialism in different ways (Lüthi, et al., 2016, p. 1). This type of involvement is sometimes called marginal, secondary or complicit colonialism (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015), which points to an overall minor role compared to the one played by the metropoles. Consequently, the study of this kind of colonialism might be—and generally is—considered as less important. The process of decolonization, however, changed the picture. In another breadth, the term's usefulness lies in the fact that it helps to investigate the peculiarities of nations that have built their self-perception on the idea of having been a 'colonial outsider. Decolonization` took the form of struggles for political independence of colonies from their respective metropoles rather than of a movement against coloniality. It is for the same reason that European countries involved in colonialism, but without colonies were, therefore, not directly targeted nor necessarily affected by decolonization. On the contrary, it sometimes gave them the opportunity to increase their influence where the former metropoles' control was cut back (Widmer, 2017, p. 3).

The manifestations of this kind of colonialism (colonialism without colonies) engenders the phenomena of crypto-colonialism. It suffices to mention that the preexisting informal, indirect and less visible forms of colonialism—Randeria (2015) calls *crypto-colonialism*—practiced by secondary colonial actors, survived decolonization and constitute colonialism without colonies in practice. Instructively, in the aftermath of decolonization, it is precisely this sort of colonialism that became mainstream (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p.9) as part of the structural hierarchies or the colonial matrix of power. Nkrumah (1965) referred to these persisting structures and mechanisms of domination or imperialism when he pointed to neo-colonialism. The term "neo", however, implies that these mechanisms are "new" and alludes to the new manner in which the same old ex-metropoles continue to dominate their former colonies. It once again implicitly excludes those countries that never had formal colonies from the spectrum of analysis (Purtschert et al., 2016, p. 290).[5]

Scholars like Purtschert (2015) and Michel (2015) have connected the past with the present, and through postcolonial discourse, have unveiled the mask of innocence that portrays Switzerland as a post racial nation and, therefore, exonerated from any of the matrix of colonial power constellation. Through the lens of postcolonial critique, Purtschert (2015) reveals how science has been fundamental in valorizing racialized space in Switzerland. Purtschert (2015) shows how the Masoala Halle in the Zurich Zoo in Switzerland is a one-stop spot of a demonstrator of loaded racism and colonial debris. The Zurich Zoo evokes and celebrates racist and colonial images of a Madagascar rainforest (Purtschert, 2015, p. 517). In the zoo, a general impression is created of autochthones as premodern and are reduced to existential and bare life while the scientist (white) that study them are privileges as civilized and modern (Purtschert, 2015, p. 510). Purtschert's work reveals how just like other European countries, Switzerland is complicit in the commodification of natives in the "human zoos" business which was largely facilitated by science. It is even more troubling when she wrote that while human zoos disappeared in most parts of Europe, Switzerland until recently had a strong grip on this dehumanizing enterprise, because the self-projection of that country as a colonial outsider meant that, during the decolonization period, Switzerland did not have to integrate voices of non-white people into public debates (voices that could create public awareness against such racist enterprise) (Purtschert, 2015, p. 516).

Michel's work employs discourse analysis to expatiate what she calls the "politics of postcoloniality" which is a constant negotiation of the weight of the racialized colonial past in the present with respect to Switzerland" (Michel, 2015, p. 411). Michel (2015) reveals how racialized discourses are a common manifestation in Switzerland and how they have been sustained through commodity racism, the spectacle of the "other" and Swiss obsession with purity (Michel, 2015, p. 412). By drawing on a very controversial sheep poster used by the far-right wing Swiss People's Party (SVP)—where several white sheep kicked a black sheep out of territory labelled with the national flag—Michel contributes to the ongoing discursive corroboration of how Switzerland exemplifies racism and racialized spaces, both of which typify colonial structures. She demonstrates how the globally constructed image of an innocent Switzerland—characterized by the concept of Swiss *Sonderfall* (federalism, neutrality and direct democracy) which constitute the bedrock of Switzerland's political and cultural identity—facilitates "the unnameability", inadmissibility, inaudibility and for that matter continuity of racism (Michel, 2015 p. 413 *emphasis added*).

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[5] N.B. Nkrumah does mention Switzerland in his oeuvre, but only marginally and in relation to banks (Nkrumah, 1965, pp. 75–76). His mention of Swiss was geared towards his explanation of classic style neocolonialism where according to Nkrumah the victim state of neo-colonialism is in theory independent with all the outward trappings of international sovereignty, yet in reality, its economic and for that matter political policies are controlled by foreign powers (p.ix).

Swiss colonialism in Africa

Direct Swiss participation in colonialism started with mercenaries[6] from Switzerland who were assisting other European countries in their expansion overseas. As early as the 17th century, Swiss mercenaries served at the Dutch East Indian Company Station at the Cape of Good Hope and settled there (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). Later on, Swiss soldiers helped to repress slave rebellions. Colonel L.H. Fourgeoud of Geneva, for instance, fought such rebellions in the Dutch colonies from 1763 to 1778 (Walliser, 2012). Aside from military activities, Swiss participation in colonialism can also be found in the economic realm. Swiss companies were involved in the slave trade. In 1790, the company *Illens et Van Berchen* provided two ships to transport slaves from Mozambique and later on yet a third one, also designed for the transport of slaves (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). Likewise, a Basel shipping company took part in the slave trade between 1782 and 1817 (Walliser, 2012). In addition, trade houses financed such expeditions. For instance, Picot-Fazy of Geneva financed the transfer of a slave ship on which almost half of the slaves lost their lives while crossing the Atlantic (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). Furthermore, some Swiss businessmen owned plantations in Mozambique, Tanganyika (today Tanzania) and Belgium Congo (today DRC) (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009), and others used slaves on their plantations in the Antilles (Franc, 2008). Even a Swiss missionary in the Gold Coast (today Ghana), Andreas Riis, possessed slaves.[7] What is more, again in the Gold Coast, the Swiss citizen Isaac Meville from Basel partially built and governed the then Swedish slave trade fort Carolusborg (Cape Coast Castle) (Thomas, 2006, p. 222).

Even before formal colonization of the African continent Swiss Calvinist French speaking missionaries had already made inroads to South Eastern Africa (present day Mozambique and South Africa). Harries (2007), who expended substantive intellectual energy into studying the Southern African region provides very rich evidence and connections on how Swiss missionaries laid the foundations for the spread of racist ideas that ultimately manifested as apartheid[8] in the 20th century and the formal colonialization of the Southern African region. His work paved the way for critical historical narratives of Switzerland, colonialism and slavery. Harries (2007) concludes that among the many endeavors of the Swiss missionaries in the Southern African region, the harm the Swiss caused the indigenous Bantus and Zulus was of damning proportions by categorizing them as pure, untouched and unchanging "Kulturvolk".

Swiss involvement in colonial projects continued during the era of formal colonization, when almost the entire African continent was divided into official colonies. Swiss Generals, officials and merchants participated in the brutal colonization of Congo by Belgium (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). Also, Swiss regiments helped in conquering Algeria and Morocco (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009) and fought for Napoleon in Egypt in 1798 (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). Others were in the service of the British in the Nile delta. Moreover, C.A. Stofferl, the first commander of the French Foreign Legion founded in 1831, was a Swiss. The Foreign Legion "[···] used to have two Swiss battalions and was used mainly for colonial wars" (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). In 1859, however, the Swiss government prohibited mercenary activities (Czouz-Tornare, 2011). Despite the eventual rupture of the legal framework that had so far permitted these activities, Swiss participation in acts of colonial conquest endured. In 1882, Swiss subjects kept fighting for money in Egypt and in the Congo Free State (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). Besides, not only mercenaries engaged in military actions of colonial powers. Swiss missionaries and merchants were fighting side by side with the British against the Ashanti to complete the colonization of the Gold Coast (Guex, 2008, p. 3).

The above forms of Swiss involvement in the colonial enterprise fit the term "colonial complicity"[9]. Even though Switzerland did not try to colonize its own territories, Swiss soldiers, companies and individual businessmen—often with either the explicit or implicit consent of the Swiss authorities—supported other European countries in their colonial ventures. Switzerland played, in this sense, the role of a secondary actor, operating always in the shadow of the big colonial powers. This portrayal of Switzerland, placed in the margin of the colonial picture, is certainly adequate when put into the context of other Western European countries.

Nevertheless, its relevance stands out more clearly if we look at Swiss colonialism, not only in the framework of European colonialism, but as a form of colonialism by itself, that has its own purpose and that is

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[6] Mercenaries are "men serving in a foreign army for a salary". This was a common phenomenon in Switzerland from the 14th to the 19th century. It was legal until 1859 and contributed to the wealth of the Swiss population. (Czouz-Tornare, 2011)

[7] N.B. He was however expulsed from the mission for that very reason. (Franc, 2008, p. 50)

[8] In the practice of apartheid too, the Swiss government demonstrated tacit support for the brutal racist and inhuman white minority apartheid regime. Carrying out its capitalist interest, Switzerland supported anything profit-producing and had commercial transaction with the apartheid government of South Africa in the name of neutrality and the capitalist notion of freedom (Purtschert 2011, p.173; Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné 2015, p.4)

[9] N.B. The meaning in which this term was originally used by Ulla Vuorela for Finland has more to do with participation in the creation of colonial knowledge and imaginary, mentioned below. (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p.8) But for the purpose of this paper, it refers to any form of cooperation with the European powers regarding their colonial endeavors.

adjacent and parallel to the one practiced by the metropoles but remains concealed and nuanced. As one that continued and became maybe even more efficient after decolonization, which partially explains Switzerland's favorable position today as one of the richest countries in the world (Purtschert, Falk & Lüthi, 2016, p. 291). This type of colonialism has been termed "crypto-colonialism" by Randeria (2015). 'Crypto' means 'concealed' or 'secret' and stems from the Greek word for 'hidden' (Oxford Dictionaries).

Acting hidden behind the back of bigger players is thereby one way in which Swiss actors concealed their colonialism that went indeed beyond their contribution to the colonial projects of European powers. Take for instance, Rodney's argument that albeit the Swiss did not possess colonies in Africa, their substantial capital investment in SCOA and their key role in imperialist banking cannot be overemphasized (Rodney, 1980, p. 190).[10] They kept out of the colonial wars fought by other capitalists so that they could still continue to trade with both sides and thereby acquire colonial produce (Rodney 1980).

As indicated earlier, Swiss missionaries and merchants participated directly in the fight of Great Britain against the Ashanti who were an obstacle for British control over its recently formalized colony, including notably over the trade with the northern part of modern-day Ghana (Franc, 2008, p. 43). There are two elements that suggest that this was more than just an input to someone else's colonial endeavor. Firstly, in this case, it was not the mercenaries who fought first and foremost for money, but those who participated in the warfare were missionaries and merchants. These actors had their own colonial interests, namely to spread Christianity and to get good trading conditions which could be granted by the British. Secondly, for the same reason, the Swiss missionaries and merchants had lobbied beforehand at the British Parliament, pushing for the project of colonizing the Gold Coast (Guex, 2008, p. 3). Lobbying for colonization is still acting behind the back of a bigger player. But in this case, instead of just supporting and profiting from what the latter does, the crypto-colonialists utilized the power of others to pursue their own colonial objectives. The convenience of this was remarked by Behrendt who wrote in 1932 that "[···] Switzerland reaped the benefits of colonial constellations without having to shoulder military responsibility" (Purtschert, Falk & Lüthi, 2016, p. 291). This position is further corroborated by Rodney (1981, p. 190) when he wrote that "[···] even those capitalist nations who were not colonial powers were also beneficiaries of the spoils. Unilever factories established in Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S.A. were participants in the expropriation of Africa's surplus and in using that surplus for their own development".

Hence, a key element of crypto-colonialism is that profit can be made while the crypto-colonialist safeguards its own reputation. In general, when something is done that would be condemned, damage of reputation can be avoided by hiding the action or gilding it. The Swiss used both methods to crypt their colonialism. Aside from hiding behind others, Switzerland has also built its own "image-fence". Accordingly, its colonial activities appear to have been constantly accompanied and masked by humanitarianism (which is generally perceived as "good"[11]). Wirz (1998) goes so far as to affirm that "[···] philanthropy and colonialism are siblings" (p. 96). It is difficult though to assess to what extent the encryption of colonialism by dint of humanitarianism was based on deliberate calculation. Baldwin (1955) introduced the concept of "colonial naiveté", which according to Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné (2015, p. 2) refers to the general belief of the Swiss that there is no relation between Switzerland and colonialism "[···] while making full use of white supremacy".

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[10] Nkrumah and Rodney were not oblivious to the Switzerland's colonial complicity in Africa, yet both of their perspectives represented a different timeframe. When Rodney mentioned Switzerland in his work, he does so in connection to Switzerland as a beneficiary of traditional colonization in Africa without formal colonies on the continent. Rodney argues that albeit, the Swiss did not possess colonies in Africa, their substantial capital investment in SCOA and their key role in imperialist banking cannot be overemphasized (Rodney, 1980, p.190). The Swiss stayed away from colonial wars fought by other capitalists, so that they could still continue to trade with both sides and thereby acquire colonial produce. They participated in the expropriation of Africa's surplus and in utilized that surplus for their own development (p.190). In his opinion Switzerland is discussed as part of the European power constellations whose expropriation of Africa's resources enriched Switzerland to the underdevelopment of Africa. On the other hand, when Nkrumah mentions Switzerland, he does so in reference to that country as part of the neocolonial forces that maintain a hold on Africa through the former's offshore accounts and banking institutions. (Nkrumah, 1965, pp. 75-76). On the point of convergence, both Nkrumah and Rodney consider Switzerland as a parasitic counterproductive foreign power whose actions are detrimental to Africa's development, but to Nkrumah more dangerous than an old-style fashion colonial power. Both scholars provide analysis that even depicts more of Switzerland as crypto-colonial power

[11] Humanitarianism is a typical example for what has been called "magnetic concept". The latter refers to a term that is generally—i.e., in a relatively large period and space—regarded as being either plainly positive or negative. In other words, it connotes either "good" or "bad" feelings and images for most people. The term "humanitarianism" has developed over the last two hundred years into a positive magnetic concept, so that "[···] it nowadays appeals to most of the social actors and seems very difficult to criticize" (Hermann, 2010, p.53). It is precisely this difficulty to criticize anything that is qualified as "humanitarian" what makes it prone to political (mis)use. On these grounds, it is possible that humanitarian activities conceal political and/or economic motivations. (Hermann, 2010)

Hence the ambiguity of Switzerland's role is confusing for its own citizens just as much as for the rest of the world.

Once again, the case of the Gold Coast sheds some light, this time on how humanitarian activity comes along with and "overshines", at least to some degree, the promotion of and profits from colonialism. According to the historian Franc (2008), "probably the most important Swiss trading company during the 19th and 20th century was the Basel Trading Company" (pp. 10-11), which operated primarily on the Gold Coast. Although its official name was Basler Handelsgesellschaft (Basel Trading Company), in Switzerland, its members called it recurrently "Schweizerische Kolonial-Handelsgesellschaft" (Swiss Colonial Trading Company) (Franc, 2008, p. 61). This trading company had started as a mission (Basel Mission) in 1828. The initial aim was not only to evangelize Africans, but also to abolish slave trade. In order to compensate the latter, the mission promoted the cash crop trade through improved agricultural methods and industrialization (Franc, 2008, p. 49-50). The purpose was twofold. On the one hand, it should help the local people to industrialize (for which the Basel Mission was also called "industry mission"). Arguably, this was an attempt of atonement for those who were involved in the Transatlantic slave trade, given that several of those financing the mission belonged to families that participated in activities stated above. In any case, there were intentions to assist the people of the Gold Coast. Schools, hospitals and the textualization of Twi and Ga are the most remarkable testimonies of that (Franc, 2008, p. 50-51).

On the other hand, there was certainly also an economic interest. The mission became the Basel Mission and Trading Company (Basler Missions-Handlungs-Gesellschaft) by 1859 (Stettler, 2002). As such, it was oriented towards profit-maximization and started indeed ab initio to make outstanding profits, especially with cocoa.[12] Until the end of the 19th century, the Basel Mission and Trading Company exported a main share of the Ghanaian cocoa. At the beginning of the 20th century, "[⋯] around one third of the [cocoa bean] harvest went through the factories of the Basel Trading Company" (Franc, 2008, p. 48). From the 1920s on, Ghana would produce almost half of the world's cocoa, of which the Basel Trading Company would still export more than 2% (Franc, 2008, p. 50-52). At the same time, it seems to have acted as a bank, granting credits to influential Africans as a political pledge (Franc, 2008, p. 54-55). This example of mission and trade merged in one single company illustrate how Swiss humanitarianism and business were intertwined. Similar cases suggest an overall tendency in this sense.[13]

Besides, the same example of the Basel Mission and Trading Company does not only show the means of crypto-colonialism, but it indicates at the same time the goals this type of colonialism pursued. On the one hand, there was the straightforward goal of accessing cheap resources, as well as foreign markets to which domestically manufactured products can be sold. On the other hand, there was the aim of promoting their own *Weltanschauung* (world-view) and constructing a colonial imagery, which contributed to a world system in which Europe—and thus Switzerland—is superior to Africa.

According to Boahen (1987), it's "[⋯] the need for raw materials to feed the factories of industrial Europe and the need for markets for the sale of manufactured goods" (p. 58) that motivates any type of colonialism in the first place. Instead of occupying, controlling and directly exploiting territories overseas, the option for Switzerland was thereby to create conditions that would allow for trade with the colonies on terms that were favorable for the Swiss.

At this point, attention should be drawn to the fact that Switzerland's industry was already in the 19th century very much dependent on cheap raw material from abroad (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). For instance, Egypt, under British protectorate, provided for more than half of the cotton imports to Switzerland. And it is worth remembering that cotton was essential for the first phase of industrialization (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). At the same time, due to the protectionist policies adopted by its neighboring European countries after 1815, especially the Swiss textile industry relied on markets overseas (Franc, 2008, p. 9). Hence, South Africa in the inter-war period, became a strategic market for Switzerland as it imported Swiss machines and chemical products, while providing Switzerland with precious metals, coal and fruits (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). As stated in 1847 by Ulrich Ochsenbein, the president of the Federal Diet of Switzerland at the time and later a Federal Council member, "the world over, wherever the venturesome and dogged British have gained a foothold, you will find the Swiss as loyal companions by their side, looking for a place to distribute the products made

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[12] As early as 1859 it became a limited liability company and "in terms of business-management, it worked just as any other modern limited liability company in the 19th century" (Franc, 2008, p.52). The profit was though divided between shareholders and the missionaries. But it is worth noting that the bigger part went to the shareholders. Some missionaries complained indeed that the high profit of cocoa seduced the members of the Basel Mission and Trading Company, so that the business gained the upper hand over the mission (Franc, 2008, pp.52, 61).

[13] E.g., The Basel missionaries (together with others) were also present in South Africa, one the most important economic partners of Switzerland in Africa (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). And with regard to the period of decolonization, Widmer (2017) shows for instance that the deployment of the ICRC in Angola was intended to protect economic interests.

with the skill and industriousness of their fatherland" (Purtschert, Falk & Lüthi, 2016, p.291). The per capital export volume of Switzerland to developing countries became consequently bigger than of any other industrialized country. According to Franc (2008), "Switzerland is maybe even the only country of the 'developed' world that successfully realized its industrial revolution by means of exporting to overseas markets" (p.9).

Trade houses operating in foreign colonies thus played a key role in the development of Switzerland, but also in the exploitation of the soils and labor forces of the colonies. Aside from effectuating the trade, they fostered in the colonies the cultivation of the raw materials required by Switzerland (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). Members of the Basel Mission and Trading Company were, for example, the first to try to grow cocoa in the Gold Coast in 1858 and 1861 (Cardinall, 1932, p. 82), a project that finally succeeded thanks to Tetteh Quarshie who had been a disciple of the Basel Mission (Stohler, 2014). When cocoa eventually spread all over the southern Gold Coast, the Basel Mission and Trading Company was the first to export it in 1893 (Franc, 2008, p. 58), became the official cocoa purchasing company of Switzerland (Franc, 2011, p. 353) and "[···] eventually at the beginning of the 20th century one of the biggest cocoa exporting companies in the world [···]" (Guex, 2008, p. 3). By these and similar means, "the [Swiss] trading houses in the colonies contributed substantially to the preservation and the exploitation of the dependent territories" (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008).

As for the second purpose of crypto-colonialism mentioned above, Swiss Catholic, Protestant, Capuchin and Benedictine missions spread over Africa throughout the 19th century. While one of their functions was the facilitation of trade, there was yet another colonial dimension to them. The missions contributed to the colonial imagery and influenced politics. Missionary activities were not only religious, but also social and cultural. Education was thereby a core element. The missionaries were accused of both having prepared the terrain for colonization as well as for the resistance to it during the movement of decolonization. It appears that both cases ended up strengthening Switzerland's position on the international sphere. (Perrenoud, 2010). Furthermore, intellectuals and officials fostered racism and contributed to the colonial discourse. Erwin Federspiel, who had actively participated in the colonization of the Congo Free State, for instance, publicly defended colonial exploitation (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). What is more, a central figure in the Swiss history, the lawyer Gustave Moynier, who was a co-founder and the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross from 1864 to 1910, advocated for the colonization of Congo (Wirz, 1998, p. 104). According to Wirz (1998), "Monyier had no doubt about the right to colonization; he inferred it—as he said—from the universal law of progress and 'higher state of development' of the 'white race'" (p. 105).

In this vein, Germann (2015) shows that Switzerland was instrumental in constructing race science and colonial knowledge. Lüthi et al (2016, p. 2) affirms Germann's position when they stated that "race has played an influential role in the rise of colonialism because of the division of human society or human beings in order to establish a dominance of colonialists over subject peoples and thereby also legitimize colonial enterprises. It quickly turned into one of imperialism's most supportive ideas" (p. 2). Swiss intellectuals as well as ordinary people "[···] frequently participated in colonialism through the replication of racist and dehumanizing worldview, thereby complying with one of the most effective means of colonial power" (p. 2).

All these elements that compound crypto-colonialism which was exercised by Switzerland throughout the colonial times constitute at the same time the kind of practices that ex-metropoles adopted after decolonization and would become known as neo-colonialism. Switzerland could thus nowadays simply be regarded as one of the many neo-colonial actors. It is still useful, however, to distinguish them, because there seems to be a different perception and thus reaction to each of them. Even though African countries are affected by both, they tend to keep focusing on the former metropoles and the big powers, while still largely overlooking Switzerland. The bright image of neutrality, inoffensiveness and humanitarianism has not decisively blurred over the last century. This is rather surprising, considering that members of the African elite have their bank accounts in Switzerland that many big Swiss companies are making profitable business in Africa[14] and that Switzerland hosts and influences the WTO, the World Bank and other international organizations that define and uphold the current unequal world system.

Indeed, decolonization does not appear to have significantly affected Switzerland's relations with the former colonies. On the contrary, for Switzerland, the partial departure of the European powers from their ex-colonies was even an opportunity to deepen its own influence on them, as an anecdote regarding Ghana illustrates: On the 1st of August (Swiss national day) in 1957, just a few months after Ghana's independence, the orator of the Swiss expatiate in Ghana concluded his speech by saying "Vive le canton Suisse Ghana!" (Long live the Swiss canton Ghana). (Guex, 2008, p. 3). As a matter of fact, the economic relations between Switzerland and Ghana were maintained. Shortly after the independence of Ghana, "the Federal Council [of Switzerland] agreed with the government of Ghana that the Anglo-Swiss friendship, trade and settlement treaty would remain

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[14] From the 1920s on, big Swiss companies such as Nestlé, Roche, Ciba, Geigy, Sulzer, Alusuisse and Sandoz established manufacturing plants in Africa and made direct foreign investments. (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009)

valid" (Perrenoud, 2010). On these grounds, the volume of investment in Ghana was considerable in the years right after independence and kept its high level up until the 1980s. (Perrenoud, 2010). In order to better understand this phenomenon and the overall trend of the Swiss crypto-colonialism in Africa throughout and after decolonization, we will review the role of Switzerland during this period in the following section.

Decolonization and the continuity of crypto-colonialism

Given the close relationship and dependence of Switzerland on its European neighbors, as well as the complicity that could be observed ever since the 17th century in colonial matters, it was to be expected that Switzerland would side with the metropoles that were jeopardized by the struggles for independence and try to maintain the status quo. When the voices of decolonization reached the ears of the Swiss government, however, the latter appears to have been rather interested in listening to what they had to say than in silencing them. Perrenoud (2010) observes that while "Swiss settlers in Africa who shared the ideologies of colonial areas were opposed to decolonization", the Swiss authorities took a different position: "Characterized by neutrality, the foreign policy of the Confederation was headed, from 1945 to 1961, by Max Petitpierre [···]. It is common knowledge that he used the maxim 'neutrality and solidarity' to advocate an active policy and promote aid to 'underdeveloped countries'". Hence, the Swiss government did not take sides with the threatened metropoles during the phase of decolonization. That is probably how "neutrality" should be understood in this context. In turn, the principle of "solidarity" (which implies a position statement) seems to be directed towards those who sought decolonization. The question is why Switzerland took this stance. A speech given by the Ambassador, Beat von Fisher in 1959, at an internal meeting of the Swiss diplomatic corps indicates one fundamental reason. His comments mirrored the prevailing geopolitical international context, mainly determined by the Cold War, which in his opinion made it necessary to act cautiously with regard to the African states. He was mindful that imperial behavior might "[···] push the black populations towards communism and demagogy" (Perrenoud, 2010). The expansion of communism is indeed an omnipresent concern during the period of decolonization. Confirming von Fischer's perception, Max Petitpierre stated in 1960 that "[···] the chances of success of the communists in Africa are much greater than anywhere else [···]" (p. 4). The Helvetic Confederation has however an interest "[···] in African countries remaining independent and on the side of Europe" (Perrenoud, 2010). According to von Fischer, Switzerland should therefore be solidary with the African countries in the process of decolonization, supporting them to prevent their inclination towards the communist sphere (Perrenoud, 2010).

In practice, however, the support for decolonization was modest (Von Albertini & Wirz, 2008). The relatively high dependence of the Swiss economy and policy on its European neighbors would not allow it to stretch the concept of neutrality too much. The Federal Council would thus show its approval of the claims for independence on the diplomatic front, recognizing the new African states generally soon after they were declared (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009). Other than that, it would choose indirect channels of support. Petitpierre (1960) stressed that "[···] Switzerland must associate itself with the efforts of the United Nations (UN) in Africa and participate in the struggle against underdevelopment in order to keep the communist threat at bay" (Perrenoud, 2010). Hence, "solidarity" refers also to foreign aid that addresses underdevelopment in Africa. Such humanitarian policies were probably to some extent genuine[15], but it had certainly a neither ignored nor unintended positive side effects of making Switzerland appear in a friendly light. Indeed, maintaining or improving the image of Switzerland in Africa was another main reason for the Swiss government to position itself (though discreetly) on the side of the anticolonial struggles.

According to Perrenoud (2010), the Swiss Confederation "[···] made an effort so as not to be identified with the colonial powers nor to appear as an imperialist country". In fact, in 1961, the Swiss delegate Raymond Probst made a survey about the Swiss reputation in Senegal, Guinea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. He then informed in his report to the Federal Council that the image of Switzerland was in fact positive and that it was considered "[···] as a neutral country without colonial history nor imperialist policies" (Perrenoud, 2010). Hence, keeping its good image in Africa was a basic concern for the Swiss government. The importance of an unscathed image can be seen as a condition sine qua non for the continuity of crypto-colonialism. If Switzerland was to be put in the same category as the ex-colonial powers, then decolonization—which was becoming a fact at that point in time—would endanger Swiss business and politics in Africa. In turn, if it was perceived by the new independent states as a stranger to imperialism, a sympathizer with their cause and a humanitarian actor, this positive image could provide it a convenient position between the former colonies and metropoles. Above all, it would give Switzerland the possibility to stay where the formal colonizers were forced to leave.[16] Crypto-

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[15] E.g. von Fischer said in the same meeting: "We risk making ourselves responsible for the definitive destruction of the psychic and organic development of a race which also has a right to an independent life" (Perrenoud, 2010). This shows at the same time the consciousness of the Swiss diplomats of their country being part of (neo) colonialism.

[16] For this reason, Switzerland has also been called "tercius gaudens", the third who rejoices. (Purtschert, Falk & Lüthi, 2016, p. 291).

colonialism could thus continue and even enable the expansion of Switzerland's reach, despite formal African independence. According to Widmer (2017), "the FPD [Federal Political Department, the Swiss Foreign Ministry] had used development aid to establish good relations with the newly independent states, in the hope of benefitting economically from the departure of the colonial powers" (p. 3).

However, the rise of neo-colonialism practiced not only by former metropoles but also by many other international powers, most notably the United States, initiated competition for new African trade partners and markets. This circumstance, and the constant concern of Swiss diplomacy to keep the favor of the bigger players while dealing with other convenient trade partners, would not allow the Swiss crypto-colonialism to rise much above its relatively low profile (Widmer, 2017, p.14). Indeed, the low profile itself constitutes as a basic characteristic of crypto-colonialism. It is certainly one of the elements that permits its inconspicuousness and longevity.

Hence, Switzerland continued to exercise crypto-colonialism within the limits that enshrined it throughout the period of decolonization and thereafter, applying its formula that combines business with aid, making profit with being beneficial and colonialism with humanitarianism. In this vein, Switzerland played a key role as a mediator between Algeria and France in 1961 and 1962. It was largely thanks to the diplomatic efforts of the Swiss delegate, Olivier Long that eventually in March 1962 the "Evian Accords" were signed. This put an end to the war and laid the ground for the independence of Algeria. Long, expresses later, the opinion that the relatively low cost of the mediation was worth millions of francs of aid for underdeveloped countries, in terms of how much sympathy capital Switzerland gained from it. He called it an "investment" (Perrenoud, 2010), which implies that he had already expected the sympathy capital to transform into monetary capital. Indeed, when the Evian agreements were about to be concluded, Switzerland signed a bilateral agreement with Tunisia about trade, investment protection and technical cooperation. Additionally, thanks to the Swiss reputation, the latter would be followed by similar agreements concluded within the same year with Niger, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal. (Perrenoud, 2010)

According to Perrenoud (2010), during these years of new states creation, Bern was actively seeking economic relations with the new African leaders. Hence, "a high-ranking economic civil servant, Edwin Stopper [···], who would preside over the general management of the Swiss National Bank from 1966 to 1974, recommended reinforcing the Swiss presence in Africa and met hundreds of key figures there as from 1960". The purchase of resources continued to be a main motivation for these economic ties. For instance, "the mineral resources of Guinea (primarily bauxite, gold and diamonds) attract Swiss investments [···] [in the years right after the independence of Guinea]" (Perrenoud, 2010).

Decolonization, however, also changed Africa's trade pattern. Independent African states moved further away from being "colonies" in the literal meaning of the word (etymologically "farm") (Oxford Dictionaries). Instead, they took the role of trading partners. As a consequence, there was a shift from being predominantly exporters to becoming growing markets for imported products from developed countries.[17] With regard to this, Speich (2012) explains that, in general, Bern's diplomatic practices "[···] were substantially shaped by the economic interests of the exporting industry of Switzerland [···]". Hence, since the 1950s, Swiss exports to Africa (primarily machinery, chemical products and foods) exceed the imports (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009).

Following the logic of crypto-colonialism, it should be noted that these economic affairs were constantly accompanied by humanitarian actions. As a matter of fact, Swiss aid for development took off during the phase of decolonization, notably since 1959. The aid, however, seemed to be canalized first and foremost, towards those African countries that are interesting for Switzerland, mainly in economic terms. Also, discussions continued in the years to follow whether the share of budget used for development in Africa was enough compared to the profits made by businesses there and by the Swiss banks dealing with African elites. (Perrenoud, 2010). In line with this, despite the aid that was meant to improve the reputation of Switzerland, the Helvetians received international criticism on various occasions. The most resounding reproaches relate to the Swiss banking system allowing for the acceptance and safeguarding of flight capital of African elites, including dictators like Mobutu Sese Seko, Moussa Traoré or Sani Abacha (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009; Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p. 4). Also, heavy critiques reached Switzerland after its unwillingness to condemn Portuguese colonialism and refusal to adopt the UN sanctions against the racist regimes in Southern Africa, with which it had profitable economic and financial relations (Etemad & Perrenoud, 2009; Widmer, 2017, p. 4). Yet other critiques were voiced regarding racism inside Switzerland (expressed, for instance, through unwelcoming refugee policies), as well as its role as a global financial center and its influence on international institutions like the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO, among others. (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p. 4)

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[17] From the 1960s on, Africa became indeed even a net food importer. (Rakotoarisoa, Iafrate & Paschali, 2012).

Conclusion

Swiss colonialism, from the submission above was at least partially deciphered and this did not go unnoticed to African leaders. In fact, as a reaction to the collaboration of Switzerland with white minority regimes, "[···] members of the OAU [Organization of African Unity], now the African Union [AU] accused the country [Switzerland] of leading a 'cynical, interest-driven policy that uses humanitarian actions as a smokescreen'" (Widmer, 2017, p. 4). However, the Swiss government effectively countered this cognition, supporting liberation movements in these countries and granting "humanitarian and development aid to newly independent countries" (Widmer, 2017, p. 4, 6). This aid was generally perceived as apolitical, even though "[···] it often served as political instrument [usually aiming at protecting economic interests]" (Widmer, 2017, p. 6). Accordingly, Switzerland was able restore its image[18], which continues to be predominantly positive in Africa (Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné, 2015, p. 4). This basic condition for crypto-colonialism has thus survived and so, apparently, has Swiss colonialism without colonies. The form it takes exactly nowadays and how it continually maintains its grip on Africa are pertinent questions for any African country dealing with Switzerland.

We have argued that Switzerland participated in and benefitted from the colonial projects of European powers in Africa, which can be called "colonial complicity". Similarly, it pursued its own colonial project that consisted of profitable trade relations and exporting the Swiss *Weltanschauung*. For that purpose, it acted in subtle modalities, through the lobbying of colonial powers or under the cover of (strategic or well-meant) humanitarian activities. Swiss colonialism was thus hidden behind bigger European players and camouflaged (intentionally or not) by humanitarianism. For these reasons, the Swiss way of colonialism has been termed crypto-colonialism. It allowed the Swiss Confederation to keep or even to foster its good reputation. The positive image translates thereby into sympathy capital that could be reinvested in further deals with Africa. It was key during the colonial times and a sine qua non for surviving the decolonization—turning the latter even to its advantage—as well as for giving crypto-colonialism continuity. Sympathy and good image are the seeds that Switzerland sowed in Africa and the benefits it yields are still contributing to the wealth of the Swiss population.

For all practical intent and purpose, Switzerland is no stranger to the long standing patterns of power dynamics attributed to colonialism through which race and racism become the organizing principles around which the structures of the multiple hierarchies of the world systems are built. It suffices to mention that, even if Switzerland was not officially a colonial power, the reproduction and sustenance of racialized and class images so prevalent in Europe's traditional colonial powers align them more with the colonizers. Switzerland participated in colonial practices through the replication of racist and dehumanizing worldviews which are demonstrative of the most effective means of colonial power (Lüthi et al., 2016, p. 3). This is synonymous to Baldwins concept of colonial "naiveté" where countries with a self-conception of innocence or colonial outsiders simultaneously make full use of white supremacy (Baldwin, 1955, p. 4; Purtschert & Fischer-Tiné 2015, p. 2). Besides the above tenets of the matrix of colonial power, Switzerland's colonial complicity is revealed through its activities during colonialism —as a part time colonizer Fässler (2005, p. 288), or crypto-colonialist —and in the aftermath of decolonization as a "neutral" state.

Notwithstanding, Switzerland's covert colonial designs seemed not to have reached a threshold, disturbing enough to warrant critical introspection among Africa's intelligentsia, the same way imperial studies has. Is it because its effects are all things considered comparatively unimportant? Is the sum of this type of colonialism really as irrelevant as the reaction would suggest? Or is the disregard of crypto-colonialism by Africans as well as by the Swiss themselves rather related to its being inconspicuous by definition? Or does it follow the logic of Galtung's center-periphery theory, in the sense that African elites are benefitting from and therefore enabling and upholding practices like crypto-colonialism (which might be particularly practical for them too due to its inconspicuous nature)? Whatever the reasons are, as long as relatively little attention is payed to it, the most likely scenario is that crypto-colonialism will persist and along with it all the consequences it carries. Zeleza (2005, p. 4) warns that colonialism will continue to be a central theme of African historical research, but African historians need to expand the canvas of colonialism, following the trails of postcolonial theory, to encompass the imperial metropoles beyond the question of colonial policies.

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[18] According to Widmer (2017), the ICRC has served a particularly useful instrument to restore, maintain or improve the Swiss image. She notes that "··· the Swiss authorities consider the ICRC to be a pillar of Switzerland's humanitarian image, which improves the international reputation of its neutrality, and a foreign policy asset" (p.7).

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