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What do we know about the experiences of belonging for [Black] Africans in Australia? A systematic scoping review

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Abstract

Belonging is political. While it is a *felt-and-embodied* experience, it is also heavily mediated by power. For racially and culturally minoritised people, belonging is expressed in hidden, often racialised codes articulated through an "us and them" framework. Within this systematic scoping review, critical issues of belonging are made visible, indicating that belonging for Black Africans in Australia is a highly racialised and complex cultural experience and significantly impacts their sense of self, identity, agency, citizenship and participation, social integration and inclusion. This study found the core themes on experiences of belonging for this cohort, are: (1) Racialised (non) belonging, (2) Belonging as access, (3) Belonging as a civic process, (4) Belonging as an active process and (5) Re-claiming belonging. In summary, Black African migrants experienced significant challenges with access to decent employment, housing, education, health services and relationships (including potential dating partners), which affected their sense of *felt* belonging. The literature showed that belonging for this group was a constant negotiation. It included constructing and reconstructing dual identities to accommodate their experiences of Australianness and Africanness while resisting labels that homogenised them. There was also an active process of building belonging through reclaiming places of community and dignity.

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KEYWORDS
African migrants, Australia, belonging, migration, race

1 | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

While different groups of migrants to Australia have been subjected to various indignities, attacks and hostilities, "there is something particularly distinctive about African Blackness that triggers racial moral panics, the imagination of unassimilable fear, intimidation, and danger to the status quo of white hegemony" (Paradies, 2022, in Gatwiri & Anderson, 2022: n.p.). Black African communities in Australia are often reported as having "an integration problem" and are over-represented in mainstream concerns about "fitting in into the Australian social and cultural landscape" (Marcus, 2016, n.p.). They often report feeling hypervigilant due to the "symbolic burden that their Black bodies carry [while] coming to terms with the connotations of what it is to be Black in a white-dominated Australian society" (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017: 5). Many studies show that they feel over-scrutinised and overburdened with racialised tropes and assumptions from crucial stakeholders in key systems, including police officers, social workers, doctors, teachers, policymakers and politicians, consequently hindering their ability to integrate and belong in mainstream Australia (Benier et al., 2021; Fozdar, 2021; Gatwiri, 2020; Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018b; Moran & Mapedzahama, 2021; Ndhlovu, 2013; Udah, Singh, & Chamberlain, 2019; Udah, Singh, Hiruy, et al., 2019).

Understanding how Afro-Blackness is navigated through Australian social, cultural and political landscapes offers an invaluable starting point for conceptualising belonging in Australia. While efforts to ensure equality of opportunity across the life course of African migrants are essential, they may be hampered by inadequate interrogation of the conceptual grounds of analysis and action from an Afrocentric perspective. By scoping what current literature states about belonging for Black Africans in a White-majority Australian context, we place Afrocentric perspectives of belonging, at the centre of "knowing belonging" and "talking about belonging" (Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018a: 96).

2 | CONCEPTUALISING (NON)BELONGING IN AUSTRALIA

To date, there is a lack of consistent understanding within policy and public discourse in Australia about what belonging *really* entails. References to belonging are often synonymised with concepts of inclusion, social cohesion and community harmony (Wille, 2011). We suggest that belonging is more than *just* inclusion, which raises important questions about what the criteria for defining belonging are, who sets these criteria and "how subjects, both individual and collective, are to meet these criteria" (Anthias, 2013: 8). It is a truism that people can be "included" and still experience non-belonging. While the law can legislate for inclusion, it cannot enforce belonging because belonging is not merely a matter of including other people's differences but an ontological experience "fundamental to who and what we are… [and] is in some way part of what constitutes our identity, whether we are explicitly aware of it or not" (Miller, 2003: 217).

This paper therefore, situates belonging as a fundamental human need—and more than a socially constructed experience (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging spans private and public domains, as a social–emotional attachment to place and space, a felt experience curated in the body—and a connection that determines whether one feels safe, accepted, included and

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valued in the world. It is a personal sense of being "at home"- in a place where, as bell hooks states, one can live peacefully and where it is possible to be sustained humanely (2009: 1). Belonging, therefore, includes "attachment (to place, community), claims (for place, community), attributions (of place, community), formal membership to places through meeting criteria of such membership, as a commitment or practice of consensus to a state or social system" (Anthias, 2013: 9).

As a theoretical concept, belonging threads the connection between oneself and place in different contexts (e.g., home, community, education or work) and our place in the world (hooks 2009: 1). We argue here that, belonging is both a site of provocation and a struggle for the Black African diaspora in Australia that is inextricably tied to how social, economic, civic and political power is defined, shared and granted (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Lindegaard Moensted, 2020). The arguments demonstrated in the findings highlight how the attainment of belonging is interrelated to positionality or one's intersecting social identities (gender, race, class, ethnicity, ability, geographical location, etc.). In other words, belonging is an intricate marriage between systems and positioning (citizenship, agency and identity) and emotions (safety, ease and being) that inform how *being here* and *belonging here* is articulated and embodied for different social groups (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Australia's understanding of diversity and inclusion needs to move in a new direction, from inclusion to dignity and belonging. Studies focussing on African migrants suggest that despite the strong "super-diversity" narrative in Australia, their experiences are still dominated by *outsiderness* (Hiruy & Hutton, 2020; Lindegaard Moensted, 2020; Majavu, 2017; Udah, 2018). In Australia, whiteness cements a "fantasy position of cultural dominance borne out of the history of colonial expansion," positioning non-White identities as non-Australian and "foreign" (Nicolacopoulos & Vassilacopoulos, 2004). Black bodies, in particular, are constantly surveilled to determine their subjective relation to the White construct and imagination of Australianness. The colonial production of White adjacent Afro-Blackness is enacted in everyday interactions (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Gatwiri & Moran, 2022; Yancy, 2016) and policed through racial micro-aggressions and racial hostilities, which consequently underpin experiences of racialised non-belonging (Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018a).

Although racial non-belonging or unbelonging remain underdeveloped in the literature, there is a considerable discussion about how belonging is obstructed or "fractured" by experiences of race, racism and racialisation. Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama (2018a: 98) study on identity and belonging among skilled Black African migrants in Australia theorised the concept of "fractured belonging." They argued that for Black and racially minoritised people, fractured belonging is borne from the expressions of and lived experiences of racism, where they are perpetually targeted, objectified, marginalised, discriminated against and locked "outside [of] belonging" (Probyn, 1996: 14). In this way, non-belonging is layered with painful, humiliating, damaging and detrimental racialised experiences that Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017: 4) call the "burden of blackness." This burden is often internalised by those who are positioned as "others," "foreigners" or "outsiders" of mainstream society (Udah & Singh, 2019: 855). From this perspective, non-belonging can be understood as a source of violence and oppression, meaning that the attainment of belonging could act as a means of resistance and liberation against oppressive systems in which multifaceted intersectional and fluid identities can be embraced.

As Spaaij (2015: 305) has contended, negotiating the boundaries of belonging between "us" and "them" involves a range of complex factors that are never fully within the control of individuals but rather, dependent upon a "dynamic interplay between the side that claims belonging and the side that has the power to 'grant' belonging." This suggests that belonging is a political process linked to the bordering and securitisation processes through which national polities construct a nationalised, collective "us" that is separate from "them" (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Udah (2019) also conceptualises this as the hierarchies of "Otherness"

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in which belonging is hindered by "othering" processes. The notion of "Otherness" is important for understanding how societies construct, categorise, value and judge identities along multiple axes of difference, such as gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality, which have implications for their position along an axis of power relations and consequently the attainment of belonging.

3 | RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 | A systematic scoping review

This systematic scoping review was conducted to scope and collate published data from specific databases using key terms to answer the following question: "What do we know about experiences of belonging and inclusion for Black Africans in Australia?"

3.2 | Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In April 2023, the research team determined the preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature search. This included a search for peer-reviewed articles from the past 10 years, between 2012 and 2023, aligning with standard search protocol time limits for scoping reviews and keeping the search as recent as possible. The articles were collected from seven electronic databases, including InfoRMIT, Medline, ProQuest, PsycInfo, Scopus, Academic Search Premier and Google Scholar. The following search terms were used to search for relevant titles and abstracts: "Belonging AND Inclusion" OR "Belonging" OR "Inclusion" OR "Integration" AND "Black Africans" OR "African Migrants" OR "African Refugees" OR "African Australian" Or "Australians of African Background" AND "Australia."

3.3 | Results

The initial search returned 976 articles across all seven databases. A total of 482 articles that were duplicates across and within the databases along with articles outside the jurisdiction of Australia, were removed. The research team reviewed the abstracts of the remaining 494 articles, and a further 314 articles were removed based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The remaining 180 articles were read for relevance and with the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A further 138 were excluded, leaving 42 articles for final inclusion (Figure 1).

3.4 | Limitations of the study

There were several methodological limitations. It is likely that the review has not identified all relevant research applying to this study due to our database searches and our search criteria and terminologies, such as using "African" rather than specific continental countries that could have provided more scope. Likewise, terminology in the existing literature, such as "refugee," "migrant" and "Black," may have made it difficult to identify the specific experiences of Africans within those communities, especially in the early literature that may have used different terms. A third limitation was that only publications in English and only those within 2012–2023 were analysed (Table 1).

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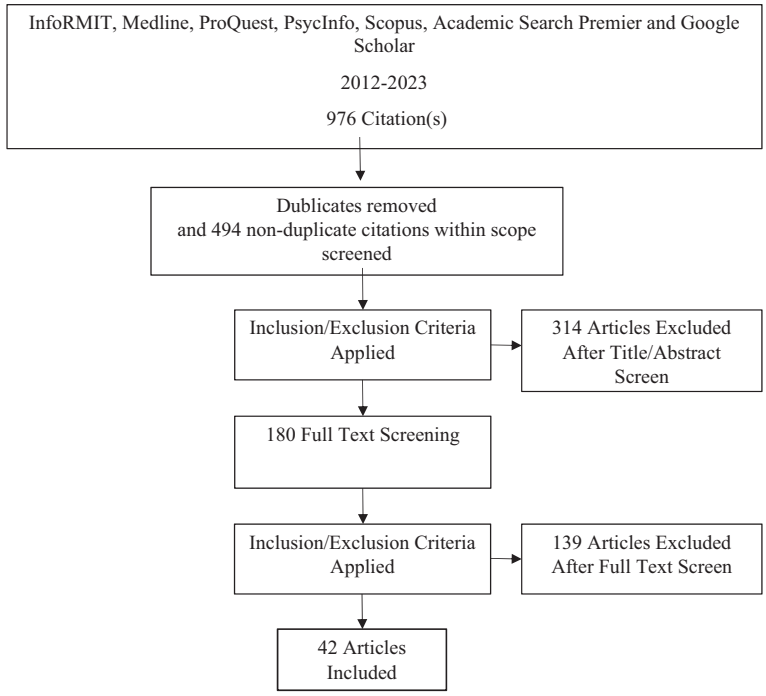


FIGURE 1 PRISMA chart.

4 | PRESENTATION OF THEMATIC FINDINGS

Critical issues of belonging for Black Africans in Australia were raised in the literature with the key messages that the highly racialised and complex cultural experiences of belonging and inclusion for Black Africans in Australia have significant impacts on one's sense of self, identity, health and well-being, agency and participation, social integration and inclusion, and educational and employment outcomes. Core themes from the results include: (1) Racialised (non)belonging, (2) Belonging as access, (3) Civic belonging, (4) Belonging as an active process and (5) Re-claiming belonging.

5 | THEME 1: RACIALISED (NON)BELONGING

In what we term as "racialised belonging," the findings suggest that the "politics of belonging"—that is, the way belonging becomes a *thing* about race, is fundamental in how Australianness is articulated and mediated in "White" mainstream Australia. The boundaries of belonging underpinned by ideas of who is seen as deserving or undeserving of being an Australian strongly define who "belongs" and who "does not belong" (Lindegaard Moensted, 2020). In this review, perceptions of belonging, unbelonging or non-belonging in the literature were discussed alongside the experiences of race, racism and racialisation for those who are visibly different (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Ndhlovu, 2013). Literature shows that *being* Australian is viewed synonymously with whiteness. This construct informs the experiences of Australianness, in which White people are perceived as *real* Australians while Black Africans are seen as perpetual strangers, guests or newcomers (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018a). This ethnonationalist ideology is part of Australia's broader settler history and is tied to the British Empire's colonial processes (Udah, 2019). A

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TABLE 1 Table summary of included articles.

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
1	Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2020)	This study utilised qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore how 22 migrant families from eight sub-Saharan African countries experienced the acculturation process. Data were analysed at the family unit level using the three steps of grounded theory method: open, axial and selective coding.	The findings illustrate that acculturation processes involve two major phases (maintaining core moral values and attaining a sense of belonging) within which six categories were identified (family relationships, societal expectations, cultural norms, religious beliefs, socioeconomic gains and educational values) as central concerns for the family unit	The study provides insight into the acculturation process of both parents and children and highlights the importance of family dynamics in the acculturation process.
2	Anderson et al. (2019)	This paper evaluated the "I'm a Local…" initiative via personal reflections about participation in the initiative, and analysis of material about the project, which was already in the public domain	It highlighted the various challenges of resettlement for Black African refugees in regional Australia and the extent to which the positive experiences of refugees can be contextualised within particular characteristics of space and place.	"I'm a Local…" provides an instructive example of how change agents from different sectors working collaboratively can dismantle prevailing discourses and affirm more inclusive and hopeful futures.
3	Baak (2011)	An analysis of conversations and experiences in the Mading Aweil community of Dinka from Southern Sudan in the days following Ngong's murder.	Community members felt increasingly vulnerable within the Australian community following Ngong's murder. Resulting in an increased desire to establish a sense of belonging at other levels of community.	Cultural norms and practices shift in response to context and locations in which they take place, which not only is in local responses but also occurs as a global phenomenon.
4	Baker (2019)	This research mobilises arts methodologies, bringing together sound arts, audio documentary and narrative research methods. Data gathering included arts artefacts and interviews with the young women and sound recordings from news media	The sound portrait titled "Battle for Truth" serves as the findings for this paper. Privileging participants' voices and convey the complexity of their stories through the layering of voices and other soundscapes including a media montage of racialised misrepresentation	Through their restorying: reflexivity, dialogue and deep listening. Sound portraits become important sites for re-imagining possibilities for social change and developing new activist avenues
5	Dandy and Pe-Pua (2015)	Data from 54 interviews and focus groups with 138 people are drawn from a larger study using Jenson's multidimensional framework of social cohesion	That racism, intercultural contact and the media had multiple and interrelated effects on aspects of social cohesion such as belonging, participation and inclusion	The utility of the multidimensional framework for understanding refugees' settlement experiences and outcomes. Key areas for policy and practice in refugee resettlement in Australia

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
6	Fozdar and Hartley (2013)	Qualitative interviews with 77 refugees living in western Australia. Thematically, these map onto civic and ethno conceptualisations of nation-state and belonging.	While refugees assert their civic belonging, their sense of ethno belonging is much more ambivalent, due to experiences with the mainstream population.	Implications in regard to the concept of the nation-state, and for processes of integration and social inclusion
7	Fozdar (2021)	This paper reviews the literature on African settlement in Australia using Ager and Strang's domains to explore the extent to which Black African migrants are experiencing positive, successful settlement	The overall picture is quite negative, with the focus of most research identifying significant social problems—extensive experiences of discrimination.	The research has failed to reflect the positive engagement and active participation of African communities. Implications for the effects of the research gaze, which can pathologise, and ignore evidence of successful settlement and integration.
8	Gatwiri and Anderson (2020)	Drawing on critical race perspectives and theories of belonging, we highlight through the use of literature how Black Africans in Australia are constructed as "perpetual strangers."	The acceptance of Black bodies within Australia is contingent upon the status quo of White hegemony. Indicating that immigration is not only a movement of bodies but also a phenomenon solidly tied to global inequality, power and the abjection of blackness.	To accommodate the diversity of Australian culture, a significant re-imagining of the Australian community is required, one that can own up to the past and current realities of racism and find a place for those historically constructed as "strangers" within the nation.
9	Gatwiri (2020)	Drawing on critical race theory (CRT), this qualitative study investigated the migrant experience including parenting and a sense of belonging.	Two key themes emerged: (1) the need to explicitly teach children about race and racism and to foster positive racial identities and (2) the complexities of navigating tensions between "African" and "Western" cultural values.	Expand knowledge on the complexity of parenting in multicultural, transcultural and intercultural contexts.
10	Gatwiri et al. (2021)	The study examined the experiences of change, cultural identity, diasporic identities, employment, negotiating family dynamics and the experiences of racial discrimination in Australia.	The findings call for considerations that address inequities, including culturally sensitive practice by social services, employers and the wider society.	Policy considerations that address inequities, including culturally sensitive practice by social services.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
11	Gatwiri and Moran (2022)	Drawing on the narratives and expertise of those who have experienced anti-Black racism, this paper employs the theoretical concept of racial dignity to highlight how young African Australians participate in racial discourse on social media.	The findings demonstrate that social media is a significant site in which Black African youth reclaim racial dignity through: 1) reversing the white gaze; 2) recognising and calling out anti-blackness; and 3) cultivating and engaging in communities of healing and belonging	Social media offers Black African young people in Australia spaces to engage in positive expressions of Afro-blackness and challenge anti-blackness in ways that are safer to them than in physical, offline settings in White contexts
12	Harris et al. (2014)	A cross-sectional study of a purposive sample of African refugees participating in a community food garden.	Participants identified important benefits: land tenure, reconnecting with agriculture and community belonging	Community food gardens can offer a tangible means for African refugees, and other vulnerable or marginalised populations, to build community and community connections.
13	Joyce and Liamputtong (2017)	Qualitative in-depth interviewing and photo elicitation methods were conducted with 16 Congolese young people.	Young people experienced unique acculturation stress and relied on a range of social support to strengthen their social capital and enhance their well-being.	Finding indicate that regional resettlement policies need to be well-planned and tailored to meet the needs of young refugees who require specific services and support.
14	Kirpitchenko and Mansouri (2014)	This study presents both quantitative and qualitative (discursive) snapshots from the overall findings, based on interviews and focus groups	Draws attention to the individuals' active position in negotiating, interpreting and appropriating the conditions of social inclusion.	Highlights the heuristic role of social engagement in fostering the feelings of belonging and personal growth for migrant youth.
15	Klingenberg et al. (2021)	The study used a qualitative methodological approach set in the conceptual framework of social constructionism.	Transnationalism was found to provide a useful framework for the migrants' lived experiences of a dual belonging, providing distinct benefits for both migrants and their new society.	This paper promotes a better understanding of the strengths offered by a multicultural society. Useful for policymakers and workplaces based on discrimination policies and cultural awareness
16	Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama (2018a, 2018b)	Using "Everyday Racism" as a conceptual framework, we draw on data from our study on identity and belonging among skilled Black African migrants in Australia to explore Afrocentric perspectives on belonging.	Everyday racism forms a typology of "fractured belonging"—with four dimensions: contestation, negotiation, ambivalence and compromise.	The need for more nuanced understandings of this "fractured belonging" among Black African migrant in Australia, and its implications for their subjective realities.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
17	Lindegaard Moensted (2020)	A qualitative case study that discusses how modes of belonging can act as both a hindrance and a protective mechanism in young people's lives.	This article discusses young people's access between contexts and communities enhances belonging and how efforts to belong can also entrench other kinds of marginalisation.	The article develops the concept of belonging, which is vital in understanding the ways marginalisation shape and influence young people.
18	Mackenzie et al. (2017)	Through the use of story and proverb, the article argues that Congolese ways of knowing the non-material world offer a radical departure from Western ways of experiencing belonging to place.	The transitory nature of rental properties is an obstacle for belonging for many African migrants from the inability to have land on which to plant a tree, which provides spiritual continuity, and connection to living-dead ancestors.	The decisions as to what is known and what is "unseen" are embedded in questions of power. The research calls for onto-epistemological plurality by "knowing" different worlds.
19	Mansouri and Mikola (2014)	By voicing the personalised journeys of young people dealing with displacement, identity and belonging, this paper examines the complex ways through which migrant youth negotiate and bridge intercultural tensions.	Migrant youth negotiate cross-cultural engagements and tensions between family, community and greater society in which they participate as active political subjects acting as "a bridge between two worlds."	The study suggests that future policymaking should recognise the wide spectrum of social and political engagement including the decision of some young people to resist altogether such activities.
20	Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017)	This article is written from a Black African experience perspective. Adopting standpoint theory and critical race theory's unique voice of colour thesis as conceptual framework for making sense of focus group data.	Black African embodiment is experienced as a (symbolic and material) burden, "the burden of Blackness." With four dimensions: problematic stereotypes and social constructions, the paradox of in/visibility, burden of racial "two-ness," and burden of minimisation.	Skin colour is broadly accepted as a conspicuous marker of difference and racial belonging. Yet, while the body is understood as a given, it is also socially inscribed: heavily sexualised, gendered,"coloured."
21	McConnell (2019)	This article examines the way musicians articulate positive African Australian identities in the face of political and media discourse that emphasises African difference and criminality	"Afropolitan projects" describe the way musicians express complexity and multiplicity, simultaneously forging allegiances across difference and foregrounding the African roots of contemporary popular music.	That African Australian musical production offers an important intervention in contemporary debates on race and belonging in Australia.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
22	Moran and Mapedzahama (2021)	A multi-method study with African young people in Australia (n = 15), which used social media ethnography and multiple participant interviews to argue that African young people use social media to agentially craft and claim their own spaces of belonging.	Suggests a typology—"Afrocentric Digital Belonging"—that involves three core processes: (re)cultivating identities and Black spaces; evoking boundaries; and forging digital and physical connections.	Digital spaces can offer new ways of navigating, contesting, (re)imagining and forging new understandings of belonging for Black African young people who live in predominantly White spaces.
23	Moran and Mapedzahama (2021)	A multi-method approach involving social media ethnography, the "scroll-back" interview method, and ongoing dialogues on social media, this article explores the everyday social media practices of nine young Black African women in Australia.	The findings indicate that social media is used to visibilise and (re)claim contemporary Black African womanhood, among a global digitally mediated community of Black African women.	Black female-centred empowerment digital communities are important spaces in which young Black African women in Australia can unlearn, resist and reject the harmful ideologies that they endure in White Australia.
24	Mude and Mwanri (2020)	A qualitative inquiry was undertaken with 31 African youths using a focus group and individual interviews. Data analysis was guided by a framework for qualitative research.	Across contexts of families, and the loss of social networks following migration, and cultural differences between African and Australian societies, that shape the experience of belonging and identity formation.	Findings indicate the need for policies and practices that consider experiences of youths as they form their identity in Australia. Further studies with large numbers of participants are needed to explore these issues further among African youths in Australia.
25	Mwanri et al. (2021)	A qualitative inquiry was conducted with 27 skilled African migrants. Participants were not directly questioned about "resilience," but were encouraged to reflect critically on how they navigated the transition to living in Australia, and to identify factors that facilitated a successful resettlement.	This study revealed that despite challenges, skilled African migrants' resilience, ambition and determination were significant enablers to a healthy resettlement in Australia.	These findings suggest that resilience factors identified in the study are key elements of integration.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
26	Mwanri et al. (2023)	In-depth individual interviews with 44 participants from refugee communities originally from Africa and South-East Asia, settled in a rural South Australian town.	The findings demonstrate how social ties were key to enabling access to resources for health. These included emotional resources, such as a sense of belonging, as well as physical and practical resources, including food, housing and/or accessing services.	Effective health service provision in these locations needs to serve these growing communities, and there is scope for services to tap into community networks to assist with this.
27	Ndhlovu (2013)	The paper draws on the outcomes of a study with refugee background Africans in regional New South Wales (NSW) to propose the language nesting model that seeks to illustrate the complex linguistic and discursive practices and how such resources are used to create and negotiate material and social spaces in everyday life	The paper demonstrates how the stories that were elicited—about the languages, cultures, identities, migration histories and just about everything else about the sampled African diasporas—both support and resist the theoretical suppositions of super-diversity in equal measure.	The important message for policymakers and service providers is this: Refugee background migrants have a range of linguistic capabilities and cultural experiences, which can be harnessed and directed toward enhancing the settlement and coping mechanisms of these people.
28	Nunn (2016)	Emerging out of a collaboration between researchers, artists and Somali-background youth, Home: is an audio-visual work that integrates documentary, acted scenes, interviews and photographs to chart the complexity and dynamism of producing and inhabiting home	As the first generation of young people growing up in an emerging immigrant community, the Somali-Australians who passed through adolescence in the first decade of this century were pioneers. The outcome is a polyvocal and multisensory map that takes the viewer into the homes of young Somali-Australians	Forging their own paths through the spatial, sociocultural and emotional terrain of Somalia(n) and Australia(n), the project creates new cartographies of home
29	Ramsay (2017)	Drawing on the case of a child protection intervention in Australia, in which an African woman experienced the forced removal of her children after being resettled as a refugee. I analyse this experience not as the result of parental deficiency, but as the outcome of a disciplining imperative through which resettled refugees are governed as either "deserving" or "undeserving" of civic belonging.	In the case study, the intervention of forced child removal results in an experience of what I term "ruptured" personhood: whereby intersections and contestations of motherhood as, concurrently, a social role, legal category and affective experience produce a situation in which a woman lives a paradoxical state of existence that she herself describes as being "dead."	The case study compels a broader problematisation of refugee resettlement and motherhood as domains in which contemporary forms of biopolitics are constituted and played out.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
30	Run (2013)	Using secondary data—narratives in the media, reports and academic literature, the article considers these experiences and places them in the conceptual frame of racial profiling as a double burden for refugees.	Racially targeting refugees is likely to reawaken vulnerability that cannder fear and distrust of the police. Position refugees as a threat to the public and manufacture racial conflict—and ghettoisation.	Racial profiling compounds refugees' burden and puts them on course for social exclusion.
31	Schermuly and Forbes-Mewett (2016)	The study employs an interpretivist approach that aims for greater understanding of the subject through the perspectives of the research participants.	Culinary rituals and traditions feature large in personal narratives of adjustment that reveal the important role of food in contributing to identity translation and the attainment of belonging for migrants.	The importance for migrants to have access to cultural traditions to maintain a sense of identity and feel a sense of belonging while integrating into host societies.
32	Sonn et al. (2017)	With a focus on meanings conveyed through migration stories, we thematically analysed semi-structured interview data gathered from nine participants.	Three themes for the ongoing negotiation of identity in relation to both South Africa and Australia, including the motivations for migration, the experience of leaving and losing home, and the personal and political challenges of homemaking.	The findings are discussed with reference to the role of nostalgia and race in negotiating belonging and identity.
33	Udah (2019)	In this paper, the author shares the challenges of being different, and of being Black and the experiences of Black Africans in Australia.	The paper invites more conversations on finding ways forward to change the system that favours some and disadvantages others.	It indicates the need to humanise the Other and make Australia a more inclusive and liveable multicultural environment.
34	Udah (2021)	This article draws from empirical data generated via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 30 participants in South East Queensland.	The discursive constructions of Africans in everyday language and social relations in Australia work to construct their lived reality of being, becoming and being positioned as a racialised subject, leading to objectification, marginalisation, exclusion and disadvantage.	The article advocates for systemic changes that will end the problems of everyday racism at both state and national levels, and for the introduction of programmes that will encourage the inclusion, belonging and full participation of visible and ethnically marked immigrants to Australia.
35	Udah and Singh (2019)	It draws on data from interviews conducted with 30 Black Africans living in South East Queensland.	Racialised identities impacted on how they felt, were defined, related to and constructed, in Australia. Suggesting that Othering practices can marginalise, exclude and affect migrants' and refugees' sense of belonging.	The findings indicate the need for a more inclusive Australia, the accommodation of difference, the fostering of new identities, the rejection of negative stereotypes of the Other.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
36	Udah, Singh, and Chamberlain (2019)	The paper draws on findings from a qualitative study conducted in South East Queensland. The study examines how Black African immigrants define their identity, socioeconomic well-being and sense of belonging in Australia.	The findings suggest that settlement and integration policies in Australia need to be informed by immigrants' employment experiences.	The paper contributes to the literature on the role of employment in the settlement and integration processes of racially and culturally different immigrants.
37	Uptin (2021)	This study draws on individual and focus group interview data from a broader study that investigated the negotiation of cultural identities of recently arrived former refugees.	Although all participants had undergone multiple prior migrations, moving to a dominant White society was much more difficult due the visible difference, markedly their Black skin, that brought a reaction, both positive and negative.	Of interest in this study is how the African Australians responded the research process to negotiate deeper insights into how to belong in an Australia that still sees itself as a "white space."
38	Uptin et al. (2013)	This article draws upon individual narratives of young former refugee's experiences of high schools. It explores the stories told by the young people of being identified as different and of negotiating ways of belonging in schools both academically and socially.	One of the more significant and confronting times for young people was entering high school. For many, it was the first time they had to face being identified as embodying difference. Making it hard to participate in cross-cultural friendship groups and to develop any sense of belonging within the school culture.	It argues that it is how the school positions the newly arrived refugee students within mainstream school culture that opens up or restricts opportunities for inclusion in all aspects of school (in culture and pedagogy).
39	Weng et al. (2021)	Conceptua paper.	African-Australians' belonging can be fracture in multiple ways. This can be through "routine experiences of exclusion from employment and opportunities to earn their rights to belong."	The study examines the concept of 'relational belonging' among African migrants in contemporary Australia. It centres African migrants' lived experience narratives and theories of belonging developed by African scholars to counter narrow and negative stereotypes perpetuated by political and media discourses.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Author	Methodology	Findings	Implications
40	Wickramaarachchi (2020)	Using focus group discussions with 42 participants, it shows that despite the welcoming atmosphere, South Sudanese migrants are attracted to cities and feel at home.	The article argues that cities make strangers un-noticed and make them feel at "home" using theoretical concepts of "the stranger" and "power". Showing how more diverse environments encourage negotiating difference and ease the power imbalance among different groups.	The easy commuting distance of Castlemaine to Melbourne and its suburbs is discussed as a factor of reducing the potential ability in constructing a sense of belonging with the local community.
41	Woldeyes (2018)	Conceptual Paper	This discussion suggests that, a relational belonging are entwined with civic participation required for integration processes in the Australian society	
42	Wood et al. (2019)	Nine adults of refugee background were purposively sampled through community organisations to uncover emergent themes and identify relationships between themes. A strengths-based theoretical framework was adopted.	Paid work and volunteering engender a sense of self-fulfilment and sense of belonging, facilitating successful integration into a new community.	Meaningful employment and volunteering can facilitate positive health and well-being outcomes of refugees and thus reinforce the importance of providing such opportunities to ensure successful settlement.

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study by McConnell (2019), for example, reported on the experience of a South Sudanese Australian musician, Ajak Kwai, who has lived in Australia for over 20 years and identifies as Australian. Although Ajak states that "Australia is home," she also expressed how frequently she is denied the right to call Australia home, because as a visibly Black person who stands out she "get[s] reminded every single day that [she is] not Australian." Ajak's story is similar to many others who report feeling perpetually suspended in their efforts to find a *home* and a place to belong. Normalised everyday racism and racial stress (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020) were reported to have a considerable impact on the health and well-being of African migrants, including increased mental health issues, loneliness, isolation and dislocation from the community (Gatwiri, 2020; James et al., 2022; Mwanri et al., 2021). Racial stress is amplified in White-majority contexts where Black bodies become "racial battlefields," forced to fight to belong and experience racial dignity (Gatwiri & Moran, 2022: 362).

Many studies in the review suggested that negative racialised stereotypes about African communities are the biggest hindrance to belonging. Baak (2011, 2019) and Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama (2018b) report that these stereotypes can destabilise belonging and amplify racially motivated violence or hate crimes toward this community. Run (2013) argued that this is felt acutely by refugee communities who have fled their home countries, searching for a place to belong and to feel safe, only to experience an additional burden of racial profiling and targeting due to dominant anti-blackness in their new home. The African youth gang narrative that has continually fueled anti-African sentiment and the rise in public anxiety or moral panics (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020) has produced division and exclusion that limits access for Black people of African background due to assumed criminality (Baker, 2019; Nolan et al., 2016). Politicians have also attempted to leverage this narrative by publicly vowing to "smash" these "gangs" by increasing police resources, limiting humanitarian intake, and deporting young people back to Africa (Benier et al., 2021).

For new Australians, the public and political discourse on who does and does not belong is increasingly contested, particularly for those who are seen as "undesirable" migrants due to Afro-Blackness (Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2013; Udah & Singh, 2019). As Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017: 1) argue, in Australia, Afro-Blackness is not *just* about skin colour, "but rather it is a social construct persistently conceived of as an opposition to whiteness." Udah and Singh (2019) suggest that such racialised tropes codify Black Africans in Australia within colonial racist discourses labelling them as problematic, inferior or a threat to whiteness.

In Uptin (2021) and Dandy and Pe-Pua (2015), examples are given of Black people being spat at, followed in shops, verbally abused, called names, ignored and receiving unfair treatment, with differences in skin colour and religion often pointed out as the reasons. Racialised non-belonging notably appeared significant for African Australians from refugee backgrounds (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015; Nunn, 2010). Refugees of South Sudanese background in particular, reported experiencing intensified public hostility and suspicion, culminating in targeted discriminatory processes. Conditional belonging was offered contingent on maintaining the status quo of White hegemony (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020).

6 | THEME 2: BELONGING AS ACCESS

The literature showed that belonging was intricately linked to access to social capital, including friends, family, community networks and formal organisations. This includes regional or country-specific associations, faith and sport-based organisations, church congregations, and, to a lesser extent, government-initiated settlement programmes (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Mwanri et al., 2021; Weng et al., 2021). Social relations were seen to be foundational to settlement and integration support, and challenges to forming or accessing relational connections

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hindered the experiences of belonging (Fozdar, 2021). Some studies reported that strong relationships with family, long-term friends, and cultural and religious groups were a significant foundation for identity, well-being, health and belonging (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Mwanri et al., 2023). Other studies reported that people from African diasporic communities seemed to draw "positivity and optimism from religion, faith, hope, and community-oriented attitudes, which nurture resilience, social connections, and a sense of belonging in a new country" (Mwanri et al., 2021: 10). As such, Africans tended to be attracted to diverse and multicultural spaces where they can access community support from other Africans and escape urban problems such as racial violence, exposure to substance misuse and peer pressure on young people (Wickramaarachchi, 2020). Multicultural spaces with a good welcoming reputation offered a plurality and a diversity of people, where differences can be negotiated and community and cultural networks can be forged. In such contexts, there are reduced experiences of "otherness," particularly for refugees.

The literature highlighted that education, employment and belonging are important determinants of health and racial dignity (Gatwiri & Moran, 2022), social capital (Mwanri et al., 2023), identity formation (Gatwiri et al., 2021), agency and civic participation (Woldeyes, 2018), and overall emotional well-being and life satisfaction (Udah, Singh, & Chamberlain, 2019; Udah, Singh, Hiruy, et al., 2019). However, racially unsafe schooling experiences were rife (Uptin et al., 2013), as were challenges finding meaningful employment due to racial discrimination (Udah, Singh, & Chamberlain, 2019; Udah, Singh, Hiruy, et al., 2019). Underemployment, regardless of high skills and expertise, led to reduced socioeconomic mobility (Gatwiri, 2020), which fed into home and land ownership challenges (Fozdar, 2021; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013). In many African communities, land ownership is a *proxy* for belonging; it is a place to "plant a tree" and get spiritually connected (Harris et al., 2014). In the context of Australia, concepts of land ownership tend to overlook non-White migrants, as their settlement in Australia is often seen as temporary, and as such, many are perceived only as possible renters, not homeowners. Mackenzie, Mwamba and Mphande (2017: 146) argued that "the need for an ontology that constructs a concept of a home and belonging can also support an attachment to spirit and ancestors in a foreign place, and how the ancestors can belong here in Australia."

Fozdar (2021) also links belonging to access to safety, including how stories about African migrants told in mainstream media affect how the public and Australian systems interact with them. Studies suggest that dominant media narratives influence public perception and affect how people and institutions of significant authority view Black migrants (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020). As Udah (2021: 134) suggests, "in many cases, it is precisely the media that formulates the public position regarding this or that [ethnic] group," impacting their acceptance and sense of belonging within society. Abur (2022) also notes that mediatised public discourse about refugees has already framed them as a *burden* on host countries, which has been argued to increase levels of violence and abuse in the community. Similarly, Gatwiri and Anderson (2020) argued that racialised discourse in the media acts as a bordering process tool where Black bodies come under scrutiny and securitisation, with significant implications for social cohesion, belonging and public health. As Windle (2008; 563) wrote;

> Racialisation of African refugees in the Australian media appears to find its proximate source in the activation of race as an explanatory category amongst police, giving licence to a xenophobic minority. This activation draws on the history of racism in Australia, on wider colonial narratives about primitive Africa, on the perennial discourse of dangerous youth, and even on fears about American cultural imperialism (in the form of black "gang culture"). As with Indigenous Australians, the dominant frame is one of underlying societal risk.

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Such felt experiences of negativity, hostility and perceived lack of acceptance from the general population impact belonging, stability and a sense of being safe *here*. Racialised narratives limit access to community, dignity, safety and belonging. As Run (2013: 22) asks, "If random racist attacks can instill a sense of vulnerability in the refugee community, then what potential effects would racial profiling, which is a centrally planned policy by those armed by society to legitimately use violence, be likely to have?".

7 | THEME 3: CIVIC BELONGING

Civic inclusion and participation also appeared as a sub-theme for attaining belonging. People need to feel a certain sense of belonging to be *good*, *active* citizens and vice versa (Mansouri & Mikola, 2014). Some studies suggest that having a sense of civic responsibility, citizenship and contributing socially, politically and economically in a country creates a sense of belonging (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Woldeyes, 2018). According to Mansouri and Mikola (2014), civic participation is often primarily understood through interactions with formal institutions (voting, signing petitions, sending letters to politicians and attending meetings), which overlooks other types of non-institutionalised civic involvement, particularly for young people who participate socially and politically in local, national and transnational spheres such as local arts or human rights movements, cultural and community organisations, and family and friend networks as part of their daily lives. Other studies have also suggested that participation in actions, such as legal citizenship, and *inclusive* transactions, such as voting or decision making, are only partial contributors to belonging (Anderson et al., 2019; Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018a; Noble & Poynting, 2008). This implies that inclusion and participation in civic processes alone do not guarantee a sense of ethno-belonging to a community, state or organisation, as participation is not just about social practices but also about meanings and identities (Mansouri & Mikola, 2014).

This review also revealed that civic contributions to Australian society were linked to national pride, consequently fostering belonging. This pride was experienced through contributions such as paying taxes, volunteering in community engagements (Wood et al., 2019) and participating in "acts of citizenship" (Mansouri & Mikola, 2014: 30). These contributions provided a way to actively participate in the community and helped African migrants feel like they were a part of the broader Australian society. In Anderson et al. (2019), former refugees in a regional town in New South Wales established a sense of belonging by engaging in local interests such as sports as a way of "becoming locals." Shared identities were constructed through shared interests such as sports, gardening, local community needs, and shared languages. Shared cultural interests and social relations (such as friendship and relationships), also emerged as tools of fostering horizontal identities and belonging with other local groups (Harris et al., 2014; Kirpitchenko & Mansouri, 2014; McConnell, 2019; Schermuly & Forbes-Mewett, 2016). Different forms of civic belonging (participation and contribution) also appeared in school environments and social relationships for young people, especially through sports and music where young African people could negotiate or take on *acceptable* racialised identities (McConnell, 2019; Uptin et al., 2013). However, whether this confined young people within these spheres and created barriers to inclusion in other social or academic areas is still to be determined.

Political and Western expressions of cultural participation among Africans in Australia were problematised in some studies. For example, Klingenberg et al. (2021) argued that participation is too often expressed as an expectation of acculturation (or assimilation) and focussed on disconnection and separation rather than more positive frameworks such as transnationalism that recognise how generations of migrants have multiple ties between multiple countries. For Fozdar and Hartley (2013), this highlights the non-neutral nature of civic systems, which

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are seen to continue to exclude and divide people along ethno-distinctions of belonging in Australia. For example, many young people of refugee or migrant backgrounds often speak out against hyper-policing, in which they are regularly targeted and searched by police, or advocate for changing discriminatory laws and regulations (Mansouri & Mikola, 2014). Likewise, Ramsay (2017) argues how Australia's state-administered child protection services reproduce racial profiling, as child welfare systems are governed around the logic of whiteness, which dismisses culturally diverse and plural forms of childcare and family needs. Such logics have resulted in historical and contemporary forms of forced removal and separation of Indigenous and migrant children from their families, who are deemed undeserving of civic belonging.

8 | THEME 4: BELONGING AS AN ACTIVE PROCESS

Many studies in this review operationalised belonging as an active negotiation process of searching for new identities or making sense of the old ones (Mude & Mwanri, 2020). According to Udah and Singh (2019: 845), identity is a reflective and dialogical construction that "can be defined as a specific kind of narrative or story that people construct about themselves and others." Identity construction can be linked to what Gatwiri and Anderson (2020:10) describe as "constant boundary-work" from the precarity of conditional belonging, in which belonging is actively developed, negotiated or hyphenated as identities across two or more cultures conflate in Australia.

Scoped studies showed that some African migrants are not motivated to try to belong in Australia because they consider themselves Africans rather than *African Australians*. They fought to retain their Africanness by holding with nostalgia the positive memories of their lives in Africa as a foundation for their identity continuity in Australia. However, holding firmly to previous identities sometimes constrains the processes of belonging or new identity formation in Australia due to what Kwansah-Aidoo and Mapedzahama (2018) refer to as the "fantasy of return." In other words, nostalgia and longing for home can complicate efforts to belong *here*. Despite the challenges it presents to belonging, Schermuly and Forbes-Mewett (2016) perceive the use of nostalgia as an important bridge between worlds, which can be observed through how migrants use their cultural practices from their home countries, including preparing traditional cuisine to negotiate and construct new identities that reaffirm and connect their homeland identity with a new diasporic identity and home environment.

According to Sonn et al. (2017), activating new identities can be experienced as a paradox. For example, for some Black South Africans (previously referred to as "coloured" during Apartheid), embracing their new social identities as "South African Australians" meant reconstructing their social positions in a new sociocultural context, with different opportunities for education and employment that they did not have access to in South Africa. At the same time, some experience significant "embodied nostalgia" and "irretrievable loss" from losing their home, which continues to "agitate and shadow countervailing experiences of compensatory gains" while they also negotiate a different form of racism in Australia (Sonn et al., 2017: 49). While belonging may not be able to solve these complex experiences, it could provide some support to create new and different experiences. This dual or double-sided nature of belonging shows that belonging must be managed constantly.

While most scholarship on belonging emphasises the positive, inclusive aspects of belonging and something to be achieved, some scholars conceptualise dual belonging as both a resource and a constraint (Klingenberg et al., 2021). Dual belonging is a balancing act that can be both a hindrance and a protective factor (Lindegaard Moensted, 2020), as well as something that can be operationalised differently depending on space and place (Wickramaarachchi, 2020). For example, Lindegaard Moensted (2020) argued how young Muslim Somali refugees conceptualised their experiences of belonging in Australia through dualities of belonging–unbelonging,

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nearness–distance and new belongings–old belongings. These sharp contradictions highlight that they felt belonging within their communities of choice while contending with non-belonging in broader society due to racism and stereotypes about Muslims in their daily interactions.

Dual belonging is also seen within family and community networks as places of both comfort and tension. For many young people, the tension of balancing dual belonging can also occur when simultaneously negotiating belonging in their adopted society, where their identity is constantly being negotiated while also attempting to incorporate their cultural, racial and ethnic identity across the broad spheres of family and community (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2021; Mude & Mwanri, 2020). In some cases, due to these community tensions, young people step away from their family and community environment to give themselves space to understand their own identity and belonging outside their families and communities. This is also sometimes seen as a chance to harness their knowledge and "prove themselves" before returning home. As one young participant in Mansouri and Mikola (2014: 34) shared,

> To me, to live in Australia is to live in two worlds. I give Australia fifty percent, and I give my community fifty percent. I do this because I know I will not get accepted in Australia 100 percent. It does not matter what you do or what you achieve. So, what I do is balance, you know. When I am with an Australian, I know how I will act, and when I am with my people, I know how I will act.

Intergenerational differences in attaining a sense of belonging were also noted in the way older African generation prioritised family needs, commitment to maintaining core values (such as religious beliefs and educational values) and the fulfilment of migration goals (such as pursuing socioeconomic gains and contributing to the community; Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2020). In contrast, their children, who were born or raised *here*, preferred to attain a sense of belonging through Australian societal expectations and cultural norms (Nunn, 2016) signifying what Gatwiri, et al. (2021: 487) referred to as "double cultural identity." The active negotiation of belonging also came out strongly for Black African parents raising children in (White) Australia- where they balanced multiple paradoxes to attain belonging for themselves and their families. This included helping their children to foster a connection and pride to their African or homeland heritage, ancestry and culture (Ndhlovu, 2014), and at the same time, encouraging their children to "curate their blackness" as a way of protecting them from racism and to minimise experiences of racialisation (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2021: 153). This suggests that while African families understand the importance of maintaining their original culture, they also adapt and adjust to new host country environments and their new diasporic identities.

9 | THEME 5: RE-CLAIMING BELONGING

The final theme emerging in the literature was how African diasporic communities claim and reclaim belonging when they feel it is not offered to them. For many Africans growing up in emerging migrant and diasporic communities, there was no clear path to finding belonging, with some stating that it is an uncharted territory (Nunn, 2016). Belonging was claimed and negotiated depending on multiple facets, including the varying degrees of power and agency one has (Lindegaard Moensted, 2020). Nevertheless, many African people in Australia, across age, generation, location and background, were seen to be creating their own spaces and ways to claim belonging. In the literature on Afropolitan projects, African perspectives of belonging are seen to create, foster and facilitate new insights into the practical, affective, embodied, sociocultural and ethical relations of belonging and identity (Baker, 2019; McConnell, 2019). McConnell (2019: 144) suggests that "African-Australian musical productions offer an

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important intervention in contemporary debates on race and belonging in Australia in the context of growing racial anxiety and public debates about immigration and the treatment of refugees."

Another sub-theme that emerged under Re-claiming belonging was the need to challenge dominant deficit perspectives and narratives about Africans. According to Fozdar (2021: 33), this may be in response to "the possible effects of the research gaze, which can pathologise and ignore evidence of successful settlement and integration." For example, according to Mansouri and Mikola (2014), deficit perspectives often frame African youth through a problem-oriented focus, where young people are seen as being at risk of disengaging from the mainstream and who require constant guidance and control. This fails to acknowledge the multitude of ways young African diasporic people navigate and create bridges from living between two worlds as a strength that is present in "all spheres of their lives, including engagement with the state, civil society, as well as family networks" (Mansouri & Mikola, 2014: 34).

According to Moran and Mapedzahama (2021), push-back narratives of these deficit narratives are seen profusely online, where Black African people and Black African women assert alternative and more dignified narratives of themselves on social media. Afrocentric Digital Belonging is an attempt to (re)cultivate identities and Black spaces, evoke boundaries, forge connections and unlearn, resist and reject the harmful racialised ideologies that they have endured (and continue to endure) in White Australia (Moran & Gatwiri, 2022, Moran & Mapedzahama, 2021). However, an observation is made that although young Black Africans use digital spaces to reclaim belonging, online platforms can offer conditional thresholds due to the structural whiteness that govern digital spaces and the fear of White backlash.

10 | CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The new Black African Diaspora in Australia is not a homogenous group and comprises a highly diverse group of people from a multitude of ethnic, sociocultural and political backgrounds, as well as different migration pathways into Australia. This review strongly shows that there are hidden and untold stories of how the African diaspora creates and negotiates spaces for belonging to everyday life—that both support and resist the theoretical suppositions of super-diversity in equal measure. For example, assumptions that language barrier is the most compelling explanation for un/underemployment are challenged here, as studies report more structural and systemic issues related to anti-African sentiments in mainstream landscapes that complicate their *access* to spaces regardless of their spoken English proficiency. Additionally, the resources that African diasporas possess often seem to get overlooked. These include having multiple linguistic and cultural capabilities that can be harnessed and deployed across various social and multicultural contexts in Australia to participate in and build community and claim belonging.

This review aimed to scope literature on how Black Africans in Australia experience belonging. Various themes identified in this scoping review highlighted that a range of factors determine how Africans embody or experience belonging. Studies led by Afrocentric scholars highlighted the importance of dignified and sociologically nuanced Afrocentric narratives in conversations about belonging. However, care must be taken to avoid use of reductive ethnicised group identities to categorise and formulate incomplete storylines about particular communities, due to the significant political and social implications possible. This suggests that overemphasis and oversaturation of discourses about Africans operationalised through deficit narratives overlook the myriad of ways that African communities in Australia resist these narratives culturally, socially and politically.

The review also showed how belonging for this community was coded through racialised structures in which Blackness *and* Africanness were seen to add psychological and

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emotional burdens that complicated belonging within a predominantly White Australian context. In Australian society, where race is always operational and where whiteness is the standard of Australianness, belonging for those who are othered by racialising processes becomes conditional and contingent on maintaining the status quo of White hegemony (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2021). Scholars such as Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013) and Gatwiri (2020) also wrote about the processes of *becoming* Black and wearing the coded racialised meanings within the assigned racial category of Black *and* African in Australia. Theorising their experiences of *becoming* Black, Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2013: 69) wrote,

> We 'became' black and African when we came to Australia. We became aware, very early on in our migration experience, of the attention we attracted when we walked down the street and the fact that most people would turn back to take a second glance at us…We had (overnight) become 'objects' of curiosity for the 'white gaze'… What we could not comprehend was that, by virtue of our dark skin, we had now been racialised into a racial category— 'black'—complete with all the inferiorisation that is embodied within it in the Australian context…. Growing up in Africa… dark skin was the norm, the dominant, so being so dark-skinned did not come with the same kind of racial valorisation that happens within contemporary western societies.

The review found that non-belonging can be experienced within African communities themselves, especially in the context of intergenerational conflict and changing familial roles. Children often adapted to their new environment, cultures and systems faster than their parents and may feel less connected to the African identity. They may also prefer to have a dual identity as both Africans *and* Australians. For the generation of children growing up in Australia, belonging is more than just "feeling at home"—it is deeply rooted in social justice and anti-oppression—which goes beyond inclusivity and requires an embrace to their multiple identities, and safe spaces to heal from the wounds of systemic oppression. In summary, the conceptual discussion of belonging and the conclusions drawn on its significance for marginalised and minoritised groups, particularly for Black African migrants in Australia, suggests that belonging is an active process in which Africans are in constant negotiation with the places and spaces they wish to belong to and why.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Kathomi Gatwiri: Conceptualization; funding acquisition; writing – review and editing; formal analysis; supervision; data curation; methodology; validation. **Samara James:** Investigation; writing – original draft; project administration.

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