WHITHER SOUTH AFRICA – NEOLIBERALISM OR AN EMBODIED COMMUNITARIAN INDIGENOUS ETHIC?

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WHITHER SOUTH AFRICA – NEOLIBERALISM OR AN EMBODIED COMMUNITARIAN INDIGENOUS ETHIC?

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DECLARATION

I, Inge Konik (204016207), hereby declare that the thesis for Doctor of Philosophy: Philosophy (Research) is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

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Summary

This thesis offers a critique of neoliberal transformation in South Africa, which process results in growing social inequality and political apathy among citizens. Many scholars have made political-economic and historical analyses of the neoliberal transition, emphasizing structural changes at work at a 'macro' level. However, little attention has been paid to changes that have taken place in South Africa at the 'micro' level – changes to individual subjectivity and gender codes. That said, the thesis opens by summarizing the above mentioned political-economic accounts of neoliberalism in South Africa, because such works are indispensable to understanding how the regime is embedded within and buttressed by major global institutions. Yet, to achieve a holistic grasp of 'neoliberal South Africa,' more is needed. A sociological investigation into the impact of neoliberalism on ordinary people's self-identification uncovers deep cultural reasons for the continued perpetuation of this unjust political-economic system. Only if it can be understood why people comply with the system in the face of suffering, can effective counter-measures be proposed and implemented over time. This thesis is inherently transdisciplinary. The approach rejects the privileging of one discipline over others, and likewise cautions against collapsing or dissolving disciplines into one another. Instead, recognizing the valuable contribution that each discipline can make to critical scrutiny of a particular issue, a form of methodological transversalism is used to bring different disciplines into dialogue with one another. Following this interplay of structural and subjective analysis, the thesis uncovers the role that consumerism plays in the political neutralization of South Africans. Consumer culture, tied as it is to profitable accumulation, instigates the neoliberal 'values' of economistic calculation, competition, and social atomization. This ethos is inculcated in individuals, both at work and during leisure hours. Moreover, consumerism derives much of its power from its 'sexual sell,' the creation of fashionable and 'exemplary' models of masculinity and femininity. In South Africa, these hegemonic gender models serve to instill competitive individualism while derogating indigenous values. The thesis proposes that in order to counter neoliberal hegemony in South Africa, and begin reclaiming the cultural autonomy of its peoples, it is important to invigorate indigenous communitarian practices and norms. The original contribution of this thesis consists in placing the African ethos of *ubuntu* in transversal dialogue with global ecological feminist voices. Both political perspectives reinforce a liberatory alternative vision for a future based on principles of embodied relationality, care giving and protection of community.

Key words: neoliberalism, consumerism, gender, political agency, *ubuntu*, ecofeminism, relationality, personhood, community

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Political acronyms

ACTSA	Action for South Africa
Aids	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (economic grouping)
CEF	Central Energy Fund
CEPR	Center for Economic and Policy Research
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRLR	Commission on Restitution of Land Rights
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECA	Export credit agency
ECDC	Eastern Cape Development Corporation
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FHISER	Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research
Finrand	Financial rand
G8	Group of Eight industrialized economies: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, United States, Italy, Canada and Russia
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEAR	'Growth, Employment and Redistribution' strategy
GNP	Gross national product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ID	Identity document (South Africa)

IDA	International Development Association
IDZ	Industrial Development Zone
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International financial institution
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LMS	London Missionary Society
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MFN	Most-favored-nation (GATT principle)
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NP	National Party
NT2	Nam Theun 2 (hydroelectric project)
Numsa	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
R&D	Research and development
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RRA	Rapid rural appraisal
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAL	Structural adjustment loan/lending
SAP	Structural adjustment program
SAPA	South African Press Association
SDI	Spatial Development Initiative
SEZ	Special Economic Zone

SIA	Social impact assessment
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
Telkom	Telecommunications provider in South Africa
TNC	Transnational corporation
TORs	Terms of reference
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights
TRP	Taxi Recapitalisation Programme
UF	Urban Foundation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNSNA	United Nations System of National Accounts
URAOA	Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture
US	United States
VAT	Value Added Tax
VOC	Dutch East India Company
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

Glossary of indigenous terms

amatshipa	lost to the mines
bakontshana	mine wives
Bantu	Bantu-speaking ethnic groups in Africa
bantustans	tribal homelands
feta kgomo o tshware motho	'go past the cow and hold the human being'
impi	Zulu regiment (isiZulu)
izikhothane	to lick/mock (isiZulu)
letsema	intra-communal collaboration
lobola	a gift from the bridegroom's family to the bride's in the form of livestock, or increasingly, cash (roughly translatable as 'bridewealth')
mfecane	the 'great crushing' or 'scattering'
mmereko/pangela	waged work (Setswana/isiXhosa)
motho ke motho ka batho	'one attains humanity through others'
ormeek	'modern' non-Maasai masculinity (Maa)
piny	'on the ground' (Luo)
polo malo	'up in the air' (Luo)
tiro/ukwakha	building the *umzi* (Setswana/isiXhosa)
tokoloshe	sprite-like figure in Xhosa tradition
ubudoda	manhood
ubuntu/botho	being human
ukumetsha	thigh sex
umuntu	be-coming human
umzi	homestead

Introduction

Neoliberalism constitutes the most recent manifestation of the capitalist system. It is a form of domination-by-deregulation that involves subjugating entire countries under the logic of the free market, ostensibly to facilitate 'development' through economic growth. Fiscal tightening, privatization, public expenditure cuts, tax reform, and liberalization of interest rates, exchange rates, trade and investment,[1] all are supposed to boost a country's economy and so improve the lot of its people in the long run. Under the neoliberal hegemony,[2] commodity consumption is promoted not only as a means to growth but also as the key to human happiness itself. However, it has been demonstrated amply that free market globalization benefits the few rather than the many. Global financial institutions, a handful of powerful nations, transnational corporations (TNCs), and the transnational capitalist class comprising foreign and local financial elites, reap the benefits. On the other hand, ordinary people experience societal deterioration and many environments suffer irreversible degradation, which further undermines the capacity of local communities to survive outside of the money economy. The German ecological feminist Maria Mies accordingly refers to this system as a "gigantic parasite."[3] It feeds off workers, women, nature, and the erstwhile colonies now controlled by the World Bank, the IMF and TNCs. She argues that those aiming to "help … construct a reality in which neither women, men, nor nature are exploited and destroyed," have to face up to the fact that capitalism and patriarchal structures of domination are interrelated. Conceiving women as inferior to men makes possible the exploitation of the former as though they constitute 'natural resources.' Women's work as care-givers to the young and those externalized from the 'productive' economy goes unremunerated, but is crucial to the maintenance of the capitalist economic system. Mies adds that the dominating

[1] John Williamson, "A Short History of the Washington Consensus," in *The Washington Consensus Reconsidered: Towards a New Global Governance*, eds. Narcis Serra and Joseph E. Stiglitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 16.

[2] The British educator Harold Entwistle points out that "[t]he notion of hegemony is most familiar in political history and international affairs where it refers to situations in which one nation exercises political, cultural or economic influence over others." Yet, the Italian marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci "extended its reference to apply to relationships between groups, especially social classes." Thus, "one social class can be thought of as exercising hegemony over other 'subaltern' classes," and "[i]n capitalist society the bourgeoisie is hegemonic in relation to the industrial working class." Harold Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 7.

[3] Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 38, 224.

logic operational in the resourcing of women parallels that at work in the colonist's resourcing of indigenes.[4]

Because it resources people and nature in these ways, neoliberalism can be said to carry various unacknowledged and unaddressed debts. Most political economy critiques, following Marx, emphasize the debt owed to the worker. Industrialists extract surplus value from workers, making them labor for unnecessarily long hours by lowering the rate of pay.[5] Socialist movements criticize this exploitative dynamic and lobby for improved treatment of workers, including better salaries and worker protection. Often, though, such movements fix on the so-called economic bottom line, and therefore remain as blind as the transnational business class is to other kinds of debts incurred by free market ideology.[6] One such moral and material 'debt' is owed to peasants and indigenous peoples. The annexation of resources that were once a commons and the economic exploitation necessary to sustain neoliberalism, detrimentally affect Third World men and women, and so can be said to comprise a neocolonial debt. This exacerbates an original colonial debt extracted from the bodies of indigenous slaves. In reaction to this theft, postcolonial movements fight for the right to local autonomy and self-sufficient livelihoods. The international peasant organization *Via Campesina*, for example, focuses on restoration of the commons and promotion of small- to medium-scale agriculture, to counter global agribusiness and restore food sovereignty and national autonomy.[7] Then there is the unacknowledged embodied debt owed to women.[8] As reproductive or caring labor, women are resourced commercially and within the household, where they birth and raise new generations of workers and undertake caring, life-sustaining work. Household labor goes unpaid because it takes place in the 'private' reproductive sphere rather than in the 'public' productive domain. A postcolonial debt to women extends to those in the Third World who, through neoliberal globalization, are denied lands for subsistence and "are often especially earmarked for factory work paid at nearly slave wages."[9] Ecological feminists strive to eradicate the implicit treatment of all capitalist patriarchal 'others' as

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[4] Ibid., 23.

[5] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, 3 vols., ed. Friedrich Engels (New York: Cosimo, [1867] 2007), 637.

[6] Ariel Salleh, "Ecological Debt: Embodied Debt," in *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology*, ed. Ariel Salleh (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 1-40.

[7] William D. Schanbacher, *The Politics of Food: The Global Conflict between Food Security and Food Sovereignty* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), xiv.

[8] Ariel Salleh, "Embodied Materialism in Action: An Interview with Ariel Salleh," *Polygraph* 22 (2010): 186.

[9] Faye V. Harrison, *Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 227.

natural resources. Liberal feminists, on the other hand, advocate women's entry into the economic system as equals. New Zealander Marilyn Waring takes a middle way, to argue that women's caring labor should be valued in monetary terms to give a clearer picture of the extent of women's exploitation within the capitalist system. Most economic indices, including the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA), exclude women's work because it supposedly is situated "outside … the *production boundary*."[10] Meanwhile, an unspoken yet solidly material intergenerational debt is owed to children, who suffer the ecological fallout of passing the environmental 'buck.' In addition, child labor is integral to neoliberal development even though it largely remains unacknowledged. Hundreds of millions of children work in factories under harsh conditions, and children additionally suffer abandonment, educational failure, psychological damage and physical abuse.[11] In turn, a species debt is owed to animals, and the Animal Liberation movement aims to sensitize people to biodiversity loss and large-scale extinction under free market expansion.[12] What must also be considered is the destruction of thousands of animals each year in the name of scientific progress.[13] Finally, the theft of natural resources from a living ecosystem constitutes, in principle, an ecological debt. The drive for profitable accumulation through the ever increasing production of consumer items precipitates unsustainable resource extraction, unprecedented levels of pollution, and often irreversible environmental degradation. Environmental groups like Friends of the Earth accordingly encourage people to turn away from consumerism to value life itself.[14]

As long as these life-depleting debts remain invisible, the capitalist patriarchal hegemony of neoliberalism continues. Partly, this is because the global media effectively "manufacture consent"[15] for neoliberalism, and so debilitate people politically. This parasitic system rests not only on global institutions and policies, but on ordinary people's buy-in as consumers as well. The American sociologist William Robinson explains that complicity with neoliberalism is constantly encouraged by means of "ideological campaigns aimed at

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[10] Marilyn Waring, *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women Are Worth*, 2d ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 27.

[11] Ximena de la Barra, "The Dual Debt of Neoliberalism," in *Imperialism, Neoliberalism and Social Struggles in Latin America*, eds. Richard A. Dello Buono and José Bell Lara (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 42.

[12] Eduardo Mendieta, "Animal Is to Kantianism as Jew Is to Fascism: Adorno's Bestiary," in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 159.

[13] Marti Kheel, *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 246.

[14] Barry Smart, *Consumer Society: Critical Issues and Environmental Consequences* (London: Sage, 2010), 173.

[15] Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), lix.

seduction and passivity." For him, it is essential to realize that "the culture of global capitalism attempts to seduce the excluded and to channel their frustrated aspirations into petty consumption and fantasy as an alternative to placing political demands on the system through collective mobilization."[16] The economic system paralyzes the majority of citizens by trapping them in a work-and-spend cycle centered on consumer rivalry.

However, not everyone remains co-opted. Over the past decade a diversity of movements have arisen that oppose neoliberalism and its social and environmental injustices. Activists are calling for alternative forms of globalization and different ways of life. In Seattle, protestors took on the World Trade Organization (WTO).[17] In New York, the Occupy Movement decried the fact that 99 percent of the US population is exploited for the benefit 1 percent of financiers.[18] The World Social Forum (WSF), founded in the wake of the Battle for Seattle, seeks to integrate such movements in a coherent international platform for resistance to market economics. Its strength lies in coalition building between interest groups from peasants to peaceniks.[19] Indeed, the need for unity in resistance to neoliberalism among grassroots movements is extremely urgent, particularly as the status quo also is maintained through the age-old process of divide and rule. The Australian ecological feminist Ariel Salleh believes that the WSF counters this tendency by acting "as an instrument for drawing together worker's, women's, indigenous, and ecological voices."[20] In its 2012 manifesto, "Another Future is Possible," the WSF has formulated the concerns and visions of these exploited and marginalized peoples belonging to what Salleh has identified as a 'meta-industrial labor class' – engaged not in production for sale but in caring or reproductive labor, subsistence, and community building.[21] It is called 'meta' because it is an outside frame, 'over and above,' but essential for industrial productivism to function. The WSF document brings

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[16] William I. Robinson, "Global Capitalism and Its Anti-'Human Face': Organic Intellectuals and Interpretations of the Crisis," *Globalizations* 10/5 (2013): 666-667.

[17] Leslie Sklair, *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 291.

[18] Heather Gautney, *Protest and Organization in the Alternative Globalization Era: NGOs, Social Movements, and Political Parties* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 181.

[19] Zeynep Atalay, "World Social Forum," in *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, eds. Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (New York: Springer, 2010), 1661.

[20] Ariel Salleh, "Rio+20 and the Green Economy: Technocrats, Meta-industrials, WSF and Occupy," *Rio20.net*, April 18, 2012. Available at: http://rio20.net/en/documentos/rio20-and-the-green-economy-technocrats-meta-industrials-wsf-and-occupy/. Date accessed: September 8, 2014.

[21] Ariel Salleh, "Global Alternatives and the Meta-Industrial Class," in *New Socialisms: Futures Beyond Globalization*, eds. Robert Albritton, Shannon Bell, John R. Bell and Richard Westra (London: Routledge, 2004), 201.

together manifold issues and articulates a vision for the future, touching on ethics, philosophy, human rights and the rights of Earth, production, economic distribution, consumption, commoning, governance, power, and political subjectivity along the way.[22] The emphasis falls on activism and critical conceptual reflection, indicating the need to develop a vision for a different future by synthesizing intersecting movement concerns. This transversal approach to politics entails grasping how all kinds of domination (concerning gender, race, class and nature) are interconnected under neoliberalism. As the social movement scholar Hamed Hosseini explains, transversal political struggle involves "commitment and openness for exchanging experiences and ideas across a variety of local fields of resistance."[23] The immediate question is: how do indigenous Southern African voices contribute to this new universalizing perspective? Does this political moment belong to the great philosophers of *ubuntu* such as Mogobe Ramose, Thaddeus Metz, Dismas Masolo and Joseph Gaie?[24]

In terms of mapping inclusive visions for 'another future,' this thesis constitutes an attempt at both grassroots transversalism and 'academic transversalism.' Regarding the latter, it interweaves political economy, socio-cultural analysis, and philosophical reflection on the neoliberalization of South Africa. The rise of a neocolonial consumerist hegemony in South Africa is identified as a failure of democracy that carries socially and ecologically disastrous consequences. Currently, South Africa is a regional hegemon, setting the pace and seemingly also the rules for development of the entire continent. The country has long-standing affiliations with Washington and Wall Street, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. South Africa recently aligned economically with Brazil, Russia, India and China, to form the BRICS; what South African political economist Patrick Bond describes as a sub-imperial economic liaison.[25] Government leaders tout neoliberal-style development as the panacea for South African ills – socio-economic and ecological. However, the uptake of free market policies has only aggravated human inequality and worsened the condition of local environments. Racial apartheid has been replaced by class apartheid and a new kind of gendered apartheid. State sovereignty has been lost, while corporations and local financial

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[22] World Social Forum, "Another Future is Possible: Texts Drafted on the Basis of the Findings of the Thematic Groups of the Thematic Social Forum," *Rio20.net*, June 10, 2012. Available at: http://rio20.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Another-Future-is-Possible_english_web.pdf. Date accessed: September 8, 2014.

[23] S. A. Hamed Hosseini, "Occupy Cosmopolitanism: Ideological Transversalization in the Age of Global Economic Uncertainties," *Globalizations* 10/3 (2013): 428.

[24] Mogobe B. Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu* (Harare: Mond Books, 1999). This body of literature will be discussed in Chapter 5.

[25] Patrick Bond, "BRICS and the Tendency to Sub-Imperialism," *Pambazuka News*, April 10, 2014. Available at: http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category/features/91303. Date accessed: September 9, 2014.

elites run amok. Since the 1994 democratic transition, international ruling elites have claimed that 'there is no alternative' to neoliberalism, but continue to play a very active role in facilitating it. Ordinary South Africans also are complicit with this material domination, content with the comforts of consumer culture. Alternative cultural and ethical frameworks have readily been discarded, and political debilitation of the South African citizenry looms large. How to begin addressing this crisis?

The first chapter of this thesis is political-economic in disciplinary orientation. It provides an 'origin account' of neoliberalism and details how this system gradually spread across the world under the impetus of US 'modernization' ideology. Focus falls on the Washington-Wall Street policy alliance promoting development through deregulation as a cure-all for societal problems. Thereafter, the globalization of neoliberalism is tied to the implementation of 'Washington Consensus' reforms in the Third World through World Bank-IMF-WTO mechanisms. Finally, consideration is given to influential academic and activist criticisms of neoliberal policy implementation on account of its aggravation of social inequalities and its environmental fallout.

The second chapter is more historical, situating neoliberalism in a specifically South African context, and identifying it as a neocolonial phenomenon. First discussed are the colonial and apartheid periods in South Africa, and how these endeavors were animated by a capitalist economic logic. After this, in reference to seminal political economy texts on South Africa's 1994 democratic transition, the new African National Congress-led government is shown to have aligned with neoliberal institutions and businesses previously supportive of the apartheid regime. Erstwhile grassroots struggle leaders in the first democratically elected government, encouraged neoliberalism for the sake of personal enrichment. They did so in spite of their earlier socialist promises of countering the deregulation eroding national autonomy, and ending the capitalist exploitation of the black South African majority.

The disciplinary frameworks adopted in the first two chapters of this thesis risk painting neoliberalism as something facilitated exclusively by big government, big business, and Big Men. The focus on economic structures *per se*, invites the assumption that this system is beyond the influence or control of citizens. This is sociologically reductionist, and so the third thesis chapter turns to the cultural and psychological complicity of ordinary individuals – 'little people' – in this unjust socio-economic regime. The chapter examines why industrialization resulted in worker alienation and loss of subjective autonomy, and how consumerism has served as a compensatory mechanism. The desire to consume to regain self-esteem is fuelled further by the association of display with the heights of 'individualism.'

Here, the profoundly patriarchal culture underlying capitalism surfaces as constructions of gendered 'masculinity and femininity' are manipulated to economic ends.

The fourth chapter reflects more intimately on the 'South African Dream' that was developed along the lines of the American Dream ideology of hyper-consumerist bliss. This homogenizing vision of success and contentment buttresses neoliberal hegemony despite its negative impacts, which obliterate any chance of indigenous economic or cultural independence. Consumerism has undermined black South Africans' centuries-long efforts to retain indigenous cultural autonomy and livelihoods. The chapter opens with a brief overview of South African battles over colonialism and apartheid. From the 1970s, this shifts to the conflation of black liberation with consumer competence, as businesses sought a new local consumer base. Spending money on commodities became politicized. Soon indigenous communal norms and self-conceptions were replaced by competitive individual display and narcissistic gender styles exalted in the neoliberal media. The valorization of mainstream consumerist visions of gender identity has portrayed indigenous self-definition as 'backward' and unbecoming of a so-called 'modernizing people.'

The central task of this thesis is a consideration of how to apply a transversal analysis in order to deconstruct this engineered complex of politics, economics and socio-cultural organization that reinforces neoliberalism at every turn. One option is to appropriate now virtually defunct indigenous perspectives and practices to help formulate a more socially and environmentally attuned ethic. But the simple evocation of tradition will not serve a politically sophisticated post-modernizing world. A radical alternative needs to grow in dialogue with other parallel struggles for political democracy ongoing around the world. This is where the thesis becomes an exercise in political transversalism. Only a grassroots transversal dialogue is capable of contesting the homogenizing neoliberal monologue in a way that builds social movement alliances bottom up and across the board. To this end, the fifth thesis chapter reflects on the threatened status of indigenous African knowledge. The discussion, inspired by indigenous thinkers such as Ramose and others, centers on aspects of such knowledge that are critical, dialectical, and thus useful to societal critique today. Several contemporary formulations of the indigenous ethic of *ubuntu* are analyzed here. These normative statements stand in sharp contrast to the politically dualist, socially narcissistic, and ecologically alienated conventions of neoliberalism by emphasizing:

- embodied knowing;
- relational livelihood and personhood; and
- human embeddedness and dependency on nature.

After examining these features of *ubuntu*, the indigenous voice is brought into dialogue with another marginalized yet global 'minority' perspective – ecological feminism. The latter politics involves an integrated statement of environmental, postcolonial and gender concerns. The domain features of ecological feminism closely parallel those of *ubuntu*:

- non-dualistic logic;
- caring and subsistence labor; and
- material embodiment of humans within nature.

Ecofeminism is an increasingly prominent voice in the alternative globalization movement, and so might lend strength to the indigenous ethic of *ubuntu*, a world view that has not been taken as seriously as it should be. Furthermore, ecological feminists can support *ubuntu* philosophers, in steering clear of anthropocentric and idealist tendencies, and in favoring an environmentally embedded and praxis-based livelihood perspective. The Conclusion to the thesis provides a general overview of this transversal dialogue and its contemporary political relevance.

I close this Introduction with some reflexive observations on my research methodology and authorial positioning in relation to the field. The transversal political process described above occurs between distinct activist strands in the international arena. Different interest groups from diverse localities are engaging in dialogue with alliance building rather than cooptation in mind. Hosseini argues that "common grounds" are created "[t]hrough dialogical processes," but instead of homogenizing movements what is promoted are opportunities for "exchanging and accommodating positive elements of cultures, ideologies, and traditions in encountering common sources of problems."[26] Thus, a "cross-sectional consciousness" can emerge between, for example, young African American men and Middle Eastern immigrants to the US who experience comparable forms of racial discrimination.[27]

However, as noted above, this thesis involves a second order of transversalism, calling for interdisciplinary dialogue between different academic knowledges. A richer dialogical exchange between the disciplines would better map out the contemporary socio-economic terrain and its emergent crises. Indeed, this approach is of the essence if something is to be done about contemporary global crises at the level of academic critique, because as things stand the divisions between academic disciplines are unhelpful to understanding the layered complexity of such problems. Political economists, often harboring an economistic bias,

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[26] Hosseini, "Occupy Cosmopolitanism," 435.

[27] Ibid., 431.

might neglect culture, subjectivity, and environmental factors when critiquing neoliberalism. Scholars of the social sciences might focus exclusively on social or cultural dynamics while overlooking how these are tied to economic changes or to ecologies. Philosophers, in their turn, might be prone to idealism, keeping their theoretical reflection divorced from events and actions playing out in daily life. Many intellectuals also remain anthropocentric, blind to the likelihood that in the present conjuncture, ecocentric thought is now unavoidable, as it becomes increasingly clear that human beings are fully dependent on a natural environment under serious threat. Disciplinary distinctions may help to build expertise in relation to one field, but at the expense of a holistic grasp of everyday life. In fact, the German social theorist Hans Joas suggests that the divides between academic fields are so entrenched that even when scholars from different disciplines are studying the same phenomenon, they still do not talk across these divides to one another. He explains that in scholarly reflection on action theory, "little notice is taken in psychology, economics and sociology respectively of arguments put forward in debates in each of the other fields."[28] Similarly, in an article on the threatened status of sociology in a neoliberal world, the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell identifies academic insularity as a major impediment. Connell proposes that sociology should expand its horizons, for instance by including work on the relation between economics and cultural transformation, and taking seriously analyses emanating from the global South.[29] Connell stresses that for sociology to remain strong, "it must address major questions about the social world now coming into existence," and "[o]ne of these is the relationship of gender dynamics to neoliberalism."[30] Ecological feminist scholars, many of them sociologists, carry the argument further into linkages between genders, societies, economies, and ecologies. An inherent danger too, pointed out by the marxist author J. D. Bernal, is that the social sciences can be "reduced almost to impotence through the fear that they might be used to analyse and alter the economic and political bases of capitalism."[31] The environmental sociologists John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark and Richard York argue in direct reference to Bernal's work, that the critical political potential of the social sciences often is neutralized by these sciences being "seriously circumscribed by and often directly subservient to the established order of

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[28] Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Paul Keast (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), 1.

[29] Raewyn Connell, "Global Tides: Market and Gender Dynamics on a World Scale," *Social Currents* 1/1 (2014): 1, 11.

[30] Ibid., 1.

[31] J. D. Bernal, *Science in History: The Emergence of Science*, vol. 1, 3d ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 57. For Bernal's complete treatment of the state of the social sciences, see his *Science in History: The Social Sciences: Conclusion*, vol. 4, 3d ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

power."[32] This is all the more reason for transversal alliance building between different academic disciplines.

In the spirit of disciplinary transversalism, this thesis aims to construct a more holistic understanding of neoliberalism in South Africa. Thus, while in the first two chapters emphasis falls on political economy and history, chapters three and four mainly focus on sociology, cultural studies, and gender studies. Finally, in the fifth thesis chapter, and against the backdrop of insights derived from reflection on neoliberalism through the lenses of all the above disciplines, attention shifts on to grassroots transversalism through a conversation between ecological feminist thought and African philosophy. Each political voice is indispensable to exploring the question of where South Africa is heading, and how its current trajectory may be altered – as reflected in the thesis title *Whither South Africa – Neoliberalism or an Embodied Communitarian Indigenous Ethic?*

A third level of transversalism again comes into play when disciplinary constructs are challenged dialectically by political experience. This ultimately historical mode of transversal activity, although it lies beyond the scope of this thesis, is critically important because theory necessarily must be tested through praxis, and modified should it fall short. In future research, the theorizations put forward in this study will be tested at grassroots level. It is envisioned that this will entail interviews with government and social movement stakeholders, and discussion workshops with South Africans of various demographic backgrounds, to gain their reflections on the impact of neoliberalism and its attendant consumer culture. This will move this theoretical research study into an activist sphere.

Now, for a brief note on data collection for this study. The data collected for this research thesis mainly comprise published academic texts. For the first chapter, articles, chapters and books were selected that provide a standard overview of the political and economic dimensions of neoliberalism. With a few exceptions, these texts are written by scholars from the global North. In turn, the primary works consulted for the second chapter specifically focus on South African history and political economy, and are authored by scholars situated in or originally from South Africa or the global South. Particularly important to this chapter were articles, chapters and books by South African historians and political economists. This second chapter also referenced newspaper articles (print or online), published South African presidential speeches, published interviews with South African struggle and union leaders, and statements from South African government departments,

[32] John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark and Richard York, *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010), 21.

political parties, social movements and business entities, all available on the internet. For the third thesis chapter, texts were selected that explicitly identify the relation between capitalism and the emergence of consumer culture, and the link between consumer culture and hegemonic gender identities, in the global North. Accordingly, much of the literature used in this chapter is authored by sociologists, consumption studies theorists, and scholars of gender, from the global North. Some magazines, again from the global North and from the United States in particular, also were referred to. In contrast, the fourth chapter of this study drew on academic texts predominantly authored by individuals from South Africa, Southern Africa or the global South more generally. This is because this chapter focuses on the socio-cultural impact of colonization and missionary Christianity, subjectivities under apartheid, and new forms of leisure, identity, and gender ideals especially subsequent to the 1994 democratic/neoliberal transition in South Africa. Other than academic articles, chapters and monographs, this fourth chapter also utilized published chronicles of missionaries, British parliamentary papers, speeches by colonial authorities, archived market research reports, various newspaper articles (print and online), and South African magazine articles and features. The final and fifth thesis chapter, because it involves a transversal linking of ecological feminism and African philosophy, drew on postcolonial academic studies, articles and books by international ecofeminist scholars and activists, and works by African philosophers and ethicists. Therefore, about two-thirds of the works consulted for this final chapter emanates from the global South, while the remainder of the texts consulted are authored by scholars of the global North. Also, a number of works were consulted for the purposes of discussing African communitarianism as a practice well predating colonization. These texts are authored by, among others, Christian missionaries, and African or Africa-based anthropologists, archaeologists, and experts in African vernacular architecture. No data were collected through interviews or surveys, and thus no university ethics clearance was required. Rather, the study is textual and interpretative in its presentation of individuals "construct[ing] reality in interaction with their social worlds."[33] On the whole, the research aims "to *understand* how people make sense of their lives and their experiences,"[34] through the lens of a hegemonic discourse such as neoliberalism. "Discursive practices shape and reshape our ways of seeing … understanding … and even our ways of being."[35] But the

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[33] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 22.

[34] Ibid., 23.

[35] Susan Strauss and Parastou Feiz, *Discourse Analysis: A Multi-Perspective and Multi-Lingual Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 313.

assumption underpinning this study is that while individuals adopt and perpetuate hegemonic practices, they are capable of interrogating and countering them.

The 'development discourse' underpinned by free market ideology frames and damages people's self-perceptions in the global South, by characterizing their indigenous knowledge systems as fundamentally backward. To become 'modern,' Africans for example, are expected to abandon shared cultural understandings and communal traditions. This destabilization of personal identity undermines indigenous confidence, priming such groups for exploitation as worker-consumers or as new local governing and business elite enforcers of capitalist patriarchal imperatives. The process simply expands the classic colonial hegemony. The Palestinian American intellectual Edward Said disclosed similar power dynamics in the Middle East, where "[t]he very possibility of development, transformation, human movement – in the deepest sense of the word – is denied the Orient and the Oriental." Instead, he argues, 'othered' peoples are essentialized under the colonial gaze, dehumanized, and portrayed as outside of history, static and unproductive.[36]

The process of acculturation may become so deeply embodied that all too often, those who engage in liberation struggles to overthrow colonial rule, nevertheless hang on to imposed Western ideas and lifestyles. African commentators have argued that the indigenous bourgeois ruling class emerging in the wake of independence gained ascendance precisely through their complicity with the values of their erstwhile colonial oppressors – the indigenous majority becoming ever more impoverished.[37] The argument of this thesis is that alternative values and aspirations are urgent today, given the politically numbing culture of neoliberal consumerism. It is proposed that the indigenous African ethic of *ubuntu* contains a number of valuable counter-hegemonic practices which can help catalyze this kind of transformation, as well as modeling alternatives for activists in the global North.

With regard to my own social practice and positioning in the text: I am a white South African woman with a middle-class upbringing and opportunities, yet I choose to advance the indigenous African ethic as an antidote to neoliberalism. In this, my privilege leaves me vulnerable to censure possibly as 'hypocritical' and perhaps also, for being inexperienced in indigenous struggle. As an academic observer of African cultures, I take an 'etic' approach,

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[36] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 208.

[37] Kwame Nkrumah, Author's Note to *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization*, 2d rev. ed. (London: Heinemann, 1970); Abiola Irele, "Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa," in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert G. Mosley (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), 279; and Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Africa in Search of a New Mode of Politics," in *African Perspectives on Development*, eds. Ulf Himmelstrand, Kabiru Kinyanjui and Edward Mburugu (London: James Currey, 1994), 251.

which “involves studying behavior from a position outside the system, examining two or more cultures and comparing them, imposing a structure created by the analyst, and using criteria that are considered absolute or universal.”[38] On the other hand, when I identify synergies between the *ubuntu* ethic and ecological feminism, as a woman I am motivated by an ‘emic’ or insider position, but rely on ‘etic’ categories to draw out convergencies between the two perspectives. Finally, the study is undertaken in the spirit of a dialectical transversalism that is committed to encouraging a healthy interaction between lived political praxis and academic innovation.

[38] Karen Miller-Loessie and John N. Parker, “Cross-Cultural Social Psychology,” in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. John Delamater (New York: Springer, 2006), 532.

Chapter 1: Neoliberalism and the Development Syndrome

In a recent article entitled "Where in the World Does Neoliberalism Come From?," the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell and the Lebanese cultural theorist Nour Dados criticize the standard account of neoliberalism for privileging "social experience of the global North."[39] This rendition of neoliberalism, they argue, is inflected in either of two ways. On the one hand, neoliberalism may be conceived as a "system of ideas." What is then detailed is how Keynes was rejected by prominent economists, whose liberalizing approach was implemented by US and British leaders. Liberalization of the global South was promoted by powerful institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Alternatively, neoliberalism can be accounted for in reference to changing economic mechanisms, resulting from crises of profitability in the 1970s, leading to the increasing financialization of economies. Connell and Dados hold that in both inflections, neoliberalism is perceived as a creature of the US and Europe, which gets implanted within hapless nations in the global South.[40]

For Connell and Dados, such accounts overlook neoliberalizing moves made within South American countries well before the Reagan-Thatcher push, and so neglect Southern leaders' adoption of neoliberalism "*as a development strategy*."[41] The authors maintain that if one focuses on Southern commentators' own perspectives on their countries, a far more "enriched understanding of neoliberalism"[42] is to be had. Voices from the global South reveal that different countries have idiosyncratic motives for adopting neoliberal policies. They also disclose governing elite complicity with foreign institutions and corporations – South African political economist Moeletsi Mbeki's criticism of the "parasitical" indigenous ruling class being a case in point.[43] For Connell and Dados, these pragmatic voices are muffled by the circulation of the standard Northern account of neoliberalism among the intelligentsia and leaders of the global South. Accordingly, developing countries all too easily are framed as victims of neoliberalism even by governments themselves. Thus opposition leaders "paint their domestic opponents as puppets of Washington."[44]

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[39] Raewyn Connell and Nour Dados, "Where in the World Does Neoliberalism Come From? The Market Agenda in Southern Perspective," *Theory and Society* 43/2 (2014): 118.

[40] Ibid., 119-121.

[41] Ibid., 122.

[42] Ibid., 132.

[43] Ibid., 125-126.

[44] Ibid., 134.

Connell and Dados make legitimate points, but they themselves seem to overlook an important body of work generated by scholars situated in the global South. These studies begin with the standard Northern account of neoliberalism as a system of ideas and/or an economic development, but then shift focus on to the nuanced manifestation of neoliberalism within the particular territories. The work of Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva and Durban-based socialist scholar-activist Patrick Bond are cases in point. Indeed, it is useful to give the standard account of neoliberalism, before investigating how it unfolds in a specific country. The reasons for such an approach include: (1) the globalized nature of the contemporary world; (2) the ideological power of the Northern, neoliberal development paradigm in the global South; (3) the coercive power of Northern, neoliberal institutions in these terrains; and (4) the inherently destructive impacts of neoliberal policies and foreign institutions and firms within the global South. The standard account thus provides the backdrop against which the nuanced manifestation of neoliberalism in a developing country can be identified and analyzed. In other words, when country-specific analyses are examined following the generalized account of neoliberalism, they gain perspective through it. This problematizes Connell and Dados's claim that the generalized account causes scholars to "downplay … the agency of Southern actors," and to ignore the fact that "[r]esistance to neoliberalism is not a matter of throwing out an alien intrusion, but requires deeper local social politics."[45] The present chapter provides an overview of the standard political-economic account of neoliberalism, as it is elaborated by predominantly Northern scholars. The focus falls first on the Washington-Wall Street alliance that coalesced around a US-instigated idea of development, and then shifts on to the rise of the World Bank-IMF-WTO complex and its disastrous impact on the global South. It is against the backdrop of all of this that the succeeding chapter considers the neoliberalization of South Africa.

Washington-Wall Street policy alliance

American 'modernization' ideology

The universalizing, coercive bent of the American vision of development was evidenced as early as 1949, when Harry Truman delivered his presidential inauguration speech. As the German sociologist Wolfgang Sachs points out, during his inaugural address Truman promoted ever increasing production and technological advancement as key to the well-being

[45] Ibid.

of all nations, regardless of their economic, political, social and cultural differences, nuances, and dreams. Sachs holds that this was the first time that a "world view" was prescribed in which "all the peoples of the earth were to move along the same track and aspire to only one goal – development." [46] Such a prescription, although admittedly hubristic, was understandable considering the profile that the US developed especially during and after the Second World War as the undisputed leader of the 'free world.' The country had already attained considerable economic power after World War I, going from a predominantly "borrowing nation" to one of the few industrialized countries "with its manufacturing base intact [and hence] … with money to invest abroad."[47] Then, during World War II the US adopted a leadership role in matters of "planning, coordination, and supplying of the Allied side,"[48] and it emerged from the war as the productive giant of the free world. That is, while in the aftermath of the war "the productive capacities of France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Japan [were] reduced by about 50 percent of their immediate prewar levels … the United States emerged … with a 72 percent increase in its Gross National Product over 1939."[49] Further, in the interest of maintaining its ideological and economic preeminence over its Western European counterparts, the US implemented the Marshall Plan in 1947. Although the Marshall Plan was ostensibly designed to aid in the reconstruction of Western Europe in the aftermath of the war, critics indicate that it was motivated, at least in equal measure, by US self-interest. The American historian Michael Hogan, for example, argues that American policymakers believed that recovery of "powerful trading partners" in Europe was crucial to a "dynamic economy" in the US. They also were fully cognizant of the fact that Western European markets and natural, industrial and manpower assets were vulnerable to appropriation by "a hostile power or coalition," were the United States not to capture them first. Thus, central to the Marshall Plan was the "need to preserve American access to

[46] Wolfgang Sachs, *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 3.

[47] Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 31-32.

[48] William R. Thompson, "Global War and the Foundations of US Systemic Leadership," in *America, War and Power: Defining the State, 1775-2005*, eds. Lawrence Sondhaus and A. James Fuller (New York: Routledge, 2007), 160.

[49] Terrence McDonough, "The Construction of Social Structures of Accumulation in US History," in *Social Structures of Accumulation: The Political Economy of Growth and Crisis*, eds. David M. Kotz, Terrence McDonough and Michael Reich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 117.

Europe's resources while denying them to potential rivals."[50] In related vein, an attempt was made to ensure US economic preeminence on a global scale through universalizing the US vision of development, and through advocating free trade as instrumental to its attainment. Over time, it became clear that trade liberalization did not in fact transform underdeveloped and developing countries into techno-economic Utopias[51] like the US. However, it undoubtedly served US interests as governments were pressured into discarding "nationalist economic policies" in order to become part of the new, "worldwide capitalist economy open to American investment and export."[52]

Any opposition to trade liberalization and the uptake of a liberal capitalist development plan, however legitimate, was framed as suspiciously totalitarian by the American regime. In short, the US regarded adoption of liberal capitalist principles as a sign of democratization, while it "associated autarkic economic policies with totalitarian political regimes."[53] Thus, Truman's 1949 speech justified the need to develop 'poor' countries on the grounds that they were, in their current undeveloped state, extremely vulnerable to communism – that "false philosophy which has made such headway throughout the world, misleading many peoples and adding to their sorrows and their difficulties."[54] The ideological impetus necessary for countries to accept the US politico-economic agenda for the world, was augmented by its military preeminence. It was the US that dropped the first atomic bomb, and subsequent to the end of the war this country actively sought to position itself as the largest nuclear power in the world. The American historian Shane Maddock, in his *Nuclear Apartheid*, indicates that Truman cast a blind eye to "Anglo-American wartime agreements and collaboration [to] … proclaim … a U.S. nuclear monopoly." Furthermore, Truman and his successors attempted to retain this monopoly when the Soviet Union and Britain began engaging in nuclear research in the late 1940s and early 1950s. They did this by on the one hand initiating the development of the hydrogen bomb, and on the other hand "working to make the British program dependent on U.S. aid and influence."[55]

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[50] Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 27.

[51] Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 3.

[52] McDonough, "The Construction of Social Structures of Accumulation in US History," 118.

[53] Hogan, *The Marshall Plan*, 26.

[54] Harry S. Truman, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 48.

[55] Shane J. Maddock, *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), x.

In comparison to the large-scale liberalization and *laissez-faire* economics of the later neoliberal era, American economics of the 1950s and 1960s was still largely Keynesian in orientation. That is, although the US economy was organized along liberal capitalist lines, important emphasis nonetheless was placed on the necessity of state intervention for economic stability. This relative conservatism of post-war American economics is well articulated by the international social justice advocate Susan George, who comments that "[i]n 1945 or 1950, if you had seriously proposed any of the ideas and policies in today's standard neo-liberal toolkit you would have been laughed off the stage or sent to the insane asylum."[56] Yet, after the economic downturn in the US in the 1970s, the deregulation of the market in Britain from the 1970s onward, and determined Reagan-Thatcher efforts to make their nations more receptive to free market thinking, the rise of this 'mad' neoliberal economic framework was well underway.[57] Slowly but surely, state intervention in any form whatsoever became regarded as a major source of economic 'stagflation' – a situation in which economic stagnation is combined with escalating inflation. In the mid-1970s the US descended into its most significant economic slump since the Great Depression. The automobile industry was badly affected, corporate profits were at a standstill, and inflation was on the rise, all of which signaled "a dramatic decline in the international position of the U.S. economy as a whole."[58] In 1973/1974 corporations attempted to counter the crisis in which they found themselves by generating the impression that existing economic problems derived from government overregulation alone. This allowed them to frame themselves as the panacea for ills facing the American people. If corporations could be freed from burdensome regulation, or so it was argued, the US economy would improve drastically. However, the American political scientist Stan Luger indicates that rather than stemming from government overregulation, the economic slump was actually a "sign … of the end of the American century (the period of unparalleled economic prosperity that followed World War II)," and that "[c]oming to grips with its unraveling transformed the political agenda to the advantage of corporate lobbyists."[59] The second major slump that edged the US even closer to fully-fledged neoliberalism occurred in the early 1980s. By 1982, among other problems, the GNP of the United States

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[56] Susan George, cited in Alex Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 2.

[57] Alex Callinicos indicates that some Americans and Britons vehemently opposed the implementation of neoliberal policies, most notably American air traffic controllers in 1981, and British miners in 1984/1985. Alex Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 2.

[58] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 150.

[59] Stan Luger, *Corporate Power, American Democracy, and the Automobile Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 90-91.

had plummeted nearly 2 percent in real terms, unemployment had risen to nearly 11 percent, and "the trade deficit exceeded the largest in U.S. history up until that time."[60]

Accordingly, in the early 1980s US president Ronald Reagan, as well as British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, joined the chorus of corporate lobbyists steadily implementing an unregulated free market economy. This was done with the ideological backing of increasingly powerful innovators in law and economics who viewed "free markets as a governance model and adopted economic efficiency, rather than full protection of public health and the environment, as a major goal."[61] Reagan, for example, deregulated the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well as agencies responsible for worker security, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Product Safety Council.[62] In addition, the Reagan administration deregulated the US economy more generally through significant tax cuts and various acts, such as the Garn-St. Germain Act (1982) that drastically reduced regulation and so "revolutionized the banking industry;" the Bus Regulatory Reform Act (1982) that allowed firms to set their own bus fares, change bus routes, etcetera; and the Shipping Act (1984) that liberalized shipping rates, among other measures.[63] Through such deregulation the US set up a fully-fledged neoliberal regime during the 1980s – "a period when global economic connections began to intensify in increased flows of cross-border foreign direct investment and world financial markets took off."[64] At the same time Thatcher applied herself to the reform of the British economy through, among other measures, the substantial deregulation of bank and building society lending, and the abolition of hire-purchase restrictions and exchange controls. But perhaps the most important form of financial deregulation introduced under Thatcher was "the so-called 'Big Bang' liberalization of City

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[60] John S. Odell, "Growing Trade and Growing Conflict between Latin America and the United States," in *The United States and Latin America in the 1980s*, eds. Kevin J. Middlebrook and Carlos Rico (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 275.

[61] David Driesen, "Alternatives to Regulation? Market Mechanisms and the Environment," in *The Oxford Handbook of Regulation*, eds. Robert Baldwin, Martin Cave and Martin Lodge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 205.

[62] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2002), 43.

[63] Anthony S. Campagna, *The Economy in the Reagan Years: The Economic Consequences of the Reagan Administrations* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 100. Notably, Campagna, a Keynesian economic historian, argues that the Garn-St. Germain "Act … actually exacerbated the problems that later led to massive bank failures."

[64] Nina Bandelj and Elizabeth Sowers, *Economy and State: A Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 198.

financial markets in 1986 [that] removed limitations on mergers between different types of financial firms, lifted trade restrictions imposed by the City (such as minimum commissions) and established a system of self-regulation."[65]

In terms of setting a precedent for the liberalization and deregulation of the world, then, the United States and Britain led the way proactively. That said, neoliberal reforms had been adopted even earlier by other regimes such as Augusto Pinochet's in Chile and Turgut Özal's in Turkey.[66] Yet, these countries were not global hegemons like Britain or the US, and so could not introduce any global paradigmatic shift toward neoliberalism.[67] For the Zimbabwe-born British marxist Alex Callinicos, what definitively marked the beginning of neoliberal hegemony proper was the fall of communism.[68] Revolts against communist organizations were encouraged by the US, which also pushed "successor regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to undergo 'shock therapy' that dragged their economies abruptly from state controlled autarky to incorporation in a highly competitive world market."[69] Neoliberal hegemony was strengthened further through the debt crisis created by the economic slump of the 1980s, because this crisis forced numerous Third World governments to accept neoliberal economic policies and so abandon any notion of national sovereignty and protection of domestic markets.[70] The marxist scholar David Harvey argues that neoliberalism in fact involves "[c]risis *generation*, management, and manipulation on the world stage," which have "evolved into the fine art of deliberative redistribution of wealth from poor countries to the rich."[71] These themes are further developed in Canadian journalist Naomi Klein's path-breaking work *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.

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[65] Terrence Casey, *The Social Context of Economic Change in Britain: Between Policy and Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 50.

[66] Connell and Dados, "Where in the World Does Neoliberalism Come From?," 122.

[67] Anthony Leysens and Lisa Thompson, "The Evolution of the Global Political Economy," in *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa*, 3d ed., eds. Patrick J. McGowan, Scarlett Cornelissen and Philip Nel (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 81.

[68] Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*, 6.

[69] Ibid., 2-3.

[70] Ibid., 2.

[71] Emphasis added. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162.

The Washington Consensus

The standard neoliberal framework to be adopted in both ex-Communist countries and the Third World found its clearest articulation in a 1989 paper by the English economist John Williamson. In it, he coined the term 'Washington Consensus,' which refers to the policies that Washington, D.C. analysts apparently considered "widely desirable" in the development of Latin American countries in mid-1989.[72] As Williamson indicates in a later reflection on the implementation of these policies, both "sympathetic observers [and] … critics" of the Consensus regarded it "as offering a policy prescription (and as having broader application beyond Latin America)."[73] He further contends that the Consensus has indeed found global implementation, and in reference to this he praises the neoliberal shift in South Asia and China, while expressing disdain at sub-Saharan Africa's "spott[y] and grudging" progress in this regard, which has often taken place "under foreign pressure rather than out of conviction."[74]

The Washington Consensus reforms identified by Williamson were (1) fiscal discipline; (2) re-ordering public expenditure priorities; (3) tax reform; (4) liberalizing interest rates; (5) a competitive exchange rate; (6) trade liberalization; (7) liberalization of inward foreign direct investment; (8) privatization; (9) deregulation; and (10) property rights.[75] All such reforms pointed to a rejection of state regulation of economic matters, and Williamson accordingly suggests that "[t]he Washington Consensus was a … response to a leading role of the state in initiating industrialization and import substitution [and the] … Consensus said that this era was over."[76]

However, it is very problematic to claim that all governments adopted a strictly 'hands-off' approach to economic growth within the new Washington Consensus schema. While it may be true that neoliberal reforms in countries of the global South terminated these nations' sovereignty particularly in matters of economics, the US government continued to

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[72] John Williamson, "The Washington Consensus as Policy Prescription for Development," in *Development Challenges in the 1990s: Leading Policymakers Speak from Experience*, eds. Timothy Besley and Roberto Zagha (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 33.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 43.

[75] Williamson, "A Short History of the Washington Consensus," 16.

[76] John Williamson, 1990, cited in Narcis Serra, Shari Spiegel and Joseph E. Stiglitz, "Introduction: From the Washington Consensus towards a New Global Governance," in *The Washington Consensus Reconsidered: Towards a New Global Governance*, eds. Narcis Serra and Joseph E. Stiglitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

play an active and decisive role in global neoliberal reform. Further, the national interests of the US have actually been promoted by global institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, via their implementation of Washington Consensus prescriptions. As Callinicos puts it:

> At a global level, the imposition of neo-liberal orthodoxy at least in part reflected a conscious strategy pursued by successful American administrations in order to maintain US hegemony in the post-Cold War era: the very name attached to these policies – the Washington Consensus – is symptomatic of the role played in their implementation by the institutional complex binding together the US Treasury, the IMF, and the World Bank.[77]

Yet, the leverage of the US government in both national and global economic matters derived not only from its position as global hegemon, but also from its handling of the termination of the Bretton Woods system. In terms of the Bretton Woods Agreement, which was in operation from about 1946 to 1973, exchange rates of participating non-US countries were fixed against the US dollar, while the US in its turn exchanged dollars for gold at the set price of $35/ounce. [78] This system was criticized widely by proponents of deregulation and liberalization, because it restricted many of the participating countries in terms of both trade in goods and services, and capital movement. Trade restrictions were lifted steadily, but other restrictions remained, which while not "mak[ing] it impossible for capital to flow between countries … greatly reduced the ease with which it could do so." Hence the architecture of the Bretton Woods system, characterized as it was by "*fixed exchange rates* and *imperfect capital mobility*,"[79] did not sit well with advocates of neoliberalism and particularly not with those who also sought to augment US hegemony. As the Scottish political theorist Peter Gowan explains, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in fact was welcomed by the Nixon administration, precisely because it wanted "to break out of a set of institutionalised arrangements which limited US dominance in international monetary politics in order to establish a new regime which would give it monocratic power over international monetary affairs." The new regime would thus form "part of a strategy for restoring the dominance of US capitals through turning the international monetary system into a dollar-standard regime."[80] This involved nothing short of completely disconnecting the US dollar from the gold-exchange standard, so that it could become the global reserve currency. The main

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[77] Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*, 3.

[78] Peter J. Montiel, *International Macroeconomics* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 161.

[79] Ibid., 159.

[80] Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble: Washington's Faustian Bid for World Dominance* (London: Verso, 1999), 19.

implication of delinking the dollar from gold was that the exchange price of the US dollar could now be decided by the US government. Also, exchange rates between the main world currencies were no longer fixed, which allowed the "US government … alone among governments [to] move the exchange price of the dollar against other currencies by huge amounts without suffering the economic consequences that would face other states which attempted to do the same."[81] Finally, this new regime aimed at handing the reins of international financial relations over to private financial institutions instead of leaving the Central Banks in control.[82] It is because of this alliance between the state and private financial firms that Gowan alternately refers to the dollar-standard regime as the "Dollar-Wall Street Regime."[83] These changes allowed Wall Street to flourish, which in combination with actual increases in productivity and output, led to a situation where "hype and economic reality were hopelessly intermingled in the euphoric … belief that the 'New Economy' represented America's liberation from the restraints of the business cycle."[84] However, the success of the New Economy (1992-2000) was only facilitated through formidable austerity measures including "a historically unprecedented repression of real wages." And the boom was also only sustained beyond 1997 because of quasi-Keynesian interference on the part of the Federal Reserve Board, which drastically reduced interest rates and salvaged a major hedge fund.[85] Such tight enmeshment of Washington and Wall Street in national and global economic governance is given clear description by the British development theorist Richard Peet:

> Behind the political interests represented by the Washington bureaucracies we discern a more compelling power – that of the giant corporations, specifically the New York investment banks. Global economic policy employed by an increasingly coordinated governance institution … comes from a Washington-Wall Street Alliance. The economic world produced by global governance is that envisioned in the bankers' minds – except that a poverty of vision produces a wild capitalism that moves beyond the control of even the most powerful of institutions.[86]

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[81] Ibid., 20.

[82] Peter Gowan, "The Globalization Gamble: The Dollar-Wall Street Regime and Its Consequences," 1998, 9-10, *marxsite.com*. Available at: http://marxsite.com/Gowan_DollarWallstreetRegime.pdf. Date accessed: October 5, 2014.

[83] Gowan, *The Global Gamble*, 19.

[84] Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*, 29-30.

[85] Ibid., 41.

[86] Richard Peet, *The Unholy Trinity: The IMF, World Bank and WTO* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 26.

In light of this, the sympathy that the US government expressed toward corporations during the financial crisis of 2008 is relatively unsurprising. In short, 2008 saw "the greatest nationalizations [of major corporations and banks] in world history," evidencing the neoliberal hypocrisy of the United States as well as the United Kingdom. As Alex Callinicos argues, "[n]eoliberalism proved to be for dummies – something that the states at the centre of the system imposed on others but didn't practise themselves when they got into economic difficulties."[87] Major companies were taken over by the US and British governments, and of the five Wall Street investment banks, only Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley survived the crash. Further, to ameliorate the effects of the impending economic recession, the Obama administration provided a stimulus package of well over 5 percent of the 2008 US GDP, and bought "up nearly $1½ trillion of mortgage-backed securities in a determined effort to drive down mortgage rates and thereby … help reverse the continuing fall in house prices."[88] In the aftermath of the crisis, other governments too have had to continually rescue or write off failing companies. Early in 2009, for example, the German banking regulator indicated "that the scale of the bank write-offs would be more than €800bn, about a third of Germany's annual GDP, compared to the capital and reserves of its monetary and financial institutions amounting to only €441.5bn."[89]

World Bank-IMF-WTO implementation

The Bretton Woods system may have come to an end, but the two institutions that had been created at the same time as it proved stunningly resilient and indeed instrumental to the globalization of neoliberalism. These institutions are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), or World Bank. In the run-up to the Bretton Woods conference, ideas for a new, post-war economic order were being formulated by Harry Dexter White of the US Treasury, and John Maynard Keynes who was at the time an advisor to the British Treasury. White wanted a "stabilization fund" which would reduce barriers to trade by synchronizing countries' monetary policies. In addition, he stressed the need for a major bank, which would invest both in European countries negatively impacted by the war, and in countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia which did not at that stage meet "world market standards" – all in order to transform these countries into "healthy

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[87] Alex Callinicos, *Bonfire of Illusions: The Twin Crises of the Liberal World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 8-9.

[88] Ibid., 83, 91-92.

[89] Ibid., 88.

trading partners" for the US.[90] Keynes, on the other hand, envisioned the creation of an international currency union with its own monetary unit, which would operate as a bank for all countries across the globe. For Keynes, such a union could comprise a global economic government of sorts, but very importantly, would operate in terms of policies that neither permit the accumulation of power in the hands of a few at the expense of the majority, nor lead to the perpetration of social injustices and other harms. Thus, as the globalization theorist Catherine Caufield indicates, Keynes proposed that interest should be charged on overdrafts as well as on trade surpluses, because he believed "that imbalances in trade were the responsibility of both the debtor and the creditor nations."[91] Understandably, this was something that the US, a major creditor at the time, could not tolerate. So while the establishment of the IMF and the IBRD was agreed to at the conference, Keynes's more radical ideas were shunned. The creation of a third institution to manage trade relations between nation-states was also proposed and was supported by both Keynes and White. Yet, this idea only came to fruition in 1995 with the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

However, what is significant here is that while many people thought that the IMF and the World Bank were established on the basis of multilateral consensus, and while many still regard them as institutions

> designed to regulate international economic relations in such a way that the world would never again suffer the threat of total disruption … [t]he historical reality is quite different. Of all the 'great powers' the USA had been most averse to being ruled by anything resembling an independent institution … [So] the USA came to dominate the post-war international economic agenda … [and t]he IMF and the World Bank … were set up as US-dominated institutions, as collectivist fronts for US international economic policy – arms … of a new world order characterized by a more subtle, effective imperialism.[92]

Caufield, in her *Masters of Illusion*, examines how and to what extent the IMF and the World Bank in particular facilitate an imperialistic form of globalization, involving the implementation of neoliberal policies even in 'recipient' nations completely averse to this imposed framework. She also analyzes the degree to which such imperialistic encroachment, rather than leading to the improvement of recipient countries, generates immense levels of social injustice and environmental harm. In short, as discussed in what follows, over time it has become clear that Keynes's vision for the future operations of the World Bank has been

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[90] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 40.

[91] Ibid., 41.

[92] Peet, *The Unholy Trinity*, 24.

turned on its head. Keynes wished for the Bank to loan money "only for proper purposes and in proper ways, after due enquiries by experts and technicians, so that there will be safeguards against squandering and waste and extravagance which were not present with many of the ill-fated loans made between the wars."[93] However, for the most part, World Bank loans have been motivated by dreams of empire, have wreaked social and ecological havoc because of careless planning and reckless implementation, and have largely benefited only the extravagantly rich while further impoverishing those truly in need.

Mixed motives

As already indicated, the creation of the IBRD/World Bank was motivated primarily by the need to reconstruct war-torn European countries for the sake of US trade interests. That is, it was reasoned that by facilitating within them sufficient production and economic growth through IBRD assistance, these countries should be able to engage in 'healthy' trade with America. Also in view was the possibility of developing Third World countries into similarly capable trading partners. Yet, after providing a mere four loans – to Denmark, Holland, Luxembourg, and France on condition that the latter remove all Communists from its cabinet – the Bank's lending capacity was almost entirely exhausted. In response to this, and at least partly because the Marshall Plan "dwarfed the World Bank and made its [European] reconstruction role obsolete,"[94] Bank president John McCloy promoted a shift in the Bank's primary lending focus from Europe to Latin America, Africa and Asia. McCloy was succeeded by Eugene Black, under whose authority the Bank first introduced 'program loans' that were dispensed on condition that recipient countries adopt neoliberal reforms. These loans proved enticing because of their size and quick disbursement, and because they could be used for almost any purpose whatsoever, provided the recipient country implements the

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[93] John Maynard Keynes, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 43. From an alternative globalization perspective which seeks the dismantling of the capitalist system, Keynes's faith in managed capitalism is problematic. However, his insistence on the need for socially and environmentally ethical behavior on the part of capitalist entities remains valid.

[94] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 53. From 1947 to 1952 the Marshall Plan involved the "disburse[ment of] about US$ 13 billion, most of which went to the United Kingdom (24.3 per cent), France (20.2 per cent), Italy (11 per cent), West Germany (10 per cent), and the Netherlands (8.5 per cent)." Governance scholar José Magone holds, however, that the Marshall Plan failed in a major respect, as it could not create the "single European market" that would have made it "much easier and cheaper for American firms to distribute their goods." José M. Magone, *Contemporary European Politics: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 58.

neoliberal policies dictated by the Bank. During Black's tenure, however, such program loans were made to developed countries alone, the only exception being Iran which in 1957 received a $75 million "general development loan."[95] But although the Bank was thus not able to achieve truly global reach at that stage, it did manage to exercise considerable influence over the politico-economic and other affairs of recipient countries. Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, chief of the World Bank's economic advisory staff from 1947 to 1953, indeed emphasized the necessity of Bank interference in these countries' organization on the premise that a "critical mass of investment, national economic planning, *and* programming,"[96] were requisites for economic growth and augmented trading capacity.

Toward the end of the 1950s, however, World Bank staff began to acknowledge that like any business, the Bank's expansion depended on enlarging its client base. Yet, there were ever fewer 'creditworthy' countries judged capable of repaying their loans. Developing states, though, scrambled to counter the Bank's resistance against lending to uncreditworthy countries, not least because they could not receive much-needed loans from other private lending institutions. International observers placed even more pressure on the Bank to assist these states. It was argued that if the Bank wished to uphold its public image as a branch of the United Nations, it would have to aid developing countries rather than sitting back and watching them collapse. The Bank consequently established the International Development Association (IDA) in 1960, to provide financing to countries regarded as credit risks. Given this status of recipient countries, then, IDA loans came to differ significantly from traditional IBRD loans. Firstly, capital was not raised on the bond market but generated through pledges made by member nations on a three-yearly basis. Secondly, IDA loans involved preferential interest rates as well as repayment and grace periods. That is, unlike IBRD loans that demanded almost market-related interest rates, offered only a five-year grace period and required repayment within fifteen to twenty years, IDA loans carried far lower interest rates, and allowed a ten-year grace period and a thirty-five to forty-year repayment period.[97] Black had serious reservations about this kind of lending,[98] but his successor George Woods proceeded to actively encourage it. Woods argued that rather than being a stickler for creditworthiness, the Bank should realize its leverage in coercing these currently

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[95] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 57-58.

[96] Emphasis added. Bruce Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth: The World Bank, Environmental Impoverishment and the Crisis of Development* (London: Earthscan, 1994), 73.

[97] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 66.

[98] Richard Jolly et al., *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 83.

uncreditworthy countries to adopt and consistently implement Bank-style economic policies. The promptings of Woods and of other proponents of IDA lending gradually led to a situation in which what was increasingly being "talk[ed] about with … member countries [were] fundamental policies to govern their day-to-day economic decisions,"[99] as Woods himself explained. Robert McNamara succeeded Woods as World Bank president in April 1968 and became an even more fervent supporter of such lending. After only a few weeks in office he announced that the Bank would grant over $11 billion of loans in the coming five years, more than the total of all World Bank loans made during the first two decades of the institution's existence.[100] Through the support of Wall Street, McNamara managed to raise an enormous amount of capital within a matter of months. And unlike his predecessors, he was wholly committed to remedying the failure of the 'trickle-down effect,' which saw local elites rather than the needy majority enjoying the benefits of World Bank loans. McNamara clearly articulated this aim in a speech delivered in Nairobi in 1973, in which he stressed that while GNP has increased significantly, the poor have not really benefited and continue to suffer abominably while local business and governing elites enrich themselves. To this he added that the elimination of "absolute poverty by the end of the century" should be striven for, implying "the elimination of malnutrition and illiteracy, the reduction of infant mortality and the raising of life expectancy standards to those of the developed nations."[101] McNamara's goals may have been commendable, and he may have been innovative by focusing on nutrition rather than per capita income as a measurement of poverty. However, he remained quite dogmatic in his insistence that economic growth alone could eradicate poverty, and was highly reductionist in his definition or measurement of poverty itself. As Wolfgang Sachs argues in *Planet Dialectics*:

> The trouble with such definitions is that they reduce the living reality of hundreds of millions of people to an animalistic description. In an attempt to find an objective and meaningful criterion, the ground was clear for a conception of reality that reduces the rich variety of what people might hope and struggle for to one bare piece of data about survival … Reducing whole ways of life to calorie levels does, to be sure, make the international administration of development aid a lot easier. It allows a neat classification of the clientele (without which worldwide strategies would be pointless) and it serves as permanent proof of a

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[99] George Woods, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 91.

[100] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 98.

[101] Robert McNamara, cited in Wolfgang Sachs, *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 6, 9.

> state of global emergency (without which doubt may be cast on the legitimacy of some development agencies).
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> This readjusted idea of poverty enabled the development paradigm to be rescued at the beginning of the 1970s. In its official version, the fulfilment of basic needs *strictly called for economic growth*, or at least growth 'with redistribution.' The link to the previous decade's dogma of growth was thus established.[102]

Indeed, reducing all phenomena to mathematically quantifiable entities has been one of the hallmarks of the Bretton Woods institutions, and it involves a willful ignoring of cultural diversity and with it, the validity of alternative political-economic and socio-cultural paradigms. McNamara, by erroneously defining subsistence-oriented, frugal communities as 'absolutely poor,' paved the way for the further strengthening of the World Bank's hold on underdeveloped and developing countries. By beginning to focus on 'helping' those who were thus construed most needy – and who incidentally comprised the majority in economically impoverished yet resource-rich countries – the World Bank could continue to legitimate its 'development mission' indefinitely. Further, it could "cloth[e] self-interest in generosity,"[103] because the overt benevolence of its mission masked both its cruel overlordship in recipient countries, and the swelling of its profits through interest payments made by indebted governments. As ecological feminists observe, it is through policies such as these, that the masculine productivist sector colonizes and exploits the reproductive sector.[104]

Structural adjustment lending

Toward the end of his tenure, McNamara acknowledged that his plan of aiding the 'absolutely poor' through allocating ever more and larger development loans had failed. The debt of Third World countries was spiraling out of control, and the act of pulling subsistence-oriented communities into the productive market economy rendered these people destitute. Fear of a balance-of-payment crisis was growing and McNamara, prompted by the World Bank's Operations Division head Ernest Stern, now advanced the necessity of structural adjustment lending. The IMF had introduced a similar stabilization program somewhat earlier, and McNamara's structural adjustment loans (SALs) would remain closely aligned with it by

[102] Emphasis added. Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 10.

[103] Ibid., 3.

[104] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, xii; and Ariel Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx and the Postmodern* (London: Zed Books, 1997), 91-92.

being offered only to countries already participating in the IMF program.[105] Through these loans and programs, the World Bank and the IMF in time exercised unprecedented influence over Third World nations. As Richard Peet indicates, the IMF had already by the mid-1970s adopted a "more interventionist stance" by making its loans to Third World countries dependent on their governments introducing austerity measures. And while such "neoliberal conditionality, together with other related policy moves [like] … capital account liberalization," may have improved recipient countries' short-term economic outlook, over time working-class and unemployed people were pushed into unprecedentedly dire situations owing to forced cuts in public spending, among other things.[106] The World Bank followed suit later in the 1970s when, "[f]aced with a distinct rightward shift in political conditions … [it] became involved in structural adjustment employing neoliberal policies, increasingly in concert with the IMF."[107]

Structural adjustment loans might have been the conceptual offspring of Stern and McNamara, but no one disbursed them more readily than the latter's successor Alden Clausen, who was elected by the Reagan administration,[108] and served as World Bank president from 1981 to 1986. Clausen openly abandoned McNamara's ethical vision of poverty eradication and instigated a shift in the Bank's focus toward economic liberalization as an end-in-itself. Such economic liberalization, it was proposed, by default would solve the borrowing country's problems, from "inflation, unemployment, underinvestment, poor public services, inefficient public bureaucracies, unsustainable debt burdens … [to] even lack of personal freedom."[109] Clausen also adopted an aggressive, "total-immersion" approach to

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[105] Howard Stein, *Beyond the World Bank Agenda: An Institutional Approach to Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 33.

[106] Peet, *The Unholy Trinity*, 24-25.

[107] Ibid., 25.

[108] Because the US is the major shareholder in the World Bank, the unstated rule is that it chooses the World Bank president. This fact evidences what may be termed a 'Washington-World Bank' alliance similar to the Washington-Wall Street alliance discussed earlier. The Filipino political theorist Walden Bello contends that the US Treasury is actually explicit about its influence on the Bank. For example, a 1982 US Treasury Department report indicated that "[t]he United States was instrumental in shaping the structure and mission of the World Bank along Western, marked-oriented lines … We were also responsible … for the emergence of a corporate entity with a weighted voting run by a board of directors, headed by a high-caliber American-dominated management … As a charter member and major shareholder in the World Bank, the United States secured the sole right to a permanent seat on the Bank's Board of Directors." US Treasury Department, *Assessment of US Participation in the Multilateral Development Banks in the 1980s*, 1982, cited in Walden Bello, *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 59.

[109] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 145.

adjustment lending, through enforcing reforms overnight rather than allowing for their gradual introduction. In addition, such reforms had a massive "impact … on the citizens of … borrowers,"[110] as they almost always demanded drastic cuts in public spending, and involved riding roughshod over these countries' cultural and other differences from the industrialized global North.

In their *Paths to a Green World*, sustainability scholar Jennifer Clapp and international relations theorist Peter Dauvergne provide an illuminating discussion of both principal SAL reforms, and the main reasons for indebted countries' high demand for SALs in spite of the loss of national autonomy that they require. They argue that institutions such as the World Bank, and proponents of economic liberalization more generally, regard SALs as critical to restructuring indebted countries' economies "to promote growth and eventually enable [them] … to repay their debts."[111] Such restructuring involves, firstly, currency devaluation and the implementation of a floating exchange-rate system in the interest of boosting incomes, production, and the exports through which the country is expected to raise the capital required to pay off its loans. Secondly, the country is obliged to liberalize domestic price policies and to lift trade restrictions, in order to get the prices of products and services 'right.' Correct, market-competitive pricing, it is argued, can only be realized in the absence of government meddling and/or trade protectionism. Thirdly, borrowing countries are actively encouraged to privatize state-owned firms, to cut government spending, and to promote foreign investment by reducing restrictions on the latter. All of these measures are supposed to help diminish inefficiencies that prevent a country from repaying its debts, yet encroach significantly on the borrowing country's capacity for self-determination, economic or otherwise.[112] In short, SALs give the World Bank license to involve itself in "almost any [domestic] issue with economic ramifications – from labor law to health policy to military spending … [so] with adjustment lending its 'role in a country tends to become more politicized.'"[113]

In spite of this, more and more countries have implemented structural adjustment programs (SAPs), including the majority of those in sub-Saharan Africa. The reason for this is because, although developing countries do receive development aid from large institutions such as the World Bank, certain UN agencies, and wealthier governments, such aid is dwarfed

[110] Ibid., 146.

[111] Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 203.

[112] Ibid., 204.

[113] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 195.

both by their 'official debt' to these same institutions and governments, and by their debt to entities such as export credit agencies (ECAs).[114] As Clapp and Dauvergne indicate, "[i]n 2001 total debt service paid by developing countries was US$377.5 billion … of which US$261.3 billion was paid in principal repayments and US$116.2 billion was paid as interest payments."[115] In short, interest on these loans constitutes almost one-third of the payments. This indebtedness has only since increased: between 1990 and 2009, the external debt stocks of developing countries have more than doubled, rising from approximately $1.86 trillion to $4.07 trillion.[116]

For countries caught within this debt cycle, there are few alternatives to accepting SALs. These loans are quick-disbursing, and unlike many other loan types they may be used by borrowing countries specifically to service their debt obligations. Bluntly put, SALs allow countries to borrow money from the World Bank to pay off loans they have already received from the World Bank and from other institutions and governments. This loan and debt-payment cycle constitutes a type of "Faustian finance,"[117] because while the Bank postures as a benign broker supposedly ameliorating countries' indebtedness by introducing SALs, it has in the last two decades generated for itself a "billion dollar-plus net income" per annum through precisely such financing.[118] Thus, it is in the economic interest of the World Bank that these countries remain indebted, which explains why World Bank staff members are rewarded on the basis of the sizes of the loans they initiate.[119] And as already indicated, a further advantage of developing countries' continued indebtedness is the politico-economic influence that the World Bank, the IMF, and the US are able to exercise over these countries.[120] Such influence becomes prolonged as SAPs, despite being designed "as a one-time adjustment" for implementation over a maximum of five years, have in several countries

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[114] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 191, 193.

[115] Ibid., 193.

[116] World Bank, *Global Development Finance: External Debt of Developing Countries* (Washington: The World Bank, 2012), 40.

[117] Charles Schumer, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 143.

[118] Devesh Kapur, "The Common Pool Dilemma of Global Public Goods: Lessons from the World Bank's Net Income and Reserves," *World Development* 30/3 (2002): 339.

[119] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 202. Catherine Caufield corroborates this, arguing that "[f]or at least twenty years, numerous internal surveys have pointed out that career advancement in the Bank depends almost entirely on the amount of money an employee has helped lend and not at all on the quality of project design or implementation." Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 260.

[120] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 203.

extended over two decades.[121] The Ghanaian political scientist Edward Osei Kwadwo Prempeh, deeply critical of structural adjustment lending, contends that SAPs are crucial to a "resurgent neoliberal globalization and empire" bent on the "incorporation and integration of Africa into an unjust and uneven global economic system on an unequal and subordinate basis."[122]

Importantly, the US is the one country that stands to benefit most from the Bank's global influence. As discussed, the US is the Bank's major shareholder, it is "the only country with a veto over amendments to the [Bank's] Articles of Agreement,"[123] and it is the country that selects the World Bank president. Further, it possesses immense leverage insofar as Congress can at any time diminish or even cease IDA funding, with major economic repercussions for the Bank. All of this explains why the US is able to use the World Bank to protect its own domestic markets and economic interests without being accused of doing so. In the mid-to-late 1980s, for instance, the Bank exhibited immense sensitivity to the economic needs of the US by diminishing or stopping loans for steel, copper and oil production in the developing world, in sympathetic response to "the United States' concern about *its* worsening trade deficit."[124] Indeed, when its political demands are not met, the US is not averse to reducing its IDA contribution. As the governance scholar Ngaire Woods points out, in 1999 Congress "passed bills reducing the U.S. contribution to IDA, citing not just … budgetary pressures but the World Bank's decision to continue working on a loan to China even after the United States had voiced disagreement with the project."[125] In addition, the unique leverage of the US in World Bank affairs also affords American-owned firms numerous privileges. When a World Bank project gets implemented, major shareholders in the Bank – of which the US is the largest – expect to receive contracts for their companies.

Other beneficiaries of World Bank-IMF power in developing countries are banks, lending agencies, and private firms from the developed North. While banks were encouraged by the IMF to lend to indebted countries in exchange for charging high fees to these countries for loan rescheduling,[126] the economic and trade liberalization central to the World Bank-IMF

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[121] Ibid., 204.

[122] E. Osei Kwadwo Prempeh, *Against Global Capitalism: African Social Movements Confront Neoliberal Globalization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 150.

[123] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 197.

[124] Ibid., 202-203.

[125] Ngaire Woods, *The Globalizers: The IMF, the World Bank, and Their Borrowers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 29.

[126] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 139. The American development researcher Barbara Stallings indicates that private banks have also, in conjunction with "the IFIs [International Financial Institutions] and … governments

framework allowed for the rise of unaccountable export credit agencies (ECAs) and the swarming of foreign firms into the developing world. ECAs provide loans at high interest rates for projects undertaken in developing countries, and these loans are backed by the government of the developing country in question. This means that the country itself is "taking out a loan from the ECA, which then goes to the corporation providing the service … turning what appears to be privately held debt into public debt."[127] Unconstrained by any binding environmental or social regulations, these agencies frequently provide loans for high-risk projects involving natural resource extraction.[128] Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne add to this that debt to ECAs amounts to approximately 40 percent of debt owed by developing countries to official agencies. Thus, in addition to their negative environmental and social ramifications, ECAs also intensify the debt crisis in the developing world.[129] In turn, private firms, thanks to the Washington-World Bank-IMF push for economic and trade liberalization, similarly capitalize upon the abundant natural resources and relatively cheap labor of the global South, particularly the compliant labor of 'Third World women.' In these endeavors, they are aided and abetted by WTO rules.[130] To clarify, firms routinely enter developing countries precisely when the latter have undergone processes of liberalization, frequently through the imposition of SAPs. They then benefit from the operation of GATT principles followed by members of the WTO. Although the WTO in 1995 replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1947, it still operates in terms of the original GATT principles, the most important of which is the most-favored-nation (MFN) principle. This principle

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of the industrial countries … [come to demand] more orthodox economic policies" as part of their loan rescheduling deals. Barbara Stallings, "International Influence on Economic Policy: Debt, Stabilization, and Structural Reform," in *The Politics of Economic Adjustment*, eds. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 56.

[127] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 212.

[128] ECA funding for mineral projects dwarfs even the World Bank's contribution. For the period 1995-1999, ECAs provided $40.5 billion for oil and gas projects alone. Why they are able to engage in such environmentally damaging enterprises is because they are "generally exempt from important national legislation that would impose critical environmental, social, transparency and accountability standards." Geoff Evans, James Goodman and Nina Lansbury, "Politicising Finance," in *Moving Mountains: Communities Confront Mining and Globalisation*, eds. Geoff Evans, James Goodman and Nina Lansbury (London: Zed Books, 2002), 39, 41.

[129] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 213.

[130] Espen Moe, *Governance, Growth and Global Leadership: The Role of the State in Technological Progress, 1750-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 226.

> requires each GATT signatory to accord to all other GATT signatories the same trading conditions as it accords to its 'most favored nation.' Signatories must also provide so-called national treatment to other GATT signatories. This requires them to treat 'like products' the same regardless of the country of origin or the process of production. The GATT also calls for a general reduction in the level of tariffs and an elimination of quantitative restrictions on trade.[131]

Because these requirements involve explicit condemnation of trade sanctions, they allow labor exploitation and environmental destruction in developing countries to go unpunished. More specifically, trade liberalization allows heavily polluting industries to be established in poorer countries, the products of which are then exported to wealthy countries with little or no benefit to local populations. In turn, export-oriented production, while crucial to developing countries' debt repayments, often involves "the unsustainable use of local natural resources or … dirty and unsafe factories (relying on cheap labor)."[132] Another problem with free trade is that the unsustainability of current patterns of consumption goes unnoticed, because of the 'distancing' of sites of production where the negative social and ecological impacts are felt, from sites of consumption where no trace of these impacts exists. Relatedly, product prices hardly ever reflect these products' actual social, embodied, intergenerational, and ecological costs. Finally, to attract transnational corporations (TNCs), developing countries tend to lower their environmental standards or fail to enforce standards, enabling corporations to externalize environmental costs.[133] In the light of all of the above, opponents of neoliberalism contend that structural adjustment lending, which facilitates economic and trade liberalization among other things, serves the interests of corporations rather than those of people in developing countries. Doug Hellinger, who worked as a World Bank consultant on urban development, accordingly argues that the Bank's aim is not "to develop Brazil or … Ghana … [but] to provide the [US] government's friends in business with cheap labor, a deregulated atmosphere, and export incentives," with the consequence that "[i]t isn't a development strategy, it's a corporate strategy."[134] This corporate strategy is bolstered by yet another branch of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which, unlike the

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[131] Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World*, 134-135.

[132] Ibid., 128.

[133] Ibid., 128-130.

[134] Doug Hellinger, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 159.

World Bank, can sidestep involvement with governments and lend directly to the private sector.[135]

While the IMF has never pretended to be an organization primarily pursuing the welfare of Third World populations, and while the public image of the WTO has always been that of "an instrument of neoliberal discipline,"[136] the World Bank has paraded itself as peacemaker, humanitarian agency, and custodian of highly indebted nation-states.[137] The Bank may act in these capacities at times, but such posturing is eclipsed by its principal operation – enforcing neoliberal policies on a world scale, in partnership with Washington, the IMF and the WTO. In what follows, the discussion shifts to the flawed ways in which the World Bank carries out its business, which also call into question the beneficence of its mission.

Flawed methodologies

John Maynard Keynes had emphasized that Bank loans should be disbursed for proper purposes, but as indicated in the foregoing, many have actually been motivated by the Bank's desire for profits and for increased neoliberal influence over the global South. He also emphasized that processes involved in Bank lending should be proper – which he believed could only be ensured "after due enquiries by experts and technicians."[138] However, as numerous scholars such as the American political economist Michael Goldman have been at pains to point out,[139] the Bank may make enquiries into the projects it is to fund but these enquiries are anything but 'due.' They are inherently biased, because Bank supporters are usually commissioned to conduct them. They are also highly problematic, because they are undertaken within unrealistically limited time frames. Furthermore, the official impact

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[135] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 277-278. The environmental campaigner Bruce Rich contends that when James Wolfensohn was World Bank president, he actively pursued the expansion of the IFC while proposing "stronger environmental and social policies" for it. However, skeptics regarded this "growing focus on the private sector as little more than corporate welfare with little direct connection to improving the lot of the poor." Bruce Rich, "The World Bank under James Wolfensohn," in *Reinventing the World Bank*, eds. Jonathan R. Pincus and Jeffrey A. Winters (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 38.

[136] Peet, *The Unholy Trinity*, 25.

[137] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 308-309.

[138] Keynes, cited in Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 43.

[139] The discussion that follows draws primarily on Michael Goldman's powerful thematization of the 'manufactured-ness' of World Bank project reports, although many other scholars have also shed light on the flaws of World Bank social and environmental impact assessments.

assessment reports related to these enquiries frequently include dubious information in support of the loan and omit vital information standing to jeopardize the loan application.

Catherine Caufield elaborates on the processes that must be followed before a World Bank loan can be issued. The project cycle starts off with project identification, based on resonance with "the borrower's overall development plan," and technical and economic merit.[140] The second step is preparation of loan application documents, including a detailed project plan. Were logic to prevail, such preparation would be undertaken by individuals native to the borrowing country, because unlike foreigners they would be more intimately acquainted with the country's circumstances and with the lives and needs of its inhabitants. However, such preparation is usually carried out by consultants from the global North, and the Bank often provides funding to the applicant country specifically to make recruitment of foreign consultants during this preparation stage affordable.[141] Thirdly, the Bank conducts its own appraisal of project feasibility, and in this it should give due consideration to the social and ecological impacts of the project. Yet, in its appraisal the Bank habitually prioritizes the project's potential for economic returns. As Caufield explains, "[u]nderlying the Bank's obsession with judging projects by their economic rates of return is its desire to gauge the contribution of its loans to the gross national product (GNP)" and hence the supposed well-being of the country.[142] However, equating GNP with a country's well-being is incredibly problematic, since the quantitative GNP measurement precludes any qualitative considerations, and since the measurement includes as positive contributions any monies generated through destructive events such as environmental disasters and wars. The British environmentalist Jonathon Porritt quite rightly argues that

> our single most important indicator of economic prosperity (namely GNP) obscures the reality of what is actually happening … [because] as we eat up our 'natural capital' or degrade the ecosystem's capacity to renew the kind of natural services upon which we depend, we persist in counting all that destructive economic activity as current (benign) income … [and] we also count in many so-called 'defensive expenditures,' caused by having to deal with some of the externalities of economic growth, be they environmental (such as environmental protection and restoration, and damage compensation) or social (such as car accidents, poor health and rising crime).[143]

[140] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 216.

[141] Ibid., 217-218.

[142] Ibid., 221.

[143] Jonathon Porritt, *Capitalism As If the World Matters* (London: Earthscan, 2007), 71-72.

Marilyn Waring points out that in view of the deficiencies of gender-blind economic measures such as GNP, prominent ecological economists such as Herman Daly and John Cobb have sought alternative measures that allow "'costs' … [to] be registered as deficits or depletions, not as 'goods' or 'benefits' in production and consumption."[144] A major problem with the World Bank, as Daly has shown, is that many of its economists do not question the validity of the GNP measurement, and therefore do not seriously consider the negative social and ecological consequences of Bank loans. In fact, Daly was appointed as a senior economist in the Bank partly to convince his Ivy League-trained colleagues to take stock of the potential social and ecological hazards of Bank-funded projects. This came at a time when the Bank was obliged to promote 'sustainable development' through its project loans, given the pressure being mounted on it by social movements concerned about the worsening crises of justice and nature. That is, the Bank and other institutions were increasingly coming under fire because it was becoming evident that the neoliberal economic expansion pursued by them exacerbated inequality and led to environmental destruction.[145] However, Daly's efforts at raising the consciousness of Bank employees largely failed. He indicates that the Bank continued to prioritize economic factors above all else in the disbursing of project loans, and that for this reason it kept

> sustainable development very vague … The only part of the Bank that took up the idea that depletion of natural capital is a cost was the natural gas section. In the other areas, no attempt was made to apply it. We just never were able to get the idea of sustainable development taken seriously … [since] the Bank is basically a money pump. It wants to get money out the door and anything that gets in the way of that – like careful accounting and environmental review – is frowned upon.[146]

In his 2004 essay "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature: Environmental Knowledge for the World (Bank)," Michael Goldman reveals that years down the line very little has changed. Now, the Bank only better conceals its endorsement of socially and ecologically destructive practices in the global South. Because the Bank commissions seemingly legitimate but incredibly constraining environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and social impact assessments (SIAs), it becomes extremely difficult for groups opposing Bank projects to

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[144] Marilyn Waring, "Policy and the Measure of Woman: Revisiting UNSNA, ISEW, HDI, and GPI," in *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology*, ed. Ariel Salleh (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 169.

[145] Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 72-73, 75.

[146] Herman Daly, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 222.

voice their dissent. Admittedly, pressure to reform has been placed on the Bank, one of the most notable instances being the 1990 protest against its financing of the Narmada dam project in India. This protest forced the Bank into appointing an Independent Review Panel to assess the project's feasibility, and the Bank withdrew from the project when assessors revealed immense disparities between the initial, positive appraisal of the project and its major, negative downstream consequences.[147] But this event has done little to truly reform the Bank. Instead, the Bank now simply takes more care to inoculate itself against potential damning criticism for its funding of socially and ecologically destructive projects. Goldman, for example, exposes this inoculating procedure in relation to the feasibility studies commissioned by the Bank for the Nam Theun 2 (NT2) hydroelectric project in Laos. To conduct such studies, the Bank usually appoints consultants who have frequently worked with the firms expected to construct the infrastructure for the project, with the consequence that they are likely to emphasize the project's feasibility in their reports. This was precisely the approach taken by the Bank when it first commissioned feasibility studies for the NT2 project. However, after the project was approved on the basis of feasibility studies conducted by an engineering company with long-term business links to a major NT2 stockholder, NGOs conducted their own environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments, using their findings to contest the project's feasibility. The Bank then appointed another engineering firm to do another set of assessments, yet the validity of these was also challenged by international activists.[148] Finally, the Bank decided to commission a final round of feasibility studies, this time breaking new ground by appointing two international NGOs to conduct the EIAs and SIAs.

However, Goldman contends that although this move suggests the Bank's commitment to ecological sustainability and social justice, "important institutional factors shape[d] the knowledge production processes" involved in these studies, notwithstanding the independence of the two appointed NGOs.[149] He argues that perhaps the most important mechanisms of restriction placed on consultants involved in World Bank-commissioned studies are the 'terms of reference' (TORs). TORs allow the Bank to specify

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[147] Michael Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature: Environmental Knowledge for the World (Bank)," in *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance*, eds. Sheila Jasanoff and Marybeth Long Martello (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 55-56.

[148] Ibid., 60-61.

[149] Ibid., 61.

> exactly *what kinds* of information is needed, a *time frame* in which the research must be completed (and by implication, how long the researcher can be in the field), and by when it will be written up. *Ownership and circulation* are also important dimensions of the TOR: the direct contractor … is given exclusive right of ownership over the product as well as the raw data [so that l]egally, one cannot use the data for one's own research, or distribute one's findings without permission from the contractor.[150]

Goldman's interviews with several researchers commissioned to conduct EIAs and SIAs for the NT2 project, reveal that the TORs restricted researchers to such an extent that it was virtually impossible for them to provide accurate assessments. Firstly, owing to exacting stipulations concerning the types of information required, a wealth of information on the complexity of ecological and socio-cultural systems in the area was omitted. For instance, one researcher's study of the ecologically sustainable subsistence practices of locals was omitted from all reports on the NT2 project, in spite of it providing "a startling image of complexity, reciprocity, knowledge, and interdependence." The reason for this omission, the researcher explained, was that these findings did not answer the Bank-formulated research question of whether "this particular Mekong river ecosystem [can] hold up under the weight of a capital-intensive aquaculture investment."[151] Secondly, the limited time frames in which the research had to be conducted and the findings formulated, also worked against any thematization of the complexity and fragility of natural systems – thematization that of course would have challenged the cut-and-dried economic logic which prevails in World Bank funding decisions. A team of ichthyologists, for example, argued that they would have needed several years to do justice to their task of assessing the potential impact of the NT2 project on Mekong fisheries. This is because the fish species would have to be studied both in relation to the annual flood-dry cycle, and at numerous sites since the Mekong is a system of rivers rather than one body of water. Despite this, they were given only between three and five months to conduct these studies, and were thus unable to provide an accurate EIA.[152] Speed was also of the essence in the project's SIAs. The researchers were constrained by a process termed 'rapid rural appraisal' (RRA), which involves "learn[ing] about the lives of the poor using simple techniques such as wealth rankings, oral histories, role playing, games, small group discussions, and village map drawings." Ostensibly, this procedure "permit[s] respondents … to provide meaningful graphic representations of their lives in a manner that can give outside

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[150] Emphasis added. Ibid., 62.

[151] Ibid., 67.

[152] Ibid., 63.

researchers a quick snapshot of an aspect of their living conditions."[153] In this case, the researchers were tasked with assessing how a proposed dam and reservoir would affect the Nakai Plateau people. They were hoping to be given about three days to visit every two villages, and approximately three days to write up a report for each village. However, they were allocated far less time than that. In addition, time-consuming tasks such as cooking and setting up camp were not included in the Bank's calculations, with the result that the researchers could only ever rush into a village, introduce themselves, try quickly to learn about the villagers' lives, and return by helicopter to the capital city to write up their reports.[154] Admittedly, 'participatory rural appraisal' (PRA) is now more frequently used. It is regarded as "transformative," insofar as "the goal is to facilitate a dialogue, rather than extract information, to help the poor *learn about themselves* and thereby gain new insights that can lead to social change ('empowerment')."[155] However, PRAs appear to be more co-opting than anything else, as they seem to encourage villagers to re-envision themselves in a manner favorable to the project's economic actors, rather than express themselves and how they truly feel about the proposed project. Further, PRAs have inherited the unrealistically limited time frames of RRAs. As Patricia Feeney of Oxfam points out, a "PRA is normally completed in a day … [or] half a day … [and] this very compressed time-scale makes the information gathered suspect and unreliable."[156] Another obstacle to an accurate SIA was the inability of World Bank staff and contractors to effectively explain to the villagers precisely what the NT2 megaproject would entail, and how it would affect their lives. A woman appointed to evaluate the efficacy of NT2 public consultations explained that "presenters … described the dam project in a language 'more appropriate to [a US] Army Corps of Engineers meeting,'" with diagrams, schemes and power-point presentations to match. Villagers were left absolutely clueless, with some even believing that the contractors "had come to present them with a simple but appreciated gift: not Laos's largest dam, but a village water well."[157] Yet, as Goldman asserts, it is in the consultants' and researchers' interests to accept this state of affairs even if they believe the assessment processes to be seriously flawed. If they decide to engage in any explicit criticism of the Bank, they risk the termination of their contract – an

[153] Vijayendra Rao and Michael Woolcock, "Mixing Qualitative and Econometric Methods: Community-Level Applications," in *Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Deepa Narayan (Washington: The World Bank, 2005), 289.

[154] Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature," 63.

[155] Rao and Woolcock, "Mixing Qualitative and Econometric Methods," 289.

[156] Patricia Feeney, *Accountable Aid: Local Participation in Major Projects* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1999), 81.

[157] Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature," 69.

ichthyologist who challenged the Bank's push for rapid appraisals of the impacts of the NT2 project on Mekong fisheries was fired.[158] Aside from imposing these constraints, the Bank is free to include any scrap of dubious information promoting the viability of the project, and with impunity to omit any quantity of accurate information that threatens to undermine the project – since it owns and controls the circulation of the information gathered and generated by the consultants.[159]

The Bank's strict control of information flow certainly has not gone unchallenged. Activists and locals have attacked its information policies, as has US Congress – which led World Bank president Ernest Stern to modify its information policy and set up a Public Information Center where documents relating to project loans could be accessed. However, the data provided by and regulations in place at the Information Center were highly problematic. Much of the data could prior to publication be watered down and bowdlerized by the governments that had had a hand in their preparation; many documents would only be available for public scrutiny after the project has been approved; and any documents deemed important to the approval of the project could only be viewed with the endorsement "of individual task managers, from whose decision there is no appeal."[160] Such censorship is even applied within the Bank itself. The executive directors, whose task it is to approve or reject project loans, are in principle permitted full access to any information held by the World Bank, yet their access is constrained by the fact that they must know of the existence of the information to be able to request it. This strange bind was emphasized by Herman Daly when, in a farewell speech to Bank colleagues, he expressed his frustration with the existing situation – one in which "one part of the Bank has to hide things from other parts of the Bank, and especially from executive directors."[161]

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[158] Ibid., 64.

[159] Ibid., 67, 75; and Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 233-235.

[160] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 266. In 2010, the World Bank launched an Open Data Initiative to enhance its transparency. Numerous datasets are available for public scrutiny, but the Terms of Use suggest that the Bank can amend the data at any time, that certain datasets may be restricted, and that it may at its "sole discretion, under any circumstances, for any or no reason whatsoever and with or without prior notice to you, terminate your access to the Datasets, any means of accessing or utilizing the Datasets … [Further, t]he World Bank shall also not be responsible or liable for the accuracy, usefulness or availability of any data in the Datasets." World Bank, "Terms of Use for Datasets Listed in the World Bank Data Catalog," *web.worldbank.org*, 2013. Available at:
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/0,,contentMDK:22547097~pagePK:50016803~piPK:50016805~theSitePK:13,00.html. Date accessed: October 5, 2014.

[161] Daly, cited in Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 238.

Indigenous knowledge

Another problematic feature of information generation by the self-proclaimed "world's knowledge Bank,"[162] is that the people directly affected by Bank-endorsed projects are treated as objects of analysis rather than as active agents possessing valuable information concerning their native land, local ecosystems, and socio-cultural organization.[163] As Catherine Caufield argues, when indigenes are treated as mere objects of analysis, World Bank experts in Washington are better able to "translat[e] complex and messy real-life problems into numerical terms … [to] be broken down and analyzed," and on that basis to "formulate solutions to problems in countries they hardly kn[o]w."[164] Goldman confirms the Bank's aversion to considering indigenous knowledge and values, when he argues:

> While most people affected by the Bank projects are accounted for through processes of census, classification, and project incorporation, they become legible and accountable only within the context of a specific capital investment and culture of development capital; hence, qualities that have little to do with commercial markets are ignored or defined as destructive to the unquestioned goals of (trans)national economic growth and sustainable development.[165]

Such an approach rejects the possibility that indigenous knowledge may well be of inestimable value to World Bank funding decisions precisely because it is "more suited to the cultural and to the peculiar patterns of each nation."[166] Through the use of 'objectivist' social scientific methodologies the Bank denies local people a voice. The Bank makes it impossible for them to challenge the proposed projects, which they would likely do because locals gauge feasibility in reference to various non-economic factors such as quality of life, educational opportunities, cultural integrity, social cohesion, and concern about subsistence livelihoods. The act of reducing living, knowledgeable human beings to digits on a page, or at best to so-called "development 'beneficiaries,'" is for Goldman what allowed "the remote environments

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[162] World Bank, 1998, cited in Michael Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature: Environmental Knowledge for the World (Bank)," in *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance*, eds. Sheila Jasanoff and Marybeth Long Martello (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 75.

[163] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 60.

[164] Ibid., 61.

[165] Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature," 68.

[166] Mahbub ul Haq, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 302.

and societies of Laos … [to be] judged in terms of their value to the proposed capital investment, and not the reverse."[167]

Failures resulting from the rejection of indigenous agency and knowledge are plentiful. A 2008 study has shown that traditional African smallholder family farming has suffered tremendously through being marginalized by Bank-style development and the related implementation of neoliberal policies. Many previously prosperous families have been rendered destitute due to so-called development, which has also diminished family cohesion and undermined cultural integrity.[168] The resettlement programs frequently tied to projects backed by the World Bank similarly destroy traditional, sustainable ways of life. Caufield sums up what resettlement actually means in her discussion of the displacement of villagers to make way for a new dam and reservoir in Thailand. The reservoir spelled ecological disaster, submerging approximately three hundred square kilometers of teak forest and riverine land. The consequences for the area's human inhabitants proved equally catastrophic. No less than twenty thousand villagers were

> [w]ith little warning … ripped from the villages in which they had lived and farmed for generations; given meager amounts of cash as compensation for the loss of their homes and crops; moved to poorly prepared sites lacking schools, drinking water, and sanitation facilities; assigned small plots of land of dubious fertility; and forgotten.[169]

In view of this and other such cases, it becomes understandable why the anthropologist Thayer Scudder argues that "[f]orced resettlement is about the worst thing you can do to a people, next to killing them."[170] Despite this, indigenous voices are for the most part muted by the Bank and its neoliberal affiliates. Indigenous knowledge is only valued if it bolsters the one solution to all possible problems always proffered by the Bank, namely, development.[171] Consequently, most of the Bank's consultations with indigenous populations that stand to be affected by proposed projects remain nothing other than empty rituals.[172] Indeed, as Wolfgang Sachs argues, whenever a new problem – either caused or

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[167] Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature," 68.

[168] Kjell Havnevik et al., *African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2008).

[169] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 74-75.

[170] Thayer Scudder, cited in Catherine Caufield, *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 262.

[171] Caufield, *Masters of Illusion*, 303.

[172] Goldman, "Imperial Science, Imperial Nature," 68-69.

aggravated by development – has been identified by the World Bank, another development strategy has been devised to remedy it. Accordingly, the concept of development has been "repeatedly stretched until it included both the strategy that inflicted the injury and the strategy designed for therapy."[173]

Containing the Third World

The World Bank-IMF-WTO complex undoubtedly has had a profound impact on the global South. Although fierce disputes have raged over whether this impact has been predominantly positive or negative, from the foregoing it is difficult to deny that the neoliberal type of development advocated by this complex has wreaked social and ecological havoc. Under the auspices of neoliberal reform, monies have been squandered without benefit to the global majority of poor – women in particular; natural resources previously held in common have been annexed and exploited especially by extractivist firms; and the Washington-Wall Street and World Bank-IMF-WTO institutional complexes, their business affiliates and local elites have been made extravagantly rich in the process. Of all the destructive processes entailed in such development, perhaps the most damaging has been the push for developing countries to pursue ever increasing levels of production-for-export to pay off foreign debt. This type of economic activity tends to deplete the environment and criminally exploit the local workforce. Yet, countries in the global South hardly seem to have any alternative, given the tyranny of the WTO. According to the Filipino sociologist Walden Bello, the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS), which forms part of the GATT-WTO Accord, undermines product innovation, and limits profits particularly in high-tech goods manufacture, in the developing world. This is because the TRIPS regime offers patent protection of a minimum of twenty years and increases the duration of such protection for computer chips and semi-conductors. It then allows for the policing of borders for products that appear to be in violation of intellectual property rights, "plac[ing] the burden of proof" on the so-called violators of these patents.[174] Accordingly, although South Korea is regarded as an "electronics-led developmental state,"[175] because of the TRIPS regime Koreans have to

[173] Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 33.

[174] Walden Bello, "The Iron Cage: The World Trade Organization, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the South," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 11/1 (2000): 20-21.

[175] David A. Sonnenfeld, "Global Electronics," in *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry*, eds. Ted Smith, David A. Sonnenfeld and David Naguib Pellow (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 14.

pay "exorbitant multiple royalty payments to what has been called the American 'high tech mafia' [which] keeps [their] … profit margins very low while reducing incentives for local innovation."[176] Over and above this economic exploitation and this damper on innovation, such electronics manufacture "has brought devastating impacts to the health, well-being, and in some cases, the lives of young women and (im)migrant laborers," and the electronics "industry's ecological footprint has been considerable, with groundwater pollution and resource depletion an important part of its widespread legacy."[177] Notably, the TRIPS regime is also misused by firms from the global North as it condones their acts of biopiracy, or, "the patenting of indigenous knowledge."[178] That is, TRIPS permits Northern firms to hold patent rights over life forms or biological resources on the basis of the fact that they have isolated parts of these in their development of certain synthesized products such as pesticides. For example, as Vandana Shiva explains, W. R. Grace holds "patents for making *neem* pesticides and fungicides" from the Indian Neem Tree (*Azadirachta indica*), and this gives the firm "the right to prevent farmers from saving seed, [and] small manufacturing units from making products based on biodiversity using processes which have been pirated from indigenous cultures."[179]

The ability of developing countries to export significant quantities of agricultural produce to raise money is also jeopardized. Farmers in developing countries are unable to compete with those from the global North when it comes to agricultural exports, because although "[t]he Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (URAOA) instituted important commitments to reduce agricultural protection in the area of export competition,"[180] developed countries have found ways to flout these commitments. Bello explains that OECD countries have found various means by which to actually "rais[e] the total amount of agricultural subsidies … *since* the Agreement came into force: from $182 billion in 1995 to an astounding $280 billion in 1997." In contrast to this, "farmers in many developing countries have had little financial support from their governments … [and] developing countries have been penalized by policies that have brought about the 'negative subsidization'

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[176] Bello, "The Iron Cage," 21.

[177] Sonnenfeld, "Global Electronics," 15.

[178] Vandana Shiva, *Protect or Plunder? Understanding Intellectual Property Rights* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 116.

[179] Ibid., 103.

[180] Harry de Gorter, Lilian Ruiz and Merlinda D. Ingco, "Export Competition Policies," in *Agriculture and the WTO: Creating a Trading System for Development*, eds. Merlinda D. Ingco and John D. Nash (Washington: The World Bank, 2004), 43.

of their agricultural sector." Yet, these very same countries are through the WTO bound by "clear commitments to give greater market access to Northern farming interests, whose runaway subsidization continues to push them to create mountains of commodities seeking export outlets."[181] Bello admits that some agricultural actors in the global South have benefited from the AOA, but these are organized lobbies of cash-crop exporters and processors. Small-scale farmers are marginalized, and many are driven into destitution because of their inability to compete with large-scale agribusiness. The privatization of land only adds to the woes of rural farmers; families drift to cities in search of work; rural women with children often face a choice between prostitution or destitution.

Given the stranglehold of the WTO on developing countries, particularly in respect of technological innovation and agriculture, it is understandable why many resort to natural resource extraction to raise their GNP.[182] In fact, many developing countries with SAPs in place are obliged to exploit their natural resources.[183] In addition, the World Bank quite unashamedly advocates natural resource extraction as key to reviving an economy, even following civil war. In a World Bank policy research report on post-civil war development strategies, researchers advance that while "a long-term strategy for diversification is desirable for peace building … [t]he economy will need the foreign exchange … [and] by far the easiest exports to encourage are likely to be those obtained by natural resource extraction."[184] This strategy may make economic sense, but it is ecologically as well as socially ruinous. Forced resettlements strip people of the environments upon which they, and the generations before them, had made their livelihoods and it wreaks havoc on their intricate customary beliefs and practices. These multifaceted impacts of resource-extractive industries were powerfully

[181] Bello, "The Iron Cage," 27. Recently, a G8 initiative to 'enhance' food security in Tanzania has caused the Tanzanian government to "chang[e] its tax and seed policies … [and] make it easier for investors to gain access to land." So, instead of assisting Tanzanians, this initiative actually enriches foreign investors and firms while "pos[ing] serious threats to rural communities" and reducing "small farmers into mere labourers." Claire Provost and Erick Kabendera, "Tanzania: 'Large-Scale Farming Turns Small Farmers into Mere Labourers,'" *The Guardian*, February 18, 2014. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/feb/18/tanzania-large-scale-farming-small-farmers-labourers. Date accessed: June 4, 2014.

[182] A 2012 World Bank report indicated that foreign direct investment in sub-Saharan Africa in the period 2001-2010 was "directed mainly to the minerals and metals sector, constitut[ing] two-thirds of net capital flows (excluding grants)" during this period. World Bank, *Global Development Finance*, 21.

[183] Cord Jakobeit, "Nonstate Actors Leading the Way: Debt-for-Nature Swaps," in *Institutions for Environmental Aid*, eds. Robert O. Keohane and Marc A. Levy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 132.

[184] Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington: The World Bank, 1996), 166.

thematized in the South Moluccan government's statement at a UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples held in 1997. In its statement, the government not only lamented the soil and water pollution resulting from mining operations in the Moluccas, but also stressed the "social impact of natural resource extraction." The 1967 Indonesian Mining Act sanctioned government appropriation of resource-rich lands, yet such unilateral appropriation "conflicts with the customs of the Moluccan people [and t]he forced resettlement which takes place as a result … disrupts the indigenous people's system of traditional law, called *adat*."[185] The German legal anthropologist Franz von Benda-Beckmann has shown that attempts at commercializing even Moluccan sago production were undermined by the complexity of *adat* law. This is because *adat* property rights, as they are employed by the local communities, involve "an exceedingly complex system in which different property rights are connected to a variety of social units (individuals and groups) with respect to a differentiated set of small property units, which inhibits the isolation of differentiated property relations between a small number of producers and large amounts of productive resources."[186] In view of this complex framework, then, the economic reductionism at work in the appropriation of entire stretches of land by a single government solely for economic purposes and on the basis of a certain natural resource contained in or upon these lands, is nonsensical to traditional Moluccans. They have become painfully aware of the extent to which their complex practices and property rights are being undermined by the monopolistic, neoliberal trajectory of contemporary Indonesia. Also, they have had to contend with the fact that they now depend for their livelihoods on spice production. But even this livelihood is rendered precarious by price fluctuations on the global market and the spice monopoly held by those close to the former Indonesian president Suharto.[187]

Examples such as these invalidate the claim that the world's poor ultimately benefit from the neoliberal policies implemented by the World Bank-IMF-WTO complex.[188] Decades ago, World Bank president Robert McNamara acknowledged the failure of the 'trickle-down' theory, and contemporary analyses continue to corroborate his sentiment. The Washington-

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[185] Representatives of the Republic of South Moluccas, "UNPO Member Reports," in *Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization: Yearbook 1997* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998), 136.

[186] Franz von Benda-Beckmann, "Sago Law and Food Security," in Franz von Benda-Beckmann and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, *Social Security between Past and Future: Ambonese Networks of Care and Support* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2007), 89.

[187] Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, "Law, Violence, and Peacemaking," in Franz von Benda-Beckmann and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, *Social Security between Past and Future: Ambonese Networks of Care and Support* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2007), 287.

[188] The Bank's slogan is actually 'Working for a world free of poverty.'

based Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) engaged in a comparative study of the period of economic globalization (1980-2000), and the preceding period dominated by Keynesian policies of demand management (1960-1980). Findings indicated alarming declines, during the 1980-2000 period, in among other things per capita GDP growth, life expectancy (except in the wealthiest countries), education, literacy, and progress in infant mortality reduction.[189] Furthermore, contemporary World Bank researchers themselves have admitted to the widening gap between the world's richest and poorest individuals.[190] A similarly widening gap is evidenced within countries, indicating that certain individuals and groups benefit from the economic liberalization of a country while the majority does not. Richard Peet, in reference to numerous studies demonstrating that "booms in foreign investment … [and] policies to attract foreign business do more harm than good," accordingly argues that the advantages of foreign direct investment and other liberalizing reforms "accrue disproportionately to the foreign investor and the local elite, but not the mass of people in the country invested in."[191] The divide between the elite and the poor within cities themselves received similar emphasis in a 2010 United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) study. The study focused on income and consumption inequalities in 109 cities in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for the period 1993-2008. In terms of income-based Gini coefficients, of the ten most unequal cities in the developing world nine were located in South Africa. On a scale of 0.2 to 0.8, the most unequal cities were Johannesburg (0.75); East London (0.75); Bloemfontein (0.74); East Rand (0.74); Pietermaritzburg (0.73); Pretoria (0.72); Port Elizabeth (0.72); Durban (0.72); and Cape Town (0.67). These were followed by Goiana in Brazil, with a coefficient of 0.65.[192]

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[189] Callinicos, *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*, 22-23.

[190] World Bank, "Poverty Overview," *worldbank.org*, October 8, 2014. Available at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview. Date accessed: October 29, 2014.

[191] Richard Peet, *Geography of Power: The Making of Global Economic Policy* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 50. Peet adds that we must also not "forget that underdeveloped countries send more funds back to developed countries than they receive – in 2005 this 'negative net investment' was $527 billion."

[192] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide* (London: Earthscan, 2010), 73.

Global wealth: global inequalities

These figures demonstrate the extent to which the global South has embraced the neoliberal paradigm and implemented neoliberal policies, particularly the "regional hegemon" of South Africa.[193] The result is unprecedented wealth accrual among local elites and devastating impoverishment of the majority. Yet, ruling elites are not mere puppets of Washington-Wall Street, the World Bank-IMF-WTO complex, or TNCs more generally. Rather, they form part of what American sociologist William Robinson refers to as the new "transnational capitalist class," which is "embedded in … global circuits of accumulation rather than national circuits" and "represents the *hegemonic fraction* of capital on a world scale."[194] They directly benefit from the workings of the above mentioned neoliberal complexes and so spur them on, even though neoliberal reforms lead to the dehumanization of their countrymen and women, and to the destruction of local environments. Against the backdrop of the foregoing general account of neoliberalism, the next chapter looks more closely at the political and economic nuances of the neoliberalization of South Africa. The post-1994 transformation of South Africa may have been guided by neoliberal institutions and policies, yet hinged on various twists and turns of history, acts of hypocrisy, and not least the agency of governing elites themselves.

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[193] "Hegemon," in *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa*, 3d ed., eds. Patrick J. McGowan, Scarlett Cornelissen and Philip Nel (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 399.

[194] Robinson, "Global Capitalism and Its Anti-'Human Face'," 659, 661.

Chapter 2: The South African Context

It is tempting to regard socio-economic inequality in contemporary South Africa as the legacy of apartheid, the government-sanctioned process of racial discrimination and disenfranchisement operational in the country from about 1948 to 1990.[195] The inequality that continues to be experienced by the majority of South Africans, can with relative ease be attributed to their historical deprivation of education, occupation, property rights, and life chances under the strictures of apartheid. However, such attribution carries the implication that inequality can be remedied through a reverse dynamic of deregulation and an 'opening up' to the world via globalization. While the globalization of social relations may constitute a worthwhile goal, this is not the type of globalization that is usually implicit in this neoliberal assumption. Rather, what neoliberals are talking about is the globalization of capital, centered on policy deregulation and an opening up of peoples not to one another but to the free market.[196]

South Africa has pursued globalization in the neoliberal mold, yet it has led only to deteriorating living standards among the poor majority. Durban-based civil society activist and academic Patrick Bond argues "that worsening poverty for the masses is an intrinsic feature of globalisation, much as it was a corollary of apartheid in South Africa."[197] Critical education scholar Haroon Kharem similarly contends that globalization is Eurocentric imperialism re-baptized.[198] In his turn, the globalization specialist Jan Nederveen Pieterse claims that globalization "is another round of domination," and that "[w]hat is common to both imperialism and contemporary globalization is the sense of powerlessness and frustration on the part of the global majority; only now the dynamics of deprivation are different."[199] Nederveen Pieterse in fact considers the idea of "contemporary globalization … [as]

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[195] Apartheid was established in 1948 under the Afrikaner National Party (NP), but discriminatory practices of segregation had been instantiated as early as 1901 through "a series of legislative Acts which removed and restricted the rights of 'non-whites' in every possible sphere." Therefore, apartheid was a radical intensification of earlier practices of segregation but offered "a rigorous and totalizing ideology in a way that segregation had never been." William Beinart and Saul Dubow, Introduction to *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, eds. William Beinart and Saul Dubow (London: Routledge, 1995), 3, 12.

[196] Prempeh, *Against Global Capitalism*, 87.

[197] Patrick Bond, *South Africa and Global Apartheid: Continental and International Policies and Politics* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2004), 11.

[198] Haroon Kharem, *A Curriculum of Repression: A Pedagogy of Racial History in the United States* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 12.

[199] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 109.

imperialism, recolonization or dependency by another name" to be "almost a collective cliché in the global South."[200]

Given this long-standing equation of neoliberal globalization with imperial domination among Southern intelligentsia, it is alarming that shortly after the termination of apartheid, South African struggle leaders endorsed free market values so vociferously in public. At the July 1998 Mercosur meetings of South American nations, Nelson Mandela claimed that "[g]lobalization is a phenomenon that we cannot deny. All we can do is accept it."[201] Around the same time, Mandela and then deputy president Thabo Mbeki rebuked a Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) executive committee and a large SA Communist Party (SACP) congress for their criticisms of neoliberalism.[202] Somewhat bafflingly, Mbeki shortly thereafter changed tack completely. At a Durban meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement he suggested that the market cannibalizes its "offspring," namely developing nations, and so "we are showered with accolades for cooperating in the effort to fatten ourselves for the kill."[203] Correlatively, he thematized the loss of national sovereignty through neoliberal globalization during a May 2000 address at Georgetown University.[204] Still, Mbeki avoided associating growing inequality and liberalizing 'development,'[205] thoroughly confusing many on the South African radical left. Further, he unreservedly applauded a new Port Elizabeth-based factory manufacturing catalytic converters for export,

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[200] Ibid., 34.

[201] Nelson Mandela, cited in Patrick Bond, "Global Financial Crisis: Why We Should Care, What We Should Do," *Indicator SA* 15/3 (1998).

[202] Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance*, 2d ed. (London: Zed Books, 2003), 119.

[203] Thabo Mbeki, "Statement at the XII Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Governments of the Non-Aligned Movement," Durban, September 3, 1998. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has "attempted to create an independent path in world politics that would not result in Member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers … [and d]uring the years the focus of the Non-Aligned Summits … shifted away from essentially political … issues, to the advocacy of solutions to global economic and other problems." Non-Aligned Movement, "The Non-Aligned Movement: Description and History," *The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)*, September 21, 2001. Available at: http://www.nam.gov.za/background/history.htm. Date accessed: October 6, 2014.

[204] Thabo Mbeki, cited in Uma Shankar Jha, *South Africa and the Non-Aligned Movement: Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* (Delhi: Association of Indian Africanist, 2001), 180.

[205] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 120-121; and William Mervin Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, rev. ed. (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), 139.

even though profits would leave the country and viable local employment was not guaranteed.[206]

The contradictory attitudes of these South African leaders raise the question of whether they accepted neoliberalism willingly or under duress. There may have been some coercion involved, and this is certainly the perspective that the ruling party promotes when it blames current government failures on either apartheid or the unstoppable advance of neoliberal globalization that all simply have to accept.[207] It makes little sense that a newly liberated people would willingly shoulder the yoke of yet another form of economic domination. Yet several anti-apartheid leaders preached socialism while actively encouraging the neoliberalization of South Africa to their personal political and economic benefit. Quite likely, both coercion and acceptance were at work, and it is this ambivalent both/and understanding that underpins the subsequent analyses.

From colonialism to apartheid

The economic logic of racial domination

Centuries before the 1876-1912 'Scramble for Africa' when the continent was divided among Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy and Spain,[208] South Africa had already become subject to European colonial domination.[209] Its allure derived from its strategic position for

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[206] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 124. During his speech, Mbeki also threatened that worker inefficiency or rebelliousness would lead to the vehicle manufacturing industry switching over "to other plants located outside our country … with … inevitable job losses," and he placed the burden of research and development (R&D) for the manufacturing process on local "universities, technicons and specialised public sector bodies." Thabo Mbeki, "National General Council 2000: Keynote Address by President Thabo Mbeki – Port Elizabeth 12 July 2000," *African National Congress*, 2011. Available at: www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2560. Date accessed: October 6, 2014.

[207] Patrick Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 292.

[208] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876-1912* (London: Abacus, 2005), xxiii. The Scramble "gave Europe virtually the whole continent: including thirty new colonies and protectorates, 10 million square miles of new territory and 110 million dazed new subjects, acquired by one method or another."

[209] Actually, it is inaccurate to argue that Africans' first experience of colonization occurred under the Europeans. In the case of South Africa, for example, "the English and Dutch (Boers) colonised the Zulus, who themselves had colonised earlier tribes and nations 'native' to the southern grasslands." In view of this, "no people is in absolute terms either 'native' or foreign to a place." Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 143.

trade and shipping, lack of tropical diseases, and abundance of arable land and other natural resources.[210] The Dutch East India Company (VOC) occupied the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, making it the only "European presence in the southern African coastal region" other than the Portuguese in Mozambique.[211] The Dutch reached agreements with indigenous groups, gaining possession of the Cape of Good Hope itself. However, the Dutch hold on the Cape Colony was constantly challenged by Great Britain, who occupied the Cape on two occasions and to whom the Cape eventually was ceded by the Dutch in 1814.[212] Feelings of animosity ran deep, because this ceding was perceived as involving nothing short of "the imposition of British [rule] over some 16,000 Dutch colonial settlers, [and] the San and Khoikhon (*sic*) peoples."[213] The disgruntled Dutch, German and French settlers responded by trekking inland during the period 1836-1852, where they successfully established the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State.[214]

The settlers did so with little indigenous retaliation, because native inhabitants had been weakened by the *mfecane*, or the 'great crushing' or 'scattering.' The Zulu king Shaka had already pushed many communities out of their lands in order to consolidate the Zulu state. These people then came into conflict with other communities whose lands they had been obliged to invade. In short, the *mfecane* precipitated forced migration and led to community fragmentation and rivalries among indigenous populations. Such precariousness enabled "white traders, trekkers and missionaries, as well as runaway slaves and servants, [to] move … easily into the masterless realm beyond the Orange [River]."[215] Novel alliances were formed subsequently that crossed racial lines. For instance, through the *mfecane* the Mfengu people had been driven down toward the Cape Colony, and there they allied with colonial authorities and settlers in the Frontier Wars from 1846 onward. These wars were fought

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[210] Dominik J. Schaller, "Genocide and Mass Violence in the 'Heart of Darkness': Africa in the Colonial Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, eds. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 350.

[211] Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134.

[212] Harry H. Johnston, *A History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 126, 254-255.

[213] Bernard M. Magubane, *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa, 1875-1910* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996), 43.

[214] Leslie William White and W. D. Hussey, *Government in Great Britain, the Empire, and the Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 257.

[215] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 221.

against the Xhosa over "limited water and land resources,"[216] in particular grazing for cattle during periods of drought.[217] The Xhosa offered formidable resistance and their aggression and recalcitrance, although largely legitimate, "contributed to a radicalization of the settlers" who, to try to subdue the Xhosa, engaged in punishing actions such as "scorched-earth tactics."[218] This paved the way for later segregationist strategies implemented by Europeans to control indigenous South African groupings.

Conflicts continued to rage even among the whites. In the late nineteenth century Great Britain tried to force the two Boer nations, the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State, into a union with limited powers of self-governance. This precipitated two Boer Wars (1880-1881, 1899-1902). The first war broke out after Britain annexed the Transvaal and refused to withdraw,[219] and it ended in British defeat at the battle of Majuba. Peace terms restored Transvaal independence but Britain maintained suzerainty.[220] The second Boer War broke out after Orange Free State president Marthinus Steyn finally concurred with the Transvaal's Paul Kruger that war with belligerent Great Britain was inevitable. An ultimatum was submitted, accusing Britain "of breaking the London Convention of 1884 by interfering in the internal affairs of the Transvaal."[221] A history of meddling led to this accusation. In 1843 Britain seized Natal, a Boer republic established with considerable difficulty during the Great Trek after terrible fights with the native Zulu.[222] And while Britain officially recognized the independence of the other two Boer republics – the Transvaal in 1852 and the Orange Free State in 1854 – its officials reconsidered the wisdom of their largesse at the time of the gold rush toward the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal. This rethink was instigated particularly by the Transvaal Boers' continued discrimination against the new fortune-seeking British

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[216] Roger B. Beck, *The History of South Africa* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 55. The Hlubi, Zizi, Tolo and Bhele peoples moved into modern-day Transkei and became known as the Mfengu. Missionaries and colonial authorities identified them "as 'refugees from the Mfecane,'" and they came under British colonial protection. They worked as laborers in the Colony, and colonial authorities gifted them with land captured from the Xhosa. Peter Magubane, *Vanishing Cultures of South Africa: Changing Customs in a Changing World* (London: Struik Publishers, 1998), 12.

[217] John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (London: Penguin, 1998), 453.

[218] Schaller, "Genocide and Mass Violence in the 'Heart of Darkness,'" 352.

[219] Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2006), 39.

[220] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, 106.

[221] Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 103.

[222] In one incident, Zulu regiments (*impis*) attacked the Trekboers' wagons at night-time and killed "[f]orty men, fifty women … one hundred and eighty children … and … over two hundred Hottentot servants." David Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa: South Africa in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 16.

immigrants to their republic, whom they called '*uitlanders*.'[223] Ultimately, the accusation contained in the ultimatum submitted to Britain was fairly legitimate. Even so, the ultimatum went unheeded and the war commenced.[224] This extremely costly conflict lasted around three years and each side suffered over twenty thousand casualties. While this was largely a conflict among colonists and settlers, approximately twelve thousand indigenous Africans also perished as a result. A peace treaty signed at Vereeniging in 1902 saw the two Boer republics lose their independence and become absorbed into the British Empire. The Boers and their allies received amnesty, war reparations and a tentative promise of self-governance in the future. Very importantly, Britain indicated that it would expect the Boers merely to contemplate granting franchise to indigenes, and only once they had attained such self-governance.[225]

Eight years later, South Africa became a Union through the amalgamation of the Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In so doing, it also became a member of the British Empire. Despite South Africa's affiliation to the Crown, British authorities and the first cabinet of the Union did little to address racial discrimination, even though the first prime minister, Louis Botha, was in favor of "racial conciliation."[226] Racial tensions ran high and generated conflicts such as the 1922 Rand Revolt. At least in part, this rebellion was motivated by the conviction among white mine workers that 'their' skilled and semi-skilled jobs were threatened by black staff, who had temporarily occupied these positions during the First World War when the white men were serving.[227] White communities of the time also feared "a Black Peril," an imagined catastrophic uprising of the black majority. As a consequence of this imagined danger, they felt very uneasy about the "quickening pace of black urbanisation and … a radicalisation of black politics on the Witwatersrand" subsequent

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[223] Pakenham, *The Boer War*, xxi-xxii.

[224] Ibid., 103.

[225] Ian Loveland, *By Due Process of Law? Racial Discrimination and the Right to Vote in South Africa, 1855-1960* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 1999), 63.

[226] F. S. Malan, "South Africa after the Union, 1910-1921," in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. 4, ed. Eric Anderson Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 642. Even after the unification of South Africa, job segregation remained "enshrined … by regulation, ordinance and law," as it had been under preceding Boer governments. Jeremy Krikler, *The Rand Revolt: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2005), 34.

[227] Another factor that instigated the revolt was dissatisfaction with mine owners exploiting workers with ever greater ruthlessness after World War I, when the mines were facing a "profitability crisis." Krikler, *The Rand Revolt*, 42, 125-126.

to World War I.[228] Despite white miners' efforts, there was a marked shift against white labor after the Rand Revolt. That is, although in 1926 the government legislated that skilled mining jobs remain reserved for whites, it did not retaliate against "the expulsion of whites from a range of semi-skilled occupations."[229]

Over time, anti-British Afrikaners resistant to the Union and the economic empowerment of blacks cultivated a strong Afrikaner nationalist movement emphasizing white rule and Afrikaner ascendancy. Increasing numbers of Afrikaners rose in support of these ideals, paving the way for the Afrikaner National Party's 1948 electoral win "under the mandate of apartheid."[230] Formal apartheid, usually regarded as the final form of draconian domination exercised in South Africa, thus began in 1948 and was maintained even after South Africa broke from Britain and became a Republic in 1961. This is ironic, because the Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africans rejected membership of the British Commonwealth in the spirit of post-war decolonization efforts, but did not permit decolonization of the local black population. The English-speakers, although previously critical of Boer racism, had come to "accept … Afrikaner attitudes on politics and race"[231] and stood to benefit from this.

Formal apartheid involved the "institutionalisation of categorisations emanating from colonial anthropology."[232] Its premise was that the races are not equal, and so each should be 'allowed' to develop separately at cultural, linguistic, political and other levels. The Population Registration Act of 1950 saw to the classification of every South African as white, black, Indian or Coloured. Assessment of ethnicity was extremely arbitrary and to a large extent based on the subjective opinion of the assessor. Ethnicity was gauged mainly from appearance,[233] causing such confusion that siblings were placed in different racial categories

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[228] Ibid., 144, 147.

[229] Ibid., 291.

[230] Pauline Leonard, "Landscaping Privilege: Being British in South Africa," in *Geographies of Privilege*, eds. France Winddance Twine and Bradley Gardener (New York: Routledge, 2013), 100.

[231] Bobby M. Wilson, "Critically Understanding Race-Connected Practices: A Reading of W. E. B. du Bois and Richard Wright," in *Critical Geographies: A Collection of Readings*, eds. Harald Bauder and Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro (Kelowna: Praxis (e)Press, 2008), 291.

[232] Abebe Zegeye, Ian Liebenberg and Gregory Houston, "Resisting Ethnicity from Above: Social Identities and Democracy in South Africa," in *Democracy and Governance Review: Mandela's Legacy 1994-1999*, eds. Yvonne G. Muthien, Meshack M. Khosa and Bernard M. Magubane (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2000), 154.

[233] Yvette Christiansë, "Passing Away: The Unspeakable (Losses) of Postapartheid South Africa," in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 392.

simply because one had a darker or lighter complexion than the other.[234] Being placed in any of the racial categories carried enormous negative or positive implications in matters of residence (the 1950 Group Areas Act); freedom of movement (the pass laws); education (the 1953 Bantu Education Act); work (labor control legislation); social interaction (the 1953 Reservation of Separate Amenities Act); and marriage (the 1949 Mixed Marriages Act). The crowning legislation was the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, which was tied to "Grand apartheid [–] … a macro policy … which sought to create independent 'tribal homelands' (Bantustans) … [spanning] 14% of the surface area of the country." It was envisioned that these areas would be "the official country of residence of all blacks, leaving South Africa with a majority white 'democracy.'"[235]

The *bantustans* were not only a political expedience. They were also central to the apartheid regime's economic strategy. To clarify, the homelands ostensibly were created to allow black populations to develop independently and in their own time, in order for them ultimately to 'qualify' for independent status. However, the homeland system precipitated these people's destitution. The *bantustans* contained only 8 to 17 percent of arable land, undermining any possibility of agricultural success or even long-term subsistence.[236]

Consequently, the majority of the income generated 'in' the *bantustans* actually consisted of the wages black migrant workers earned in the 'white' South Africa. Swedish sociologist Bertil Egerö estimates that in 1991, migrant laborers spent much of their wages themselves, but even the one-third that did eventually "reach the Bantustan households … [wa]s still close to five times the agricultural earnings."[237] At that stage, the economic logic behind establishing and maintaining the *bantustans* was impeccable. Those classed as so-called 'productive natives' resided in white South Africa, gratefully earning a pittance, while those seen as 'unproductive natives' – women, children, and the elderly, decrepit, and unemployed – remained in, or were sent to, the homelands.[238] As South African sociologist

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[234] Robert C. Pirro, *The Politics of Tragedy and Democratic Citizenship* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 101.

[235] Kevin Durrheim and John Dixon, *Racial Encounter: The Social Psychology of Contact and Desegregation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 2.

[236] Bertil Egerö, *South Africa's Bantustans: From Dumping Grounds to Battlefronts* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1991), 18.

[237] Ibid., 21.

[238] South African sociologist Cherryl Walker contends that in addition to being "a labour reservoir and dumping ground for those blacks not required to service capitalism's immediate needs," the homelands also led to black people's political neutralization. This was achieved through "channel[ing] African political initiatives out of the cities … and into ethnically based, decentralised regional authorities in the various reserves." Cherryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991), 124.

and anti-apartheid activist Harold Wolpe explains, maintaining the *bantustans* created a migrant labor system that over-exploited fit indigenes while quarantining those considered undesirable or unproductive. This ensured capital accumulation but without leading to a buildup of black populations in the parts of South Africa reserved for whites. The capitalist enterprise may have been introduced in South Africa well before apartheid by British colonists, but it flourished in this unprecedentedly segregationist setting.[239] The South African intellectual and activist Neville Alexander suggests that ever since the discovery of gold and diamonds in the late nineteenth century, the profit motive, rather than racial bias, has been the more powerful driver of socio-economic organization in South Africa. He thinks it a mistake to assume "that racial ideology was one of the main motive forces for capital accumulation in South Africa." Rather, particularly subsequent to "the 1870s and 1880s, capitalism was put on the agenda very clearly in South Africa [and] those pre-existing social relations were transformed in order to maximise capital accumulation and profit."[240] Yet, Alex Callinicos, in his turn, is of the opinion that racial exploitation in the interest of capital accumulation was visible even earlier in the nineteenth century, especially in Cape and Natal export-oriented agricultural concerns.[241] Thus, apartheid legislators found powerful allies in financial institutions as well as in the Afrikaner farming community, which for several generations already had reaped the economic fruits of exploiting black workers. Only now, the apartheid government literally gave these farmers license to continue doing so, and indeed, sanctioned an intensified labor repression.[242] Industrial capitalists were not in explicit support of the government's racist policies, but the mining magnates nonetheless assisted the regime in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre.[243] This event spurred massive capital flight from South Africa, but the mining company Anglo American and one of its subsidiaries responded by

[239] Harold Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid," in *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, eds. William Beinart and Saul Dubow (London: Routledge, 1995), 66-68.

[240] Neville Alexander, "National Liberation and Socialist Revolution," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 115.

[241] Alex Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution* (London: Bookmarks, 1988), 10.

[242] Ibid., 13.

[243] On 21 March 1960, police opened fire on a group demonstrating against the pass laws. Sixty-seven protestors were killed and 186 more were wounded. This was a watershed event, as it made the anti-apartheid resistance movement less reform-oriented and far more revolutionary and militant. James Barber and John Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 1945-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 69-70.

raising and organizing American loans for the state.[244] A powerful American businessman also worked to draw investors back into the country.[245]

That said, in keeping with the mercenary character of capitalism, over the next twenty years industrialists and businessmen cottoned on to the fact that racist policies were hindering profitable accumulation in the long term. Black unions were gaining power and strikes were becoming more frequent. Moreover, and not least important, apartheid prevented black South Africans from coming into their own – as consumers.

Black 'empowerment'

Semi-legal African trade unions flourished from the mid-1970s onward, significantly strengthening the black working class. Workers realized their leverage in disputes with employers, and they also grew confident at the sight of capitalist reluctance to continue down the apartheid path. As indicated, entrepreneurs were concerned about the economic impact of strikes, and were keen to expand their consumer base. In addition, the dearth of white workers for whom skilled and semi-skilled occupations were officially reserved, enticed companies to "break the colour bar." Black workers were placed in these positions, swelling the number and salaries of gainfully employed 'natives.'[246] The black population also was politicized further by the rivalries that erupted between the parties that made up the liberation movement. From the perspective of Jeremy Cronin of the South African Communist Party (SACP), such politicization, together with the empowerment of black workers, was crucial to bringing about the 1976 Soweto uprising. The subsequent political ascendance of the African National Congress (ANC), backed by the SACP, instigated even more cohesive political activism, such as the township revolts of 1976-1977.[247]

Alex Callinicos indicates that following the Soweto uprising, "both Afrikaner and English-speaking capital swung behind the notion of a black middle class that would act as a buffer between the white minority and the African masses."[248] In an effort to create such a

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[244] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 16.

[245] Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, "Profile: Charles V. Engelhard," March 1966, *Optima* 16 (1966): 40.

[246] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 25.

[247] Jeremy Cronin, "The Communist Party and the Left," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 81, 85; Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 26; and Robert I. Rotberg, *Suffer the Future: Policy Choices in Southern Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 86.

[248] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 43.

socio-economic stratum quickly, the Urban Foundation (UF) was established and tasked with addressing the housing issues faced by black people in urban areas. Also, from 1978 black individuals were permitted ninety-nine-year leaseholds in urban areas, and some time later the government started hinting at the possibility of black companies operating in white areas rather than only in the homelands and townships.[249] Coming into ever clearer focus were the profits to be made from a largely untapped black consumer base, in terms of the sale of foodstuffs and other essentials, fashion, large appliances, and automobiles. The electrification of Soweto, facilitated by government funding and private loans, stood to contribute to this vision.[250]

This effort on the part of businessmen to liberate – or rather liberalize – the black population rapidly certainly was not an isolated item. Pressured through increasingly militant protests and the rise of a skilled and semi-skilled black labor force, the government also started making concessions. South African president P. W. Botha sought to take capitalism in a neoliberal direction, and thus encouraged large-scale privatization and deregulation.[251] Botha also legalized trade unions in 1979, and consented to the establishment of parliamentary chambers for Coloured and Asian minorities in 1983. Understandably, concessions such as these were not made "to abolish white domination," but rather "to create and to incorporate a privileged layer of black intermediaries."[252] Even so, they elevated the black majority's hope of liberation and political activism increased exponentially, as

[249] Ibid.

[250] Ibid., 44. The South African political theorist Merle Lipton argues that "[r]etailers of durable consumer goods (fridges, stoves, electrical equipment), hit by the mid-1970s recession, hoped the electrification of Soweto would lead to increased demand. Some businessmen [also] stood to gain from the removal of social apartheid which kept blacks out of restaurants, theatres and hotels." Merle Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1986* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 164.

[251] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 153, 166. In February 1988, Botha announced the government's intention to privatize major public enterprises in South Africa, including its iron and steel industries, the railways, the post office, and telecommunication services. Erwin Schwella, "Privatization in South Africa," in *International Handbook on Privatization*, eds. David Parker and David Saal (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003), 293. His deregulation efforts even extended to agriculture – farming subsidies were phased out, among "other moves in the direction of 'deregulation.'" Henry Bernstein, "The Political Economy of the Maize Filière," in *The Agrarian Question in South Africa*, ed. Henry Bernstein (Portland: Frank Cass, 1996), 135.

[252] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 2-3.

evidenced by the massive union-led 'stay-aways' of 1984-1986.[253] The concessions, on the other hand, proved deeply unsettling to white farmers, petty bourgeoisie and even the working class. They were becoming aware that their days of privilege were coming to an end.[254]

Even during the 1986 state-of-emergency involving unprecedented efforts at repression,[255] the Botha regime continued to make concessions. It abolished the pass laws,[256] and the 'colour bar' was removed from mining, opening skilled positions to black workers.[257] It was becoming apparent that a negotiated settlement was inevitable. Hope for the imminent liberation of the black majority was boosted by the 1988 Angolan military failure of the South African Defence Force (SADF), as well as by Namibian independence in 1990.[258] The impact of economic sanctions and capital flight on South Africa's debt burden also sped up concessions. F. W. de Klerk, who succeeded Botha as president in September 1989, allowed the ANC-aligned Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) to hold demonstrations. He instructed the release of all those incarcerated following the 1964 Rivonia treason trial, excepting Nelson Mandela. In 1990 he unbanned the ANC, the SACP and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and a few days later freed Mandela himself. The main apartheid legislation was repealed in 1991, and in 1993 the date for the first non-racial democratic election was set.[259]

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[253] Ibid., 132. In 1984 alone, the 'person days' lost due to stay-aways was 379 712. Roger Southall, *Imperialism or Solidarity? International Labour and South African Trade Unions* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995), 64.

[254] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 41, 153. White disgruntlement quite possibly instigated the rise of the Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB), an extreme right-wing, fascist, Afrikaner resistance movement. P. Eric Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 163-172.

[255] During the 1986 emergency, the government's security forces went on the offensive. They favored "open jeeps with mounted machine guns and highly mobile armed commandos on horseback" over cumbersome vehicles and riot gear. Among black trauma patients, there was a marked "increase in gunshot wounds … related to core organs." Laurie Nathan, "Troops in the Townships, 1984-1987," in *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa*, eds. Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 73.

[256] Alex Callinicos, Introduction to *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 14.

[257] Guy Standing, John Sender and John Weeks, *Restructuring the Labour Market: The South African Challenge* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2000), 167.

[258] Colin Bundy, "Reform in Historical Perspective," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 92.

[259] Callinicos, Introduction to *Between Apartheid and Capitalism*, 11, 14-15, 17.

Importantly though, the de Klerk regime could control the democratic transition by making concessions such as the above.[260] Jeremy Cronin believes that the apartheid government and the liberation movement were in a state of reciprocal siege. The government had the comparatively stronger military and legislative power to continue repressing the black population, but the apartheid regime was suffering under the constant pressure of "mass action and mass struggle" combined with "international isolation."[261] By introducing concessions the regime could 'soften' the liberation movement, so that the negotiated settlement ultimately would entail not 'socialist revolution' but 'national liberation.' This would not scupper the program of the ANC, which was essentially a populist-nationalist party, but it would constitute a serious blow to the 'workerist' vision of its ally, the SACP. From its inception in 1955, the primary goal of the ANC was establishing "'a democratic majority' rather than a 'racial majority' within the government of the country."[262] Commendable as such non-racialism is, little was said about the need to undermine capitalist domination to remedy social injustices primarily experienced by black people. For instance, a socialist interpretation of one of the ANC's founding documents, the Freedom Charter (1955), was quickly rejected by Nelson Mandela. He argued in 1956 that,

> [w]hilst the Charter proclaims democratic changes of a far-reaching nature it is *by no means* a blueprint for a socialist state but is a programme for the unification of various classes and groupings amongst people on a democratic basis … The breaking up and democratisation of … monopolies will open fresh fields for the development of a prosperous non-European *bourgeois* class.[263]

This bias against socialism and attendant nationalization gathered strength in the four succeeding decades. First ANC leaders Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo opposed explicit ANC support of the Communist Party's "general 'stay-away' strike in protest … against the impending Suppression of Communism Act."[264] Later, in the 1980s, the ANC made its business-friendly leanings patent in meetings between party leaders and white corporates,

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[260] Already in 1991, Neville Alexander knew that concessions were "not going to be victories that are going to be scored by the liberation movement," because concessions were only granted if the regime "believe[d] they've got the capacity to control the situation." Alexander, "National Liberation and Socialist Revolution," 125.

[261] Cronin, "The Communist Party and the Left," 83.

[262] Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: A Massacre and Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30.

[263] Emphasis added. Nelson Mandela, cited in Martin Meredith, *Nelson Mandela: A Biography* (London: Penguin, 1997), 139.

[264] Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 30.

such as when Oliver Tambo convened with Anglo American chairman Gavin Relly in 1985.[265]

In contrast, for the SACP it was crucial to effect a socialist revolution by unraveling capitalism. Cronin maintains that the foundation myth of the SACP was twofold: "that the western working class was on the brink of making the socialist revolution," and that this "prediction seemed to be nearly fulfilled also in South Africa, in the 1922 Rand Revolt." Admittedly, as indicated earlier, this revolt was partly underpinned by racial, as opposed to strictly economic, tensions. Still, the white mine workers' militant struggle against mining magnates was unprecedented, and became a touchstone for the SACP. As early as 1924, however, the SACP began to realize "that the spearhead of the socialist revolution in South Africa wasn't the white working class." It therefore stopped looking westward for inspiration, and instead established "the connection between national liberation and socialist revolution," so developing what "remains the strategic perspective of the SACP today."[266] For the SACP, then, national liberation is a stepping-stone rather than an end-in-itself; the ultimate goal is socialism. As trade union leader and anti-apartheid activist Moses Mayekiso explained in a 1990 interview:

> [T]he achievement of national liberation will strengthen the workers' resolve to get to socialism … [and so] the mass struggles have to be conducted … But you must conscientise people, people must know that it's not an end in itself, it's just one of the steps that we have to pass through. You still have to fight for the goal [of socialist revolution], and use what you get today to get to the end of the tunnel.[267]

The SACP enjoyed immense popular support during apartheid precisely because the ruling National Party (NP) so demonized communism.[268] But as Mayekiso indicates, in the 1990s the SACP moved to prioritize national liberation, stepping down its more radical demands. This was done to prevent a possible break-up of the national liberation alliance between the ANC, the SACP, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) founded in 1985.[269] This coalition stood "to improve the fortunes of the progressive forces in negotiations

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[265] Callinicos, Introduction to *Between Apartheid and Capitalism*, 29. Other meetings between the ANC and big business are documented by Luli Callinicos in *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2004).

[266] Cronin, "The Communist Party and the Left," 77.

[267] Moses Mayekiso, "Socialists and the Trade Unions," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 105, 107.

[268] Cronin, "The Communist Party and the Left," 78.

[269] Ibid., 84-85.

with the government and the NP and as a unified force to contest the 1994 general elections."[270] COSATU had adopted the ANC's Freedom Charter in 1987, but as a union worker movement it also had strong ties with the SACP.[271] The shared workerist orientation of COSATU and the SACP appeared to inspire formidable anti-capitalist action. There was a three-day strike in 1988 against the Anglo American-endorsed Labour Relations Amendment Bill that sought to curb strikes and make unions accountable for strike damages,[272] and a two-day strike in 1991 against the imposition of a Value Added Tax (VAT) system on essential foods and services, and healthcare.[273] Even so, the strikes aimed to address the problems of capitalism rather than dismantle the system itself. Callinicos contends that particularly since the early 1990s, "[a]n intellectual consensus … emerged on the South African left … that socialism is not on the agenda in South Africa."[274] Instead, the goal became 'normalization.' The South African historian Colin Bundy argues that this expression was "short-hand" for the contention "that South Africa's not a normal capitalist society because we've got apartheid and if we can do away with apartheid, then we become normal … like any other capitalist society with a bourgeois political framework."[275] Thus, and despite earlier promises of a non-racial just society, the tripartite alliance sought only to introduce "a more humane and more efficient version of South African capitalism."[276] Any concessions to workers would take place within the capitalist framework. The 1994 electoral victory of the alliance therefore facilitated not liberation but the unfettered neoliberalization of South Africa, to the detriment of the majority. Neville Alexander was correct to warn that undoing apartheid would not

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[270] Kenneth W. Grundy, "South Africa: Transition to Majority Rule, Transformation to Stable Democracy," in *The Uncertain Promise of Southern Africa*, eds. York Bradshaw and Stephen N. Ndegwa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 52.

[271] Mayekiso, "Socialists and the Trade Unions," 112.

[272] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 184-185; Aletta J. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (London: Verso, 1996), 242; and John S. Saul, *Recolonization and Resistance in Southern Africa in the 1990s* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993), 25.

[273] Callinicos, Introduction to *Between Apartheid and Capitalism*, 39; and Mats Lundahl and Lena Mortiz, "Macroeconomic Stagnation and Structural Weaknesses in the South African Economy," in *Economic Crisis in Africa: Perspectives on Policy Responses*, eds. Magnus Blomström and Mats Lundahl (London: Routledge, 1993), 336.

[274] Alex Callinicos, "Social Contract or Socialism? The Agenda of the South African Left," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 137.

[275] Bundy, "Reform in Historical Perspective," 96-97.

[276] Callinicos, "Social Contract or Socialism?," 142.

dissolve "racial inequalities," since apartheid legislation is simply "the scaffolding" and that "the house of racial inequality stands firmly, solidly, on capitalist foundations."[277]

The democratic transition involved the stealthy subsumption of the hoped-for practice of 'democratic socialism' under 'social democracy,' which quite easily could operate under the aegis of capitalism.[278] Even during the transition years of 1990-1994, the business-friendly leanings of the ANC became apparent, and socialists realized that its dominance in the tripartite alliance made the continuation and indeed intensification of capitalism very likely. South African public intellectual Mark Swilling in 1990 advanced that "there are three elites in the game – the ANC elite, the old state elite, and the business elite – and those three can do business with one another. But they need a strong ANC."[279] The ANC elite, more than the leaders of COSATU or the SACP, would be likely to accept the argument that South Africa, in the immediate post-apartheid context, would have to deregulate and seek the assistance of the IMF and the World Bank to stay afloat.[280] The bent of the ANC elite – the Big Men – was as instrumental in the neoliberalization of South Africa as was the structural situation in which the country found itself. Patrick Bond confirms that "the new government's deviation from the liberation movement mandate" could sometimes be attributed "directly to political and economic pressures," and "sometimes to the whims of individuals."[281]

The ANC aligns with oppressors

Apartheid regime collusion

As Bond explains in *Against Global Apartheid*, South Africa is no stranger to economic turbulence. Its many financial crises have derived from, *inter alia*, the rise of finance and over-speculation (1865); the Standard Bank-instigated halt of diamond share speculation (1881); economic ramifications of the 'Scramble for Africa' and a credit crash (1889); speculative turbulence accompanying deep-level gold mining and the effect of the 1907 US financial crash on diamond exports; chaos in the banking system (1920s); farmers'

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[277] Alexander, "National Liberation and Socialist Revolution," 117.

[278] Callinicos, Introduction to *Between Apartheid and Capitalism*, 33.

[279] Mark Swilling, "The Dynamics of Reform," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 45.

[280] Devan Pillay and Karl von Holdt, "Strategy and Tactics," in *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*, ed. Alex Callinicos (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 69.

[281] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 3.

indebtedness and traders' and spectulators' "disproportionate influence on prices and prospects" (1923-1924); and international financial collapse (1930s).[282] These crises occurred due to the volatility of the capitalist system, but this fact did not lead to any genuine questioning of its South African applicability. Rather, particularly because of the influence of local mining magnates and foreign investors, South Africa became increasingly enmeshed in and dependent on the global capitalist economy after the Second World War. South African capitalism entered the "monopoly phase" with the 1950s expansion of mining concerns into industry, and the establishment of money markets serviced by financial institutions set up by the mining houses. The merging of "bank capital and productive capital," signaled the rising "of the phase of finance capital."[283] These processes necessitated financial regulatory changes, giving banks and building societies freer rein. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) was boosted as "liquid capital [flowed] out of production and into the money and capital markets." [284] In the 1970s, the skyrocketing price of gold instigated not only "the internationalisation of the mining finance houses," but also enormous "parastatal expansion (iron and steel, electricity, oil-from-coal, transport); outward-oriented investments;" and improvement of existing national transport and housing infrastructure, which helped "extend … urban sprawl."[285] But gold was not enough to finance such expansion and upgrading. The government engaged in heavy borrowing, through international capital markets, large banks, and other private-sector financiers. The IMF and World Bank were also significant players in financing and shaping South African economic policy. The 1976 Soweto uprising did not deter the IMF from making loans available to Pretoria. It stopped lending to the apartheid regime only when US Congress prohibited any further dealings with this 'rogue' state in 1983. Still, the IMF maintained ties with apartheid-era South Africa, annually sending advisors to the country who encouraged "the apartheid government's shift in the late 1980s towards neo-liberal economic strategies."[286] This is what led to the push for privatization and

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[282] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 254-264.

[283] Duncan Innes, *Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 150, cited in Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance*, 2d ed. (London: Zed Books, 2003), 268.

[284] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 21.

[285] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 268-269. South African coal production increased precipitously in the early 1970s, with the Richards Bay "coal terminal gr[owing] rapidly from a relatively small port into one of the world's largest coal-exporting ports." Stephen G. Bunker and Paul S. Ciccantell, *East Asia and the Global Economy: Japan's Ascent, with Implications for China's Future* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 108.

[286] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 68.

a more concerted export orientation, spikes in real interest rates, as well as the "regressive" Value Added Tax (VAT) system against which COSATU and the SACP protested in 1991.[287] The IMF also launched an assault on South African workers in 1992, by advocating the curbing of real wage growth.[288]

The involvement of the IMF in South Africa was significant, but the World Bank played an even more influential role in the country over the decades. It contributed to the infrastructural expansion undertaken by the apartheid regime, without expecting the regime to address racial inequality. South Africa was a model borrower, as it repaid a $50 million Bank loan received in 1951 by the end of 1953. The Bank followed this up with loans totaling $162 million, and as Bond points out in *Elite Transition*, "even in the wake of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre … granted [additional] loans worth $45 million." This, even though notable persons such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and ANC president Albert Luthuli "called for financial sanctions against Pretoria."[289] The Bank stopped lending to the regime only because the South African per capita GDP had risen to a level disqualifying it from further World Bank financing.[290] Even so, the Bank continued assisting South Africa by stealth. It financed a massive water project in the Kingdom of Lesotho, a landlocked country situated within South Africa itself. The latter stood surety for the $110 million loan for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). The LHWP was ecologically destructive and socially unjust. It entailed damming rivers and excavating mountains in Lesotho, to provide water for wealthy white residents in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Bank increased its loan amount to $8 billion, placing an enormous burden on the small kingdom. Its population also suffered abominably. Tens of thousands of people were displaced with the inevitable loss of livelihoods, community cohesion and customs, and increase of sexually communicable diseases, alcoholism and crime. Arable land was flooded, and even after the 1994 democratic transition in South Africa, the population of Lesotho, living in extreme poverty, still had no access to this water.[291] To return to the World Bank's apartheid-era involvement though: while the Bank was obliged to sever formal ties with the de Klerk government, it continued to

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[287] Ibid.

[288] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 159-160.

[289] Ibid., 158.

[290] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 64.

[291] Ibid., 64-65; Bond, *Elite Transition*, 159; Patrick Bond, "Economic Growth, Ecological Modernization or Environmental Justice? Conflicting Discourses in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 11/1 (March 2000): 54-55; and International Monetary Fund, *Lesotho: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Progress Report* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2003), 2. See also Mats Lundahl, Colin McCarthy and Lennart Petersson, *In the Shadow of South Africa: Lesotho's Economic Future* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

influence South African policymaking and practice. That it did so with the intention of guiding the economic side of the South African transition is testified in Bank president Geoffrey Lamb's pre-1994 interaction with Thabo Mbeki of the ANC. Lamb, a former socialist, was infamous for "making neoliberal African economic policies appear to be 'homegrown,'" and he and Mbeki appointed "specialist teams to analyse conditions and generate policy options in macroeconomics, industry, health, education, housing and land reform" for the new South Africa.[292]

Throughout its decades of oppression, the apartheid regime also enjoyed US government support. Good relations were maintained during the Nixon presidency on the premise that this would ensure stability in the country, prevent the spread of communism, safeguard US investments, and secure "trade, access to raw materials, [and] South Africa's strategic location."[293] Later, Ronald Reagan continued to lend support to South African president P. W. Botha even in the wake of the latter's ominous 'Rubicon speech.' In this 1985 address, Botha rejected the "one man, one vote" democratic principle, which he believed would "lead white South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide."[294] The US administration regarded Botha and his affiliates as "moderate modernizers … opposed by extremists in both the white and black populations who, if successful, would bring about a communist South Africa."[295] However, Americans intensely opposed Reagan-style 'constructive engagement' with the apartheid regime, and in 1986 the US Congress passed a Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Bill, overriding Reagan's veto thereof.[296]

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[292] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 161.

[293] David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 86.

[294] P. W. Botha, "Rubicon Speech," 1985, cited in David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 224.

[295] Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989*, 228.

[296] John Dumbrell, *American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 106. Other Western powers similarly condoned the apartheid regime. During the 1960s not one "appeared to feel much moral responsibility for ending apartheid," and in the period 1960-1990 the US as well as "Britain … routinely vetoed efforts at the United Nations to impose sanctions on South Africa." Gay Seidman, "Armed Struggle in the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement," in *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*, 2d ed., eds. Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 285. Margaret Thatcher and her followers persistently refused to isolate South Africa, and in the 1990s even suggested that their strategy "had been 'proved right' by Mandela's release." Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa Since the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 337. Notably, it was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that "provid[ed] … a tip from a deep cover CIA agent which led to the

By the end of the 1980s, South Africa was feeling the pinch of economic and trade sanctions even though it had paid off its debt to the IMF by 1987.[297] The government negotiated a debt standstill with Northern creditors for the period 1985-1987.[298] Capital flight, pressure from business, the loss of IMF, World Bank and Washington support and the threat of mass action, pushed the de Klerk regime into freeing leading anti-apartheid activists, introducing democratic reforms, and entering into a negotiated settlement. It is ironic that the increasing integration of South Africa into the world economy, though helping it to become the most successful sub-Saharan capitalist state, also was key to the undoing of the apartheid regime, since it made the country vulnerable to economic penalization. Dismantling the apartheid system did not, however, imply improved conditions for the economically needy majority. Indeed, during the transition years running up to the 1994 elections, and beyond this, renewed involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions, Washington, and other capitalist enterprises ensured that capital growth would once again be boosted in South Africa, but at the cost of aggravating social inequalities and environmental harm, and benefiting only corporations and local and foreign financial elites.

Naïve liberator or streetwise neoliberal?

The ANC-led government readily embraced the IMF, the World Bank, and the Washington-Wall Street alliance, despite their long and morally reprehensible relations with the apartheid regime. A May 2000 National Reparations Conference, led by Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, resolved unequivocally that the IMF and World Bank should pay reparations to black South Africans, given their earlier unflinching support of Pretoria.[299] Even prior to this, leftist movements such as the Workers' List Party, and large coalitions like Jubilee 2000 South Africa, had begun to criticize the new government's willingness to repay the apartheid regime's debt totaling around $70 billion.[300] However, as the economist Stephania Bonilla

August 5, 1962, arrest of Nelson Mandela." James M. Scott and Jerel A. Rosati, "'Such Other Functions and Duties:' Covert Action and American Intelligence Policy," in *Strategic Intelligence: Covert Action, Behind the Veils of Secret Foreign Policy*, vol. 3, ed. Loch K. Johnson (Westport: Praeger, 2007), 89.

[297] Hein Marais, *South Africa, Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition* (London: Zed Books, 2008), 109.

[298] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 22.

[299] Njongonkulu Ndungane, cited in Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance*, 2d ed. (London: Zed Books, 2003), 143. See also Njongonkulu Ndungane, *A World with a Human Face: A Voice from Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003).

[300] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 176-177.

explains, the Mandela administration "actively dissociated itself from the calls of NGOs and civil activist groups … to repudiate the [apartheid-era] debt … on moral grounds."[301] Citing fear of disinvestment, the ANC-led government instead appointed Reserve Bank negotiators and a foreign debt review team simply to reschedule this debt. Such rescheduling involved immediate down payment of $500 million, and a clear commitment to settle almost all the rest of the debt within less than a decade. The debt servicing costs alone amounted to an astounding $2 billion each year.[302]

Admittedly, the ANC had not inherited an economic utopia. There was the debt burden of the apartheid regime's unrestrained infrastructural expansion and revamping. In addition, South Africa was staring down the barrel of three major crises relating to manufacture and exports. Firstly, the country had been suffering from an over-accumulation of capital,[303] involving a chronic overproduction of luxury goods since the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s, manufacturers basing their operations in South Africa enjoyed protection from foreign competition, which resulted in many flooding into the country to produce top-of-the range luxury goods for the well-to-do South African whites. However, by 1967 this market had become saturated, and the commodity glut was felt most acutely in the motor vehicle industry.[304] Market saturation also led to reluctance to invest in the productive economy, resulting in corporate savings being rerouted into "high finance" such as money markets and JSE shares, where a higher rate of return could be expected.[305] The second crisis was situated on the opposite end of the continuum. South Africa was not producing enough basic-needs goods, and a relentless push to mechanize industry stood to undermine both future capital accumulation and employment opportunities. Directing capital into manufacturing automation and construction did little to remedy uneven and unsustainable

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[301] Stephania Bonilla, *Odious Debt: Law-and-Economics Perspectives* (Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag, 2011), 35.

[302] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 177.

[303] Over-accumulation of capital derives "from the general tendency for competition and technological innovation within capitalism … to result in more machines than workers … [which] in turn leads to a growth in productive capacity beyond what consumer markets can bear." Thus, it is "characterized by an oversupply of unsold commodities, large numbers of unemployed workers, and unused capital goods in the form of plants and equipment." Zine Magubane, "Globalization and the South African Transformation: The Impact on Social Policy," in *Globalization and Social Policy in Africa*, eds. Taid Akin Aina, Chachage Seithy L. Chachage and Elisabeth Annan-Yao (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2004), 57.

[304] Patrick Bond, *Commanding Heights & Community Control: New Economics for a New South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991), 37, 40.

[305] Ibid., 47.

development.[306] It did nothing to address the shortage of basic-needs goods. And while it reduced the staffing costs of industries, automation also eroded profits. Surplus value can be extracted from workers but not from machines, because workers' wages can steadily be lowered, forcing them to labor for longer hours to earn the amount required to make ends meet.[307] Moreover, workers are consumers of the products they produce, and of the products of other industries. Thus, laying them off also has a knock-on effect on sales. In South Africa, even big companies like Anglo American failed to make this connection.[308] Thirdly, heavy reliance on the 'minerals-energy complex,' particularly coal production, for export earnings constituted yet another problem for South Africa. The prices of primary commodities fluctuate radically on the world market. Moreover, the water and energy demands of resource extraction and processing are high. For example, as Bond and his colleagues disclosed in a 2002 essay, while the complex on average contributes about one-quarter of the annual GDP, it utilizes nearly half the electricity produced in the country.[309] Extractive industries depend on extreme exploitation of the workforce, and constant downward pressure on workers' rights inevitably leads to work stoppages and financial losses. In short, the minerals-energy complex has proven economically vulnerable as well as environmentally destructive and socially unjust. But macroeconomic emphasis on export-oriented growth, instantiated by the apartheid regime and accepted as the *modus operandus* by the new South African government, only led to further rewarding and aggrandizing of these unsustainable and exploitative extractive concerns.[310]

In short, in the aftermath of apartheid, the ANC-led government found South Africa in an economically precarious situation – one so dire that it jeopardized the life chances of the

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[306] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 21-22.

[307] At a 1940 mine workers' convention this much was pointed out: "[E]ven to the great industrialists of America who are only interested in profit, let's say to them that when they throw millions and millions of men out of work and when they find they cannot exploit a machine, then their profit will end also." United Mine Workers of America, *Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Constitutional Convention of the United Mine Workers of America* (1940), 291.

[308] Clem Sunter, cited in Patrick Bond, *Commanding Heights & Community Control: New Economics for a New South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991), 61.

[309] Patrick Bond, Maj Fiil-Flynn and Stephen Greenberg, "Power to the Powerful: Energy, Electricity, Equity, and Environment," in Patrick Bond, *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development, and Social Protest* (London: The Merlin Press, 2002), 304.

[310] Patrick Bond and David Hallowes, "The Environment of Apartheid-Capitalism: Discourses and Issues," in Patrick Bond, *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development, and Social Protest* (London: The Merlin Press, 2002), 42.

previously disadvantaged black majority for the foreseeable future. Still, no assault was launched against neoliberalism and its vehicle of global free markets. Leaders tended to accept neoliberal globalization as *fait accompli* and as something for which there was "no alternative."[311] This apathetic attitude, argues Bond, manifested in Nelson Mandela's show of impotence in the face of the devastation of the South African rand at the hands of "financial speculators and their local allies."[312] Further, although the new government initially was reluctant to accept World Bank loans,[313] it relented in 1997 in a bid to increase the global competitiveness of small- and medium-scale enterprises.[314] Leftist movements criticized this capitulation, well aware of the Bank's tyrannical track record in the global South. Some ANC members who had lived in countries annihilated by World Bank policies, also opposed the loan. But the ANC received generous applause from high-profile business leaders and civil servants of the apartheid days, known for their feverish promulgation of "free-market conventional wisdom from Washington DC as the gospel."[315] All the while money had in any case been flowing from the World Bank to South Africa via the Bank's private-sector subsidiary, the International Finance Corporation (IFC).[316] Even so, the initial coyness of the ANC-led government over receiving World Bank loans was not matched by any reluctance to accept World Bank policy advice.[317] Policy-wise, the Bank's most significant contribution was to the 'Growth, Employment and Redistribution' (GEAR) strategy.[318] GEAR proved something of a misnomer, because it resulted in inconsistent economic growth, spikes in unemployment, and further inequality. The IMF also remained active in post-apartheid South Africa, and the ANC was surprisingly keen on maintaining economic ties with this institution as well. In 1993, the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) comprising ANC and National

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[311] Ian Taylor, *Stuck in the Middle GEAR: South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Relations* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 8.

[312] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 206-207.

[313] Ibid., 182.

[314] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 69.

[315] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 160-161.

[316] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 144. The involvement of the IFC in South Africa has increased in subsequent years. A 2007 IMF report put the portfolio of the corporation at "$342 million … as of May 2007, the second largest in Africa after Nigeria." International Monetary Fund, *South Africa: Staff Report for the 2007 Article IV Consultation* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2007), 5. Available at: http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr07274.pdf. Date accessed: October 12, 2014.

[317] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 155.

[318] Notably, fourteen out of the fifteen economists who devised this strategy were thoroughly neoliberal in orientation. Ibid., 82.

Party leaders, signed a $850 million IMF loan for 'drought relief' – a sham as the drought had ended over two years earlier.[319] A 1994 leak revealed that the loan conditions included formal obligations to cut state spending, to lower import tariffs, and to reduce wages across the board. In addition, a more informal expectation was raised that finance minister Derek Keys and Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals be reappointed even though they had been "the two main stalwarts of National Party neo-liberalism."[320] These stipulations smacked of IMF-style structural adjustment, clearly indicating the neoliberal trajectory of the 'new South Africa.'

From RDP to GEAR

The above generated a situation of grave contradiction, because of the incompatibility between neoliberal prescriptions and the 1994 election promises, made by the tripartite alliance, of employment, poverty alleviation and equitable redistribution. In an unsuccessful effort to address this contradiction, the 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (RDP) was formulated. This was a contorted policy document suggesting the impossible – that neoliberalism and social justice could be pursued jointly. In March of 1994 the ANC adopted the RDP as the party's "most substantive set of campaign promises," for want of any other policy documentation with which to run for election.[321] Nelson Mandela cited it as "the cornerstone, the foundation, upon which the Government of National Unity is going to be based,"[322] but soon after the election denied that the document prescribes nationalization, which it clearly did.[323] Patrick Bond, who played a role in formulating the RDP document, in fact characterizes it as something "beset by enough fragmented voices, multiple identities and competing discourses to leave even postmodern analysts confounded."[324] In this respect, he contests claims that the RDP document is fundamentally "people centered" and anti-

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[319] Stefan Andreasson, "The Resilience of Comprador Capitalism: 'New' Economic Groups in Southern Africa," in *Big Business and Economic Development: Conglomerates and Economic Groups in Developing Countries and Transition Economies under Globalisation*, eds. Alex E. Fernández Jilberto and Barbara Hogenboom (New York: Routledge, 2007), 279.

[320] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 68, 143-144.

[321] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 89.

[322] Nelson Mandela, cited in Patrick Bond, George Dor and Greg Ruiters, "Transformation in Infrastructure Policy from Apartheid to Democracy: Mandates for Change, Continuities in Ideology, Frictions in Delivery," in *Infrastructure Mandate for Change 1994-1999*, ed. Meshack Khosa (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2000), 25.

[323] African National Congress, *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: A Policy Framework* (Johannesburg: Umanyano Publications, 1994), 4.2.5.1.

[324] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 90.

monetarist,[325] or that it very clearly can be distinguished from the succeeding GEAR strategy which is supposedly "far more neo-liberal."[326] Bond insists that the RDP, on the one hand, had strong 'right-ward' neoliberal leanings. Among other things, it accepted the independence of the Reserve Bank which thus remained "insulated from democratic policy inputs." It argued for the curbing of state spending. It permitted a monetarist stance, and in no way opposed the apartheid-era debt burden. And neoliberals welcomed its industrial policy, which was littered "with visions of post-Fordist competitiveness."[327] However, other parts of the document were far more 'centrist' and interventionist. A case in point was the suggestion that government must step in to stabilize matters in event of market failure. Such action would help safeguard against further entrenchment of racial capitalism, militate against corporations' short-term view, and "facilitate access to basic goods and services, to environmental and consumer protection, or to industrial and technological development."[328] Finally, the RDP document also included a good dose of 'leftist' arguments, cautioning against World Bank and IMF interference. It was stated that Southern African countries

> were pressured into implementing programmes with adverse effects on employment and standards of living … The *RDP* must use foreign debt financing only for those elements of the programme that can potentially increase our capacity for earning foreign exchange. Relationships with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must be conducted *in such a way as to protect the integrity of domestic policy formulation and promote the interests of the South African population* and the economy. Above all, we must pursue policies that enhance national self-sufficiency and enable us to reduce dependence on international financial institutions.[329]

Unusually, for a capitalist patriarchal context, awareness of the problem of gender discrimination was also indicated, as were needs such as the following: engendering an active, critical citizenry; preventing over-speculation and related currency devaluation; routing local capital into productive activities benefiting communities; and offering communal housing that

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[325] Gloria Emeagwali, "The Neo-Liberal Agenda and the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs with Reference to Africa," in *Critical Perspectives on Neoliberal Globalization, Development and Education in Africa and Asia*, ed. Dip Kapoor (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2011), 10.

[326] Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (London: Earthscan, 2002), 13.

[327] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 92.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Emphasis added in second instance. African National Congress, *The Reconstruction and Development Programme*, 6.5.16.

is affordable, for which purpose a Housing Bank should be established.[330] In the end, though, when this extremely ambivalent document was 'translated' into the new government's first white paper under the supervision of Development Bank neoliberals, all of its progressive, socialist-oriented and gender sensitive aspects were dumped.[331] Leftists subsequently began to suggest that RDP actually stands for 'Rumors, Dreams and Promises.' Bond contends that already in 1994 the integrity of the RDP Office itself was compromised, when the World Bank was invited to advise on formulation of urban and rural strategies.[332] In 1996, the RDP Ministry in the Office of the President was closed. The idea obviously had reached its sell-by date. Even so, the ANC was never shy to evoke the socialist aspects of the RDP come election time – ideologically potent promises never to be fulfilled.[333]

However, the neoliberal bent of the ANC-led government was confirmed unequivocally in June 1996, with the 'Growth, Employment and Redistribution' (GEAR) policy statement.[334] GEAR policies conformed to Washington/IMF/World Bank thinking, and over time led South Africa to adopt precisely the type of reforms peddled by the IMF and promoted in terms of the Washington Consensus.[335] Indeed, the only 'non-neoliberal' individual involved in formulating the GEAR policy, also confirmed its "[c]lose affinity with the Washington Consensus … [in terms of] substantive policy recommendations … [and] the process through which it was formulated and presented to the public."[336] The 1994 IMF *Declaration on Partnership for Sustainable Global Growth*, otherwise known as the '11 commandments,' advocated myriad neoliberal reforms which over time saw implementation in South Africa. These included "mutually reinforcing … sound monetary, fiscal and

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[330] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 94-96; and Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 127.

[331] Taylor, *Stuck in the Middle GEAR*, 80.

[332] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 106.

[333] To score political points the ANC routinely recalled the importance of the RDP to achieving social justice, even long after it had been replaced by GEAR. See, for example, African National Congress, "Policy Framework: 2009 Election Manifesto," *African National Congress*. Available at: http://www.anc.org.za/elections/2009/manifesto/policy_framework.html. Date accessed: October 15, 2012.

[334] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 15.

[335] In a 1999 meeting, World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz did not deny the involvement of World Bank staff members in the creation of the GEAR strategy either, but he refused to take responsibility for their inaccurate employment forecasts. Mercia Andrews and George Dor, cited in Patrick Bond, "Their Reforms and Ours: Balance of Forces and Economic Analysis in a New Global Financial Architecture," in *Global Finance: New Thinking on Regulating Speculative Capital Markets*, eds. Walden Bello, Nicola Bullard and Kamal Malhotra (London: Zed Books, 2000), 68.

[336] Stephen Gelb, "The Politics of Macro-Economic Reform in South Africa." Paper delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand history workshop, September 18, 1999.

structural policies … trade liberalization … increased freedom of capital movements … strengthened fiscal discipline … [and] bold structural reform, including labor and product market reform."[337] These commandments closely mirror the reforms promoted within the Washington Consensus, which is unsurprising as their common goal is neoliberal globalization. Recall that the Washington Consensus reforms comprise: (1) fiscal discipline; (2) re-ordering public expenditure priorities; (3) tax reform; (4) liberalizing interest rates; (5) a competitive exchange rate; (6) trade liberalization; (7) liberalization of inward foreign direct investment; (8) privatization; (9) deregulation; and (10) property rights.[338] Through GEAR, the new South African government committed to, and proceeded to implement, all of these reforms to the benefit of TNCs and elites and at the expense of local peoples and environments. In fact, GEAR completely stood at odds with the socially progressive aspects of the original RDP booklet. ANC leader Thabo Mbeki's denial of this fact at the 1998 SACP Congress was most disingenuous.[339]

South Africa's 'Consensus' reforms

There are ten domain features of the Washington Consensus as adopted in South Africa.

Firstly, in terms of fiscal discipline, the South African government drastically curbed public expenditure. For example, the Education Department implemented a 'rationalization strategy' leading to the virtual decimation of permanent teaching staff, who were replaced by inexperienced temporary appointees. While from 1975 to 1996 provincial teaching staff numbers grew at 4.9 percent per annum, this rate declined by 1.3 percent in the period 1996-2000. Also, 'redeployment' was pursued to facilitate racial integration among teaching staff. Many experienced white teachers were unwilling to move to schools in admittedly dangerous low-income areas, and opted for early retirement. On the other hand, talented black teachers constantly agitated for transfer to safer, better equipped and organized schools in affluent suburbs. As a result, even in contemporary South Africa, "schools in disadvantaged areas [tend to] remain populated by black learners and black teachers, the vast majority of whom

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[337] Norman K. Humphreys, *Historical Dictionary of the International Monetary Fund*, 2d ed., ed. Jon Woronoff (Lanham: Scarecrow Press EPub, 1999).

[338] Williamson, "A Short History of the Washington Consensus," 16.

[339] Thabo Mbeki, "Speech to the South African Communist Party Congress," Johannesburg, July 2, 1998, 2, cited in Patrick Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 214.

were trained under a teacher-training college system notorious for poor quality."[340] These teacher-training colleges have also suffered under the rationalization strategy, either being closed for good, or amalgamating with universities that charge fees unaffordable to many aspiring teachers.[341] Finally, even universities have been adversely affected through cuts in government funding, forcing them to merge departments, retrench staff, increase student fees, and eradicate entities that are not proving to be 'cost-effective.'[342] In light of this state of affairs, which sees "Africa's intellectual life … destroyed or enslaved," Italian marxist feminist Silvia Federici urges university educators to disclose and criticize the fiscal strangulation of education that is part of "the World Bank's and the IMF's plan for African education and Africa's future in general."[343]

Secondly, in relation to re-ordering public expenditure priorities, the government favors economic entities over social concerns. As Patrick Bond reveals in *Elite Transition*, in the period 1995-2002, state capital expenditure on "economic infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams, electricity and water supply) and economic services" such as business enterprises, increased from 61.3 percent to 67.6 percent (about $16 billion). On the other hand, for the same period expenditure on social infrastructure in what materialist ecofeminists identify as the reproductive sector – education, healthcare and administrative services – decreased from 38.7 percent to 33.4 percent (about $8 billion).[344] It is no exaggeration to suppose that to a

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[340] Michael Cosser, "Race and Opportunity in the Transition from School to Higher Education in South Africa," in *Discrimination in an Unequal World*, eds. Miguel Angel Centeno and Katherine S. Newman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123. COSATU, as well as critical journalists of leading South African newspapers, continue to criticize austerity and mismanagement in education – even likening the resulting deprivation to the apartheid strategy of keeping black people uneducated. Luyolo Mkentane, "Cosatu Members, Teachers Protest in Bhisho," *The Herald,* March 7, 2012; and Redi Tlhabi, "Verwoerd's Work Goes On, Only Now It's the ANC Crushing Black Children," *Sunday Times*, July 29, 2012.

[341] Robin Stevens and Eric Akrofi, "South Africa: Indigenous Roots, Cultural Imposition and an Uncertain Future," in *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: Cross-Cultural Historical Studies of Music in Compulsory Schooling*, eds. Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens (London: Continuum, 2010), 233.

[342] Franco Barchiesi, "South Africa: Between Oppression and 'Homegrown Structural Adjustment,'" in *A Thousand Flowers: Social Struggles against Structural Adjustment in African Universities*, eds. Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis and Ousseina Alidou (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000), 167-168.

[343] Silvia Federici, "The Recolonization of African Education," in *A Thousand Flowers: Social Struggles against Structural Adjustment in African Universities*, eds. Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis and Ousseina Alidou (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000), 23.

[344] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 267. In 1998, the government was even brazen enough to "redirect … the *RDP* Fund away from basic needs and – via the Department of Trade and Industry – towards 'corporate welfare' Spatial Development Initiatives." Ibid., 36.

capitalist patriarchal government the economic is twice as important as the social. The consequences of neglecting education and healthcare speak for themselves, but the repercussions of underfunding administrative services are equally dire. The South African elderly may qualify for a social grant, but cannot obtain the South African identity document (ID) needed to access it, because of ineptitude or backlogs at the Department of Home Affairs. Youth need IDs to do banking, apply for jobs, study and vote, and they face similar difficulties in acquiring these documents. Some are driven to such desperation that they commit suicide.[345] Social problems have not provoked the government to reconsider its prioritization of expenditure. On the contrary, the South African cabinet, for instance, has continued to "ma[k]e far more funding available for the purchase of high-tech weaponry than for job creation."[346]

Thirdly, in respect of tax reform, the new government continued with the 10 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) system implemented in 1991 by the apartheid regime. As part of a 1993 credit agreement with the IMF to counterbalance poor mining export performance and an increase in grain imports, the Transitional Executive Council in fact committed to raising the VAT rate to 14 percent.[347] Yet, in what appeared to be a progressive move, finance minister Trevor Manuel introduced considerable tax cuts. However, the poor did not gain anything from this, only "the … privileged middle class, black and white." This is because only those earning R40 000 and above actually benefited from personal income tax cuts, leaving the unemployed and those earning less than this amount out in the cold.[348] The extent of this failure to assist the poor can only be fully appreciated when one remembers that over a

[345] Public Protector South Africa, "Public Protector Rescues a Young Man's Future While Home Affairs Moves to Get Its House in Order," *The Public Protector: The Official Newsletter of Public Protector South Africa* II (2010): 5. Available at: http://www.pprotect.org/news/9981_public%20protector_final%20newsletter%20rf%20.pdf. Date accessed: October 6, 2012; and Bronwyn Gerretsen, "ID Book Delay Drives Woman to Suicide," *IOL News*, June 20, 2007. Available at: http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/id-book-delay-drives-woman-to-suicide-1.358419#.UHAbAZhJP8w. Date accessed: October 6, 2012.

[346] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 270. In 1999, South Africa purchased three submarines, four frigates, jet training aircraft, helicopters and Gripen fighter jets at a cost of R70 billion, though few military personnel actually had the expertise to operate some of these machines. Bobby Jordan, "SA's Billion-Rand Arms Deal Subs are Left High and Dry," *Sunday Times*, August 12, 2012.

[347] Mark Horton, "The Role of Fiscal Policy in Stabilization and Poverty Alleviation," in *Post-Apartheid South Africa: The First Ten Years*, eds. Michael Nowak and Luca Antonio Ricci (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2005), 84.

[348] Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, 133.

quarter of the South African population remains unemployed,[349] and that South Africans earn such low wages "that only every third employee is registered as an income taxpayer."[350]

Fourthly, the government liberalized interest rates, and this led to substantial rate hikes. In inflation-adjusted terms, the real prime rate rose from 6 percent in 1994 to 15 percent in 1998, and it spiked again in the period 2000-2002.[351] Admittedly, in the succeeding years the real prime rate gradually was reduced to 5 percent. This was done to encourage more borrowing and so spur household spending, and to instigate corporate investment in productive enterprises. Only in 2014 has the interest rate been raised again on two occasions, and more hikes are on the horizon. South African Reserve Bank governor Gill Marcus cites currency devaluation and the need to keep inflation under control as some of the factors motivating the decision to raise the repo rate.[352] Still, South Africans' current debt-to-income ratio, indicating the percentage of total monthly earnings used to service debt, stands at over 75 percent.[353] A low interest rate may have encouraged reckless borrowing, but raising the interest rate is pushing indebted individuals to the limit, not least because the rate hikes have been accompanied by radical increases in electricity tariffs and fuel prices.[354]

Fifthly, the pursuit of a competitive exchange rate has been one of the most devastating reforms implemented by the government. In 1995, the then Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals announced the abolition of the financial rand or 'finrand,' which had been used alongside the commercial rand to attract foreign investment while discouraging capital flight. The value of the finrand was 10 to 20 percent higher than the value of the commercial rand, and was used only in investment transactions by foreigners. The implication of this was that foreigners could invest in South Africa and receive between 10 to 20 percent more for their dollar than they would have had they been obliged to work with the

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[349] Statistics South Africa, "Work & Labour Force," *Statistics South Africa*, March 18, 2014. Available at: http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=737&id=1. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

[350] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *OECD Economic Surveys: South Africa 2010* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2010), 76.

[351] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 257.

[352] Gill Marcus, "Statement of the Monetary Policy Committee," 6, 13, *South African Reserve Bank*, January 29, 2014. Available at: https://www.resbank.co.za/Lists/News%20and%20Publications/Attachments/6075/MPC%20Statement%20January%202014%20f.pdf. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

[353] Ibid., 10.

[354] SABC, "Hard-Pressed Consumers Face Massive Price Increases in July," *SABC*, June 30, 2014. Available at: http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/bed45b80448ec9ab87d5ff3bfe17c0b1/Hard-pressed-consumers-face-massive-price-increases-in-July-20143006. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

commercial rand. Were they to disinvest, though, they would get less dollars back than if they were exchanging commercial rands for dollars. If capital flight was imminent, such as after the assassination of struggle icon Chris Hani, the value of the finrand would spike in order to deter disinvestment.[355] Neoliberals praised the abolition of the finrand, since they believed it had unnecessarily protected the financial system. They anticipated renewed investment interest, but many foreigners actually were keen to disinvest the moment the single floating exchange rate came into operation.[356] Certainly, in the immediate wake of finrand abolition, foreigners' investment in government bonds doubled. But when early in 1996 it was rumored that Mandela was ill, this "hot money" rapidly flooded out of the country and the rand plummeted. In its economically weakened state, the South African government succumbed to the pressure of international financial institutions promoting abandonment of the RDP in favor of the GEAR policy. GEAR was adopted by June 1996, and "introduced a 'homegrown' structural adjustment programme for South Africa." However, its uptake prevented neither the further raiding on the rand in March 1998, nor the perpetual downward spiral of the currency in the decades following.[357] The weak rand drove up interest rates to 21.8 percent, and had a negative impact on the JSE and Reserve Bank foreign reserves. Consumers also suffered, particularly as 2000/2001 saw the doubling of prices of certain goods such as imported maize.[358] Destruction of the rand was facilitated by liberalizing the South African economy and market under instigation of US and British neoliberalizers, the IMF and the World Bank. Despite this, the neoliberal GEAR policy continued to be regarded as a cure for all South African ills. This is unsurprising, though, if one recalls that at the launch of the GEAR policy, then deputy president Thabo Mbeki indicated his own liberalizing bent by declaring: "Just call me a Thatcherite."[359]

Sixthly, trade liberalization further weakened the country. Rather than reversing the unsustainable export orientation of the apartheid regime, the new Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) pushed even harder for export-led growth. Numerous preferential and free

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[355] Pieter Cornelis Smit et al., *Economics: A Southern African Perspective* (Lansdowne: Juta, 2007), 620-621.

[356] Hugh Pope, "South Africa Scraps Finrand," *The Guardian*, March 11, 1995. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/south-africa-scraps-finrand-1610946.html. Date accessed: October 7, 2012.

[357] Action for South Africa (ACTSA), "International Pressures and Constraints," in House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *South Africa: Fifth Report of Session 2003-04* (London: The Stationary Office Limited, 2004), Ev 20, 3.4.

[358] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, ix, 304.

[359] Thabo Mbeki, cited in William Mervin Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, rev. ed. (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), 107.

trade agreements were signed with the US and the EU among others,[360] instigating Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) aimed at linking productive sites in Southern Africa to further enhance exports.[361] The outcomes of these initiatives, however, have been problematic. For example, an SDI linking the greater Johannesburg region (Gauteng) to the main port of Mozambique, promised to enhance the industrial productivity of surrounding areas and integrate regional economies. However, the initiative benefited South Africa far more than it did Mozambique in terms of exports, and the more developed areas and wealthier populations benefited from related regional development.[362] Failure to develop and empower rural and impoverished areas is a common weakness of SDIs.[363] In addition, Industrial Development Zones (IDZs) have been established at major South African ports, to assist export-oriented growth and attract foreign direct investment. Pundits argue that these differ from regular Export Processing Zones (EPZs) by having measures in place against labor exploitation and the lowering of environmental standards.[364] There is little to back up such claims, however. If the Coega IDZ established at the Port of Ngqura just outside Port Elizabeth is anything to go by, IDZs primarily enrich corporations in spite of promises to uplift poor South Africans, and wreak environmental havoc despite the stewardship rhetoric which emanates from them. The stated purpose of the multi-billion rand[365] Coega IDZ is to foster investment in export-focused

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[360] Earlier South African governments set a precedent in respect of trade liberalization. South Africa was represented at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference, and was associated with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization from the outset. John Dugard, *International Law: A South African Perspective*, 3d ed. (Lansdowne: Juta, 2005), 429.

[361] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 49-50.

[362] Daniel Tevera and Admos Chimhowu, “Situating the Maputo Corridor: A Regional Perspective,” in *Regionalism and Uneven Development in Southern Africa: The Case of the Maputo Development Corridor*, eds. Fredrik Soderbaum and Ian Taylor (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 38, 40.

[363] Doreen Atkinson and Lochner Marais, “Urbanisation and the Future Urban Agenda in South Africa,” in *Democracy and Delivery: Urban Policy in South Africa*, eds. Udesh Pillay, Richard Tomlinson and Jacques du Toit (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006), 30.

[364] Southern African Development Community (SADC), “Chapter 3: Investment Incentives,” *Southern African Development Community*, 2012. Available at: http://www.sadc.int/english/regional-integration/tifi/tax/chapter-3/south-africa/. Date accessed: October 7, 2012.

[365] Patrick Bond, “Coega, Energy, Corporate Welfare and Climate Crisis,” in *Development Challenges in the Eastern Cape*, ed. Greg Ruiters (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011), 164-165; and Mcebisi Jonas, “Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs 2013/14 Budget Vote Speech,” *South Africa Government Online*, March 22, 2012. Available at: http://www.info.gov.za/speech/DynamicAction?pageid=461&sid=26183&tid=62074. Date accessed: October 9, 2012.

manufacturing industries, which promises to improve local economic and social conditions by making employment available to locals and equipping them with new skill sets.[366] The regional media have sold the IDZ to the public, accordingly laying emphasis on the tens of thousands of jobs supposedly created.[367] All the while, silence prevails on the health implications of and ecological damage that will result from the aluminium/manganese/steel smelting and oil refining operations of key IDZ anchors.[368] Also, what is not made clear at all is that most employment opportunities are temporary and relate to the construction phase of each project.[369] The number of permanent jobs that will be made available at the IDZ pales in comparison to the loss of permanent jobs in local sustainable industries, which stand to be jeopardized by the ecological fallout of the operations of key IDZ anchors. Local industries that likely will be adversely affected are salt works, fisheries, mariculture and agricultural concerns, and eco-tourism ventures in the surrounding area. Bond, in a 2011 study of Coega, conservatively estimated resultant income loss to be R706 million per annum, and losses of permanent jobs to approximate 9,486.[370] IDZ anchors also will consume most of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan electricity supply at bargain prices, while locals are punished with ever higher tariffs, the impoverished are denied a lifeline electricity supply, and many rural communities have to go without electricity altogether.[371] In spite of all this, the establishment of the Coega IDZ has not been rued. The only negative assessment of the IDZ program in general has been its inability to attract sufficient foreign direct investment to warrant the

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[366] Coega Development Corporation, "Coega Industrial Development Zone," *Coega Development Corporation*, 2012. Available at: http://www.coega.co.za/Content2.aspx?objID=84. Date accessed: October 7, 2012.

[367] Bob Kernohan, "Coega Smelter Dream Over," *The Herald*, October 16, 2009; Riana de Lange, "Terugslag vir die Oos-Kaap: Coega-Smelter Geskrap," *Die Burger*, October 16, 2009; Brian Hayward, "Two More Smelters in the Pipeline for Coega," *The Herald*, May 25, 2012. Available at: http://www.peherald.com/news/article/6366. Date accessed: October 10, 2012; and Nwabisa Makunga, "Coega Refinery Bonanza," *The Herald*, February 20, 2012. Available at: http://www.peherald.com/news/article/4883. Date accessed: October 9, 2012.

[368] Marianne Sullivan, *Tainted Earth: Smelters, Public Health, and the Environment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 6-7.

[369] Patrick Bond, "Economic Growth, Ecological Modernization or Environmental Justice?," 47; and CEF Group of Companies, "South Africa's Next Multi-Billion Rand Crude Oil Refinery," *Central Energy Fund*, 2012. Available at: http://www.cef.org.za/index.php?view=article&id=50%3Asouth-africas-next-multi-billion-rand. Date accessed: October 10, 2012.

[370] Bond, "Coega, Energy, Corporate Welfare and Climate Crisis," 166.

[371] Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC), "Infrastructure," *Eastern Cape Development Corporation*, 2012. Available at: http://www.ecdc.co.za/about_the_eastern_cape/infrastructure. Date accessed: October 10, 2012; and Lee-Anne Butler, "Punitive Power Charges: New Tariffs Already in Effect Could Mean Hike of 35%," *The Herald*, July 2, 2012.

amounts that the government has already spent on these initiatives. It is believed that this deficit can be addressed by transforming IDZs into Special Economic Zones (SEZs) run in terms of different policies. Critics are concerned that these policies will entail corporate welfare, condoning labor exploitation and the lowering of environmental standards.[372] Notwithstanding all such efforts to pump up South African exports, to date the value of imports consistently has exceeded that of exports.[373] Evidently, the free trade agreements established between South Africa and other nations give South Africa the opportunity to engage in more export activities, but they also force open the South African market to the flood of other countries' goods.[374] Liberalization of trade has not proved as beneficial as the government had anticipated.

Seventh, the government has engaged in concerted liberalization of inward foreign direct investment (FDI), to devastating effect. The first thing to be mentioned is that FDI inflow to sub-Saharan Africa is routinely linked to socially and ecologically damaging mineral extraction industries, the profits of which are routed out of the host country.[375] Shell's investment in Nigeria is a case in point, as the profits of this company skyrocket while hundreds of fishermen and farmers are robbed of their livelihoods and their communities are devastated.[376] In South Africa, FDI is mainly linked to minerals extraction, and extractive industries establish their headquarters here but are foreign-owned. This leads to a situation where the FDI outflows from South Africa far exceed FDI inflows to the country. In short, the companies send their profits back home, after exploiting the local workforce and pillaging the local environment.[377] Also, the level of FDI inflows itself is misleading, because foreign direct investment in South Africa often is carried out by major South African companies such as Anglo American, De Beers, and Liberty Life, which in the late 1990s were permitted to

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[372] Lisa Steyn, "Doubts over Economic Zones Bill," *Mail & Guardian*, January 20, 2012. Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2012-01-20-doubts-over-economic-zones-bill/. Date accessed: October 10, 2012.

[373] Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), "SA Export Value HS8 (Annual)," *The DTI*, 2014. Available at: http://tradestats.thedti.gov.za/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=891. Date accessed: November 10, 2014; and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), "SA Import Value HS8 (Annual)," *The DTI*, 2014. Available at: http://tradestats.thedti.gov.za/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=894. Date accessed: November 10, 2014.

[374] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 35.

[375] Ibid., 16; and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Environmental Impacts of Foreign Direct Investment in the Mining Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2002), 1, 7.

[376] Andrew Heavens, "Shell's Nigeria Pollution Lawsuit Reaches the Hague," *The Huffington Post Green*, October 11, 2012. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/11/shell-pollution-lawsuit-nigeria-africa_n_1956931.html. Date accessed: October 21, 2012.

[377] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 17.

'become' foreign by moving their primary share listings to London.[378] Despite such disequilibrium the government still sees FDI as beneficial to South Africa, and to attract further investment it reduced corporate taxes by 18 percent over the period 1994-1999.[379] A final point to be made is that by 1999, the majority of FDI inflows unrelated to mineral extraction did not consist in investment in new, productive industries. Rather, they were tied to mergers and acquisitions, the most notable of which was the partial privatization of the South African telecommunications company, Telkom. The IMF has indicated that more recent FDI inflows to South Africa, unrelated to mineral extraction, are attributable in large part to the World Bank subsidiaries, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), interested in privatization of municipal infrastructure, financial services, private healthcare, and so on.[380]

Since the 1990s, the new South African government has been bent on 'sending the right signals' to the global market, one such gesture being implementation of the eighth Washington Consensus reform of privatization. Before 1996, consent had already been given for the sale of numerous radio stations, and in that year the government announced its intention to allow the partial or complete privatization of an entire complex of industries ranging from energy, telecommunications and transport to agriculture and forestry. This troubled many ordinary South Africans greatly, particularly because privatization so often entails downward pressure on wages and working conditions, and concomitant escalation of food prices and utility costs.[381] These fears were realized in the partial privatization of the telecommunications service, Telkom, in 1997. Before long, twenty thousand workers were retrenched and the cost of previously subsidized local calls rose precipitously. Thus, although with the help of taxpayers' money the company connected nearly three million new lines through 2001, two million of these soon were disconnected as low-income earners simply could not afford the higher charges.[382] The disappointing sum raised at Telkom's Initial Public Offering on the New York Stock Exchange in 2003 entailed an estimated $5 billion loss, if the government's late-1990s capital expansion was taken into account. Despite these

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[378] Ibid., 25, 193, 260; and Patrick Bond and Ashwin Desai, "Explaining Uneven and Combined Development in South Africa," in *100 Years of Permanent Revolution: Results and Prospects*, eds. Bill Dunn and Hugo Radice (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 236.

[379] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 265.

[380] International Monetary Fund, *South Africa*, 5.

[381] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 80-81.

[382] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 127; and Patrick Bond et al., "Eco-Social Injustice for Working-Class Communities: The Making and Unmaking of Neoliberal Infrastructure Policy," in Patrick Bond, *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development, and Social Protest* (London: The Merlin Press, 2002), 187.

issues, when the government in 2004 repurchased Telkom's Texan/Malaysian shares, it continued clinging to the neoliberal trajectory initiated by this consortium during the preceding years.[383] The outsourcing of water and sanitation services likewise created problems. From the start this venture was guided by a 100 percent cost recovery policy, endorsed by the World Bank and accepted by Pretoria.[384] So although, in the run-up to the 2000 local government elections, the ANC promised the poor free lifeline-supply water and electricity, hundreds of thousands of people nonetheless have suffered disconnections because of unaffordability.[385] Prioritizing profitable accumulation over human lives in this manner,[386] also resulted in an enormous cholera outbreak in 2000. Rural communities, unable to afford the newly instantiated R51-per-household connection fee, were obliged to resort to consumption of untreated water and this led to 130 thousand cholera infections and three hundred deaths.[387]

Deregulation, the ninth of the Washington Consensus reforms, has done further damage to South Africa. As discussed earlier, government-endorsed financial deregulation precipitated capital flight and facilitated downward raiding on the South African rand, while deregulation of the interest rate and trade had similarly negative repercussions. Deregulation of the transport industry, initiated in 1987 by apartheid-era president P. W. Botha,[388] has adversely affected many South Africans as well. Botha permitted the use of minibuses as taxis, paving the way for the emergence of the South African taxi industry. Competition became rife as thousands of aspiring 'taxi moguls' received permits without having to demonstrate "a need for their service in a particular area or … any degree of financial security or competence."[389] Lack of regulation saw slaughter on the roads and fatal shootings among

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[383] Patrick Bond, *Looting Africa: The Economics of Exploitation* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 82-83.

[384] Patrick Bond, Greg Ruiters and Robyn Stein, "Droughts and Floods: Water Prices and Values in the Time of Cholera," in Patrick Bond, *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development, and Social Protest* (London: The Merlin Press, 2002), 270.

[385] Julian May and Nina Hunter, "Poverty, Inequality and the Social Wage," in *Democratising Development: The Politics of Socio-Economic Rights in South Africa*, eds. Peris Jones and Kristian Stokke (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 122.

[386] Myron Echenberg, *Africa in the Time of Cholera: A History of Pandemics from 1817 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 155.

[387] Bond, Ruiters and Stein, "Droughts and Floods," 255-256; and Echenberg, *Africa in the Time of Cholera*, 149, 151-152.

[388] See note 251 above.

[389] Jackie Dugard, "From Low Intensity War to Mafia War: Taxi Violence in South Africa (1987-2000)," *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation*, May 2001. Available at: http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/papers/papvtp4.htm. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

taxi drivers themselves.[390] The government has made some effort to improve safety standards, by initiating a Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP) involving subsidization for the purchase of new, roadworthy minibuses. However, by 2010, due to delays and non-compliance, "the project appeared to be running aground and was perceived by many as a fruitless and wasteful exercise."[391] Turf wars between taxi bosses and among drivers remain commonplace, resulting in hundreds of deaths and pointed assassinations.[392] Also, competition among drivers who 'poach' one another's routes frequently leads to reckless driving and dangerous overloading of vehicles.[393] The resultant accidents claim approximately forty lives per day.[394] Deregulation of extractive industries also threatens human life. Mining houses, exempt from national radiation regulations, have become so careless that some even neglect to fence off radioactive areas close to communities.[395] Wages have also been targeted for deregulation by among others, the managing director of the IMF.[396] Since the 1990s workers have been obliged to accept wage increases below inflation.[397] Although criticized severely by the workerist Congress of South African Trade Unions,[398] the government has

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[390] SABC, "Taxi Violence," *SABC Truth Commission Special Report*, 2014. Available at: http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/glossary/taxi_violence.htm?tab=victims. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

[391] Sekanyane Tys Daisy Mashishi, "The Taxi Recapitilisation Programme: Some Perceptions of the Taxi Associations in Temba," *UJDigispace*, October 2010. Available at: https://ujdigispace.uj.ac.za/handle/10210/3850. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

[392] Michael Wines, "Cartels Battle for Supremacy in South Africa's Taxi Wars," *The New York Times*, September 19, 2006. Available at: http://www.google.co.za/url?sa=f&rct=j&url=http://travel2.nytimes.com/2006/09/17/world/africa/17africa.html%3Fpagewanted%3Dall&q=cartels+battle+for+supremacy,+wines&ei=LTOFUO_jL9GKhQf3lICgBw&usg=AFQjCNECyiJfjZ4JEqYTchOEzoYQBBbIbA. Date accessed: October 22, 2012; and Jane Barrett, *Organizing in the Informal Economy: A Case Study of the Minibus Taxi Industry in South Africa* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2003), 8.

[393] SAPA, "Taxi was Carrying 55 Children – Police," *IOL News*, September 13, 2011. Available at: http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/taxi-was-carrying-55-children-police-1.1136909#.UIUx-G9JP8w. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

[394] Mandi Smallhorne, "Offenders Must Be Punished," *Mail & Guardian*, October 7, 2011.

[395] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 221; and Gia Costella, "Greater Intervention Needed to Tackle Acid Mine Drainage," *Mining Weekly*, March 23, 2012. Available at: http://www.miningweekly.com/article/environmental-risks-and-hazards-within-the-wits-goldfields-2012-03-23. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

[396] Christine Lagarde, "Statement by IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde at the Conclusion of Her Visit to South Africa," *International Monetary Fund*, January 7, 2012. Available at: http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2012/pr1201.htm. Date accessed: October 6, 2014.

[397] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 37.

[398] Sam Shilowa, *Business Day*, April 7, 1998.

done little to address this problem. Rather, amendments to South African labor laws have been proposed that deter strike action.[399] Added to this, treatment of striking workers is becoming ever harsher, a case in point being the killing of forty-four workers by police during the Marikana miners' strike. The miners were 'illegally' protesting low wages for dangerous work.[400] Rather than rallying in support of the miners, many South African media outlets indirectly censured them by making much of the negative economic impact of this strike, which included multi-billion rand disinvestment.[401] More critical journalists did, however, begin asking the public whether profitable accumulation should be pursued at the expense of human lives.[402] Recently, platinum miners engaged in the longest ever strike in South African history. They struck for five months, with unions demanding the tripling of their salaries with very limited success. Local and international media again bemoaned the resultant economic losses and damage to the reputation of South Africa as a foreign investment option.[403] They did so instead of emphasizing the need to implement regulations for better treatment and protection of mine workers.

Finally, in relation to property rights, the new South African government continued to follow neoliberal, Washington Consensus dictates despite promises of land redistribution. The RDP aim of redistributing 30 percent of good farmland to previously disadvantaged peoples within five years failed miserably. This was principally because Pretoria adopted a World Bank-engineered 'willing buyer-willing seller' policy.[404] In terms of this policy, redistribution hinged on the seller's willingness to part with their land at a price either affordable to grant

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[399] COSATU, "Cosatu's Submission on Proposed Labour Law Amendments," *politicsweb*, July 31, 2012. Available at: http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page72308?oid=316541&sn=Marketingweb+detail&pid=90389. Date accessed: October 22, 2012; and Greg Nicolson, "Labour Law Amendments Provoke Unions' Ire," *Daily Maverick*, April 5, 2012. Available at: http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-04-05-labour-law-amendments-provoke-unions-ire. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

[400] Athandiwe Saba et al., "Never Forget," *City Press*, September 9, 2012.

[401] Amukelani Chauke and T. J. Strydom, "Mine War: SA Bleeds," *The Times*, August 16, 2012; and Loni Prinsloo and Jana Marais, "'Huge' Blow to SA Investment," *Sunday Times*, August 19, 2012.

[402] Kuseni Dlamini, "Deaths Reflect Badly on Leaders: Lonmin Killings Should Prompt a New Conversation About the Type of Society We Want to Be," *Sunday Times*, August 19, 2012.

[403] Alex Mitchley, "Mining Strike Could Hurt Us All Soon – Economist," *The Citizen*, May 27, 2014. Available at: http://citizen.co.za/185452/mining-strike-hurt-us-soon-economist/. Date accessed: August 3, 2014; and Devon Maylie, "South African Platinum Miners Agree to End Strike," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2014. Available at: http://online.wsj.com/articles/south-african-miners-end-strike-1403538168. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

[404] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 108.

applicants, or, in restitution cases, acceptable to the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) purchasing the property. This approach came with various insurmountable problems. First, market prices were, and remain, hugely overinflated. Second, applicants were given only a R20 000 grant, making it impossible for them to purchase quality land. Third, restrictions were placed on applicants pooling their grants in order to jointly purchase land and pursue group projects.[405] Abie Ditlhake of the National Land Committee argues that although the policy carried the veneer of legitimacy, since the Department of Land Affairs had consulted with rural communities, these people's concerns ultimately "were outweighed by global imperatives represented by the World Bank and other international interests, and the emerging national petit-bourgeoisie."[406] Aside from the problematic policy itself, not nearly enough money was allocated for land redistribution.[407] Frustration with the slow pace of reform,[408] combined with welling anger over substandard and slow housing delivery,[409] is quite likely what motivated the government's gazetting of the Promotion and Protection of Investment Bill late in 2013, hinting at land expropriation without compensation. However, the Bill was rejected by both the German ambassador to South Africa and the American Chamber of Commerce, and concerns have been raised over it jeopardizing foreign investment,[410] making its implementation doubtful. Thus, notwithstanding the plight of the poor, the wealthy and a climate conducive to foreign investment are prioritized at every turn. Yet participating foreigners have made it near impossible even for middle-income South Africans to own homes. Enticed by the weak rand, they pay exorbitant prices for properties and thus drive market sentiment up, leading to overinflation of house prices. Prospective local

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[405] Ruth Hall, "Transforming Rural South Africa? Taking Stock of Land Reform," in *The Land Question in South Africa: The Challenge of Transformation and Redistribution*, eds. Lungisile Ntsebeza and Ruth Hall (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 98-99.

[406] Abie Ditlhake, "Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa: Prospects and Challenges," *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly* (October-November 1998): 10-11.

[407] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 109; and Michael Aliber and Reuben Mokoena, *Farmland Price Trends in South Africa, 1994-2003* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2003), 3.

[408] SAPA, "Land Reform Too Slow, Says Zuma," *News24*, February 10, 2012. Available at: http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Land-reform-too-slow-says-Zuma-20120209. Date accessed: October 22, 2012.

[409] Leslie Bank, Langa Makubalo and Landiswa Maqasho, *Housing Delivery and State Subsidies* (East London: Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research (FHISER), 2010), 30.

[410] Thalia Holmes, "New Land Reform Bill – Dangerous or Not?," *Mail & Guardian*, June 23, 2014. Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2014-06-23-new-land-expropriation-bill-dangerous-or-appropriate. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

homeowners receive hardly any protection from the government in this regard, by way of regulations or taxes that would deter foreigners from purchasing South African properties.[411]

Big Men: little people

In 2000, Thabo Mbeki publicly conceded that the Washington/IMF/World Bank-style GEAR strategy had failed South Africa. In an address on 24 May, he asserted:

> Notwithstanding some specific problems in some developing countries and especially African countries, there are many among these countries … that have responded positively, even under very difficult circumstances, to the prescriptions of both the prospective investors as well as the multi-lateral institutions … In our country, we have been assured that our economic fundamentals are correct and sound. We have developed a stable and effective financial and fiscal system. We have reduced tariffs to levels that are comparable to the advanced industrial countries. We have reformed agriculture to make it the least subsidised of all the major agricultural trading nations. We have restructured our public sector through privatisation, strategic partners and regulation. We have a … sophisticated system of labour relations that is continually adjusting to new developments. We play an active role in all multilateral agencies in the world. *Yet, the flow of investment into South Africa has not met our expectations while the levels of poverty and unemployment remain high*.[412]

Mbeki indicates here that South Africa followed the Washington Consensus reforms, but that this did not facilitate the desired growth and social upliftment. Even so, and despite worsening poverty and severe environmental degradation, fourteen years on South Africa remains on a neoliberal trajectory. This can be attributed in part to the stranglehold of major institutions to which South Africa is indebted, most notably the World Bank and the IMF.[413] The relatively recent economic alignment of South Africa with Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRICS), may signal a move away from the tyranny of the dollar-regime, but not an end to the

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[411] Denise Mhlanga, "Foreigners Snap up Homes in Cape Town," *property24*, April 3, 2012. Available at: http://www.property24.com/articles/foreigners-snap-up-homes-in-cape-town/15046. Date accessed: August 3, 2014.

[412] Emphasis added. Thabo Mbeki, "Address to the Commonwealth Club, World Affairs Council and the US/SA Business Council Conference," *The Presidency Republic of South Africa*, May 24, 2000. Available at: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=2637. Date accessed: October 19, 2012.

[413] Wade Mansell, Belinda Meteyard and Alan Thomson, *A Critical Introduction to Law*, 2d ed. (London: Cavendish Publishing, 1999), 135.

exploitation of people and the environment under the capitalist imperative.[414] South Africa is identified as beneficial to the other BRICS countries precisely on the basis of its *in situ* mineral wealth.[415] Yet, staying on the neoliberal course may also be the doing of self-serving governing elites, insensitive to the growing poverty of ordinary South Africans – at least half of whom have to survive on under $2 per day.[416] Those critical of GEAR and requesting a return to 'leftist' RDP values have been charged with disloyalty.[417] And social movements refusing to continue supporting what they see as an irremediably neoliberal ANC, risk the charge of "heretical" politics.[418] Sacralization of the ANC remains a lingering problem.

Moreover, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy, aimed at bringing previously disadvantaged South Africans into play professionally and thereby eradicating racialized poverty, has only served a small minority. To clarify, preference is given to previously disadvantaged South Africans in job applications, and certain black South Africans have benefited hugely by being placed in managerial positions and allocated business partnerships and shares, as companies receive incentives for this from the government.[419] This new executive class constitutes the South African *nouveau riche*, the 'black diamonds' who engage in near unfathomable levels of conspicuous consumption while the majority of black South Africans fall by the wayside. Those in the new black business class, giving a new face to an old elitism,[420] increasingly distance themselves from the economically disempowered and shield themselves from what they perceive as the poor menace. Together with their new comrades, rich whites, they seek "insulation from crime and segregation from the vast majority [through a] … residential 'arms race' – private security systems, sophisticated

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[414] John Weeks, "The BRICS Bank," *openDemocracy*, July 15, 2014. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/john-weeks/brics-bank. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

[415] Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), "South Africa in BRICS," *BRICS*, 2014. Available at: http://www.brics5.co.za/about-brics/south-africa-in-brics/. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

[416] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 199; and Johann Kirsten et al., "South Africa," in *Beyond Food Production: The Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction*, eds. Fabrizio Bresciani and Alberto Valdés (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007), 189.

[417] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 84.

[418] Richard Pithouse, "On Abahlali baseMjondolo Voting for the DA in Durban," *The South African Civil Society Information Service*, May 9, 2014. Available at: http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/1999. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

[419] Gauteng Provincial Government, "What is Black Economic Empowerment?," *Guatengonline*. Available at: http://www.gautengonline.gov.za/Business/Pages/FAQs.aspx. Date accessed: October 23, 2012.

[420] Anne Kelk Mager, *Beer, Sociability, and Masculinity in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 121.

alarms, high walls and razor wire, [and] … gated communities."[421] Government leaders are not shy about economic indulgence, either. Recently, president Jacob Zuma unflinchingly spent R246 million of taxpayers' money to upgrade his private Nkandla residence, which involved construction of "palatial" proportions in one of the poorest areas of the country.[422] He did so in spite of his earlier call for business executives to curb their spending in view of "the challenge of high income and wage disparities that create resentment and limit our social cohesion as South Africans."[423] These Big Men – South African government and business leaders – undermine the struggle for social and ecological justice. They are, as Patrick Bond puts it, polishing rather than breaking the chains of global apartheid.[424] The democratic transition in 1994 did not dismantle the capitalist underpinnings of South Africa, and so racial apartheid has simply been replaced by class apartheid. Each new neoliberal development adds yet another page to the country's chronicle of domination.

That said, neoliberal hegemony hinges not only on the dictates of big government, big business, big institutions and Big Men, but also on buy-in from the many 'little people' – ordinary men and women. This is because, as Maria Mies, drawing on the work of Rosa Luxemburg,[425] explains, capitalism cannot be sustained unless there is an ever expanding consumer base for manufactured products. Most people in overdeveloped countries, as well as the middle and upper classes of the global South, invite its perpetuation by orienting their identities primarily around consumption. Even the destitute tend to fall under the sway of visions of the high life, with some resorting to crime in an effort to obtain the commodities that promise prestige.[426] Mies, in fact, is of the opinion that the "area which has been almost totally left out for political struggle in the West has been … consumption."[427] She maintains

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[421] Patrick Bond, "Contradictions Subside Then Deepen: Accumulation and Class Conflict, 1994-2000," in John S. Saul and Patrick Bond, *South Africa – The Present as History: From Mrs Ples to Mandela & Marikana* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2014), 167.

[422] David Smith, "Jacob Zuma's Palatial Folly Sparks Anger and Resentment amid Poverty," *The Guardian*, May 3, 2014. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/03/jacob-zuma-pleasure-dome-south-africa-elections. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

[423] Jacob Zuma, "Media Statement by President Jacob Zuma on the Conclusion of the Social Dialogue Meeting on the State of the Economy," *politicsweb*, October 17, 2012. Available at: http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71619/page71654?oid=333397&sn=Detail&pid=71654. Date accessed: October 23, 2012.

[424] Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, xi.

[425] Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, [1913] 1968).

[426] Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 11.

[427] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 225.

that unionists, many feminists, as well as other groups opposing the economic status quo focus critical attention on governments, corporations or the economy, without considering "their own role in the exploitative system" as consumers.[428] The same can be said of anti-neoliberal protest in South Africa. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) broke new ground in 2014, by indicating the need to form "a united front against neoliberalism," through allying with diverse interest groups ranging from LGBT activists to land sovereignty advocates.[429] Still, for the moment critique remains focused on the non-socialist actions of corporations, neoliberals, and the complicit ANC government, rather than involving acutely self-reflexive questioning of each individual's endorsement of the hegemony through commodity consumption.[430] The next chapter heeds Mies's attention to the role of consumerism in the perpetuation of neoliberalism, particularly in relation to how it molds gender identity.

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[428] Ibid.

[429] Judith Marshall, "Building a United Front against Neoliberalism: South African Metalworkers Change Course," *Socialist Project*, March 4, 2014. Available at: http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/944.php. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

[430] Verashni Pillay, "Full Marx at Numsa's Political School," *Mail & Guardian*, February 7, 2014. Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2014-02-06-full-marx-at-the-numsa-school. Date accessed: August 5, 2014.

Chapter 3: Global Political Economy and Identity

Big government, big business, big institutions and Big Men all had a role to play in bringing global free market ideology to South Africa. However, neoliberalism could neither have been so effortlessly established nor continue so unhindered, were it not for ordinary people's acceptance of it. This chapter, drawing on scholarship predominantly from the global North, describes how people come to embrace neoliberalism through consumer culture; an immersion so deep that they readily ignore its social and ecological fallout. In short, it presents a standard account of the rise of consumerism and the changes this brought about in hegemonic gender ideologies. This provides the backdrop against which the nuanced manifestation of these processes in South Africa are identified and analyzed in the next chapter. People may be disempowered in the workplace, but are declared 'sovereign consumers' during their leisure hours. Further, thanks to a barrage of advertising, men and women are made to believe that they even will attain heightened "sexual status through consumerism."[431] Writing on masculinity, the American scholar Paul Hoch maintains that establishing individual and group gender identity "has eclipsed Christianity as an ontology for directing activity."[432] In the neoliberal setting, this ontology is most perverse, since pursuit of the 'exemplary' masculinity and femininity of the day rests on commodity acquisition rather than on human achievements or actions. A 'real man' is projected as someone who owns high-tech goods, not someone who protects others. An attractive woman is someone who dons the latest fashion, not someone who cares for family or community. Status is achieved by buying, not doing; by going with the economic flow rather than resisting it. Thus, in contrast to their workerist predecessors, a majority of contemporary men and women have become so blinded by the neon lights of commodification that they relinquish any meaningful sense of subjective autonomy, or occasion for genuine social relations and pointed political action.

Industrialization and the theft of subjective autonomy

Today consumerism is a ubiquitous phenomenon, but the precise moment and causes of its rise are debatable. The Canadian anthropologist Grant McCracken regards certain late

[431] Paul Hoch, *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 15.

[432] Ibid., 16.

sixteenth-century practices as instrumental to the rise of consumerism. He focuses on Elizabeth I's conspicuous consumption to signify her majesty, and her noblemen's ruinous spending as they competed with one another for the attentions of their royal benefactress.[433] British economic historian, Neil McKendrick, on the other hand, cites as key to the rise of consumerism the eighteenth-century English demand for exotic items imported from India and elsewhere; the proliferation of fashion knowledge; the commercialization of pottery; and an increase in newspaper advertising among other things.[434] The French historian Rosalind Williams again identifies nineteenth-century France as birthplace of the consumer revolution. Williams acknowledges earlier motivating factors, such as Louis XIV's cultivation of subservience by transforming his subordinates into rapacious consumers. Yet, she emphasizes that later events facilitated a more broad-based shift toward consumerism, such as the 1889/1900 'mass culture' expositions in Paris, precedents for the department store and the trade show.[435] In her turn, Maria Mies discusses how in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, women became framed as creatures that belong in the home, not only because they were expected to raise a new generation of workers, but also because they were supposed to operate as "agent[s] of consumption." For her, "housewifization" and consumerism went hand in hand.[436] Thomas Princen, an American political theorist, demonstrates the direct correlation between the industrial drive for efficient production and a rise in consumer activity. As he explains, the increasing bodily and psychological alienation experienced by workers in the factory, as their movements became subject to ever greater mechanization under the auspices of Taylorism, precipitated a desire to become re-empowered via the purchase of goods. The American historian Gary Cross, too, emphasizes the intertwining of industrialization and consumerism. He points both to structural concerns of supply and demand relating to industry, and to worker acceptance of radical changes in the conception and utilization of leisure time. A common thread running through Princen's and Cross's arguments is the decline of people's subjective autonomy – something identified in the present argument as fundamental to the rise of consumer society and the political debilitation of workers. Princen and Cross each highlight how individuals were stripped of

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[433] Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 11-12.

[434] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

[435] Rosalind H. Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[436] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 106.

subjective choice over their lives through industrialization, and primed for so-called empowerment through purchase of the products of this very system.

Early battles over selfhood

In *The Logic of Sufficiency*, Thomas Princen argues that prior to the radical societal transformation brought about by the Industrial Revolution, the productivity of factories was hampered severely by what was termed a "backward-bending supply curve for labor."[437] Workers considered autonomy over their time as a fundamental right of sorts, supplying their labor to factories only for durations of their own choosing. They did so in spite of the wages thereby forfeited. This attitude persisted even when factory owners, in an effort to 'straighten out' the supply curve, began offering higher wages. Workers continued to value their subjective autonomy, and hence self-governance, over any economic enticements. This orientation was, however, countered through calls for greater discipline by various societal institutions and industries, and more decisively, through the process of land enclosure carried out in England from the middle of the eighteenth century onward. Enclosure marginalized the majority of people by robbing them of lands on which to subsist,[438] and in so doing made them increasingly dependent on employers who could then exploit them at will. Even so, this dramatic transformation of labor culture was vehemently contested at first, obliging factory owners to "suppress wages … install … bells and whistles and clocks … add … timesheets and timekeepers, hire … informers, and impose … fines and physical punishments."[439] Worker obstinacy indicated a particularly autonomous 'working rationality.' And for Princen, this testifies to the fact that people are averse to being reduced to automatons operating on clock time, and that they are capable of satisfaction through meaningful social relations and "real working" rather than "purchasing and consuming."[440]

In *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture*, Gary Cross identifies a similar tussle over subjective autonomy between capitalists and workers about a century-and-a-half later. In 1910, workers in the US began demanding shorter hours, or, an eight-hour day, since automation increased labor productivity, and therefore should have resulted in a reduction in labor time. Absenteeism and worker turnover rose, as workers were unwilling to sacrifice time spent with family for more earnings. These short-hour agitators enjoyed a temporary

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[437] Thomas Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 125.

[438] Ibid., 126.

[439] Ibid., 127.

[440] Ibid., 128-130.

victory in 1919, when the eight-hour day was generally adopted in industrial Europe and the US. Around this time, blue-collar workers, who routinely received less 'perks' than white-collar employees, also began to demand paid vacations. Yet, just as the process of enclosure undermined workers' ability to remain autonomous in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the American Depression and the 1937 recession crippled the short-hour movement. This economically dire and psychologically devastating period instigated a renewed focus on production, rather than on the "*distribution* of time and money" across the board. Even American unions accepted the minimum wage and relaxed their expectations concerning labor time reduction.[441] Vacation hours, too, were abandoned during the Depression, "when fear of unemployment provided a cost-free form of creating 'loyalty.'"[442] From 1929 to 1933, US unemployment increased over eightfold, and the social and psychological effects of this wore people down even further. Therefore, when a job opportunity presented itself, the worker chose money over time. Cross is careful to insist, though, that the worker's choice was motivated by fear of destitution and an absence of any viable alternatives, rather than by an explicit desire for more purchasing power.[443] The Second World War prevented the revival of the short-hour movement for analogous reasons to the Depression, and the idea that purchasing power, not free time, constitutes the just reward for hard work, continued to gain momentum.[444]

This idea received persistent attention at an institutional level during the Depression, the recession, and the war, since commodity sales were tied to economic recovery and growth. Of particular importance was the fact that, with the exception of the Second World War, these moments of economic turmoil were attributed to saturation of American consumer markets. Accordingly, the reasoning went that further recessions could be averted by targeting workers as consumers. That is, to avoid another glut, adequate demand had to be created to meet the steadily increasing supply of commodities. For some industrialists, this idea was contradictory. This is because, while, on the one hand, factory owners required disciplined, constrained workers, on the other hand, workers would be expected to transform into rapacious, unrestrained consumers after hours. Skeptics worried that encouraging a lack of

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[441] Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993), 76, 78, 80, 82-85.

[442] Ibid., 81.

[443] Ibid., 135, 143.

[444] Ibid., 93; and "Eight-Hour Movement," in *Workers in America: A Historical Encyclopedia*, eds. Robert E. Weir and James P. Hanlan (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 235.

restraint outside of work would breed ill-discipline on the factory floor.[445] Moreover, for workers to consume 'better,' they needed more time off work, and this stood to undermine industrial productivity. Henry Ford, however, contested that by increasing workers' wages and granting them a two-day weekend, the problem of overproduction would be solved. In short, by encouraging workers to spend their free time consuming goods, greater demand for commodities would be generated. Also, once workers got hooked on consumerism, their desire for purchasing power would lash them to their workplace, and in fact increase their discipline and productivity.[446] Significantly, Ford and others even promoted the idea that "workers should be encouraged to be consumers of the very products they produced."[447] This may indicate a benign democratization of consumption, but still it demonstrates the willingness of industrialists to doubly exploit individuals, in their capacity as producers and as consumers of goods. Nonetheless, for workers to become successful consumers, they would have to receive both higher wages with which to purchase,[448] and more leisure time in which to purchase.

Economic recovery and free time

Allowing workers more free time was warranted technically speaking, given the efficiency gains deriving from technological innovation in the workplace. Through automation, production occurred at a faster rate, and more output was obtained from every unit of input. Moreover, the general activities and even the individual movements of workers became increasingly mechanized, resulting in greater efficiency. Thomas Princen points out that augmenting efficiency was framed as critical not only to economic recovery but also to America's quest for global supremacy. Foremost among the efficiency proponents was the engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor. Scientific management, or Taylorism, became employed

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[445] Interestingly, as the sociologist Don Slater points out, even some contemporary scholars of consumerism hold that this contradiction will ultimately undermine economic modernization, as the "rational planning, discipline and … work ethic" intrinsic to the process of economic modernization are irreconcilable with the "fostering [of] irrational desires and passions … [and] a hedonistic orientation to gratification," which is equally indispensable to the continuation of economic growth. Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 29.

[446] Cross, *Time and Money*, 38-39.

[447] Steven Miles, *Consumerism – As a Way of Life* (London: Sage, 1998), 7.

[448] David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 219.

in factories to manage production with optimum efficiency,[449] and entailed implementing mechanisms such as the differential piece rate system. This involved identifying the shortest possible time for each work task, and then demanding that workers accomplish the task within this time. Those capable of completing the task in time were well paid, while those who could not were paid so little that they had to find another job. Taylor, discussing scientific management in general, and its implementation at Ford's factory in particular,

> famously likened … scientifically managed workers to 'trained gorillas' who could be made as productive as possible through the organization and discipline offered by his system … Taylorism promised industrial capitalists that they could displace self-directing, skilled laborers from production via the division of the production process into a series of micro-tasks … executable by less-skilled, less-expensive, more readily interchangeable and controlled industrial workers.[450]

Understandably, while scientific management improved efficiency and thus opened up the possibility of more free time to workers, the new work 'ethic' proved particularly alienating. Firstly, alienation derived from the exacting mechanical rhythms imposed upon workers' bodies. Secondly, the segmentation of work was deeply alienating. The worker could never again skillfully craft an entire object, but rather was condemned to robotically assemble merely one or two pieces of a product. Alienation and profound disempowerment also stemmed from the fact that, within Taylorism, only the efficiency experts – not the workers – were deemed competent to judge whether or not a job was done well or fast enough. The experts constituted the 'thinkers,' and the workers simply the 'doers.'[451]

So workers became trapped in demeaning jobs, and quite understandably, they had to find other paths toward empowerment and self-fulfillment outside of work. To a large extent, short-hour movements of the early twentieth century pushed for free time in which to care for children, engage with family, and undertake other personally meaningful activities. However, Gary Cross argues that already in the early decades of the twentieth century, various institutions were going out of their way to dictate precisely how workers should spend their free time. Attempts were persistently made to organize and orchestrate leisure. In the 1920s and 1930s, for instance, companies focused on shaping the leisure time of their employees. The company town was a prime experimental site, as it geographically fenced workers in – something impossible for factories situated in cities and towns where freer movement and

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[449] Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency*, 59.

[450] Mark Rupert and M. Scott Solomon, *Globalization and International Political Economy: The Politics of Alternative Futures* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 37.

[451] Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency*, 61.

various forms of recreation were to be had. George Pullman, one of the late nineteenth-century founders of the company town, recognized the depoliticizing value of controlling his workers' leisure. To maintain order among an ethnically diverse workforce, he went about prohibiting any indulgence in urban leisure or in alcohol, and furnished "healthy institutions" in their stead. In this way, he could "mold docile and cooperative workers, to prevent strikes and labor organization."[452] Ironically, the Chicago unions in the late 1930s similarly organized recreational activities for workers, in order to encourage union solidarity.[453] However, there were also less mercenary attempts made to organize free time, in the interest of personal improvement, fulfillment and rejuvenation. The French socialist Albert Thomas, head of the International Labour Office (ILO) from 1919 to 1932, vehemently opposed government, corporate and union organization of people's leisure, but also rejected a *laissez-faire* approach to leisure which would make it vulnerable to market co-optation. Instead, he advocated the formation of 'voluntarist' organizations that, with indirect government assistance, could offer edifying leisure activities, including ones that bring people closer to nature.[454] The American educator Eduard Lindeman likewise opposed both coercive and *laissez-faire* approaches to leisure. He held that 'democratic leisure' should be well thought out, specifically because of the obliteration of human creativity through automation in the workplace. In relation to this, Lindeman argued that

> [i]n pre-machine cultures education for adults was … inherent in their work … For millions of our people that opportunity is lost … as machines make their inevitable way into all lines of production. Trades and crafts and vocational skills are steadily supplanted by automatic machines; those who operate the machines need to learn only a few neuro-muscular coordinations, and when these are acquired occupational learning stops … The lesson is plain enough: those who cannot secure education from their work may open new channels for the exercise of the mind during their hours of leisure.[455]

Still, industrial leaders for various reasons were all too keen to imbricate leisure with the marketplace, and usher in a paradigmatic transformation in which leisure becomes the ultimate occasion to spend. These included figures such as the American economist Harold Moulton, who felt that there really was no limit to the American people's needs, and the

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[452] James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 152-153.

[453] Cross, *Time and Money*, 105.

[454] Ibid., 105-106.

[455] Eduard Lindeman, *Learning Democracy: Eduard Lindeman on Adult Education and Social Change*, ed. Stephen Brookfield (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987), 31.

social scientist Louis Walker, who believed that leisure could be made “usefully consumable” not by reducing daily work hours but providing workers with weekends and longer vacations in which to spend.[456]

In the decades after the Second World War, the majority of US and European workers began to receive paid vacations. Employers allowed this in order to cultivate company loyalty, as attested by the fact that the length of the paid vacation often was directly proportional to the length of time that the worker had been employed.[457] This practice in fact remains commonplace in many countries across the world. However, as already indicated, another reason for introducing a two-day weekend and the paid vacation was to occasion spending. Supply had to be met with sufficient demand, otherwise the market would become saturated and the economy would go into recession once again. Workers went along with this strategy, shedding their disciplined demeanor and donning the mantle of voracious consumer when leaving their places of work. They learned that one works not to gain time to spend with others, but to gain time to spend spending money. This marks a radical break with the approach to time held by those who had rebelled against the straightening out of the supply curve for labor, and those who supported the short-hour movement. It is necessary to consider how and why this came about.

The compensations of consumerism

Structural considerations

The ideological prodding of those seeking to conflate free time with consumption, together with post-Depression “pent-up material needs,” may have inclined people toward consumerism as the primary leisure activity.[458] However, at least equally important is the fact that commodity consumption allows workers to feel empowered, or, to purchase the dignity denied them at work. Ironically though, this involves them rewarding the very people who have stripped them of their dignity in the first place. Thus, industrialists profit not only from treating workers like robots, but also from parasitizing the insecurities that such alienation produces in them. Princen argues that it is therefore no coincidence that the notion of ‘consumer sovereignty’ was first promoted by the very agencies that had engendered the

[456] Cross, *Time and Money*, 85-86.

[457] Ibid., 96.

[458] Ibid., 184.

"efficiency revolution" in factories. He explains that as businesses began to shift focus from production to sales, the Taylor society began investigating how scientific management could be used to shape consumer demand. The idea of a sovereign consumer to whose dictates the market supposedly bows became the "mantra" of government leaders and businessmen. It also proved irresistible to the majority of people, who as workers were ordered around, but who as consumers ostensibly could reverse this subjugation by giving the orders in the supermarket.[459] With the rise of a capitalist patriarchal society based on 'exchange value,' many people began searching for fulfillment "through consuming the products of other people's work, not through the process of work itself."[460] Over time, this search has become so chronic and all-consuming that people strive to accumulate ever more goods to boost their self-esteem in spite of their increased indebtedness.[461]

Cross in fact maintains that the introduction of installment credit or hire purchase was absolutely crucial to the making and perpetuation of the consumer society. Credit rather cruelly allows individuals to prolong their dream of consumerist empowerment. Mid twentieth-century proponents of credit money may have claimed that defaults are rare, that credit provision improves the economy, and that credit does not create wants.[462] Yet, these claims have been refuted systematically as the decades have passed. For one, it has become obvious that installment credit accrues enormous defaults with dire national and sometimes even global economic consequences – evidenced by the disastrous 2007-2009 subprime mortgage crisis in the US.[463] In addition, the idea that credit does not fuel unmanageable desires, is undermined by the fact that, as early as the 1920s, young working women were battling to keep up with their debt repayments and to curb their impulse to continue buying clothes and fineries on credit.[464] To sum up, despite its dangers, the installment credit mechanism became increasingly popular, especially in the wake of the Second World War – so much so that by the 1950s and 1960s, approximately two-thirds of American households were indebted in some or other way.[465] In view of this, the behavioral economist George Katona is quite correct to tie the rise of the mass consumption society to credit, when he states

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[459] Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency*, 63, 75-76.

[460] Ibid., 81.

[461] Ibid., 141-143, 148-151; and Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 18, 29.

[462] George Katona, *The Mass Consumption Society* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 57.

[463] Nathaniel Frank, Brenda González-Hermosillo and Heiko Hesse, *Transmission of Liquidity Shocks: Evidence from the 2007 Subprime Crisis* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2008), 3.

[464] Louis Hyman, *Debtor Nation: The History of America in Red Ink* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 38-39.

[465] Katona, *The Mass Consumption Society*, 231.

that the "rapid increase in the use of installment credit is partly a consequence of a mass consumption economy and partly a factor promoting its growth."[466]

Advertising is another important structural factor operating to keep the dream of the 'sovereign consumer' alive. Already in the early decades of the twentieth century, advertisers were promoting consumers' use of installment credit, by disseminating messages aimed at reversing the predominantly negative attitude to indebtedness held by people at the time.[467] In later years, credit providers also found advertising agencies particularly useful in enticing people to take on credit cards. In the period 1972 to 1999, the amount spent on credit card advertising in the US alone rose from approximately $16 million to $876 million.[468] Of course, over and above these functions, advertising is used to frame superfluous wants as indispensable needs. Katona, a supporter of advertising, gives the contorted argument that advertised products do in fact meet people's needs, even if people only gradually come to recognize the use value of these products. He maintains that the air conditioner is a case in point. This technology had come into use in cinemas and offices shortly after the Second World War, but Katona's own quantitative studies at the time revealed householder disinterest in the product. When asked about what they would acquire for the home given unlimited funds, people never mentioned air conditioners.[469] But over time, due to advertising, they became 'indispensable' in the home, resulting in the unfortunate reduction of more ecologically sensible practices of home insulation.[470] Despite Katona's defense of the advertising-manufacturing complex, this case confirms the Canadian economist J. K. Galbraith's conviction that "[o]ne cannot define production as satisfying wants if that production creates the wants."[471] Advertising supports ever increasing levels of production by framing commodities as indispensable goods. And how consumer goods are represented often eclipses the gritty reality of the human and environmental exploitation that their manufacture involves. Instead, commodities are framed "either as immaculate conceptions or as linked to a

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[466] Ibid., 245.

[467] Nicola Jentzsch, *The Economics and Regulation of Financial Privacy: An International Comparison of Credit Reporting Systems* (New York: Physica-Verlag Heidelberg, 2006), 81; and Hyman, *Debtor Nation*, 32.

[468] Roxanne Hovland and Joyce M. Wolburg, *Advertising, Society, and Consumer Culture* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 34.

[469] Katona, *The Mass Consumption Society*, 55-56, 66, 238.

[470] Stephen Healy and Iain MacGill, "From Smart Grid to Smart Energy Use," in *Smart Grid: Integrating Renewable, Distributed, and Efficient Energy*, ed. Fereidoon P. Sioshansi (Waltham: Academic Press, 2012), 38-39.

[471] J. K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969), 147.

mythical history,"[472] especially by way of branding and celebrity endorsements. Ultimately, the power of advertising is such that contrived wants become construed as absolute necessities,[473] not for physical survival but for securing and maintaining identity.

Marching to the commodity beat

The mechanisms discussed above contributed to the emergence of the consumer society and the dream of consumer sovereignty, but people also had a decisive role to play. Cross highlights the correlation between structural and individual agency in consumerism, when he argues that "working people actively participated in the formation of the consumer society even as they were being manipulated by it."[474] In a similar vein, the British sociologist Don Slater advances that people concomitantly "march [and] … sleep … to the beat of the commodity."[475] Why they would center their lives on commodity consumption rather than anything else constitutes a hugely contentious issue.

Some have pointed out, quite legitimately, that since time immemorial people have valued certain objects because they symbolize power (e.g. a tribal headdress) or are of sentimental value (e.g. heirlooms).[476] Also, someone may become attached to an object they habitually use, even if it is of negligible social or economic worth. However, possessive acquisitiveness today, is unprecedented in terms of its extent and type. Grant McCracken, for example, points out that the "consumer revolution" diverges markedly from the ethnographic history of *homo sapiens*, insofar as perhaps for "the first time in history, a human community willingly harbored a nonreligious agent of social change, and permitted it to transform on a continual and systematic basis virtually every feature of social life."[477] Never has the consumption of goods, and the goods themselves, been prioritized by people quite to such an extent. Yet, as organization theorist Yiannis Gabriel and sociologist Tim Lang indicate, even more striking is that these mass-produced goods are extremely innocuous, and as such hardly warrant the significance with which they become imbued. There exists a marked difference between the type of goods previously valued, which were unique, rare, and often of special socio-cultural or spiritual/religious significance, and those reified under consumerism, which

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[472] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 95.

[473] Cross, *Time and Money*, 7.

[474] Ibid., 77.

[475] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 128.

[476] Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 2d ed. (London: Sage, 2006), 57, 86.

[477] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption*, 29-30.

are identical except for infinitesimal differences,[478] available *en masse*, and mundane. Gabriel and Lang believe that this rather warped valuation of objects in contemporary societies has to do with the 'virtual' fusing of identity with goods:

> that identity becomes vitally and self-consciously enmeshed in stories that are read by consumers into innumerable, relatively mundane, mass-produced objects … [which] are not so much carriers of meaning, as carriers of vivid and powerful *images*, enabling us to choose them consciously from among many similar ones, promising to act as the raw material out of which our individual identities may be fashioned.[479]

Advertising uses striking imagery and concerted branding to help make mundane, factory-line, virtually identical objects, intensely alluring. Yet, all that these objects actually can offer people are vacuous forms of pseudo-individuality and pseudo-distinction, as the Frankfurt School theorists pointed out long ago.[480] In relation to this issue, the British economist Peter Bowbrick casts a critical eye on the illusion-producing operations of the branding of certain products, which makes them more expensive than materially identical ones sold under 'lesser' labels. A case in point being Levi jeans, which "are valued differently to identical jeans with a different label," and which for many consumers are irresistible precisely because of their astronomical price.[481] Gabriel and Lang, in their turn, go so far as to argue that prices, like advertisements, endow commodities with voices – animating them as it were. So an expensive pair of jeans may interpellate a potential purchaser in the following way: "I am pricey, I know it and I invite you to find out for yourself if I am worth it."[482]

Quite possibly, the reason why people fall for this is because they reify relatively undeserving objects, believing them to hold the promise of something meaningful. McCracken offers an interesting argument in this regard. From his perspective, commodities act as 'bridges' to what a person wants to become or wants to be perceived as. Thus, products seen through a shop window, whether or not they are even eventually purchased by the voyeur, invite the latter to "contemplate the possession of an emotional condition, a social circumstance, even an entire style of life, by somehow concretizing these things in themselves."[483] And if an object is purchased but fails to deliver what the individual expected

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[478] Malcolm Waters, *Globalization*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 197.

[479] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 86.

[480] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1997), 154.

[481] Peter Bowbrick, *The Economics of Quality, Grades and Brands* (London: Routledge, 1992), 16, 46, 314.

[482] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 58, 72.

[483] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption*, 110.

from it, he/she always may reframe the object simply as one of the many components of the "bridge to displaced meaning," such that the acquisition of this one component "has the quality of rehearsal to it."[484] Alternatively, the individual may reject the acquired object as a sham, proceeding to focus on another, supposedly authentic, object promising really to yield meaning. This cycle is endless, and the individual is obliged to 'trade up' constantly, incurring ever more debt along the way.[485] Gabriel and Lang similarly contend that consumerism is addictive because the individual purchases commodities not necessarily to demonstrate who they are at the moment, but rather to represent who they desire to become.[486] Desire, however, is both fickle and insuperable.[487]

These explanations point to the crucial role that commodities play in identity construction today. The issue of identity accordingly has become the Rome of consumption studies.[488] This contemporary correlation between consumerism and identity may have resulted from the rupturing of the erstwhile association between work and identity formation, following the Industrial Revolution in general, and the emergence of Taylorism in particular.[489] As discussed earlier, it is near impossible for contemporary workers, who are treated as mere cogs in a great machine, to access through work the sense of self-fulfillment, achievement, and creative outlet that pre-industrial craftsmen enjoyed. The Frankfurt School philosopher Max Horkheimer powerfully illustrates this when he differentiates "between a craftsman of the old type, who selected the proper tool for a delicate piece of work, and the worker of today, who must decide … [simply] which of many levers or switches he should pull."[490]

Especially from the late nineteenth century onward, work became alienating and disempowering, and workers learned to live for their leisure time. After hours, they could seek, firstly, reconciliation or some sort of compensation through the consumption of the products of others' labor, and secondly, re-empowerment through exercising authority as 'sovereign consumers' in the malls and in the markets. This consumptive impulse seems to apply to blue- and white-collar workers alike, despite claims that office workers do not

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[484] Ibid., 112.

[485] Ibid.

[486] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 90.

[487] Although psychoanalysis falls outside the scope of the current study, it is a valuable tool for investigating individual complicity with capitalism. Bert Olivier, *Intersecting Philosophical Planes: Philosophical Essays* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 122.

[488] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 79.

[489] Ibid., 1; Miles, *Consumerism*, 147; and Cross, *Time and Money*, 142.

[490] Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 98.

experience the same degree of alienation as their counterparts on the factory floor. It must be remembered that they, too, constitute 'human resources' used and abused by corporations to generate profits.[491] Moreover, to ascend the career ladder white-collar employees often have to adopt false identities which, as Don Slater argues, do not fit any "inner sense of authenticity." They have to sell themselves by adopting prepackaged personalities, so much so that the white-collar 'person' becomes nothing more than "a calculable condition of social survival and success."[492] Also, because of the intense competition that working within advanced capitalist institutions involves, workers increasingly become antagonistic toward one another. They are radically atomized in workplaces constituted as competitive terrains. Each employee is pitted against the other in a fight for economic survival and career advancement.

This hyper-competitive, hyper-individualistic orientation then infuses people's behavior during their leisure time. Consumptive leisure becomes yet another site of struggle for hierarchical position or status. The early American sociologist Thorstein Veblen elaborated on people's practice of inferring the economic and social standing of others from the clothes that they wear and other objects they display. The assumption is that consumer goods are "good prima facie evidence of pecuniary success, and consequently prima facie evidence of social worth." Thus, financial clout and social status are considered directly proportional to the extent to which the individual's clothes/objects are "in excess of what is required for physical comfort."[493] Further, for every individual, decency is framed in reference to the consumerist lifestyle enjoyed and 'shown off' by individuals of a higher class or economic standing, obliging him/her to incur unnecessary debt in pursuit of this idealized style of life. Correlatively, insofar as decency is for members of almost every economic stratum equated with the lifestyles of those with greater purchasing power, the lifestyle they can afford to sustain is, by definition, never adequate to the aim of decency. This precipitates an irrational squandering of resources even among the very poor. As Veblen explained, "[v]ery much of squalor and discomfort will be endured before the last trinket or the last

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[491] Dominik Heil, *Ontological Fundamentals for Ethical Management: Heidegger and the Corporate World* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 68-69. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger already in 1949 cautioned that the use of expressions like 'human resources' risks transforming human beings into mere 'standing reserves' or "'human capital.'" Julian Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 176.

[492] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 85.

[493] Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (Bremen: Dogma, [1899] 2013), 117-118.

pretense of pecuniary decency is put away."[494] This perpetual cycle of status competition via conspicuous consumption was thematized by the classical German sociologist Georg Simmel, in relation to fashion. For him, fashion offered a mechanism of class differentiation, trapping people in a chase-and-flight cycle in which they pursue the image of higher classes while differentiating themselves from lower ones.[495] Thus, the cycle involves both a drive for imitation and the pursuit of distinction/differentiation. Imitation provides ontological reprieve, because it gives the person "the assurance of not standing alone in his or her actions," and permits the "transfer [of] not only the demand for creative activity, but also the responsibility for the action from ourselves to another."[496] At the same time, imitation of the elite few allows the individual to feel distinct from the less well-to-do majority. Fashionable items constantly change, and donning the latest pricey wares confers immediate distinction in our "thing-minded"[497] society. As Simmel put it, "fashion is nothing more than a particular instance among the many forms of life by the aid of which we seek to combine in a unified act the tendency towards social equalization with the desire for individual differentiation and variation."[498]

The observation that consumerism is socially divisive has been contested by some scholars, who instead argue that it provides an opportunity for relatively isolated individuals to share experiences with others. Often cited are the 'pseudo-communities' of the theaters and of the food courts in shopping malls.[499] However, the forms of community provided in these spaces entail no long-term commitment or meaningful interaction between individuals. For one, in such communities "[s]ocial membership is reduced to identities one puts on and takes off at whim."[500] Further, the "sociality" found in malls may afford the intensely lonely with an opportunity to be around other shoppers and interact with clerks, but does not imply genuine affection or social resonance. The American sociologist Rob Shields argues, for example, that relations between shoppers and clerks usually involve only "pro-forma greetings and salutations, a banal … interaction between scripted roles of shop assistant and

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[494] Ibid., 59.

[495] McCracken, *Culture and Consumption*, 94.

[496] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Fashion" [1905] (1997), trans. Mark Ritter and David Frisby, in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, eds. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (London: Sage, 2000), 188.

[497] Katona, *The Mass Consumption Society*, 177.

[498] Simmel, "The Philosophy of Fashion," 189.

[499] Lauren Langman, "Neon Cages: Shopping for Subjectivity," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 59.

[500] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 88.

the shopper."[501] Also, it is conceivable that when entering malls, individuals may adopt personas quite different from their regular selves. This militates against genuine social interaction; people can "change amongst a veritable *dramatis personae* of masks," and every "momentary identification corresponds to a role in a given social 'scene' – a scene dominated by a group and the group ethos."[502]

Notably, the consumer's striving for individuality is as fraught with problems and contradictions as their search for community among other shoppers. As indicated, the project of individual differentiation is problematized by the need for the individual to conform to some or other group image in order to be regarded as fashionable. What further undermines the logic of individual differentiation is the fact that the range of items available to someone, through which he/she seeks to differentiate him/herself from others, is also available to everyone else. Tailor-made artifacts mainly are a thing of the past, and factory-produced commodities of a certain type are only infinitesimally different from one another. Given such homogeneity of commodities, and the fact that the consumer can only choose from "one among fixed options," the oft-valorized idea of consumer choice is also inherently misleading. Ultimately, the consumer's activity merely is a matter of "selection"[503] from "a set menu … chosen by consumer capitalism."[504]

The idea of consumer choice, flawed as it may be, helps to frame consumption as an act and expression of freedom conceived in a political sense.[505] That is, ideas of choice and sovereignty, together with a strong emphasis on consumer rights in neoliberal capitalist societies, lead to the equation of consumerism with democratic freedom. In supposedly democratic, neoliberal states, consumerism and private property are emphasized as fundamental rights, so individual liberty becomes reconceptualized as "freedom to participate in the market, i.e., freedom to consume."[506] This is accepted by people even though commodity consumption only involves bounded choice; even though in market research consumers are stripped of subjecthood becoming mere objects of rational planning;[507] and

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[501] Rob Shields, "The Individual, Consumption Cultures and the Fate of Community," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 102.

[502] Ibid., 107.

[503] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 43.

[504] Miles, *Consumerism*, 105.

[505] Ibid., 5, 10, 151; Cross, *Time and Money*, 2; and Julie Doyle, *Mediating Climate Change* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 126.

[506] William E. Kilbourne, Suzanne C. Beckmann and Eva Thelen, "The Role of the Dominant Social Paradigm in Environmental Attitudes: A Multinational Examination," *Journal of Business Research* 55/3 (2002): 197.

[507] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 123.

even though corporations actually generate consumer wants rather than meeting consumer needs.[508] As Slater powerfully argues, in many instances, when it is claimed that people's needs are met, these are

> needs that emerge at the end of an impossibly long gauntlet of mediation by inequalities in material and symbolic power, by cultural intermediaries, by the 'impersonal steering mechanisms' of the market, by the instrumental rationality of corporate planning – a gauntlet so long that those needs that do emerge from it are battered to a pulp that is virtually unrecognizable by those to whom they putatively belong.[509]

The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, who regards consumerism as "a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species,"[510] takes this argument concerning the lack of consumer freedom even further. He contends that commodities constitute a control mechanism, which operates to ensure neoliberal order – that "categories of objects … quite tyrannically induce categories of persons" whose behaviors align with the status quo.[511] It is possible to contest that at least some people do utilize commodities in a subversive manner. For example, an individual may interpret a mainstream film in a manner entirely contrary to its intended, 'dominant reading,'[512] or he/she may modify or disfigure a prized, branded item of clothing in an act of rebellion. However, such forms of resistance stand to be co-opted and/or commodified by manufacturers, a case in point being the production of 'already-ripped' jeans catering for and thus containing young people's rebellious inclinations.[513] In fact, the environmental sociologist Michael Mayerfeld Bell believes that ripped jeans, whether store-bought or personally effected, constitute conspicuous waste and therefore complicity with, rather than resistance to, the neoliberal consumerist status quo. As he contends: "Who but the environmentally powerful could afford to deliberately rip their clothes and be so confident about their social status as to wear them in public?"[514] People's fixation on commodity acquisition is politically neutralizing, since it involves them focusing on "relative trivialities, compared to matters of life and death, political and civil rights, or the future of the

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[508] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 35, 50; and Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 40.

[509] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 211.

[510] Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, 2d ed., ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 32.

[511] Ibid., 20.

[512] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), 49, 51.

[513] Christine Quail, Kathalene A. Razzano and Loubna H. Skalli, "Buying and Selling Culture: Talk Show Content, Audience, and Labor as Commodities," in *Media Literacy: A Reader*, eds. Donaldo Macedo and Shirley R. Steinberg (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 354.

[514] Michael Mayerfeld Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2012), 48.

planet." Attention is given to "which product or service to select," rather than to larger issues such as "whether to and how to consume."[515] Along similarly critical lines, American literary and cultural theorist Fredric Jameson suggests that today, the creation of culture itself has been reduced to the production and reification of commodities.[516] A genuinely creative and free act would be people deciding for themselves what they actually need, how many commodities should be produced to meet those needs, and how natural and other resources should be allocated, utilized and distributed in the process.[517] But this is denied within the neoliberal consumer society, and instead freedom to consume is made compulsory within both the public sphere and the domain of subjectivity itself.[518] Publically, Margaret Thatcher and her acolytes framed consumption as the pinnacle of "active citizenship,"[519] in so doing transforming it from a choice into a politico-moral imperative. Then, as the 60s counter-cultural philosopher Herbert Marcuse explains, at the level of one's private life any rejection of consumerism – in reference to which one is supposed to build one's identity and be recognized in society – is tantamount to a rejection of oneself.[520]

This invites consideration of what type of identity consumerism actually affords people. As discussed earlier, alienation and subordination in contemporary work have obliged individuals to pursue identity construction through other means, most notably commodity consumption. The Polish-born social philosopher Zygmunt Bauman admits that the consumer market offers a person at least some sense of certainty, by allowing him/her to make individual choices concerning product acquisition, while guaranteeing that these choices will receive social approval.[521] Don Slater agrees that consumer culture is reassuring to individuals, because it "'technicizes' the project of the self by treating all problems as solvable through various commodities." So, rather than perceiving herself holistically and coming to terms with imperfections and aging, a woman may view her body in a grid-like fashion, with every imperfection in a given area having a purchasable cure. Emotional/behavioral issues also are technicized and their solutions commodified, in the form of self-help books and therapy. Advertising provides guidance on products, "allow[ing] us to

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[515] Gabriel and Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 42.

[516] Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* 1 (Winter 1979): 130-148.

[517] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 136; and Don Slater, "Consumer Culture and the Politics of Need," in *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption*, eds. Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards (London: Routledge, 1997), 51-63.

[518] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 27.

[519] Keith Faulks, *Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 67.

[520] Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 26.

[521] Zygmunt Bauman, *Freedom* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), 61.

orientate ourselves to the social meanings of things in a commercial world."[522] In so doing it operates much as religious leaders did in the past, who too 'guided' the faithful through the trials and tribulations of life,[523] and kept them docile and politically debilitated in the process. Consumerism has become the new religion – "sacred times [are now] … essentially consumer moments."[524]

These reflections disclose the sheer depth of contemporary individual commitment to and belief in consumerism as a meaning-giving or even salvific practice. Such devotion may be attributed to a combination of factors, including economic crises, Taylorism, installment credit, advertising, and the promise of consumerist freedom. In the succeeding pages, however, focus falls on the manufacturing of gender, because 'ideal' types of masculinity and femininity are potent catalysts for individual consumer activities. Gender is intimate and so its social constructedness is very easily forgotten. By focusing on gender construction through consumerism – something both coerced and willingly taken up – it is possible to begin comprehending why humans forfeit subjective autonomy, morally and politically meaningful relations, and quite frankly their grip on reality, to climb into the hamster wheel of conspicuous consumption.

Manufacturing the gendered self

Gender constitutes a valuable site of analysis, because it is constructed and practiced on a day-to-day basis, and can transform quietly or be reconceptualized explicitly in light of societal changes. Gender styles are dictated by the societies people inhabit, such that people sexually assigned as male or female are expected to exhibit a highly specific and proper range of behavior. Men are supposed to be 'masculine,' and women, 'feminine,' with each stereotypic category framed in reference to societal needs. As the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell puts it:

> People engaging in everyday conduct – across the spectrum from conversation and housework to interaction styles and economic behaviour – are held accountable in terms of their presumed 'sex category' as man or woman. The conduct produced in the light of this accountability is not a product of gender, it is gender itself. We make our own gender, but we are not free to make it however we like.[525]

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[522] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 86.

[523] Ibid., 87.

[524] Cross, *Time and Money*, 180.

[525] Raewyn Connell, *Gender in World Perspective*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 74.

This constant interplay between a dominant societal discourse and individual gendering makes the latter a rich object of analysis. Dominant gender types reinforce political, economic, and cultural aspects of daily life. So too, change in any one of these aspects of society is likely to be reflected in prevailing gender norms. But at the same time, rather than being simply passive, gender identity can also facilitate change. The individual's self-reflexive capacity to remake his or her gender can have a profound societal impact. The subsequent analysis emphasizes the transformations of feminine and masculine models as a consequence of the emergence of the neoliberal consumer society. For femininity, this era may have involved a relatively seamless transition, but changes demanded in the conceptualization and practice of masculinity have been radical. The following is an overview of what consumer and gender studies theorists from the global North have to say about the increasing imbrication of consumption with 'the heights' of femininity and masculinity. Their insights shed light on why contemporary individuals dedicate themselves so wholeheartedly to consumerism at the expense of all else.

Consumption-oriented femininity in the global North

To date, most studies of compulsive shopping have found that far more women than men are afflicted by this 'disorder.' Some marketing experts attribute this to the fact that in most societies, shopping has always been 'a woman's role;' others add that women like to shop, because they derive a sense of self-worth from finding bargains for their families and themselves.[526] Certainly, the anthropological record lends some support to the idea that women are commonly the societal gatherers. A gatherer would experience pleasure if, for instance, she happens upon a booty of foodstuffs well exceeding her and her clan's requirements and expectations for that day.[527] However, according to the American sociologist Ronald Faber, compulsive shopping is considered a disorder precisely because it goes beyond the logic of subsistence. It consists in a relatively "irresistible urge to buy or shop which leads to spending far more time than intended and/or purchasing more than can be afforded or needed."[528] Yet, given that consumerism entails insatiable acquisitiveness often in

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[526] Ronald J. Faber, "The Urge to Buy: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective on Compulsive Buying," in *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires*, eds. S. Ratneshwar, David Glen Mick and Cynthia Huffman (London: Routledge, 2005), 175, 189.

[527] Allan J. Kimmel, *Psychological Foundations of Marketing* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 44.

[528] Faber, "The Urge to Buy," 175.

relation to unnecessary items, perhaps it should itself be identified as a pathology, with compulsive shopping being merely an extreme manifestation of the general disorder. This parallels the contention of consumer psychologist Rajan Nataraajan and management scholar Brent Goff that compulsive shopping is not essentially anomalous behavior, but situated at the extreme end of the continuum of consumer behavior in general.[529] It is wrong to pathologize women as compulsive shoppers, because this recasts mainstream consumerism as normal and indeed benign – which it is not. Daily, women are subjected to media messages aimed at transforming them into consumers of unnecessary goods. Even so, not all of them behave accordingly all of the time. Raewyn Connell, for example, points out that most women at least some of the time shop for necessities for their families, and that such domestic consumption involves a great deal of hard work and little consumer-oriented gratification. As she puts it, "[h]ousewives do not spend their time lolling on couches and scoffing chocolates."[530]

Still, the British media and cultural theorist Bill Osgerby, commenting on transformations in femininity in the global North, advances that since the Second World War, large-scale urbanization resulted in people shedding small-town conservatism and traditional gender roles. Many women gained psychological and economic empowerment through war-time employment, and this could not be reversed easily.[531] The post-war economy required ever greater numbers of consumers for an ever increasing array of products. In the decades after the war, and at least partly through second wave feminist efforts in the global North, the housewife archetype made way for the liberated 'New Woman' archetype. She was supposedly free of the household, husband and children, and could equal any man in the affairs of business and consumption alike. Urbanization also drew black women out of subsistence provisioning and into the housewife role. Yet, as professional opportunities increasingly became available to them, these women too began aspiring to consumptive femininity and were encouraged in this by white advertisers especially.[532] In fact, the American feminist bell hooks contends that black women have become so immersed in what she deems "compulsive consumerism," that they will "lie, cheat, and steal to be able to 'buy'

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[529] Rajan Nataraajan and Brent G. Goff, "Compulsive Buying: Toward a Reconceptualization," *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 6/6 (1991): 307-328.

[530] Connell, *Gender in World Perspective*, 80.

[531] Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 51-52.

[532] Susannah Walker, "Black Dollar Power: Assessing African American Consumerism Since 1945," in *African American Urban History Since World War II*, eds. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 400-401.

all that [they] … desire."[533] At least in part, she attributes this problem to the fact that "constant consumerism is such an encouraged societal norm."[534] Osgerby indicates that this new 'exemplary' femininity was embodied in the American feminist, Gloria Steinem. Her looks, charm and dress drew the attention of the media, and she became emblematic of a new kind of liberal feminist who, while fighting for women's rights, could revel in "a consumption-driven lifestyle and an embrace of fashionable stylishness."[535] This version of the New Woman came to represent a 'commodity feminism' aligned with corporate interests, implicit in which was the assumption that women's emancipation can be had through careerism and conspicuous consumption.[536] The New Zealand media theorist Hilary Radner decries this hyper-individualism as a debilitation of feminism. She argues that this brand of feminism, readily glorified in the mass media, "seems to reply to the women's movement precisely by containing its demands." It entails "the inscription of this position … within an institutional structure that remains largely patriarchal and the representation of this position as the capacity to act as a consumer."[537]

Today, Hollywood actresses and celebrity songstresses supposedly embody this 'empowered femininity,'[538] defined in terms of money, beauty and media hype. Yet even their beauty all too often is manufactured, be it through plastic surgery and cosmetics, or digital editing and lighting techniques – making these women literally impossibly beautiful. Nonetheless, they remain the promoters of what Connell terms the "exemplary … femininities" of our time,[539] and every second of their luscious, consumption-oriented lifestyles is painstakingly documented in the media and produced as a desirable dream for ordinary women. Popular women's magazines abound with advertisements featuring these women and product lines endorsed or owned by them. They set "impossible physical standards," yet what is suggested is that any woman can become like them through acquisition of the products in question.[540]

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[533] bell hooks. *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 52.

[534] Ibid.

[535] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 190.

[536] Robert Goldman, Deborah Heath and Sharon L. Smith, "Commodity Feminism," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991): 333-351.

[537] Hilary Radner, *Shopping Around: Feminine Culture and the Pursuit of Pleasure* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-3.

[538] Connell, *Gender in World Perspective*, 1.

[539] Ibid., 5.

[540] Radner, *Shopping Around*, 177.

Radner has analyzed how women attempt to achieve this idealized femininity, principally oriented around the flawless body. Working out constitutes an avenue that Hollywood actress Jane Fonda was quick to 'capitalize' upon. In the highly publicized *Jane Fonda's Workout Book*, a woman's body is broken down into component parts to be disciplined into shape through exercise.[541] But this is not enough. The body must also be rendered feminine through appropriate attire – a costly endeavor, given the price of fashionable items and the relentless shortening of fashion cycles themselves.[542] And aside from cosmetic surgery, which Fonda herself eventually underwent, facial imperfections to which the media alerts hitherto oblivious women can be 'corrected' using a mind-spinning array of cosmetics. World-renowned feminist Germaine Greer argues that even young girls are subject to the demeaning gaze of the media. They too are trained into psychological dependence on cosmetics, as any imperfection ostensibly signals a failure in femininity.[543] These industries ply girls and women with dubious products, certain only of their escalating profits. And women, while they occasionally may enjoy getting 'made up,' will never achieve the feminine perfection promised to them. This type of femininity is an economic ruse.

Rather than achieving subjecthood, the women of neoliberalism remain objects of a predominantly male gaze. This so-called exemplary femininity, centered on an outer-directed "to-be-looked-at-ness,"[544] is not a recipe for autonomy. The British media theorist David Gauntlett drives this point home when discussing contemporary women's magazines. Magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour* may adopt a women's liberation register, by thematizing women's pursuit of autonomy and independence in their editorials, articles and features. But the image they sell to women and the products they tout barely provide any exit from objecthood within the system of capitalist patriarchal social relations. He believes that although these magazines "celebrate women's opportunities to play with different types of imagery [and thus] … encourage a degree of playfulness … they would never encourage women to step outside their carefully imagined boundaries of the 'sexy,' the 'stylish' and the 'fashionable.'"[545] Radner, in reference to *Vogue* magazine, similarly advances that even if

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[541] Ibid., 152.

[542] Ibid., 54.

[543] Germaine Greer, *The Whole Woman* (London: Doubleday, 1999), 19.

[544] Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 19.

[545] David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 216. Women's acceptance and active pursuit of their own sexual objectification is evidenced in the fact that by 1969, *Playboy* magazine was being read by over four million women per month. Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 172. Even Gloria Steinem criticized this, likening "a woman reading *Playboy* [to] … a Jew reading a Nazi manual."

women's magazines do cultivate subjectivity in women, this only allows them to become 'display subjects.'[546] These magazines push them to define themselves in terms of outward appearance, and to constantly compare themselves to other women.[547] This in turn, generates feelings of inadequacy readily parasitized by product and lifestyle advertisers.[548]

It must be remembered however, that women's reactions to mainstream media also involve choice. The images of femininity encountered in magazines and other media constitute a "bounded collection" from which women select a recognizable mainstream identity.[549] Still, they actively buy into and act upon an idea of femininity that is inherently image- and consumption-oriented.[550] Quite possibly, what has facilitated this extreme outward-oriented shift in femininity is the perverse assumption that appearances are reality, or that looks by default will transform into accomplishments.[551] This might explain why many women spend so much time obsessing over, shopping for, and fixatedly enacting, the exemplary femininity of the day – a femininity of consumption. Here, time collapses into spending money on achieving the feminine-self as a commodity-in-itself.

Consumption-oriented masculinity in the global North

So why have men transformed themselves into image-oriented consumers? After all, they are neither anthropologically nor traditionally associated with this kind of consumption. They are supposed to be 'the hunters,' not the gatherers; men are constructed in capitalist patriarchal societies as providers, not shoppers. Nonetheless, given the need to expand the consumer base once society shifted to a consumer orientation, men as bosses and workers simply had to change. Industrialization and workplace automation precipitated such change, because alienated workers could not continue primarily identifying themselves with and through their labor. In *Creating the Modern Man*, American scholar Tom Pendergast suggests that in turn,

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Gloria Steinem, cited in Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2008), 241.

[546] Radner, *Shopping Around*, 137.

[547] Ibid., 2, 129.

[548] Miles, *Consumerism*, 97.

[549] Elizabeth C. Hirschman and Barbara B. Stern, "Representations of Women's Identities and Goals: The Past Fifty Years in Film and Television," in *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires*, eds. S. Ratneshwar, David Glen Mick and Cynthia Huffman (London: Routledge, 2005), 162.

[550] Radner, *Shopping Around*, 177-178.

[551] Ibid., 55; and Cross, *Time and Money*, 96, 170.

this workplace alienation was intensified as proprietary capitalism gave way to corporate capitalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now workers were further reduced in status. Ultimately, given Western men's long-standing practice of basing their identity/masculinity on their work, such occupational denigration "brought sweeping changes to the culture of masculinity."[552] Slowly but surely, as Pendergast demonstrates through analyzing half a century of men's magazines, men's self-identification with work gave way to a consensual masculinity decidedly biased toward consumerism. In addition to clothing fashions and automobiles, the commercialization of sports and sporting goods ensured that most men became co-opted into the merchandising machine.[553]

The consumerist redefinition of masculinity required a radical shift from the dominant 'breadwinner' ethic of the Victorian value system. The new masculinity involved a man defining himself in reference to narcissistic conspicuous consumption rather than honesty and self-denial. What is critically important here, politically speaking, is that appearance and personality become more important than motives and actions. As Pendergast elaborates it, Victorian masculinity involved a man basing his self-worth either on his work skills, or on entrepreneurship exemplified in the 'self-made man.' It also entailed a man providing not simply for himself but as a relational commitment to his family. In terms of this hegemonic model of masculinity, success depended on having the right values and acting in the correct way, rather than hinging on showmanship. This archetype thus

> referred not to a static figure but to an entire narrative of becoming. The self-made man was someone who started with little and, through the diligent application of habits and values, became something and someone much richer. The narrative of the self-made man was thus a narrative of ascent; it took a man higher.[554]

This version of the capitalist patriarchal hegemony was tied to an ontology of sorts, in which austerity, courage, duty, transparency and determination were key to being a man, and to becoming a better one at that. What held similar ontological potency was providing for one's family. As the American sociologist Michael Kimmel indicates, to be a man the individual did not have to be sporty, fashionable, particularly intelligent or even physically powerful. Rather, the "non-negotiable" qualifier for masculinity was being an effective provider as a

[552] Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture 1900-1950* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 1-2, 12.

[553] John H. Gibson, *Performance Versus Results: A Critique of Values in Contemporary Sport* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 30.

[554] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 55.

consequence of workplace success.[555] With masculinity principally equated with provision, for most of the nineteenth century men bought for their families rather than for themselves. The ideological power of the provider ethic also explains men's initial reluctance to participate in the emerging consumer society. Bill Osgerby accordingly maintains that around the turn of the century, a man's "participation … in the new universe of consumerism … [still] was driven not by personal gratification but by the needs and desires of his family."[556]

Yet, Kimmel believes that the Victorian model of masculinity did constitute a stressor, given the immense responsibility for the happiness of several people that it placed on one single self-denying individual's shoulders.[557] Added to this, from the last decades of the nineteenth century onward, partly because of increasing circulation of advertisement-bearing men's magazines, hegemonic masculinity became challenged by a more self-gratifying, individualistic and consumer-oriented model of masculinity. The new masculinity was powerfully alluring, and the tension between it and the Victorian model played itself out in various media, particularly in men's magazines. In the late 1890s, the two dominant men's magazines in the US, *Munsey's* and *McClure's*, continued advocating the breadwinner archetype and ethic of the self-made man as a way "to cope with the modern world." Concomitantly, however, they represented new ideas of masculinity related to consumerism, in part because of their growing reliance on advertising revenue.[558] This profound sociological tension was even more palpable in the *Saturday Evening Post*, a magazine edited by George Horace Lorimer who tenaciously clung to the propagation of the hegemonic model of masculinity while having to accommodate, purely for economic reasons, "an onslaught of advertising that offered images quite contrary to Victorian masculinity."[559] In short, economic considerations largely underpinned the touting of consumption-oriented masculinity. Still, the agonistic negotiation of masculinity reflected in these magazines, and perplexity over this issue among male readers, indicate that the new masculinity was not simply taught to a docile readership. Finally, the Depression also dealt a severe blow to hegemonic masculinity, particularly because work-based identity construction – already jeopardized by workplace automation – was now entirely impossible for the thousands of men who had lost their jobs. What made matters even worse for them was that their wives, for whom they were supposed

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[555] Michael Kimmel, *Misframing Men: The Politics of Contemporary Masculinities* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 17.

[556] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 23-24.

[557] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 265.

[558] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 37.

[559] Ibid., 32, 58.

to provide in order to be men, went out and secured jobs.[560] The Depression taught many men that being self-denying and virtuous did not protect one from the ravages of the economy. Honesty did not necessarily pay. The decline of the Victorian model of masculinity had begun. And in contrast, even though more than one-third of the American population was unemployed during the Depression years, the new consumerist masculinity propagated through advertising survived relatively unscathed. That is, while the new consumer economy suffered considerably,[561] the idea of reorienting masculinity from Victorian ideals toward individualism and consumption flourished. This is evident from the continued popularity, even during the Depression years, of *Collier's* magazine which promoted consumerist ideas of masculinity instead of the virtues of Victorian manhood.[562]

For Pendergast, consumption-oriented masculinity remained resilient because it "allowed men to understand themselves through their personality, their physical vitality, and their ability to enjoy their leisure time." It allowed them to consider "themselves … successful in these terms despite the difficulties they may have been facing in other areas of their life.[563] Osgerby corroborates this idea when he cites the skyrocketing sales of *Esquire* in the very midst of the Depression – a costly 'men's-only' magazine which actively promoted leisure-oriented consumption.[564] Crucially, this magazine made explicit associations between leisure time, consumerism and masculinity, and promised to help fashion readers' masculinity in reference to this new constellation. In a promotional text for the magazine titled "The Art of Living and the New Leisure," editor Arnold Gingrich argued that the increased leisure time afforded men through the New Deal did not constitute a "right" of the worker so much as it comprised a "duty" to engage in leisure-oriented consumption. Further, he claimed that most men had no idea how to use this leisure time, but that *Esquire* would guide them in this, including in how to dress and what to do, consume, imbibe, and play.[565] Gingrich thus sought to organize the leisure time of *Esquire* readers in line with the new consumer economy. This also stood to draw more advertisers to the magazine's pages. The magazine also addressed the

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[560] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 158-159.

[561] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 41.

[562] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 164.

[563] Ibid., 163.

[564] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 43.

[565] Arnold Gingrich, "The Art of Living and the New Leisure," 1933, cited in Faye Hammill and Karen Leick, "Modernism and the Quality Magazines: *Vanity Fair* (1914-36); *American Mercury* (1924-81); *New Yorker* (1925-); *Esquire* (1933-)," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, vol. 2 (North America 1894-1960), eds. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 190.

discomfiting association of shopping with effeminacy. Its heterosexual masculinism received emphasis through inclusion of features on dangerous sports and contributions by 'swashbuckling' authors such as Ernest Hemingway.[566] But at the same time, what was actively advanced was the idea that shopping has always been the domain of men. The argument went that when out shopping, women buy the things their men demand, and when they shop for themselves it is actually to prettify themselves for their men. The implication was that men are the masterminds behind all of woman's shopping ventures. Further, women were deemed "woefully inept in the art of good living,"[567] and derided for such failings as their apparent inability to cook. Finally, *Esquire*'s routine sexual objectification of women through voluptuous illustrations concretized the magazine's 'maleness.'[568] *Esquire* became a staple for servicemen during the Second World War, and the magazine reflected the "ideals they were fighting for – not simply the virtues of democracy, but also the comforts and pleasures of modern consumerism."[569] Here again, consumption and political liberty became hopelessly confused with one another.

Admittedly, during the Second World War, it looked as if Victorian masculinity might reclaim hegemony. In this life-threatening circumstance, the nuclear family was infused with new value, and the rate of marriage increased as dramatically as the divorce rate declined.[570] However, after the war, disillusionment with the nuclear family set in again. Many war-time marriages had been spur-of-the-moment affairs, and from 1940 onward had allowed new fathers to avoid the draft.[571] In 1946, with all of this behind the American people, the divorce rate more than doubled.[572] And importantly, while consumerism lessened during the war it was not extinguished. Consumption-oriented men's magazines remained popular, and the war-time economy actually generated more consumer goods than military equipment.[573] The author of a *Time* feature, for instance, gloated that the US had during the war supplied its people with guns and with butter, and if not always with adequate butter then at least "'with

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[566] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 45.

[567] Ibid., 47.

[568] Ibid.; Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 213-214, 217; and Kenon Breazeale, "In Spite of Women: *Esquire* Magazine and the Construction of the Male Consumer," in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*, 2d ed., eds. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (London: Sage, 2003), 235.

[569] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 54.

[570] Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 109.

[571] Ibid., 110.

[572] Ibid., 247.

[573] Ibid., 124.

plenty of fur coats to wear between meals.'"[574] Consumerism proved resilient and increased prodigiously during the post-war economic boom. This, together with the escalating rate of divorce indicating disillusionment with the nuclear family archetype, obliterated any hope of salvaging the traditional model of Western masculinity.

The new, consumption-oriented model of masculinity was becoming hegemonic. During the war, *True* magazine, which sought to make its readers "conceive of themselves as consumers," included questionnaires on consumer and leisure choices in several of its editions, and even went so far as to frame fashion-consciousness and self-exploration through consumer goods as antifascist activities.[575] Like *Esquire*, its inclusion of sexually prone women shielded it from the charge of effeminacy, as did its framing of women's shopping as an activity principally dictated by men.[576] Both of these strategies continued to be used by the men's magazine industry after the war.[577]

Another highly significant indication of the post-war hegemony of a consumerist manhood, was the radical shift of black men's magazines toward a resonant vision of black masculinity. Pendergast demonstrates that prior to the war, black magazines promoted masculinities not at all associated with consumerism. These ranged from a black masculinity of the white Victorian mold in the *Colored American Magazine, Alexander's* and the *Voice of the Negro*, to associating masculinity with engagement in the fight for civil rights, typified by editorials in W. E. B. du Bois's *Horizon* magazine.[578] What constituted a rift between black masculinity and consumerism, was the fact that white companies did not see the black population as a meaningful consumer base, and consequently were reluctant to advertise in black magazines. Yet, black magazines needed white advertising revenue, and so began actively courting potential advertisers. To this end, *Opportunity* put out a call for advertisers in 1931, in which black buying power received significant emphasis.[579] Black magazines frequently featured black celebrities, especially sports stars, and no secret was made of their consumption-driven lifestyles.[580] In this way, black men were slowly brought round to the idea of associating the height of masculinity with consumption. However, this new

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[574] *Time* 43 (1944): 88, cited in Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 124.

[575] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 227-228.

[576] Ibid., 234.

[577] Ibid., 236.

[578] Ibid., 70, 87, 92, 104, 106.

[579] Ibid., 200, 203.

[580] Ibid., 197, 199.

masculinity was fully embraced only in *Ebony* magazine, launched in 1945. Its founder impressed on the world that black Americans are as capable of consumption as their white counterparts, and white advertising proceeded to stream into the magazine. Like white men's magazines of the time, *Ebony* associated masculinity with consumerism, leisure, appearance and personality. Less and less attention was paid to race, and highly sexualized black women received greater thematization. A "sunny outlook" on life rather than political radicalism was demanded from readers.[581] Politically inclined readers over the years were guided to equate active consumerism with black liberation. Even figures such as Huey P. Newton, leader of the militant Black Panther party from 1966 to the early 1980s, drew direct associations between black people's political subordination and them "suffer[ing] from inadequate participation in consumption."[582] Black masculinity, too, became commodified and with this, time that could potentially have been spent on political organization collapsed into spending money on achieving 'manhood.'

During the 1950s and 1960s, the hegemony of this new consumer-oriented masculinity consolidated around the phenomenal public response to Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* magazine. The success of the magazine indicated that very many men had become far more comfortable conceiving of themselves as consumers. Correlatively, the popularity and publicity of the magazine allowed it to exercise widespread discursive influence on American men. It became something of a "national institution."[583] When *Playboy* and other men's magazines promoting "sex and materialism," such as *Gentlement's Quarterly* (*GQ*) and *For Him Magazine* (*FHM*), hit the shelves in South Africa from the mid-1990s onward, they proved similarly influential in inflecting ideas of masculinity in this domain.[584] The feminist writer Diana Russell considers these magazines a "manifestation … of US cultural imperialism … [and] a serious problem for South Africa to deal with," as they "reflect the … materialism … misogyny, and homophobia prevalent in US culture."[585] In *Playboy*, masculinity was equated quite unselfconsciously with appearance, personality and taste in matters of consumption. The threat of effeminacy was neutralized through unprecedentedly explicit sexualized images of

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[581] Ibid., 209, 246, 249-250.

[582] Huey P. Newton, "The Black Panthers," *Ebony* 24/10 (August 1969): 108.

[583] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 4.

[584] Stella Viljoen, "The Aspirational Aesthetics of 'Gentlemen's Pornography,'" in *Sex, Gender, Becoming: Post-Apartheid Reflections*, ed. Karin van Marle (Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press, 2006), 41, 43.

[585] Diana E. H. Russell, "US Pornography Invades South Africa: A Content Analysis of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*," in *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*, eds. Diane Bell and Renate Klein (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1997), 431.

women,[586] and men's superiority to women in what were 'erroneously' perceived as feminine activities, such as cooking and interior decorating, received emphasis.[587] In short, the 'playboy' was permitted to manifest aesthetic and other sensitivities in matters of commodity consumption, precisely because he was reassured of his virility through his voyeuristic consumption of photographs of female nudes. Further, insofar as he was encouraged to "equate … satisfaction with hedonistic consumption" of goods and women, rather than with work or family, the playboy operated in reference to "two central fantasies of … modern consumer culture" – that one is free to do what one pleases in consumer society, and "that happiness inhere[s] in material things."[588]

The decisiveness of this hedonistic turn in the mid twentieth-century capitalist patriarchal culture exposed the weakening of the erstwhile dominant masculinity tied to the nuclear family and work. Paradoxically though, men had to work harder than ever before to afford increasingly expensive consumer items. In fact, as Don Slater points out, some scholars believe that the incongruity between attitudes required at work and those needed for consumption stands to undermine the process of economic modernization.[589] Paul Hoch explains that while "our whole social apparatus for buying and selling incessantly trumpets the commodities it claims are the *sine qua non* of the masculinity required for the 'playboy' life of leisure and conspicuous sexual consumption … our production system still insists that men orient to the more traditional masculinity of work … discipline and control."[590] However, the sociologist Daniel Rossides sees a relatively unproblematic correlation rather than a profound contradiction between hard work and consumerist masculinity. When discussing the American feminist Barbara Ehrenreich's argument that *Playboy* magazine signals American men's flight from commitment, Rossides asserts that the breadwinner ethic may have weakened substantially, but that men still are willing to work hard. But now they are willing to work hard mainly for themselves.[591] In other words, diligent work constitutes a means to the end of buying commodities promising to augment a commodified masculinity.[592]

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[586] Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

[587] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 130.

[588] James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 358.

[589] Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 29.

[590] Hoch, *White Hero, Black Beast*, 15-16.

[591] Daniel W. Rossides, *American Society: An Introduction to Macrosociology* (Dix Hills: General Hall, 1993), 278.

[592] Ian M. Harris, *Messages Men Hear: Constructing Masculinities* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 79, 88.

In the words of the great American sociologist Robert Bellah: “an emphasis on hard work and self-support can go hand in hand with an isolating preoccupation with the self.”[593] The neoliberal economic machine is kept going precisely due to the ‘symbiotic’ relationship between work and leisure-oriented consumption, and between such consumption and the ‘exemplary’ constructed models of masculinity and femininity of our time.

While the Victorian model of masculinity placed immense pressure on men because of the responsibility and self-denial it demanded,[594] the new hegemonic masculinity is equally stressful. The sexual objectification and visual consumption of women may be central to this increasingly global conception of masculinity, but its consumerist focus cultivates in men themselves an “outer-directed” individualism, demanding constant adaption to retain ‘manhood.’[595] Paradoxically, although men keep their dominant position as voyeurs of women, they too have become objects of the gaze. This shift may evoke fears over blurring lines between homo- and heterosexuality, especially since many men experience pleasure in being looked at.[596] Men also are now obliged to keep up with fashion trends in order to retain their status as men, and in effect the consumer economy feeds off their insecurities, profiting from constantly shifting goalposts. This instability was previously unknown, since in earlier versions of manhood, “certain … tests … made it easier to ascertain if one were a true man: the duel, courage in war, and … the possession of willpower as well as the manly virtues of ‘quiet strength’ and of an acceptable moral posture.”[597] Finally, the consumerist orientation of the new masculinity pushes men to earn large amounts of money or incur debt to remain ‘men.’ Given increasing job insecurities that come with global free markets, “the ‘worker’ aspect of masculinity [thus] creates many problems for men attempting to construct healthy gender identities.”[598] These precarities now affect every neoliberal economy in the global North. In the global South, the social changes described here are even more extreme.

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[593] Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 56.

[594] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 265.

[595] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 165.

[596] Sean Nixon, “Have You Got the Look? Masculinities and Shopping Spectacle,” in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 157, 163; Mary Louise Adams, *Artistic Impressions: Figure Skating, Masculinity, and the Limits of Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 77-78; and Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 161.

[597] George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 191-192.

[598] Harris, *Messages Men Hear*, 88.

Consumer culture: political debilitation

Focusing largely on capitalist patriarchal societies in the affluent world, this chapter has indicated the link between consumerism and the loss of subjective autonomy. By the twentieth century, media advertising had persuasively coerced individuals to use their free time in ways that support the existing economy. Against this backdrop, the rise of commodified models of femininity and masculinity discloses the extent to which women and men have become almost ontologically trapped within the neoliberal framework. However, rather than being merely passive victims of these structural shifts, people gave fuel to these changes – particularly where the reframing of gender was concerned. Today a global hedonistic turn in behavior and gender identity involves profound loss of autonomy and militates against political mobilization. Indeed, many people come to believe in the idea of 'consumer sovereignty,' and accordingly, to equate consumption with political expression. Also alluring are the pleasures to be had from personal display and the related construction of prototypical media images of masculinity and femininity. There is pleasure in looking, in being looked at, and in fashioning oneself in reference to the commodities at one's disposal, superficial as these may be. Ultimately, then, structural and individual agency are involved in buttressing the neoliberal hegemony. As Raewyn Connell argues of the construction of masculinities, they "are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure, prior to social interaction … [but] come into existence as people act … [and] are actively produced, using resources and strategies available in a given social setting."[599] The implication is that for consumer-oriented processes of identity and gender construction to occur, and so for neoliberalism to go uncontested, people actually have to 'take up the offer,' as Connell puts it.[600] The next chapter shows that people in South Africa are choosing to do just that, thus marginalizing alternative modes of life and different models of gender. In effect, what is taking place is the globalization of neoliberal consumerism as a monolithic way of life.[601] It is both ironic and tragic that repeatedly colonized nations, such as South Africa, so easily succumb to this neocolonization, and so quickly discard their own cultural creativity.

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[599] Raewyn W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 12.

[600] Ibid., 162.

[601] Ibid., 39-41.

Chapter 4: The 'South African Dream'

The first and second chapters of this thesis described how international political pressures and domestic policy decisions, respectively, led to the adoption of neoliberal economics in South Africa. But it was not only the actions of Big Men that led to the hegemony of free market values; the pursuit of media-promoted consumer-based lifestyles by 'little people' completed this so-called 'development' paradigm. This took place despite African people's earlier resistance to the capitalist system undermining traditional communities, fragmenting ethnic identities, and refashioning ideas of gender. Certainly, structural changes underpinned by segregationist legislation sped up urbanization and made communal lifestyles difficult to maintain. Still, this societal shift could not have been possible without some kind of endorsement from the South African citizenry. These same citizens had for many years fought for what 'black' leaders had promised them – a fair, humane, and explicitly socialist, reorganization of their country. Now many rapidly succumb to the homogenizing consumerist aspirations promoted under neoliberal hegemony. The neoliberal turn of the African National Congress (ANC) in post-1994 South Africa was dealt with at length in the second chapter, so it is treated only in broad brushstrokes here. What is explored in this chapter, are the reasons why indigenous South Africans, despite being discriminated against by European or 'white' rulers for hundreds of years, so easily fell in the post-liberation era for the consumerist trappings of yet another system hatched by their erstwhile oppressors. The historian and Africanist William Beinart emphasizes the avidity of indigenous consumerism at the expense of more autonomous grassroots African frameworks. As he argues, "urbanization by no means rules out ethnic identification, [but] South Africa may be distinctive in the degree to which African people have lost rural ethnic roots."[602] He proceeds to correlate this loss of traditional culture with the uptake of the global consumer 'monoculture' – to borrow an ecofeminist term from Vandana Shiva[603] – as individuals became gradually "sucked into modes of living that demanded new forms of consumption."[604] Indeed, in a rather short space of time the consumer ethic radically influenced South Africans of all races, gaining even greater impetus as they 'took up the offer' of neoliberal gender identities. As in the global North, in South Africa the new 'exemplars' of masculinity and femininity strengthen the

[602] William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 301.

[603] Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (New York: Zed Books, 1997), 7.

[604] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 144.

neoliberal hegemony by "setting standards, claiming popular assent and discrediting those who fall short."[605] Rich indigenous ideas of relational personhood, no less than traditional African patterns of living, for the most part have been quashed beneath these new gender identities and the lifestyles to which they are linked.

South Africa is an ethnically diverse nation, and the analyses that follow interweave discursive and behavioral changes from among peoples of several ethnic groups. The changes these different groups underwent did not occur simultaneously though, since their access to property, work and consumption, unfolded over decades. Class interaction over the years has involved many dynamics, including domination, negotiation, voluntary cross-cultural assimilation, and so on. There was a leveling out of economic opportunities in the late 1990s, but only within the middle class and elite strata, producing what has been called a black bourgeoisie. The subsequent discussion focuses particularly on the socio-cultural transformations experienced by black South Africans – the country's majority, some 80 percent of citizens[606] – consisting mainly of Xhosa and Zulu individuals. As the majority, they constitute the primary agents of change in South Africa. An attempt is made to trace the recent postcolonial history of how this majority changed, losing their cultural uniqueness and specificity while ostensibly gaining greater access to worker and political rights, and consequently, to opportunities for consumerism.

For hundreds of years, indigenous South Africans resisted the encroachment of authorities upon their autonomy. The country has a long history of domination and retaliation, stretching back to at least the middle of the seventeenth century. The discussion to follow, however, hones in on people's resistance to becoming a 'standing reserve' of labor for capitalism. Significantly, this opposition implies possession of an alternative vision of life and self. The question is: how was such resistance gradually overcome, through processes of war, disease, and enclosure? Consideration is given to why South Africans became depoliticized, and their ideals and gender styles homogenized, through consumerism in the post-apartheid era.

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[605] Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 214.

[606] At mid-year, Statistics South Africa estimated the 'Black African' population group to comprise 80.2 percent of the total South African population of around fifty-four million. Statistics South Africa, "Media Release: Mid-Year Population Estimates," *Statistics South Africa*, 2014. Available at: http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?p=2990. Date accessed: October 8, 2014.

Consumerism and the loss of indigenous autonomy

Battles for autonomy from 1800s on

In 1806, the British occupied the Cape for the second time, and saw that little development had taken place during the time that the territory had been under Batavian, that is to say, Dutch rule. The Cape had experienced a recession, as the market for Cape produce was extremely limited, and the 1799 Frontier War had ruined many farmers. Their troubles were compounded by Xhosa raids on their livestock, and the drawn-out rebellion of their Hottentot servants who colluded with the Xhosa.[607] Notably, although the British shared the settlers' view that the Xhosa were no more than "savages,"[608] they were disdainful of the settlers themselves. So, while the Afrikaners saw themselves as civilized and therefore felt entitled "to rule the land and its backward indigenous tribes,"[609] the British considered them "a rural, isolated, relatively backward people … [with] no books, paintings or innovations on which … [they] could pride themselves."[610]

For UK-based South African historian Saul Dubow, this underdeveloped condition of the Colony, and the prejudicial British assumptions relating to both the indigenous populations and the Afrikaners, are crucial to understanding the nature of the approach to settlement that the British adopted subsequently.[611] In short, their aim became that of industrializing and commercializing the territory, necessitating the 'civilization' of its inhabitants in order to shape a competent work force. In relation to this, the historical geographer Alan Lester focuses on the early to mid nineteenth-century colonization of the Eastern Cape Xhosa. He elaborates on how the British sought to 'civilize' these indigenes in such a way that they could accommodate themselves to a capitalist mode of production and consumption. This involved riding roughshod over indigenous patterns of life centered on

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[607] S. Daniel Neumark, *The South African Frontier: Economic Influences, 1652-1836* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 179; and Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 346.

[608] Alan Lester, Etienne Nel and Tony Binns, *South Africa Past, Present and Future: Gold at the End of the Rainbow?* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 64, 70.

[609] James Minahan, *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups around the World*, vol. 1 A-C (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 48.

[610] Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2003), 195.

[611] Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18.

rural, communal living and largely subsistence-oriented work. Admittedly, the disruptive impact of these British endeavors on Xhosa subjectivity has come under dispute. Some acquisitive rather than needs-based behavior on the part of the Xhosa is reflected in early accounts of this people's "enthusiastic propensity" for trade in articles quite unrelated to subsistence.[612] It is argued that rather than focusing on staples, much trade engaged in by the Xhosa was in cattle, beads, iron and copper – items allowing for the accrual of prestige and wealth.[613] Yet, many of these articles did serve to safeguard the Xhosa's traditional way of life, and most importantly, their independence. Cattle, for instance, generated social respect and served as bridewealth, while iron and copper could be used for fashioning agricultural tools and weaponry. Such uses ran against British intentions to coerce traditional communities into relinquishing their independent lifestyles and submitting their bodies to exploitative labor under a colonial master.

As discussed in Chapter 3, under capitalist patriarchal productivist economies, an intimate correlation exists between exploitative types of labor and diminution of worker autonomy and status. The related idea that individuals should be made to feel inferior to more readily become 'productive,' was manifest in early to mid nineteenth-century Cape colonial thought. The Cape colonist John Mitford Bowker articulated this inferiority-productivity relation as follows:

> Savage nations must be taught to fear and respect, to *stand in awe* of a nation whose manners and customs, whose religion, it is beneficial and desirable for them to adopt … [W]e must prove to these people that we are their superiors before we can ever hope for much good to be done among them, by conquering them if no milder means are effectual … Could the missionaries persuade the [indigenes] … to become a nation of cotton growers … conquering them would perhaps be unnecessary.[614]

For Bowker, then, a sense of cultural, and even racial, inferiority was essential to improving or disciplining Xhosa subjectivity. Most striking is how this 'civilizing mission,' although at base an aggressive process of subordination and racism, was articulated as an act of generosity, and even salvation. Indeed, in light of the patronizing tenor of colonial discourse on civilizing the indigenes, it is unsurprising that the missionaries came to play such an active role. Briefly, although the missions established at the Cape at least in part were driven by

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[612] Ludwig Alberti, *Alberti's Account of the Xhosa in 1807*, trans. W. Fehr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1968), 71.

[613] Jeffrey B. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 95-96.

[614] John Mitford Bowker, *Speeches, Letters and Selections from Important Papers* (Grahamstown: Godlonton and Richards, 1864), 131.

genuine humanitarian sentiment, a historical complicity with colonial authorities is indisputable. To clarify, although Lord Somerset, governor of the Cape from 1814 to 1826, was an advocate of colonial militarization, he believed that with the help of missionaries the Xhosa and other rebellious groupings could "be made more amenable to long term cultural transformation."[615] This thought was radical for the early nineteenth century, as it involved neutralizing, rather than expelling or annihilating, indigenous groups in the interest of colonial stability. With co-optation in mind, Somerset encouraged missionaries to acquaint Xhosa chiefs with agricultural processes and the 'gift' of civilization.[616] Subsequent Cape governors persisted in these efforts, but given the enduring recalcitrance of the Xhosa, neutralization was pursued more frequently among other ethnic groups considered more culturally malleable. In 1829, under the administration of Andries Stockenström, selected Khoi and mixed-race families, having been granted property rights and freedom from pass laws under Ordinance 50 of 1828, were established at the Kat River and tasked with developing this land. The settlement was presided over by the Dutch Reformed Church, but very soon the community requested the leadership of James Read of the London Missionary Society (LMS). He set up schools and played an important role in facilitating the inhabitants' agricultural successes, which were considerable.[617] The Kat River constituted a model settlement, but the Khoi in the rest of the Colony were characterized as lacking a work ethic and prone to alcoholism – obliging employers to discipline them through wage docking among other means. In fact, their 'masters' asserted that Ordinance 50 had been passed prematurely, as the Khoi clearly had not yet developed the necessary restraint to deserve such freedoms.[618]

To return to the Xhosa: endeavors to civilize this people persisted, in spite of or perhaps because of, a hardening of racial attitudes after the sixth Frontier War (1834-1835). This war was ignited by settlers continuing to illegitimately seize Xhosa cattle and land.[619] The Xhosa retaliated in an unprecedentedly aggressive manner, pillaging and razing hundreds of farms, seizing thousands of livestock, and killing numerous settlers and Hottentots.[620] During the war, colonial troops seized the Xhosa land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers,

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[615] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2005), 20.

[616] Ibid.

[617] Ibid., 36-37, 118; and Emile Boonzaier, Candy Malherbe, Penny Berens and Andy Smith, *The Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa* (Claremont: David Philip, 2000), 108, 111.

[618] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 58-59.

[619] R. L. Watson, *Slave Emancipation and Racial Attitudes in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 108.

[620] Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 145.

and Colonel Harry Smith was put in direct command of this conquered territory, renamed the Queen Adelaide Province. He was impatient to correct Xhosa subjectivity, particularly because this people could not be driven out of the new province. Smith proceeded to tell the Xhosa inhabitants of the Queen Adelaide Province "that they wished to become 'real Englishmen.'" What he and Cape governor Benjamin d'Urban had in mind was "nothing less than the mass cultural transformation of the Xhosa, who were now, whether they liked it or not, British subjects."[621] It was believed that this could best be effected through institutional mechanisms such as churches, schools, magistrates, and the police. Again, missionaries were expected to instruct the Xhosa in religious values as well as industry, agriculture, and the fair treatment of women among other 'civil' behaviors. For instance, in religious life, so-called irrational superstitions were to be stamped out; in agriculture, a subsistence orientation was to be discouraged to make the Xhosa more industrious; and in ethical conduct, the gendered division of labor needed to be corrected. The practice of women tending the land, and boys herding the cattle instead of attending school, while adult Xhosa men enjoy a leisurely existence, was repugnant in colonial eyes.[622] Colonists also advanced the striking idea that if the Xhosa adopted European clothing styles, discarding their "trash of brass, beads, wire, clay"[623] and so on, this would "signify the systematic neutralising of Xhosa otherness."[624]

Tensions did exist between missionaries and the colonial authorities, particularly over the issue of forcing 'civilization' upon the Xhosa. In contrast to Harry Smith, some advocated a humanitarian, patient approach, which they believed would yield results precisely because the Xhosa could not stand being dictated to.[625] Others felt that imperial expansion had been carried out unjustly, and that the indigenes, realizing this, were now bent on resisting any further colonial advances. As the Wesleyan reverend John Beecham explained it in 1838:

> The natives have had to surrender their lands without receiving for them adequate remuneration … [B]ut the moral wrong … committed … has been aggravated by the fraud practised upon their ignorance in the price … given for the lands first ceded by them. A few beads, or other trinkets, or something equally worthless, have been the consideration paid down for lands and possessions of incalculable value … [Yet,

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[621] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 82.

[622] Ibid., 84.

[623] Harry Smith, cited in William D. Boyce, *Notes on South-African Affairs* (London: J. Mason, 1839), 45.

[624] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 84.

[625] Ibid., 103.

> t]he natives have soon discovered, that their means of subsistence have been diminished … [and so are] goaded by hunger and stimulated by revenge.[626]

However, such critical reflections did not automatically imply that these missionaries were content to leave the Xhosa to their own cultural devices. For them, it was a moral imperative to 'gift' this people with Christianity and civilization. This is testified by the fact that although the Queen Adelaide Province was retroceded in December 1836,[627] the missionaries remained active there. In fact, the reasoning went that because the indigenes were wronged by colonial authorities, it was an "obligation to confer upon them all the benefits of knowledge, civilization, education and Christianity"[628] as a form of recompense. The moral tenor of the missionaries' gradualist civilizing approach was palpable in an 1837 survey of missionary labors in South Africa. Here reverends John Choules and Thomas Smith unfavorably contrasted the heathen Xhosa with 'their' converts. They described tribal chiefs as "foremost in every species of wickedness;" claimed that traditional spiritual leaders are "children of the devil, and enemies of all righteousness;" and even generalized that the heathen Xhosa are subject "to the corruptions of their own hearts, unchecked by the thought of judgment to come." These offenders were then juxtaposed with the Xhosa converts, who Choules and Smith claimed have flourished, free from the 'neglect' they had previously suffered.[629]

Despite the patient approach taken by these missionaries to change the Xhosa, they continued to face an uphill battle. Most indigenes remained reluctant to accommodate themselves to the values of 'Western civilization' and to Christianity especially. Aversion to Christianity was alarming to Beecham and his followers, because for them other aspects of civilization could only be embraced subsequent to genuine conversion to the Christian faith. They believed that trying to civilize indigenes first through agriculture and clothing, and only

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[626] John Beecham, *Colonization: Being Remarks on Colonization in General, with an Examination of the Proposals of the Association Which Has Been Formed for Colonizing New Zealand*, 2d ed. (London: Hatchards, 1838), 5-7.

[627] Christoph Strobel, *The Testing Grounds of Modern Empire: The Making of Colonial Racial Order in the American Ohio Country and the South African Eastern Cape, 1770s to 1850s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 79; and John S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier, 1834-1854* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 128.

[628] *British Parliamentary Papers: Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*, reprint (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), evidence of Rev. William Shaw, 57.

[629] John O. Choules and Thomas Smith, *The Origin and History of Missions: A Record of the Voyages, Travels, Labors, and Successes of the Various Missionaries, Who Have Been Sent Forth by Protestant Societies and Churches to Evangelize the Heathen*, vol. 2, 4th ed. (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln/Crocker and Brewster, 1837), 574.

later through Christianity, was like putting the cart before the horse.[630] Yet, with a strong indigenous culture behind them, the Xhosa had little use for the Christian god and clung tenaciously to their own cosmological framework.[631] For the most part, they accepted only those aspects of this so-called civilization which facilitated their continued independence – cases in point being agricultural innovations such as irrigation systems and the plough. The historian Christoph Strobel corroborates this, arguing that success stories of Xhosas converting to Christianity, and with this to 'civilization,' were over-optimistic and "failed to consider African motivations to join the missions," such as those relating to self-preservation.[632]

The seventh Frontier War (1846-1847) was precipitated by tribal tensions, drought and consequently, repeated Xhosa incursions into the Cape Colony. In its aftermath, colonial authorities got another opportunity to force civilization upon the Xhosa. The latter were defeated decisively and left more weakened than ever before. The erstwhile Queen Adelaide Province was recaptured, renamed British Kaffraria, and placed under Harry Smith's direct military command. Smith believed that work would aid in the civilization of the Xhosa and also alleviate the labor shortage in the Cape. He proceeded to use Xhosa men, women and children as indentured labor. The South African Xhosa genealogist Jeffrey Peires maintains that there was special demand for eight- to ten-year-old children, evidenced in "enthusiastic letters from farmers desirous of helping to civilise the Xhosa"[633] by taking on the more impressionable youngsters. Over time, these abuses aggravated the Xhosa. Desperate to reassert their autonomy, they bought into the Xhosa prophet Mlanjeni's promise that his medicines would make them impervious to British bullets. Mlanjeni had sworn that the warriors' ritualistic application of the roots of certain plants, combined with invoking their ancestors and the prophet himself, would preserve them: "The guns of the British would shoot hot water, their bullets would do no harm, and their gunpowder would fail to ignite."[634] Around the same time, other leaders such as the Ngqika chief Sandile, agitated against the missionaries as well, affronted as he was by the latter 'taking his people from him.' He and other chiefs began to regard the missionaries as "threats to African sovereignty and agents of

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[630] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 116-117.

[631] Ibid., 102.

[632] Strobel, *The Testing Grounds of Modern Empire*, 124-125.

[633] Peires, *The House of Phalo*, 168.

[634] Jeffrey B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 10-11.

empire,"[635] and actively engendered this perspective among their subjects. Ultimately, such agitation precipitated the eighth Frontier War (1850-1853), which proved devastating to the Xhosa who were left with sixteen thousand dead and their subsistence base ruined.[636] Notably, during this conflict, many supposed Christian converts, as well as about a quarter of the coloured residents of the Kat River settlement, joined in the rebellion against the colonial forces.[637] For Alan Lester, this signaled the final effort, "not just by the Xhosa, but by all of the groups facing proletarianisation in the eastern Cape, to escape their forcible incorporation within a pervasive settler capitalist system."[638]

Their decisive defeat at the hands of colonial authorities was compounded by further droughts and destitution, not to mention the related indignity of being dragged into the cycle of wage slavery. This difficult situation contributed to the Great Xhosa Cattle Killing of 1856-1857 – a most shocking, tragic rebellion of the Xhosa against losing their traditional infrastructure and being reduced to mere laboring bodies. During the time Xhosa herds were being decimated by cattle plague (*rinderpest*) introduced by imported stock, two young Xhosa girls, Nongqawuse and Nombanda, claimed they were approached by ancestors. These told them that the Xhosa people must kill all their remaining cattle, and burn all their crops, to purify themselves as "the whole community will rise from the dead."[639] While people were at first skeptical, the majority nonetheless followed through.[640] Many reasons for the Cattle Killing have been proposed, but it is generally accepted that the pressures placed on the Xhosa through colonial advances, together with the *rinderpest* scourge, caused them to turn to their ancestors for aid. Their sacrifice of absolutely everything they had, then, constituted "a sign of willingness to accept a new purity of existence, if only an idealised precolonial order was restored."[641] The literary and postcolonial scholar Jennifer Wenzel confirms this, contending that "Nongqawuse's prophesy and the colonial project of civilization were competing millennial visions of a world remade."[642] The Cattle Killing proved disastrous for

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[635] Strobel, *The Testing Grounds of Modern Empire*, 126.

[636] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 160.

[637] Strobel, *The Testing Grounds of Modern Empire*, 126; and Lester, Nel and Binns, *South Africa Past, Present and Future*, 120.

[638] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 154-155.

[639] Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 79.

[640] Ibid., 127.

[641] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 183.

[642] Jennifer Wenzel, "Literacy and Futurity: Millennial Dreaming on the Nineteenth-Century Southern African Frontier," in *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility*, eds. Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley and Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 49.

the Xhosa people. An estimated half a million cattle were killed, thousands of people starved to death, and tens of thousands more were displaced and had to make their way into the Cape Colony to find work.

A shackled people

This devastating event was a coup for both missionary Christianity and Africanized forms of this religion, which operated as psychological refuges for this ruined people.[643] It was also a boon for the steadily industrializing Cape Colony. George Grey, then governor of the Cape, described the situation as follows:

> So complete was the state of destitution to which the followers of the prophet[ess Nongqawuse] had reduced themselves, that one of the greatest chiefs, who had … immense herds of cattle, had not a single head left; … one of the leading chiefs had been obliged to work upon the roads; whilst in many parts, the country was covered throughout the day by crowds of women and children digging for wild roots, as the only means of subsistence left them … *Wisely used, the existing crisis may produce permanent advantages for the whole of South Africa. A restless nation, who for years has harassed the frontier, may now to a great extent be changed into useful labourers*.[644]

The drive to turn weakened indigenous populations into tools useful to the colonial capitalist economy continued through subsequent decades, and was reflected in the writings of, among others, Bartle Frere, who was governor of the Cape in the late 1870s.[645] The discipline of these indigenous populations was ensured further through pass laws restricting their movement within the Cape Colony. This was deemed necessary “until such a time as a favourable reformation of Xhosa subjectivity could be achieved.”[646]

However, the right moment to drop the pass laws apparently never came. Controls on the movement and occupations of South African indigenes were implemented for more than a hundred years. Racial discrimination persisted, even after the Boer wars when South Africa became a member of the Commonwealth, and even after the First World War, during which

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[643] Charles Villa-Vicencio, “Mission Christianity,” in *Living Faiths in South Africa*, eds. Martin Prozesky and John de Gruchy (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1995), 57-58.

[644] Emphasis added. George Grey, Speech at the Opening of the Cape Parliament, 1859, cited in John M’Kerrow, *History of the Foreign Missions of the Secession and United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1867), 444.

[645] Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 112.

[646] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 185.

time black South Africans had assisted the country immensely by standing in for absent white workers in semi-skilled and skilled positions.[647] Black South African ability to regain autonomy, or at least gain a voice in contemporary affairs, was eroded through their loss of residual franchise privileges in 1936-1937. This rendered them "third-class citizens, with few rights to live in the cities and no opportunities to purchase land outside of designated 'reserves.'"[648] Later, the apartheid regime's homeland system, based on this British system of native reserves, also undermined any chance of indigenes escaping wage slavery within the rapidly industrializing economy. Although the creation of both the reserves and the homelands was motivated by the objective of controlling the influx of Africans to the cities,[649] enforcing this settlement pattern was also economically advantageous.[650]

Briefly, as already discussed in Chapter 2, the apartheid government legitimated the maintenance of homelands with the argument that, through providing indigenous peoples with their own areas they could develop independently at cultural, political, economic and other levels, and ultimately gain independence. This argument markedly contrasted with the earlier colonial contention that it was imperative to turn the indigenes into properly British subjects rather than leaving them to their own devices. All this aside, the homeland system without doubt facilitated the growth of the South African capitalist economy, while undermining black people's potential to organize resistance. In short, those living in the homelands on a subsistence basis were accustomed to satisfying only limited needs. Thus, although male migrant workers actually were paid a pittance, they continued laboring willingly, as their meager earnings still were enough to support their families and even acquire a few more cattle back home.[651] Rural women left behind in the homelands were equally exploited. They received absolutely no remuneration for maintaining the subsistence base, for raising the new generation of migrant workers, or for caring for the sick or aging workers ejected from industry.[652] The costs of the rapidly industrializing 'white' economy quite literally were externalized in this way. The cultural anthropologist Anne-Maria Makhulu has recently added to this argument that indigenous identity and solidarity were undermined through the

[647] Krikler, *The Rand Revolt*, 42, 125-126.

[648] Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, 206.

[649] Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 3.

[650] Ivan Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.

[651] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 31.

[652] Bond, *Elite Transition*, 6.

homeland system. By generating distance between migrant workers and their families, the migrants' behaviors and subjectivities could be refashioned to suit capitalists. Apartheid's migrant labor system, she intimates, made possible "the regulation of private behavior and the refashioning of African subjectivity [by] … eviscerat[ing] potential spaces of intimacy such as home and family – domains generally deemed central to the achievement of self-definition."[653] There is some irony in this. The apartheid regime purportedly maintained the homeland system for South African indigenes to remain socially and culturally independent, and separate from white South Africa. Yet, the 'Western' socio-cultural ideals to which migrant laborers were exposed in white South Africa tended to erode the indigenous, non-consumerist aspirations they had shared with their communities back in the homelands. And when they returned home, they carried these new aspirations along with them, disrupting indigenous societal structures and perspectives.

Economic growth and the 'black consumer'

Makhulu's argument that the connection between miners and rural existence became severed, is both challenged and confirmed by the South African sociologist T. Dunbar Moodie in his seminal work on black miners, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration*. Moodie does indicate that indigenous mine workers gradually were sucked into consumer-oriented urban lifestyles. Yet, he contends that at least up until the 1970s, the "common motif [of] … variant strands of migrant culture … was commitment to the independence and satisfactions of patriarchal proprietorship over a rural homestead."[654] That is, many rural men decided to work on the mines specifically in order to accrue the necessary capital to become men of stature at home. Upon their return, they could purchase cattle and still have sufficient means to sustain their *umzi* or homestead.[655] Admittedly, some men were "'lost to the mines'" (*amatshipa*), abandoning their rural existence and ruining themselves in the attractions of consumer culture, urban prostitutes, and alcohol.[656] However, for the large majority, rural life remained preferable to urban existence. It is salient that the Tswana and the Xhosa, for example, drew

[653] Anne-Maria Makhulu, "The Question of Freedom: Post-Emancipation South Africa in a Neoliberal Age," in *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*, ed. Carol J. Greenhouse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 141.

[654] T. Dunbar Moodie (with Vivienne Ndatshe), *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2001), 21.

[655] Ibid., 106.

[656] Ibid., 15, 141-142.

sharp distinctions between urban work and work in the rural setting, by using different words to describe each. *Mmereko* (Setswana) and *pangela* (isiXhosa), were used to designate work for 'white' bosses or for wages, while *tiro* (Setswana) and *ukwakha* (isiXhosa), referred to the regenerative, meta-industrial building of a home, a family life and a community in the traditional, rural setting.[657] As Moodie shows, a similar privileging of rural over urban life is evidenced in the lyrics of a song routinely sung by Sotho men leaving their mountainous homes for the Johannesburg mines: "Lesotho, I now leave you with your mountains where I used to run … I am going to the white man's place – with electricity. I am leaving all the dark places here but I still prefer the mountains of Lesotho."[658] Moodie suggests that it was precisely because many mine workers, particularly the Mpondos, were not fully proletarianized, and thus were quite capable of surviving without wages, that there was so much rebellion on the mines during the 1940s.[659]

However, various forms of government interference in rural life made it increasingly difficult to sustain the *umzi* ideal. Even before the establishment of apartheid, 'betterment schemes' were introduced in the Bantu reserves, partly in an effort to encourage indigenes to adopt "'rational' and 'scientific' farming methods" to supposedly counter escalating levels of destitution. These schemes involved fencing off land to designate agricultural, pastoral and residential areas, and thereby greatly interfered with traditional patterns of life. These schemes also enjoined indigenes to cull their cattle. Authorities blamed rural livestock numbers for the difficulties experienced by these people, rather than admitting that their desperate condition largely stems from land dispossession.[660] Apartheid-era resettlement schemes exacerbated overcrowding in the homelands, by pushing those not working in the 'productive' white economy back into these areas. The urban unemployed as well as peasant communities – "'black spots'" that had ensconced themselves "in the midst of white-owned agricultural land,"[661] were prime targets for removal. The resultant strain this placed on limited resources in the homelands, combined with the allure of working on the mines especially subsequent to the introduction of bonus reengagement schemes,[662] inexorably drew

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[657] Ibid., 24.

[658] Ibid., 14.

[659] Ibid., 87.

[660] Leslie Witz, *Apartheid's Festival: Contesting South Africa's National Pasts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 195.

[661] No Sizwe, *One Azania, One Nation: The National Question in South Africa* (London: Zed Press, 1979), 65.

[662] Christopher Pycroft and Barry Munslow, "Black Mine Workers in South Africa: Strategies of Co-option and Resistance," in *Third World Workers: Comparative International Labour Studies*, ed. Peter C. W. Gutkind (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 163.

black South Africans into white areas. Urbanization also increased as black miners moved into more skilled, better-paid positions, became emboldened further by unionization, and successfully agitated for considerable pay raises as gold, freed from the dollar, led to a tenfold revenue increase between 1970 and 1980.[663] Over time indigenes of the agricultural class also settled in peri-urban areas. These relatively autonomous peasant farmers had shared agricultural land with whites through rental agreements, sharecropping, labor tenancy or wage labor, but were forcibly removed, privately evicted,[664] or deterred by labor exploitation.[665] In principle, they were permitted full urban existence in 1986, with the abolition of influx control legislation that before had made it virtually illegal for farm workers to seek employment in cities and towns. Rural women, too, moved into urban areas. Some feared that distance between themselves and their migrant husbands might cause these men to fall for city women and abandon their families. Others were motivated by the growing difficulties of sustaining a rural life in an increasingly monetized economy, and found work as domestic servants in cities and towns. However, Moodie advances that most women remained very suspicious of complete reliance on the money economy, and especially on the wages of their men, in an urban world completely lacking in a culture of sharing.[666] A rural woman indicated that this amounted to a clash in ethics, when she told anti-apartheid activist Marianne Alverson that while she and her sisters in the country would share whatever meager foods they could lay their hands on – commoning, "in town, no one will share even the head of a fly."[667]

Nonetheless, more and more people were drawn toward cities and towns, settling in townships, and in even greater numbers in 'squatter camps' on the urban periphery. Squatting was precipitated by the apartheid government severely curtailing any further development of

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[663] Daryl Glaser, *Politics and Society in South Africa* (London: Sage, 2001), 46; Moodie, *Going for Gold*, 61-62; and Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 174.

[664] Alan Mabin, "Dispossession, Exploitation and Struggle: An Historical Overview of South African Urbanization," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 15-17.

[665] Owen Crankshaw, Gavin Heron and Timothy Hart, "The Road to 'Egoli': Urbanization Histories from a Johannesburg Squatter Settlement," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 141-142.

[666] Moodie, *Going for Gold*, 40, 139-140, 154-155.

[667] Marianne Alverson, *Under the African Sun* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 43-44.

black township housing from 1970 onward, in an effort to curb black urbanization.[668] Shack housing, made from corrugated iron sheeting, sprang up in parts of the homelands bordering white South Africa, and around white cities and towns where legislation could be averted for some time at least. The latter became an attractive option as the state steadily shifted responsibility for the removal of illegal squatters onto the shoulders of private landowners.[669] Yet by the late 1970s, the apartheid regime itself had come to terms with the fact that black urbanization was inevitable. Consequently, it allowed for the establishment of the Urban Foundation (UF), funded by South African big business, aimed at addressing housing issues faced by blacks in urban areas.[670] In its turn, the government conceded ninety-nine-year leaseholds to blacks in urban areas, invested heavily in black urban infrastructure, and offered home-ownership subsidies.[671] Rather than indicating any humanizing of apartheid, though, the government's change of tack must be seen against the backdrop of factors other than mounting moral outcry and related political protest. Firstly, the costs of maintaining the homeland system, in terms of homeland development and the provision of relatively affordable public transport for migrant laborers, were incredible.[672] Secondly, the manufacturing and service industries were becoming reliant on skilled black labor, particularly as white workers were transitioning into purely managerial positions. Thus, these industries began criticizing the migrant labor system for destabilizing and demoralizing the valuable black workforce, and hampering its productivity through fatiguing commuting.[673] Thirdly, it was recognized that by permitting and indeed hastening black urbanization, the commodity glut that had plagued the white consumer market since the late 1960s could be

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[668] Jeff McCarthy, "Local and Regional Government: From Rigidity to Crisis to Flux," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 28.

[669] Dhiru V. Soni, "The Apartheid State and Black Housing Struggles," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 51.

[670] Callinicos, *South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, 43.

[671] Soni, "The Apartheid State and Black Housing Struggles," 46; and Susan Parnell, "State Intervention in Housing Provision in the 1980s," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 55.

[672] McCarthy, "Local and Regional Government," 28-29.

[673] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 157; David M. Smith, Introduction to *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 2; Soni, "The Apartheid State and Black Housing Struggles," 44; and G. H. Pirie, "Travelling Under Apartheid," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 175.

alleviated.[674] The idea was that the urbanization of black workers would generate both a stable industrial workforce and a hitherto untapped consumer base. It was imperative to bring more blacks into the work-and-spend game. Not enough of them were equipped to consume competently, given their "insufficient (or nonexistent) disposable incomes, high rates of un(der)employment and weak or nonexistent infrastructure, particularly in the heavily populated rural areas (i.e. the 'consumption fund' necessary for mass consumption did not exist)."[675] In contrast, if black urban settlement were to be encouraged, and the electrification and other infrastructural development of settlements pursued, it would become possible to cultivate a black population that would "require commodities ranging from low-cost housing through to expensive clothing, furniture, basic foodstuffs and the like."[676] William Beinart indicates as much, maintaining that as the installation of prepaid electricity meters escalated from the 1980s onward, the "demand for consumer durables and electrical goods [including] … television" increased, with the latter device in its turn opening individuals up to the new world of consumer culture and related forms of leisure.[677]

More than two decades on, it has proved impossible to change the face of the urban landscape in South Africa, particularly with respect to curbing the mushrooming shack settlements. Already by the 1980s squatter camps around cities and towns were a fixture, and by the early 1990s it was commonplace for the owners of formal township houses to erect rental shacks in their back yards.[678] Shack dwelling proved enticing because it meant that people could live in close proximity to work, yet for far less than the rental costs of formal township housing.[679] In the post-apartheid era, squatter camps have grown exponentially. This is a major concern to the current South African government, which considers them harmful to the international image of the country. The government's dislike of this settlement pattern was evidenced in the sudden decision to begin 'slum clearance' prior to the 2010 football World

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[674] Bond, *Commanding Heights & Community Control*, 37, 40.

[675] David A. McDonald, *World City Syndrome: Neoliberalism and Inequality in Cape Town* (London: Routledge, 2009), 61.

[676] C. M. Rogerson, "The Absorptive Capacity of the Informal Sector in the South African City," in *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa*, ed. David M. Smith (London: Routledge, 2005), 164; and Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid*, 164.

[677] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 317.

[678] Parnell, "State Intervention in Housing Provision in the 1980s," 60.

[679] Mabin, "Dispossession, Exploitation and Struggle," 20.

Cup.[680] Ironically, this endeavor has damaged rather than improved South Africa's international image because of bloody confrontations between police and evicted residents, which have provoked the ire even of world-renowned political philosopher Noam Chomsky.[681] Indeed for millions of South Africans, there really is no alternative to squatting. Aside from proximity to work and urban amenities, it allows them the opportunity to partake in the growing black urban culture centered on consumption-oriented activities and identities. The photobook *Shack Chic: Art and Innovation in South African Shack-Lands*, discloses that an entire universe of consumerism may be concealed behind the rusty old door of a dilapidated corrugated iron domicile. So in a roundabout way, although the black housing crisis has not been solved, the consumer glut has been addressed significantly through the large-scale quasi-urbanization of millions of black South Africans, who are becomingly increasingly 'consumerized.' In what follows, consideration is given to additional factors playing important roles in South African people's submission to the global neoliberal hegemony.

Conflating freedom with narcissistic display

Developing the 'South African Dream'

The adoption of a consumerist orientation by newly urbanized black South Africans may have been inevitable, given the erosion of their old value systems as they moved away from the countryside and its *umzi* ideal. Equally, it can be argued that assuming a new, consumer, ethic constituted a 'backlash' of sorts against being deprived of amenities during the apartheid years. Freedom from apartheid perhaps could be confused with the enjoyment of quality services and leisure activities denied under the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act. Likewise, while highly-paid and skilled work officially remained reserved for whites, the acquisition of consumerist trappings might have signaled liberation. Sociological thinkers like Thomas Princen point out that workers subjected to the Taylorist system in the US went shopping to overcome the alienation and meaninglessness they experienced on the factory

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[680] Andy Clarno, "A Tale of Two Walled Cities: Neo-Liberalization and Enclosure in Johannesburg and Jerusalem," in *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 19, eds. Diane E. Davis and Christina Proenza-Coles (Bingley: JAI Press, 2008), 168-169.

[681] Noam Chomsky et al., "Open Letter to James Nxumalo, Senzo Mchunu and Jacob Zuma," *Mail & Guardian*, October 4, 2013.

floor.[682] Similarly, it is conceivable that black South Africans turned to consumerism to overcome alienation from mainstream society under legislated apartheid. Consumption has played a dominant role in recouping black dignity, making the concern that Africans would work less if they earned more,[683] seem unfounded.

However, some accounts of the process of turning indigenous South Africans into consumers, risk eliding the challenges involved in priming a new black consumer base. The obstacles extended well beyond commonplace structural ones, such as the economic discrimination faced when applying for hire-purchase and credit.[684] The obstacles even extended beyond the problem of getting mainstream consumer products into township stores. There were also cultural barriers, brought to light in studies conducted by the National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa (1969) and the Bureau of Market Research (1974, 1995). By the late 1960s, capitalist entrepreneurs realized that economic growth depended on cultivating a black consumer base, and this required providing black South Africans with higher salaries. This is evidenced in the proceedings of a 1969 National Development and Management Foundation seminar on the 'Urban Bantu Market.' The South African Breweries managing director Richard Goss, in his opening address, advanced that cultivating the black consumer base is a basic for all South African businessmen. He argued that, by "whetting the Bantu's appetite for certain goods … by generating in them the urge to want to buy them," it will be possible to mold them into voracious consumers and increase their productivity in the workplace. Their desire to acquire consumer items would provide them with "an incentive … to earn the where-withall (*sic*) to satisfy their demands."[685] This sentiment was echoed by many other speakers, including Wally Langschmidt, managing director of Market Research Africa. He added that, instead of pursuing export-oriented expansion, South African industry should, given the "vast non-white market here … make a greater effort to increase the purchasing power of … non-whites by trying to give them higher

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[682] Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency*, 81.

[683] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 70.

[684] Mark Schreiner et al., "Racial Discrimination in Hire/Purchase Lending in Apartheid South Africa," March 17, 1997. Paper submitted for presentation at the AAEA Annual Meeting, July 27-30, 1997, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, *AgEcon Search*. Available at: http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/21026/1/spschr01.pdf. Date accessed: October 9, 2013.

[685] Richard J. Goss, "Opening Address," in *The Urban Bantu Market: Understanding Its Complexities and Developing Its Potential*. Proceedings of a 2-day seminar held in February 1969, Durban, Natal (Durban: The National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa, 1969), 7.

wages."[686] But aside from this requirement, as well as the need to make credit more freely available to black South Africans, what also was necessary for the consumer revolution to take place was a grasp of what these individuals actually wanted. How to advertise, reaching out to them in such a way that they learn to want more things, and how to get them to choose one brand over another.[687]

Grooming for affluence

The remarkably cynical proposals above were some of the primary objectives of the Bureau of Market Research, University of South Africa, whose landmark studies "aimed at constructing portraits of [black] consumers [to] … ensure that copy-writers are better able to communicate because they can visualise their audiences more clearly."[688] A study was conducted under its auspices by the South African market researcher Alice van der Reis in 1974, who interviewed 291 Sowetans. Van der Reis revealed that the large majority of them, regardless of their age or level of education, expressed interest in beautifying their homes mainly through enlarging them, furnishing them tastefully, or kitting them out with some prestigious, durable consumer items such as washing machines and refrigerators.[689] The need for 'showing off' intensified the more urban Africans became exposed to the growing culture of consumerist display in their surroundings. Also driving this desire for outward trappings of the good life was the fact that "[t]he urban African … likes to be regarded as being one or two up on his country cousin."[690] Georg Simmel's and Thorstein Veblen's arguments concerning

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[686] Wally Langschmidt, "Some Characteristics of the Urban Bantu Market," in *The Urban Bantu Market: Understanding Its Complexities and Developing Its Potential*. Proceedings of a 2-day seminar held in February 1969, Durban, Natal (Durban: The National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa, 1969), 14.

[687] Goss, "Opening Address," 7; and L. M. Guthrie, "Successes and Failures in Bantu Marketing: The Lessons to Be Learnt," in *The Urban Bantu Market: Understanding Its Complexities and Developing Its Potential*. Proceedings of a 2-day seminar held in February 1969, Durban, Natal (Durban: The National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa, 1969), 63.

[688] P. A. Nel, Preface to Alice P. van der Reis, *The Activities and Interests of Urban Black Men and Women* (Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research/University of South Africa, 1974), iii.

[689] Alice P. van der Reis, *The Activities and Interests of Urban Black Men and Women* (Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research/University of South Africa, 1974), 18.

[690] Obed Kunene, "Advertising," in *The Urban Bantu Market: Understanding Its Complexities and Developing Its Potential*. Proceedings of a 2-day seminar held in February 1969, Durban, Natal (Durban: The National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa, 1969), 59.

the role of fashion and consumer items in the establishment and maintenance of class differentiation, come to mind.

However, urban African consumer interests required diversification, and there was a growing battle among brands for this new consumer base. Print, radio and television advertisements were identified as significant catalysts of commodification, but many campaigns failed miserably because little attention was paid to the historical and cultural backgrounds of black target audiences. For example, the Xhosa, who had suffered fatal droughts throughout much of their history, were not at all charmed by the Fanta soft drink slogan: 'It's fun to be thirsty!'[691] As the South African advertising researcher Robin Morris also points out, a Ford motor company advertisement proved similarly insensitive. This entailed a Ford Husky van being described as 'The bus you've been waiting for.'[692] Thus, it held no appeal to African audiences, given the fact that for years they had been forced to live miles from their places of employ, beholden to unreliable transport. Unusual advertisements, to which most people would not give a second thought, also proved disturbing to some new consumers. An extreme example was the reaction to dancing teaspoons in an advertisement for the tea brand Teaspoon Tips. Some TV viewers wondered if witchcraft was at work, and would not touch the brand thereafter.[693]

Despite cultural 'differends' inhibiting effective marketing strategies, the interests of newly urbanized black men and women were undergoing drastic changes, especially as they became more educated and obtained better-paid jobs. Van der Reis's study, for example, revealed that the higher the respondent's level of education and hence his/her salary was, the greater his/her appetite was for an array of 'Western' consumer items and leisure activities. This attests to a correlation between education, income, and consumerist refinement, at least in newly Westernized societies.[694] Another factor implicated in the emergence of engrossing consumer interests was age. Survey respondents, mostly under thirty years of age, were immersed in the work-and-spend cycle. Van der Reis describes these "socially sophisticated respondents [as] … superficial rather than serious in their pursuits and tastes … [and as] interested in the latest fashions, beauty care … cinema … [and] social news of film stars."[695] Already five years before this study, business directors recognized that the young were more amenable to a consumption-oriented identity and more willing to discard indigenous self-

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[691] Robin Morris, *Marketing to Black Townships: Practical Guidelines* (Cape Town: Juta, 1992), 30.

[692] Ibid., 36.

[693] Ibid., 30.

[694] Van der Reis, *The Activities and Interests of Urban Black Men and Women*, 34, 42.

[695] Ibid.

definition than were older men and women. For example, Alan Tiley, a prominent advertising agency director, commented that indigenous cosmologies and tribal identities are "by and large … disappearing in modern urbanisation and a young Bantu girl of today will know more about stopping ladders in stockings than [about] a Tokoloshe."[696] The urban tendency to reject indigenous African frameworks as *passé* was demonstrated amply in Alice van der Reis and commerce researcher Luke Mabaso's much later study of the consumerist behaviors and perspectives among black Gauteng youth. Urbanized respondents strongly opposed certain indigenous socio-cultural norms wholly accepted by their parents, such as the extended family living in one household, the slaughtering of animals to placate ancestors, the importance of religion, and the legitimacy of witchdoctors. On venerating the ancestors, one respondent commented: "'How do you slaughter for someone who is no longer alive.'" Similar incredulity was expressed toward witchdoctors, who one respondent asserted, should be gotten rid of. Christianity was not spared criticism either, with young urban respondents judging it to be a money-making, hypocritical racket. Young women interviewed in the same study even questioned the logic behind circumcision rites, while some young men argued against the practice of paying bridewealth (*lobola*) in contemporary times. "'If people are educated, why should one pay for the other.'"[697] Of greater concern to them was the necessary education to secure well-paying jobs that would make them competent consumers. They unanimously expressed the wish "to be … successful and prosperous in a professional career or in their own business … [and] dreamt of living in a beautiful home with their nuclear family, in a leafy suburb with all the trappings of wealth around them."[698]

Even more significant is the intensity that marked the approach of young South Africans to consumerism; the extent to which they had become seasoned in this practice and acquainted with the mechanics of branding and advertising; and the degree to which consumerism had become tied to identity construction. No longer content with acquiring a few durable consumer items for their homes, such as a refrigerator or a washing machine, young women envisioned purchasing "'all the electrical gadgets that make the kitchen look

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[696] Alan Tiley, "Problems of Retailing to the Bantu Market: Part 2, Central Business Areas," in *The Urban Bantu Market: Understanding Its Complexities and Developing Its Potential*. Proceedings of a 2-day seminar held in February 1969, Durban, Natal (Durban: The National Development and Management Foundation of South Africa, 1969), 40. The *tokoloshe* is a feared sprite-like figure in Xhosa tradition, "a hairy and … malevolent goblin who attacks at night [and causes] … bad things [to] … happen in life including illness." Godfrey Mwakikagile, *South Africa and Its People* (Pretoria: New Africa Press, 2008), 166.

[697] Alice P. van der Reis and Luke T. Mabaso, *Aspirations, Values and Marketing Issues among Black Youth in Gauteng, 1995* (Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research/University of South Africa, 1995), 19-25.

[698] Ibid., 3.

like a laboratory.'"[699] Members of both gender groups expressed greater fashion-consciousness than their parents, who nonetheless themselves had copied American fashion trends as best they could.[700] These young people's interest in Italian and French fashion actually seemed to "rebel against the fashion statement of the previous youth group."[701] Some were also critical of advertising tricks, such as a firm simply repackaging a product, yet marketing it as something 'new and improved.' Lastly, these study respondents identified prosperous, successful people such as movie stars and business tycoons as their role models. The young men in particular expressed a desire to become like these figures not because of their wealth per se, but because of the consumer items this gave them access to, such as cars, technology, and a "'high lifestyle.'" Van der Reis and Mabaso found that many young men even went so far as stating: "'[W]e admire criminals, such as drug dealers. We know they make their money in a shady way, but they spend the money in style.'"[702] The ease and speed with which African 'tradition' is being replaced by a consumer identity and ethic are striking – even people's diets changed. The historian Diana Wylie points out that by the late 1980s, a kind of "cultural racism" took root in diets, as well-to-do young men and women scorned the foodstuffs on which their parents were raised. A Xhosa university student, for example, "swore [to her] that he would eat only 'quality' food like cultivated spinach, as opposed to the wild greens his parents had enjoyed."[703]

To sum up, then, within the post-apartheid context, urbanized black men and women have adopted a "globalized culture" of consumerist norms.[704] The tragic paradox of all this is that through establishing the 'South African Dream,' contemporary white and black South Africans have discovered something in common, but at the cost of more socially and ecologically attuned indigenous ways of life. In 1969 at the National Development and Management Foundation seminar discussed earlier, businessmen were encouraged to refrain from stigmatizing black South Africans as non-human or sub-human. On the ground that like whites, they possess consumer rationality. As Alan Tiley advised: "In advertising to the

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[699] Ibid., 14-15.

[700] William Beinart points out that in the postwar era, "American consumer icons and lifestyles had great appeal for both whites and blacks," and that between the 1960s and 1980s even in the homelands "neo-traditional dress of blankets, beads, and headdresses was fading away" and people "increasingly reflected the predominant urban and wage-based culture." Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 183, 222.

[701] Van der Reis and Mabaso, *Aspirations, Values and Marketing Issues among Black Youth in Gauteng, 1995*, 15.

[702] Ibid., 33-34.

[703] Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach*, 242.

[704] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 338.

Bantu, treat them as human beings and you will be surprised how they will react – like you or me."[705] William Beinart corroborates this attitudinal shift, suggesting that "[f]or an increasing number of people the aisles of the new cathedrals, the supermarkets, … gave access to a common society of consumption."[706] It is still puzzling, though, how this transition toward a neoliberal consumer-self took place in such a short space of time and with so little opposition – and this after centuries of resistance against colonial- and apartheid-style domination. The idea of consumerism as an expression of empowerment, freedom and even unity, together with the various economic and political changes thematized earlier, certainly all facilitated this shift. But what must be considered as well, is how such factors operated upon, and more importantly were fuelled by, changing constructions of gender. The subsequent analysis is guided by the idea that "[g]ender constructions are embedded in a dialectic … How men and women see and represent themselves, and how gender relations are organized and promoted, are shaped by larger socioeconomic, cultural, and religious transformations," yet "[a]t the same time, notions of gender have an impact on the course and receptions of these transformations."[707] It turns out that new gender constructions were both a product of the consumerist turn in South Africa, and a catalyst for the depoliticization of South Africans.

The regressive politics of hyper-gender

Given Africa's rich and diverse ethnic histories, it is unsurprising that multiple masculinities and femininities continue to exist on the continent, each identity modulating in response to external and internal pressures. Some have argued that Africa constitutes "an important site for studying the social construction of gender, since … African gender identities have been particularly fluid and contentious, heavily articulated with wealth, age, seniority and ritual authority."[708] There is no denying that long-standing indigenous conceptions of gender roles still play some part in the social construction of 'masculinity and femininity' today, especially in more rural areas. Cases in point are the veneration accorded male elders, and the frequent association of womanhood with wifely obedience and pastoral industriousness. However, of interest here is the extent to which the power of these conceptions is diminishing as

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[705] Tiley, "Problems of Retailing to the Bantu Market," 38.

[706] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 282.

[707] Stephan F. Miescher and Lisa A. Lindsay, "Introduction: Men and Masculinities in Modern African History," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 2.

[708] Ibid., 4.

urbanization increases, exposing people to consumer-oriented gender identities glorified within the neoliberal media. It is generally accepted that major changes occur in masculinity and femininity in the global South when countries undergo development, since development also imports neoliberal gender regimes.[709] Yet, it is impossible to account for gender transformation in the global South in its entirety within any one text. This is understandable, given the vastness of cultural diversity and the sheer number of different ethnic groups, not to mention the differing paces of economic development and modernization. Thus, in most cases, where in-depth study of changes in masculinity or femininity is undertaken, focus falls on a particular ethnic group or clearly delimited geographic area. For example, gender changes accompanying development have been documented in Namibia and Nigeria,[710] and a study of transformations in Maasai notions of masculinity has shown that even in this marginal community, the previously dominant pastoral masculinity has been supplanted by an '*ormeek*' masculinity centered on "the practices and fashions of modernity."[711] Similar changes have been wrought in South African gender identities, and although these changes have had some positive effects, they have also homogenized and depoliticized a previously diverse and rebellious body of people. Accordingly, these individuals are losing track of alternative notions of what it means to be a man or a woman today. Through this reduction in the horizons of possibility, people's potential and willingness to resist the neocolonization of neoliberalism, and its attendant consumer culture, fade proportionately.

South African femininity and consumption

From a liberal feminist perspective, the 'civilizing' or Westernizing impulse of Christian missionaries, colonists and later, the architects of economic modernization, was a rather good thing for gender relations in Africa. Admittedly, these authorities imposed the Western model of the nuclear family, which did not reverse women's subordination. The nuclear family model, promoted to entrench qualities indispensable to the construction of an industrious male

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[709] Connell, "Global Tides," 10.

[710] See Meredith McKittrick, "Forsaking Their Fathers? Colonialism, Christianity, and the Coming of Age in Ovamboland, Northern Namibia," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 33-51; and Andrea A. Cornwall, "To Be a Man is More Than a Day's Work: Shifting Ideals of Masculinity in Ado-Odo, Southwestern Nigeria," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 230-248.

[711] Dorothy L. Hodgson, "Being Maasai Men: Modernity and the Production of Maasai Masculinities," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 219.

workforce, led to proletarianization, the male breadwinner ethic, and the growing economic dependence of women. That said, attempts to mold indigenous peoples into nuclear family units, directed critical attention toward the patriarchal excesses of traditional African life. A notable problem was the practice of women slaving away in the fields while their men idly look on,[712] assured of the fairness of this arrangement by their payment of bridewealth for these women. Historical geographer Alan Lester points out that it was actually very important for missionaries' wives to accompany them into Xhosaland, even if it meant quickly marrying before entering this terrain, "so that they might themselves provide the Xhosa with models of more proper gender relations."[713]

Both the criticism of patriarchal practices, and introduction of technology like the plough,[714] may have helped ease the labor burden of some African women. Even so, the principle of patriarchal dominance was perpetuated in the nuclear family setup from colonial Victorian through to apartheid times. For example, the apartheid-era practice of granting urban housing only to male African household heads, both instigated the formation of black nuclear families, and entailed rejection of black women's entitlement to independence, residence and property rights. In fact, within the urban setting there was only one form of femininity, that of housewife and mother.[715] This is unsurprising, since a misogynist/racist orientation was evident already in the colonists' diminishment of white women and blacks on the basis of 'inferior' brain size. Misogyny also marked the conservative Afrikaner view of white women as properly belonging in the kitchen.[716] Similarly, within the anti-apartheid liberation movement, women were expected to support fighting men, rather than take an active stand themselves. The early ANC denied women formal membership, the implicit masculinist expectation being that they should take care of the home while their men make

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[712] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 18-19; and Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 84.

[713] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 84.

[714] Ibid.

[715] Ida Susser, *Aids, Sex, and Culture: Global Politics and Survival in Southern Africa* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 205; and Debby Bonnin, Georgina Hamilton, Robert Morrell and Art Sitas, "The Struggle for Natal and KwaZulu: Workers, Township Dwellers and Inkatha, 1972-1985," in *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, ed. Robert Morrell (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 160.

[716] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 170; Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 187; and Hannah E. Britton, *Women in the South African Parliament: From Resistance to Governance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 13.

history.[717] This did not, however, stop women from independently engaging in landmark popular protests, such as the 1950s riots against pass laws.[718] There were also some independent women activists such as Lilian Ngoyi, Winnie Mandela and Dorothy Nyembe.[719]

From around the 1960s, black South Africans were being groomed for competent consumption. In this, recognition as human beings deserving the same rights as whites subtly intertwined with the practice of consumerism, and correlatively with white ideals of beauty, fashion and femininity. A particularly troubling manifestation of this, exposing the extent to which black women had internalized a self-rejecting racial bias, was their belief that success or social status depended on approximating to a certain "degree of refined 'whiteness' or lightness of skin."[720] A fair-skinned African nurse depicted in a 1970s skin-lightening advertisement, for instance, was almost unanimously described by a sample group of black female and male respondents as "educated, wealthy and attractive."[721] The pursuit of 'Western' fashion and lifestyles, particularly American ones, was also evident by this time.[722]

But it was only after the democratic transition of 1994, when women's rights became constitutionally enshrined, that black women could begin celebrating their freedom not only from racial oppression, but also from their erstwhile patriarchal oppressors – the men in their families and homes. The responses of black women to questions concerning gender equality and marriage, posed in a 1995 case study, evidence this. The young women interviewed boldly articulated their disdain for marriage and its related gender hierarchies by arguing, for instance, that "'today's woman does not care for marriage; we believe in our independence,'" and that "'the woman of the 90s is very career conscious.'"[723] Preference for independence, career and financial success was strengthened in subsequent years through black women's entry into professional/mid-management occupations, in part thanks to affirmative action

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[717] Raymond Suttner, "Masculinities in the ANC-Led Liberation Movement," in *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, eds. Tamara Shefer et al. (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 200, 212.

[718] Kate Tuttle, "Antiapartheid Movement," in *Encyclopedia of Africa*, eds. Kwame A. Appiah and Henry L. Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 119.

[719] Hilda Bernstein, *For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears: Conditions and Resistance of Women in Apartheid South Africa* (Cambridge: International Defence & Aid Fund, 1975), 61, 64.

[720] R. K. Deppe, *A Comparative Study of Motives Observed in Selected Pictorial Advertisements Directed at the Bantu* (Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research/University of South Africa, 1974), 50.

[721] Ibid., 3.

[722] Ibid., 5, 55.

[723] Van der Reis and Mabaso, *Aspirations, Values and Marketing Issues among Black Youth in Gauteng, 1995*, 22-23.

policies that identified them as some of the most disadvantaged individuals under apartheid. A Department of Labour report indicated, for example, that by 2002 there were more black women than either black men or white women in the "professional category" of employment.[724] White women also benefited from affirmative action policies, but not to the same degree as black men and women since they were not regarded as having been oppressed to the same extent.[725] Yet they, too, had suffered beneath the ideological constraints of a patriarchal Afrikaner mentality, buttressed by the conservative ideology of the Dutch Reformed Church. Only in the 1960s and 1970s were they granted access to employment opportunities enabling them to pursue economic and sexual independence from men.[726]

Ultimately, what these new professional opportunities did afford South African women in general, was the economic wherewithal to approximate the liberated 'New Woman' archetype exalted in the US and Western Europe. Freed from housewifely and motherly burdens through their economic independence, they now could equal men in work and consumption alike. Here, commodity feminism also took root, promising feminine affirmation through competitive neoliberal careerism and the associated conspicuous consumption and display of goods. Among urbanized South Africans, this mold of femininity is hegemonic today and routinely reflected in the articles of popular magazines. The online October 2013 edition of *Bona* not only gives tips on how to get a "summer body,"[727] but also focuses on celebrity hairstyles to mimic, such as those donned by the extremely 'Westernized' black American songstresses Brandy and Ciara.[728] Its August 2014 print edition dedicates numerous pages to the latest fashion and cosmetic must-haves such as 'hair relaxers.' Further, the cynical commercial appropriation of 'black is beautiful,' evidenced in the same magazine, is a rather poignant reversal of a lost historical moment. Here, women are enjoined to embrace their blackness, but still through utilizing products such as Karazel 'BB Cream' – a product promising to even out the individual's skin tone and so "reveal" their "natural beauty."[729]

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[724] Beverly Thaver, "Affirmative Action in South Africa: The Limits of History," in *Race and Inequality: World Perspectives on Affirmative Action*, ed. Elaine Kennedy-Dubourdieu (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 161.

[725] Ibid., 156-157.

[726] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 187.

[727] Keletso Modisakeng, "Shapely Legs," *Bona*, October 8, 2013. Available at: http://www.bona.co.za/index.php?p[IGcms_nodes][IGcms_nodesUID]%20=e0bf3a3be01d46bc81fc8aac1484439a. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[728] Keletso Modisakeng, "Celebrity Summer Hairstyles," *Bona*, October 29, 2013. Available at: http://www.bona.co.za/index.php?p[IGcms_nodes][IGcms_nodesUID]%20=12889b70ce06a8865092e65cb61750a7. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[729] Karazel Skin Care Range, Advertisement, *Bona*, August 2014, 35.

Also included is a feature in which incredibly Westernized, fashion-conscious women in the media industry are interviewed. However, they were not identified for interview because of their own achievements, but because they are or have been in relationships with some of South Africa's most famous men – well-known actors, DJs, musicians, and soccer players.[730] When women are praised for their own sake, it is often because they have become managers of large corporations, such as Khensani Nobanda who is a general manager "[i]n the male-dominated industry of beer."[731] Perhaps from a liberal feminist standpoint, women such as she have finally achieved recognition and equality.

All of these anecdotes affirm the profoundly patriarchal bearers of neoliberal capitalism. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the New Woman model of femininity, oriented around career attainment and status consumption, is highly deceptive. The ideal types of beauty represented in glossy magazines and on the silver screen are unattainable without digital enhancements and/or cosmetic surgery, skin bleaching, hair straightening, and other harmful processes. To feel socially valued, women pursue "impossible physical standards,"[732] and in addition must keep up with constantly shortening fashion cycles. African women, if they want to look like Halle Berry or Beyonce Knowles, are encouraged to spend small fortunes on skin-lightening creams and tablets and hair straighteners,[733] many of which carry considerable health risks including cancer.[734] Further, as the African womanist scholar Yaba Blay contends, the very fact of striving after the white 'look' of figures such as Berry or Knowles through skin-lightening treatments, betrays a "most egregious attack" on the identity of black women whose skin color is after all "the immutable mark of [their] … Blackness." Still, she argues that rather than simply criticizing black women for falling prey to white ideals of beauty, what must also be recognized is the extent to which a public climate of masculinist contempt instigates black women's aspirations in this regard. Women are "bombarded with 60ft billboards for skin bleaching products," and prominent black men, including entertainment icons like Kevin Hart, Lil Wayne, Neyo and

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[730] Amanda Ndlangisa, "The Women Behind SA's Famous Men," *Bona*, August 2014, 64-67.

[731] Amanda Ndlangisa, "Success is in the Eye of the Beer Holder!," *Bona*, August 2014, 72.

[732] Radner, *Shopping Around*, 177.

[733] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Yearning for Lightness: Transnational Circuits in the Marketing and Consumption of Skin Lighteners," in *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities*, 3d ed., eds. Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2011), 242.

[734] Yaba Blay, "Get Light or Die Trying," January 11, 2013. Available at: http://yabablay.com/get-light-or-die-trying/#more-1236. Date accessed: November 4, 2013; and Sitinga Kachipande, "Dying for Straight Hair: The Danger of Relaxers for African Women," May 28, 2013. Available at: http://www.africaontheblog.com/dying-for-straight-hair-the-danger-of-relaxers-for-african-women/. Date accessed: November 4, 2013.

Kanye West, make no secret of their preference for lighter-skinned black girls.[735] Regarding hair straightening, the Malawian blogger Sitinga Kachipande similarly argues that many black women do "not want to get caught with village hair," because urbanized Africans associate unstraightened hair with the undesirable state of "being 'rural.'" The media perpetuate this bias, as do companies in terms of "preferences in hiring."[736] In fact, this white aesthetic is even inculcated in black toddler girls when their mothers "add … European textured hair extensions to their hair."[737]

The hegemonic mold of femininity is physically and ideologically toxic. It is also disempowering, because equating femininity with a 'white' physical beauty both endorses racism and promotes the patriarchal conception of women as little more than objects of the male gaze. So while South African magazine articles and features aimed at a female readership may adopt a register of women's liberation, emphasizing women's right to financial independence and sexual freedom, their underlying theme remains that of becoming attractive, both for the sake of narcissistic pleasure and to draw the attention of jealous women and admiring men. The pinnacle of femininity consists in becoming a "display subject" *par excellence*.[738] Women, men, the media and recruitment patterns reinforce this mindset, inhibiting possibilities for alternative formulations and expressions of personhood. For the most part, the consumption-oriented display femininity, initiated in the global North, is also vociferously engendered and ardently pursued in South Africa. This draws many women into an actually self-demeaning, politically neutralizing work-and-spend cycle. Neoliberal globalization penetrates our very body cells.

South African masculinity and consumption

In their collection of essays published in 2003, perhaps a first in its critical treatment of African masculinity,[739] social historians Stephan Miescher and Lisa Lindsay emphasize the tendency in Africanist scholarship to treat "the male subject … as given, serving as a

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[735] Yaba Blay, "Skin Bleaching, Self-Hatred and 'Colonial Mentality,'" January 2, 2013. Available at: http://yabablay.com/skin-bleaching-self-hatred-and-colonial-mentality/. Date accessed: November 4, 2013.

[736] Kachipande, "Dying for Straight Hair."

[737] Blay, "Skin Bleaching, Self-Hatred and 'Colonial Mentality.'"

[738] Radner, *Shopping Around*, 137.

[739] Akosua Adomako and John Boateng, "Multiple Meanings of Manhood among Boys in Ghana," in *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, eds. Tamara Shefer et al. (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 52.

backdrop in the examination of women's experiences."[740] Within South African studies such an approach is understandable, given the post-1994 proliferation of discourses on Aids and rape, which take men's patriarchal dominance for granted.[741] However, in overlooking the construction of masculinities in relation to "political, economic, religious, occupational, or other transformations,"[742] such an approach remains simplistic. Several recent studies remedy this shortfall, focusing on topics as diverse as Zulu masculinity during the liberation struggle (Waetjen 2004), the existence of multiple masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa (Reid and Walker 2005), and the social construction of masculinities in various African countries against the backdrop of economic globalization (Shefer et al. 2007). Drawing on these and related works, an attempt is made here to trace changes in South African masculinity more or less diachronically, highlighting continuities and disparities between successive hegemonic masculinities. Gay masculinity will not be treated here, because it lacks the hegemonic power of 'straight' models of masculinity in South Africa. In addition, it has already received systematic treatment by Aids activist Mark Gevisser and by constitutional court justice Edwin Cameron in *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (1995).

In view of the track record of resistance to colonial domination, it is unsurprising that the hegemonic masculinity of those times was of a 'heroic' or 'warrior' mold. Archetypal traits of 'the real man' were an ability to lead and defend his people and to demonstrate "military might" and "bravery." This was exemplified in the personage of Shaka Zulu who so fiercely resisted the British.[743] Equally important was a capacity to define and hold hierarchy in the home. As the South African gender studies scholar Robert Morrell and his colleagues explain, the "power and prestige [of] … male homestead heads … synchronised powerfully with a martial masculinity that was at the heart of Zulu cultural expression."[744] A similar masculinity was operational and indeed necessary among the Xhosa, who had to do battle against the British and settlers during nine Frontier Wars over the span of one hundred years. Their adversaries came to respect them as 'real men' precisely on the basis of such traits as

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[740] Miescher and Lindsay, "Introduction," 1.

[741] Deborah Posel, "'Baby Rape': Unmaking Secrets of Sexual Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994*, eds. Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), 21, 33-34, 47.

[742] Miescher and Lindsay, "Introduction," 22.

[743] Thembisa Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors: Masculinity and the Struggle for Nation in South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006), 11.

[744] Robert Morrell, John Wright and Sheila Meintjes, "Colonialism and the Establishment of White Domination, 1840-1890," in *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, ed. Robert Morrell (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 57.

bravery. For example, one nineteenth-century colonial Captain enthused that a Xhosa warrior, if encircled, would "stand up *like a man* and throw his last assegaai."[745] This heroic model of masculinity would be taken up in modified form during the anti-apartheid struggle, by proletarianized black men. But it remained weakened for quite a few decades subsequent to the Great Cattle Killing of 1856-1857. Recall that this event rendered thousands of Xhosa destitute, making them dependent on work offered by colonists and settlers. It marked the end of much indigenous resistance against white authorities. The next hegemonic form of masculinity was shaped within migrant labor practices.

In his landmark study on migrant masculinity as it developed at the South African mines, Dunbar Moodie shows how a new model of masculinity became constituted in reference to "two worlds," so to speak. On the one hand, it was influenced by the world of difficult and often emasculating labor for white men. On the other hand, it also was based in the world of the patriarchal rural homestead (*umzi*), where subsistence-oriented practices and age-old indigenous traditions held sway.[746] This made for a complex constitution and articulation of what it meant to be a man, particularly because of the infantilization of black men in their places of work, even at a linguistic level. Briefly, at least up until 1970, it was commonplace and indeed socially acceptable for whites to refer to black laborers as 'boys,' regardless of their age.[747] The same usage applied on the mines, and so there were 'boss boys,' 'machine boys,' 'hammer boys,' and so on.[748] Black men had to accept this designation, and except for 'boss boys,' they had to operate in extremely subservient roles. This was incongruous with traditional notions of masculinity tied to recognition of seniority, autonomous action and unquestioned patriarchal rule. Nonetheless, allowing themselves to be derogated in this manner at the mines, concomitantly made it possible for these men "to attain or retain manhood at home."[749] In short, at the mines they earned the economic wherewithal to be 'big men' at home, able to afford *lobola* and so gain a wife, purchase cattle, improve their homesteads, and help others in need.[750] The rural homestead life was being eroded by the betterment schemes implemented by the government, which involved dictating land use in the homelands. The subsistence base was becoming ever more precarious, and the *umzi* ideal was

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[745] Emphasis added. J. Alexander (1837), 1: 338, cited in Jeffrey B. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 139.

[746] Moodie, *Going for Gold*, 16.

[747] Suttner, "Masculinities in the ANC-Led Liberation Movement," 197.

[748] Moodie, *Going for Gold*, 19.

[749] Ibid.

[750] Ibid., 21-22.

sustainable only as long as men were willing to go out to earn. What is intriguing, though, is that the danger and hardships of mining were considered so extreme that working on the mines, rather than in any other occupation, became regarded as a legitimate passage to manhood. Moodie explains that for Mpondo men, "the mines were a testing ground for true manhood,"[751] and if they dared opt for a job in town or on the docks, others would reproach them, saying: "'You are not strong, you are not a man. Why do you not go to the mines?'"[752]

An exceedingly peculiar phenomenon pertaining to migrant existence, dealt with at length by Moodie, was the fluidity of categories of gender when husbands and wives endured long periods of separation. Miners were inclined to take young male 'mine wives' (*bakontshana*), whom they courted with gifts and with whom they engaged in thigh sex (*ukumetsha*). These 'wives,' in their turn, offered their 'husbands' domestic services traditionally only ever undertaken by women. These arrangements did not lead to stigmatization of either miner husband or mine wife as homosexual. In fact, mine wives, when old enough, quite unproblematically could move out of the effeminate, subordinate role they had previously adopted and assume the dominant role in a new mine marriage.[753] Also, the extra money and commodities gifted by their 'husbands' went a long way toward accelerating their passage to full manhood in the homelands.[754] For instance, they could afford wives and cattle far more quickly than others. On the other hand, the women left at home assumed the role of household heads, taking charge of the affairs of the *umzi* and demonstrating such strength and endurance that in the eyes of the community they were able to have 'manhood' (*ubudoda*).[755] In the long run, though, the homestead system crumbled as increasing numbers of people were pushed into the homelands from 'white' South Africa. This, together with constricting betterment schemes, explains Moodie, "destroy[ed] … the resilience of country lifestyles as individuals [were] … resettled on land … insufficient for rural proprietorship."[756] Wives became more and more dependent on their husbands' wages, many women sought their own employment opportunities in towns and cities, and the pace of urbanization increased. Full proletarianization and the attendant need to find new ways of demonstrating manhood were imminent.

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[751] Ibid., 38.

[752] Ibid., 87.

[753] Ibid., 121, 126-128.

[754] Ibid., 133.

[755] Ibid., 39, 41.

[756] Ibid., 40.

A most interesting aspect of the subsequent hegemonic form of masculinity was its hybridity. It became centered on enactment of a 'heroic' or 'revolutionary' model of masculinity, but also involved a yearning for the opportunity to embody the 'breadwinner' model. The disintegration of the rural homestead made black men dependent on wages paid by whites. Emboldened by unionization, though, they began agitating for better treatment with increasing militancy. Their demand was not only for better treatment as workers, implying higher wages, fair working hours and promotion policies. It was also for treatment as adult human beings, deserving of recognition, dignity and equal rights. From their perspective, being a man involved being able to 'have a say' in societal affairs as much as it involved being able to protect and provide for one's often extended family. In view of this, the apartheid setup doubly undermined manhood. It denied black men "the accoutrements normally associated with citizenship," and prevented them from "perform[ing] … the roles of men … including providing protection of women and children."[757] The national liberation movement criticized this state of affairs, and promoted 'a heroic or revolutionary masculinity' which would help men to right these wrongs. This masculine model gained even more political impetus when the ANC and SACP were banned and certain of their leaders killed.[758] Earlier great men were evoked: comrades were called upon to "'pick … up the spear' that had been dropped when Bambata and others had been defeated in the last armed rebellion before the Union, in 1906."[759] The "martial reputation of Zulu manhood,"[760] developed on the basis of the legendary exploits of King Shaka kaSenzangakhona, was thematized as well. So potent was the idea that the struggle was inseparable from a reassertion of masculinity, that guerilla training became a legitimate passage to manhood and for some even replaced traditional initiation rituals.[761] Nelson Mandela himself asserted that it was his military training in Algeria that had made him a man.[762] The anti-apartheid struggle and the idea of reclaiming long-denied masculinity were inextricably linked.

That said, the struggle was framed as a fight for equal economic opportunity, and in this respect was closely tied to a breadwinner conception of masculinity. This much was demonstrated, for example, by black men and women's persistent calls for quality education,

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[757] Suttner, "Masculinities in the ANC-Led Liberation Movement," 197-198.

[758] Ibid., 209.

[759] Ibid.

[760] Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors*, 2.

[761] Suttner, "Masculinities in the ANC-Led Liberation Movement," 204.

[762] Nelson Mandela, cited in Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 82.

precisely to "ensur[e] a better life in terms of either higher status and bigger salaries, or easier and 'good' jobs" that would provide "high salaries, responsibility, status," and other benefits facilitating family stability.[763] That black men must be given the economic opportunity to be competent breadwinners was articulated by striking workers as well. During the 1973 Durban strikes which risked considerable punitive action, an African worker stated this plainly enough: "We're going on strike. There is nothing left for us to do. There are people working here who've had to bury their children because they don't get enough money to look after their families." [764] Admittedly, economic uplift, full urbanization, and the attendant breadwinner model of masculinity, would also allow these men to regain patriarchal dominance over their dependents.[765] This was possibly an appealing prospect for them, given how within the context of labor migrancy, their role as household head stood to be undermined by their wives. The women had after all proved themselves perfectly capable of 'manhood,' by singlehandedly taking charge of the rural *umzi* and in many cases making the homestead thrive.[766] So men may have formulated their demands in terms of the need to be able to care for their families, but these envisioned caring relations probably would remain "inherently hierarchical and controlling."[767]

From the transition years to the present, many black men have been granted the economic wherewithal to approximate the breadwinner model of masculinity. However, within the South African context as much as the American and European ones, men's self-identification as breadwinners constitutes a precarious enterprise. It largely depends on a husband's gainful employment, which is under constant threat within a neoliberal

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[763] Deppe, *A Comparative Study of Motives Observed in Selected Pictorial Advertisements Directed at the Bantu*, 60-61.

[764] "The People Rise Up!," *African Communist* 83 (Fourth Quarter 1980): 18, cited in Bernard Magubane, "From Détente to the Rise of the Garrison State," in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol. 2 (1970-1980), ed. South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006), 46.

[765] Graham Lindegger and Justin Maxwell, "Teenage Masculinity: The Double Bind of Conformity to Hegemonic Standards," in *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, eds. Tamara Shefer et al. (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 101, 107.

[766] Bonnin, Hamilton, Morrell and Sitas, "The Struggle for Natal and KwaZulu," 144; and Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors*, 83.

[767] Lindegger and Maxwell, "Teenage Masculinity," 101. See also Cornwall, "To Be a Man is More Than a Day's Work," 237; and Bill Freund, "Confrontation and Social Change: Natal and the Forging of Apartheid 1949-72," in *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, ed. Robert Morrell (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 130.

economy.[768] It also hinges on the continued dependence of his wife, who by implication should earn only a secondary income if she is employed at all. However, the gender transformation that has taken place in South African workplaces, especially in the wake of the adoption of a Constitution strongly emphasizing women's rights, has undermined this idea of the subordinate wife, and thereby problematized the breadwinner model of masculinity.[769] Further, the breadwinner model is a stressor in itself, since it centers on the husband not only preventing starvation but catering for the more frivolous desires of his wife and children. He is also expected to increase the family's status through constant acquisition of various accouterments to display.[770] Admittedly, the specter of a more commodity-dependent manhood did loom around the *umzi* during the time of labor migrancy, as returning migrant workers were known "to buy prestige goods such as bicycles and certain types of western clothing" in order to demonstrate their importance. But such display was accompanied by their power to "dispense patronage and largesse to their neighbors and family," and acquire cattle and other necessities to sustain a rural lifestyle. Therefore, for the most part, being a 'big man' was not about consumerism and the insular urbanized world of a nuclear family, but about being "a responsible man [who] … always contribute[s] to the common good."[771] This type of manhood, common to many sub-Saharan ethnic groups subscribing to relational communitarian values, was very much tied up with the idea that to be fully human – to be a real person – a man has to care for others rather than acting only in self-interest. It was really only in the 1960s and 1970s, when black urbanization escalated and the rural infrastructure faltered, that consumer commodities began to play a more central role in family life and in ideas of manhood. It became a matter of each nuclear family to itself, and the family's status began to depend more and more on keeping up with the Joneses, so to speak. Already in 1969 advertising executives were pointing out that urbanized black families are engaged in a "continual struggle to achieve status." To this end, many "employ their own domestics … run large American motor cars [and have] … homes that could quite easily fit into a normal

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[768] Lisa A. Lindsay, "Money, Marriage, and Masculinity on the Colonial Nigerian Railway," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 151.

[769] Liz Walker, "Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994*, eds. Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), 163-164, 168.

[770] Lindsay, "Money, Marriage, and Masculinity on the Colonial Nigerian Railway," 147.

[771] Carolyn A. Brown, "A 'Man' in the Village is a 'Boy' in the Workplace: Colonial Racism, Worker Militance, and Igbo Notions of Masculinity in the Nigerian Coal Industry, 1930-1945," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 162.

European suburb and not look out of place … [with] the interior[s] of many … just the same as European homes."[772]

Alongside the breadwinner model of masculinity, gradually there developed a more individualistic consumption-oriented one. In present-day South Africa, the two models perhaps hold comparable sway and men may identify with both at the same time, or transition from one to the other depending on the situation at hand. Yet, the consumerist model is proving increasingly potent. The more hedonistic consumerist bent manifested itself as early as the 1970s. This was a time when heroic and breadwinner masculinities prevailed, but fully proletarianized, urban youth began to display increasing individualism cultivated in reference to showy consumer items. The Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi actually criticized ANC-aligned, militant youths for what he saw as self-serving consumerist weakness. He warned that these young people scorn rural life as backward, possess "swanky clothes and flashy cars," and "will build big houses and grow fat" instead of working in the interests of rural people and the working class.[773] University of KwaZulu-Natal historian Thembisa Waetjen is correct to argue that such criticism signaled significant intergenerational conflict.[774] Older and rural men continued to identify their manhood with both revolution and paternalistic care for family and community, while the younger generation, although extremely militant, were becoming ever more focused on gaining access to the wherewithal to construct their gender identities around neoliberal, display-oriented consumer activity. The right to consume became unduly glorified, because it had become tied up with black men's struggle for political and economic recognition. In the post-apartheid era, this idea of equating liberation with "the comforts and pleasures of modern consumerism"[775] was not problematized by erstwhile struggle leaders either. ANC stalwart Cyril Ramaphosa's appearance on the cover of *Tribute* magazine in July 1996 in trout fishing getup, entrenched the link between political freedom and a new masculinity predicated on consumption, leisure and appearance. William Beinart explains that Ramamphosa's "enthusiasm for this activity, as well as malt whiskey, previously prerequisites of wealthier whites, was much touted as emblematic of new ideological and social aspirations."[776] One could add to this that it was also emblematic of the flourishing of a new masculinity oriented around hedonistic conspicuous consumption and consumption-

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[772] Tiley, "Problems of Retailing to the Bantu Market," 39-40.

[773] Mangosuthu Buthelezi, cited in Thembisa Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors: Masculinity and the Struggle for Nation in South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006), 110. See also Moodie, *Going for Gold*, 247.

[774] Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors*, 110.

[775] Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 54.

[776] Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 310.

oriented leisure – one virtually unrealizable by anyone but the *nouveau riche*.[777] This unaffordable new masculinity is beginning to hold hegemonic sway. It is embodied by the contemporary black elites – dubbed 'black diamonds,'[778] and engendered through the disproportionate attention given to it within top-selling black and multiracial magazines. In an online November 2003 edition of *Drum* magazine, for example, one article celebrates the plush parties held by Leonardo DiCaprio and Kanye West.[779] Another features Soweto stylist Bobo Ndima, owner of the label Boys of Soweto, who vocally supports the practice of township men "us[ing] the platform of style and fashion to express or extend their self-worth."[780] An August 2014 print edition of the same magazine features the stylish millionaire music promoter and self-described "playboy" and "sexual athlete" Prosper Mkwaiwa. Of all possible moments he chose August – Women's Month in South Africa – to declare that he had slept with over a thousand women, sometimes without using protection. He claimed his outrageous exploits to be condoned by the fact that he never cheated on any one of these women, but rather had sex with one, after the other, after the other.[781] This manipulated type of masculinity, conceivable only within the neoliberal universe of the reified commodity, then gets reinforced by women who frame romance in entirely materialistic terms. They do this by turning themselves and sex into "consumer product[s] to be paid for by dinners, jewellery, cell phones and expensive jeans," and by only pursuing men who can demonstrate, through their own conspicuous consumption, that they can cater for them in this way.[782] Alarmingly, as the South African clinical psychologist Graham Lindegger and psychology graduate Justin Maxwell point out, these women's consumerist attitudes put them at great risk of HIV infection. Many are willing to sleep with rich men known for their promiscuous behavior, provided they are in exchange furnished with the "'3 C's – cell phones, clothes and cars.'"[783]

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[777] Ibid., 327; and Tina Sideris, "'You Have to Change and You Don't Know How!': Contesting What it Means to Be a Man in a Rural Area of South Africa," in *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994*, eds. Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), 116.

[778] Herman Wasserman, *Tabloid Journalism in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 34.

[779] Phakamani, "Leonardo DiCaprio Celebrates Birthday with Kanye West," *Drum*, November 12, 2013. Available at: http://drum.co.za/celebs/leonardo-dicaprio-celebrates-birthday-with-kanye-west/. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[780] Bobo Vusumuzi Ndima, cited in Refiloe Lepere, "Meet 'Bob' the Stylist – Q&A," *Drum*, November 11, 2013. Available at: http://drum.co.za/celebs/meet-bob-the-stylist-qa/. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[781] Nhlalo Ndaba, "Cheaters Never Prosper," *Drum*, August 14, 2014, 8-9.

[782] Aernout Zevenbergen, *Spots of a Leopard: On Being a Man* (Cape Town: Laughing Leopard, 2009), 100-101, 125, 127, 134-135.

[783] Lindegger and Maxwell, "Teenage Masculinity," 103.

The new exalted masculinity is risky in other respects as well. To conform to popular media images, men across the world engage in high-risk behaviors such as excessive smoking and drinking, reckless driving and sexual promiscuity.[784] The incredible violence perpetrated by those frustrated by their economic deficiencies, preventing them from ostensibly being 'real' men and so attracting women, has also been thematized in recent South African scholarship. Importantly, though, these studies do not perpetuate "the dominant view of men as perpetrators." Instead, they involve careful investigation of the "particular vulnerabilities" that cause men to commit violent acts in the first place.[785] Earlier work paid attention to matters such as the relation between juvenile delinquency and the redundancy of the 'shock troops' or foot soldiers of the anti-apartheid struggle.[786] And more recently, figures such as South African multicultural sociologist Kogila Moodley have identified men's perpetration of crimes such as robbery, as a response to their inability to achieve through non-criminal means "the conspicuous consumption and obscene high life of … black and white elite … celebrated by the media ad nauseam."[787] Some men are willing to kill for this lifestyle and the manhood it promises. The South African anthropologist Isak Niehaus, having interviewed convicted rapists, is convinced that men who rape are not simply monsters bent on "express[ing] … masculine domination and entitlement" in any traditional patriarchal mold. Rather, their actions must be seen against the backdrop of the fact that "after [more than] a decade of democratic governance, few promises of prosperity have materialised," yet men are obliged to aspire to a hegemonic masculinity only accessible through money. Consequently, he proposes that rape should be understood as "a violent attempt to symbolically reassert – and sometimes even … mimic – a dominant masculine persona."[788] In short, powerlessness; and indeed, in

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[784] Wayne Martino and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, *So What's a Boy? Addressing Issues of Masculinity and Schooling* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003), 266; and Laban Ayiro, "HIV/Aids and Its Impact on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy Initiatives and Challenges," in *The Impact of HIV/Aids on Education Worldwide*, eds. Alexander W. Wiseman and Ryan N. Glover (Bingley: Emerald, 2012), 16.

[785] Tamara Shefer et al., "From Boys to Men: An Overview," in *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, eds. Tamara Shefer et al. (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 3.

[786] Jeremy Seekings, "The 'Lost Generation': South Africa's 'Youth Problem' in the Early 1990s," *Transformation* 29 (1996): 103-125.

[787] Kogila Moodley, "South African Post-Apartheid Realities and Citizenship Education," in *Globalization, the Nation-State and the Citizen: Dilemmas and Directions for Civics and Citizenship Education*, eds. Alan Reid, Judith Gill and Alan Sears (New York: Routledge, 2010), 60.

[788] Isak Niehaus, "Masculine Domination in Sexual Violence: Interpreting Accounts of Three Cases of Rape in the South African Lowveld," in *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994*, eds. Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), 67, 69.

most cases there exists "a significant disjuncture between masculine ideals and the real-life situation of rapists."[789]

This does not absolve men who rape or commit other crimes of all culpability, but indicates that the current hegemonic models of masculinity are dysfunctional and destructive. They sustain neoliberal economic orthodoxy by trapping men in a work/rob-and-spend cycle, generating enough frustration to precipitate horrific acts of violence including rape, torture, and murder. The dysfunctional aspects of consumption-oriented masculinity are now conspicuous in the township youth subculture of *izikhothane*, inspired by 'fashion shows' that Zulu migrant workers used to hold in their hostels.[790] However, the migrants only ever paraded around in expensive designer clothing. Contemporary *izikhothane* practitioners go much further, by parading and then burning expensive consumer items, often in front of the less fortunate. The destruction of these commodities does not symbolize a revolt against consumerism, but a desire to prove excessive wealth, consumer competence and so masculine virility. Strikingly, many participants cannot personally afford to keep up with this behavior, and consequently force their parents into indebtedness. It has been reported that some practitioners are willing to "hit … their parents [or] … blackmail them by threatening to stop their studies … in order to have the money."[791] Young people who do not have the economic means to join in are ridiculed, particularly because within this context, being a man depends not on being a kind or helpful person but on "what label you are wearing and how many gold teeth you have."[792] Frustration with financial inability to keep participating in this subculture has pushed at least one teenage boy to suicide.[793] And absolutely no thought is spared for the poor. As one *izikhothane* practitioner emphasized: "I'm tired of hearing … we're not being responsible by burning money, or that we could have given it to the poor instead … If I want

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[789] Ibid., 81.

[790] Khuleka Mbanjwa, "Why We Need a Dressing Down," *The Times*, August 8, 2012.

[791] Cedrain Wembe, cited in Alexandre Capron, "'Izikhothane': South Africa's Bizarre Money-Burning Trend," *France 24*, September 9, 2013. Available at: http://observers.france24.com/content/20130909-burning-money-there%E2%80%99-no-tomorrow-welcome-bizarre-world-%E2%80%9Cizikhothane%E2%80%9D. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[792] Khuleka Mbanjwa, "Izikhotane a Ruinous Trait," *Pretoria News*, August 13, 2012. Available at: http://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/opinion/izikhotane-a-ruinous-trait-1.1361107#.UIOqlW9JP8w. Date accessed: October 21, 2012.

[793] Itumeleng Mafisa, "Izikothane – Fashion Suicide," *The New Age Online*, August 3, 2012. Available at: http://thenewage.co.za/58007-1007-53-Izikothane__fashion_suicide. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

to destroy banknotes, who can stop me? It's not our job to give money to the poor."[794] A greater rupture with the indigenous African notion of a real man as someone who "always contribute[s] to the common good,"[795] is barely imaginable. Yet, as one contributor to the South African *City Press* newspaper advanced, engagement in mindlessly excessive consumption is also commonplace among our political elites. It is clear that they too believe that their freedom from the chains of apartheid, and their attainment of the status of Big Men, are best demonstrated through 'bling.' To the contributor, this dysfunctional, unethical tendency toward consumerist fetishism means that black South Africans are still enslaved. As he/she put it: "We've always had chains around our necks. Now they just have diamonds in them."[796]

Challenge gender: change the world?

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated the dysfunctional character of hegemonic consumerist models of masculinity and femininity in South Africa, and suggested the extent to which these buttress the neoliberal hegemony. The transformation of South Africa into a consumer society has dire implications for cultural and ecological integrity, political mobilization, and the possibility of imagining alternative ways of life. Still, indigenous South Africans' vehement resistance against earlier colonizing endeavors suggests that opposition is possible. The question is: can change be facilitated by remolding gender,[797] away from a neoliberal, consumerist focus? As Stephan Miescher and Lisa Lindsay ask: "What kinds of political, economic, religious, occupational, or other transformations are linked to gender changes?"[798] Alternatively, can a non-neoliberal future be encouraged by "developing more egalitarian sexual and non-sexual cross-gender relationships," in terms of which individuals may pursue masculinity and femininity but without this entrenching dominating or

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[794] Muzi Kingpin, cited in Alexandre Capron, "'Izikhothane': South Africa's Bizarre Money-Burning Trend," *France 24*, September 9, 2013. Available at: http://observers.france24.com/content/20130909-burning-money-there%E2%80%99-no-tomorrow-welcome-bizarre-world-%E2%80%9Cizikhothane%E2%80%9D. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[795] Brown, "A 'Man' in the Village is a 'Boy' in the Workplace," 162.

[796] "Brash Bling and Ghetto Fabulous," *City Press*, October 6, 2012. Available at: http://www.citypress.co.za/lifestyle/brash-bling-and-ghetto-fabulous-20121006/. Date accessed: November 13, 2013.

[797] Connell, *Gender in World Perspective*, 71.

[798] Miescher and Lindsay, "Introduction," 22.

exploitative relations?[799] Or should the aim be to look beyond gender as such, focusing instead on the common humanity of men and women and how humanness can be developed through embodying a communitarian ethic? What has been suggested here is that neoliberal hegemony is maintained through people constructing themselves principally in reference to consumerist gender types. Their preoccupation in this regard blinds them to, or causes them to ignore, the atrocious dominations integral to neoliberalism. The concluding chapter advances a view that the embodied communitarian ethic of *ubuntu* offers an antidote to this social disorganization. Here is an orientation, in which human beings and life systems are clearly valued over money and commodities. Furthermore, the indigenous perspective of *ubuntu* can be reinforced in dialogue with thought streams such as ecological feminism. A promising normative convergence between these two grassroots political visions affirms that another kind of global future is possible.

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[799] Rob Pattman, "Researching and Working with Boys and Young Men in Southern Africa in the Context of HIV/Aids: A Radical Approach," in *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, eds. Tamara Shefer et al. (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2007), 48.

Chapter 5: Voicing an Indigenous Ethic

"Africa has been emptied of its content, and what has been imported is empty too."[800] So declared the Burkinabé scholar and politician Joseph Ki-Zerbo – deeply critical of African infatuation with and submission to the ideals, knowledge systems, institutions, and products of capitalist colonization.[801] Ki-Zerbo emphasizes the sheer power of this economic form and its cultural hegemony in Africa, at the same time as characterizing it as fundamentally superficial and destructive. However, as the Congolese philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe rightly points out, it would be incorrect to assume that absolutely everything Africa has lost was "civilized and beautiful."[802] Certain African thinkers such as the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop were undoubtedly guilty of this assumption, one that invites a problematic "aestheticization"[803] or essentializing "hypostasis of African civilizations."[804] Such an assumption can also encourage African academics to reject all imported attitudes and ideas as inapplicable to African problems – even though ironically they may find themselves squarely situated in Euro-American academic fields using registers of the 'Western' philosophical, anthropological, or sociological traditions. This may create problems for scholars in other postcolonial settings as well, not only because they may fall prey to this tendency, but also because they may be misrepresented as having done so. The Indian political psychologist Ashis Nandy, for example, has been criticized for romanticizing tradition defined as non-Western, indigenous Indian culture on the one hand, and dismissing the 'West' on the other, while yet identifying himself as a critical thinker.[805] Yet, this overlooks the both/and approach adopted by Nandy, whereby he uses Western registers but not without being critical of any

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[800] Joseph Ki-Zerbo, cited in Aernout Zevenbergen, *Spots of a Leopard: On Being a Man* (Cape Town: Laughing Leopard, 2009), 243.

[801] Kjell Havnevik, "A Historical Framework for Analysing Current Tanzanian Transitions: The Post-Independence Model, Nyerere's Ideas and Some Interpretations," in *Tanzania in Transition: From Nyerere to Mkapa*, eds. Kjell Havnevik and Aida C. Isinika (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2010), 35.

[802] Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 182.

[803] Michael Syrotinski, *Singular Performances: Reinscribing the Subject in Francophone African Writing* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 21.

[804] Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 196-197.

[805] Alastair Bonnet, "The Critical Traditionalism of Ashis Nandy: Occidentalism and the Dilemmas of Innocence," *Theory, Culture and Society* 29/1 (2012): 150.

tradition, including his own. As he puts it, "each … concept … is a *double entendre*: on the one hand, it is part of an oppressive structure; on the other, it is in league with its victims."[806]

It should be possible to deal carefully with the insuperability of such dilemmas by drawing sensitively and responsibly on both indigenous and modernist knowledge-making to tackle contemporary African problems. Conversely, a parallel appropriation can be applied in reverse, for African insights may well help to solve problems in the wider context of the global North. But controversy abounds on whether indigenous/traditional African knowledge is sufficiently critical, dialectical and therefore philosophical enough to address complex contemporary problems. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, numerous African political, social and moral philosophers asserted the relevance of indigenous African thought to a more humane and ecologically sensitive global development trajectory. Moreover, the Beninese neo-marxist Paulin Hountondji contends that it is essential to unite the best of European thought with the best of indigenous African thought. He believes that this can be done without "making an absolute of the internal rationality of these traditions." For him, it makes very good sense to explore African traditions not merely for personal edification "or justification, but in order to help us meet the challenges and problems of today."[807] The Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu is another who argues that Africans should feel free to appropriate valuable ideas from any culture, East or West, that in combination with "indigenous philosophical resources" can address contemporary issues effectively.[808]

Wiredu's approach is sound, and extremely important for countering the prevailing hegemony of neoliberalism. Building on his culturally open stance, an attempt is made later in the chapter to bring indigenous African ethical thought into a conversation with global materialist feminist ideas. The rationale for this particular dialogue is twofold. Women across the world, and indigenous peoples in the global South, each experience remarkably comparable forms of marginalization, disempowerment and exploitation under the international capitalist economic regime. Both groupings have been constructed as inferior to the ostensibly universal norm of the Western man. In each case, social diminishment by race or gender is believed to be justified by the subject's limited capacity for rationality. In fact, both groups are considered 'closer to nature,' and thus their labors have been exploited freely

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[806] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), xiv.

[807] Paulin Hountondji, "Reason and Tradition," in *Philosophy and Cultures*, eds. Henry Odera Oruka and Dismas A. Masolo (Nairobi: Bookwise, 1983), 242-243.

[808] Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 153.

as natural resources in the process of capital accumulation. Institutionalized racism and sexism creates 'others' as less than fully human, objects to be overseen and guided by a master. Women writing on the ecological dimensions of feminism have made a particularly important contribution, by demonstrating the ideological common ground between the exploitation of nature, of women and of indigenes as resources, and challenging such exploitation. The second rationale for treating indigenous and womanist perspectives together is that both reflect the practical attainment of life-affirming reproductive or meta-industrial skills.

However, the advocates of postcolonial and feminist politics have not often recognized the significance of such convergencies. Initially, women developed a feminist movement in the belief that emancipation hinges on becoming as economically and professionally powerful as their erstwhile capitalist patriarchal oppressors. Finding themselves in a comparably subjugated position, indigenous peoples equated black liberation with mainstream forms of economic and professional empowerment. At the same time, radical counter-modernist political identities were formulated, as exemplified in the Negritude movement and in cultural feminism. Ecological feminism and the African ethic of *ubuntu* constitute a further phase in this unfolding consciousness, moving to a materially grounded stance that is politically reconstructive. The global neoliberal project is refused on account of the human and environmental exploitation it entails, and contemporary Africanist philosophers valorize

- embodied knowing;
- relational livelihood and personhood; and
- human embeddedness and dependency on nature.

Ecofeminism overlaps with *ubuntu* insofar as it emphasizes

- non-dualistic logic;
- caring and subsistence labor; and
- material embodiment of humans within nature.

These resonances between the indigenous African ethic and ecological feminism speak to the fact that both are sociologically positioned to recognize the material limits of natural resources. Ecofeminist actions are carried out by ordinary care-giving women who have to discern contrived wants from "everyday needs," and who accordingly develop "an intimate biocentric understanding of how people's survival links in to the future of the planet at large."[809] That is, although women are encouraged to participate fully in consumer culture,

[809] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 17.

ecological feminists argue that the household care-giving labor which most women engage in for at least part of their lives, is simply incompatible with a narcissistic individualist consumer ethic. Like subsistence-based indigenous peoples, the knowledge base of care-giving women is "materially embodied" and relational.[810]

In terms of social theory, this process of engaging in transversal analysis helps guard against the pitfall of thematizing either ecological feminism or the indigenous African ethic of *ubuntu* as an uncritical exercise in 'identity politics.' To explain: the American feminist philosopher Nancy Fraser famously argued that identity politics uses the ostensible uniqueness of a social perspective with the aim of achieving political recognition. Fraser saw this practice leading participants "to drastically simplify and reify group identities,"[811] overlooking the need for distributive economic justice and refraining from interacting with others, even to the point of xenophobia.[812] However, Fraser's liberal pluralist dilemma suggests that humans live only in a world of ideas. The first premise of a materialist ecofeminism is the sociological interlock of all dominations – gender, race, class, and species. Moreover, this movement advocates the global indispensability of reproductive labors and communal care giving regardless of gender, race or class.[813] As Ariel Salleh points out, the traits required for our common "collective emancipation … represent natural human capacities which have not been historically objectified and valued in the formation of an oppressively specular and exclusively 'masculine' culture."[814] In this critical realist vein, "it is crucial to rediscover, revalue and reintegrate in culture these hitherto neglected dimensions of experience if a real social alternative is to be made."[815] Likewise, the indigenous African ethic of *ubuntu*, as formulated currently, does not involve uncritical simplification, because it is acknowledged as a normative framework based on values shared among various sub-Saharan indigenous peoples.[816] Furthermore, *ubuntu* thinkers reject outright any traditions condoning

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[810] Ibid.

[811] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition," *New Left Review* 3 (May/June 2000): 108.

[812] Ibid., 107, 110-112.

[813] Mary Mellor, "Eco-Feminism and Eco-Socialism: Dilemmas of Essentialism and Materialism," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 3/2 (1992): 48, 53.

[814] Ariel K. Salleh, "Contribution to the Critique of Political Epistemology," *Thesis Eleven* 8 (1984): 35.

[815] Ibid., 39.

[816] Thaddeus Metz and Joseph B. R. Gaie, "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho*: Implications for Research on Morality," *Journal of Moral Education* 39/3 (September 2010): 274.

physical or psychological abuse.[817] The *ubuntu* ethic is underpinned by a logic of sharing, which condemns privileging individual gains over the common good. Finally, insofar as the ethic of *ubuntu* stresses the dignity of others regardless of ethnic identification, emphasizes that to be fully human one must help others, and prioritizes human interdependence, it cannot be said to foster insularity or xenophobia. Indeed, when placing the indigenous African ethic in dialogue with ecological feminism, the universally life-affirming politics of each transcends and unifies postcolonial, gender, and environmental concerns.

The threatened status of indigenous African knowledge

Chapter 4 of this thesis considered the loss of South African indigenous autonomy, particularly from the 1800s onward. Emphasis fell on how colonial authorities and missionaries sought to legitimate imperialist behaviors by demeaning indigenous peoples for their supposed irrationality and deficient beliefs and practices. This placed Europeans in an ideologically superior position, as ‘possessors of rationality’ and true beliefs required for effective governance. Aristotle, in fact, was one of the first to hierarchize humans in his discussion of the scale of nature or Great Chain of Being. This schema graded all living creatures from invertebrates to humans, and argued that climate generates temperamental and physical differences of ability between the races. Aristotle’s theorizations were not explicitly racist, but they were appropriated in this way by the Romans. The latter knew the importance of deeming other races inferior, as this allowed them to frame slavery and imperial expansion as ethically unproblematic. The colonized peoples were considered ‘naturally’ lesser beings, in need of the rule of Roman law.[818] Racist ideology has been employed in efforts to justify domination ever since, and the racial imaginary was entrenched fully in Eurocentric thought by the eighteenth century. This is affirmed in the attitude of G. W. F. Hegel, who deemed the Western Christian tradition the most advanced.[819] Philosopher David Hume supported racist

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[817] Ibid., 280; Daniel A. Bell and Thaddeus Metz, “Confucianism and *Ubuntu*: Reflections on a Dialogue between Chinese and African Traditions,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38 (2011): 81; and Dismas A. Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 105, 108.

[818] Joseph L. Graves Jr., *The Emperor’s New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 18.

[819] Philip J. Kain, *Hegel and the Other: A Study of the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 246.

claims with his view that no eminent individuals had emerged from among 'non-whites.'[820] Immanuel Kant also held an explicitly hierarchical view of the races.[821] The contemporary American philosopher Lee Brown is quite correct to point out that these attitudes, particularly given the prominence of their bearers, "helped fuel racialism and served to marginalize any intellectual activity by those of obvious African descent." Popular stereotypes of the 'irrational animal' and 'backward civilizations' went unquestioned, despite the fact that "there is no causal link between the amount of melanin in an individual's body and in the ability of an individual … to engage in abstract reasoning."[822] Small wonder, then, that nineteenth- and twentieth-century missionaries and authorities perpetuated the vision of the colonizer as having *logos* while "conced[ing] only *mythos* to the colonized."[823] The colonized were not, in this view, seen as capable of governing themselves or rationally calculating what is best for them. This gave Europeans the ostensible "'right' to invade" their territories and to control them.[824] The myth that the African is 'animal and not properly human,' grew in momentum. As ecofeminists point out, women likewise were accorded a status as 'closer to nature.' Ironically, by according pure reason to themselves, Western men were the ones operating in terms of *mythos* – in this case the myth of rational superiority based on skin color or body form.

Be that as it may, ethnophilosophers who began writing about traditional African societies in the first half of the twentieth century, aligned themselves with, rather than against, the indigenous peoples. Many of them remained guilty of assuming that African thought is "pre-reflective."[825] The Belgian missionary Placide Tempels propagated the view that Africans possess an ontology centered on 'vital forces' arrayed in hierarchical fashion, that could be augmented or diminished and that inhered in all life forms. He contrasted this ontology with European ideas of 'being' and 'existence,'[826] and indicated that unlike Western belief systems such as Christianity, African beliefs were never really subject to

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[820] Andrew Valls, "'A Lousy Empirical Scientist': Reconsidering Hume's Racism," in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Valls (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 129-130.

[821] Robert Bernasconi, "Kant's Third Thoughts on Race," in *Reading Kant's Geography*, eds. Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 291.

[822] Lee M. Brown, Introduction to *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, ed. Lee M. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

[823] Mogobe B. Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," *Dialogue and Universalism* 1-2 (2002): 27.

[824] Ibid., 29.

[825] Barry Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 51.

[826] Samuel Oluoch Imbo, *An Introduction to African Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 78-79.

systematization, critical reflection or the demand for proof.[827] Further, he argued, it was the job of non-Africans to properly systematize African beliefs:

> We do not claim … that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is *our* job to proceed to such systematic development. It is *we* who will be able to tell them, in precise terms, what their inmost concept of being is. They will *recognize themselves in our words* and will acquiesce, saying, "You understand us: you now know us completely, you 'know' in the way we 'know.'"[828]

Other ethnophilosophers, such as Marcel Griaule who chronicled knowledge of the Dogon elder Ogotemmêli, disputed such ethnocentric claims by demonstrating, for instance, that Africans do possess a philosophical vocabulary and systematize their thought.[829] Even so, for contemporary African philosophers such as Paulin Hountondji, generally speaking the 'apologetic' literature of ethnophilosophy hardly improved on the knowledge produced on Africa by missionaries and colonial authorities. The fact was that they all treated indigenous traditional societies "as a voiceless face under private observation, an object to be defined and not the subject of possible discourse."[830] Further, Hountondji agrees with Aimé Césaire that works such as Tempels's were actually politically debilitating: that attention to so-called Bantu philosophy was a diversionary tactic drawing attention away from the fact of colonial exploitation.[831] As Césaire suggests, Tempels's ethnophilosophy was surreptitiously propagating sentiments that condoned indigenous exploitation, such as the following:

> Since Bantu thought is ontological, the Bantu only ask for satisfaction of an ontological nature. Decent wages! Comfortable housing! Food! These Bantus are pure spirits, I tell you: 'What they desire first of all and above all is not the improvement of their economic or material situation, but the white man's recognition of and respect for their dignity as men, their full human value.' In short, you tip your hat to

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[827] Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), 8.

[828] Emphasis added. Ibid., 36.

[829] Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy*, 14-15. Here, Hallen discusses Griaule's seminal work, *Conversations with Ogotemmêli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[830] Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 34.

[831] Paulin J. Hountondji, "An Alienated Literature," in *The African Philosophy Reader: A Text with Readings*, 2d ed., eds. P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (London: Routledge, 2005), 149-150.

> the Bantu vital force, you give a wink to the immortal Bantu soul. And that's all it costs you! You have to admit you're getting off cheap![832]

In view of this, it is quite understandable why Hountondji and others criticize ethnophilosophy. He contends that such writing merely fed "the curiosity and other intellectual and even non-intellectual needs of Western readership,"[833] and helped colonial authorities to subject, impoverish and mute indigenous populations. Further, he condemns ethnophilosophy for its gross oversimplification of African traditions, which strengthened racist ideas concerning the 'primitiveness' of Africans. That is, the ethnophilosophical assumption of 'unanimism,' according to which "everyone agrees with everyone" in African cultures, entirely eclipsed the plurality and complexity of traditional African societies.[834] According to Hountondji, this same oversimplifying tendency is unfortunately also evidenced in home-grown anthropological theorizations of their countrymen. These scholars are for the most part entirely "*co-opted* into a Western, or West-centered discussion" while "[t]he rank-and-file of the people remain excluded" from this discourse.[835]

However, Hountondji's sustained attack on ethnophilosophy for ignoring the plurality and complexity of traditional African societies, does not imply that he grants indigenous knowledge the status of philosophy proper. Rather controversially, he argues that there was no such thing as African philosophy until around the middle of the twentieth century, when intellectuals of African ethnic and geographical origin began writing down critical reflections on philosophical problems. Somewhat ironically, for Hountondji, indigenous knowledge is not philosophy because it is oral rather than written. The critical reflection that one can exercise on a written text is not possible to exercise upon an oral tradition. The latter favors fundamentalism: "the consolidation of knowledge into dogmatic, intangible systems," leaving "the mind … too preoccupied with *preserving* knowledge to find freedom to *criticize* it."[836] Hountondji also maintains that philosophy is scientific, and this precludes any 'artistic' works such as traditional "fables, legends, myths, proverbs, biographies, autobiographies, etc., [which] are 'literary' genres in the ordinary sense of the word."[837] These works are not mere

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[832] Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 58-59.

[833] Paulin J. Hountondji, "Knowledge as a Development Issue," in *A Companion to African Philosophy*, eds. Kwasi Wiredu, William E. Abraham, Abiola Irele and Ifeanyi A. Menkiti (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 530.

[834] Ibid., 530-531.

[835] Ibid., 531.

[836] Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, 103.

[837] Ibid., 82.

"wordplay" to him, but not serious modes of critical philosophical reflection either. They are relatively autonomous, independent of specific historical facts, and not dialectical in the sense that a philosophical work is. In contrast, argues Hountondji, a truly philosophical work constitutes only a momentary part of a continuing debate concerning a specific issue or experience, and involves the dialectical process of "refer[ring] to antecedent positions, either to refute them or to confirm and enrich them."[838] Hountondji has been criticized for so rigidly delimiting the 'philosophical.' However, even his critics have been forced to look very circumspectly at indigenous African knowledge.

Hountondji has forced Africans to assess the philosophical value of indigenous knowledge, and to recognize in the process that it cannot simply be retrieved from obscurity and revived as is.[839] However, the Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka objects that although "[w]riting is a good way to store thought, and so to store philosophy," "philosophy is thinking, and one can think even if one is incapable of or has no facilities for writing."[840] Others, such as the American philosopher Richard Bell, criticize Hountondji for insisting on writing as a philosophical criterion while regarding Socrates – a non-writer – as philosopher *par excellence*.[841] Oruka, in addition, identifies and elaborates on the thought of selected sages who, rather than espousing dogma "possess the philosophic inclination," undertaking "a critical assessment of their culture and its underlying beliefs."[842] The Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye similarly emphasizes the value of Akan proverbs as products of "acute speculative intellects." The proverbs "become philosophically interesting when one sees them as attempts to raise and answer questions relating to the assumptions underlying commonly held beliefs and make a synthetic interpretation of human experience."[843] Kwasi Wiredu, most notably in his *Philosophy and an African Culture*, likewise emphasizes the importance of appreciating the philosophical aspects underlying "folk thought."[844] Yet, at the same time, Wiredu stresses the need to redirect energies away from an exclusive focus on "search[ing]

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[838] Ibid., 83.

[839] Hountondji, "An Alienated Literature," 147.

[840] Henry Odera Oruka, Introduction to *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, ed. Henry Odera Oruka (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), xxii.

[841] Richard H. Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 32.

[842] Henry Odera Oruka, "Philosophic Sagacity in African Philosophy," in *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, ed. Henry Odera Oruka (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 45.

[843] Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 21.

[844] Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), ix.

for the correct conception of African philosophy." His advice is to "get along with the task … of modern philosophical thinking" by actively addressing the problems of today.[845] In all these criticisms, emphasis comes to rest on the critical value and contemporary applicability of aspects of indigenous African knowledge. This casts doubt on the legitimacy of Hountondji's rejection of indigenous knowledge as unphilosophical *tout court*.

A final controversy concerning African culture centers on the apparent differences between 'universalistic' and 'particularist' currents. Wiredu and Oruka have been identified as proponents of the universalistic approach. This entails understanding philosophy as "both (i) a fundamental outlook on human life and nature in general and (ii) a critical evaluation of what is given in one's cultural and natural environment."[846] Others, such as Hountondji, have been identified as proponents of a more particularist current. This is exemplified in his argument that something is philosophical only if it constitutes a specific response to a particular event taking place at a certain time. A properly philosophical work, therefore, is "intelligible only as a moment in a debate that sustains and transcends it."[847] To proponents of the particularist current, African philosophy must be "more closely bound to the political struggles and intellectual history of contemporary Africa."[848] It must avoid the universalistic tendency by becoming ever more endogenous, both in content and in the audience it seeks to address. To clarify, for Hountondji "[t]heoretical discourse is undoubtedly a good thing … [but] in present-day Africa we must at all costs address it first and foremost to our fellow countrymen, and offer it for the appreciation and discussion of Africans themselves."[849]

Even so, Hountondji himself cites Aimé Césaire's argument that one can lose oneself either through "dilution in the 'universal'" or "fragmentation in the particular."[850] This makes any absolute privileging of either the 'universal' or the 'particular' problematic to say the least. Perhaps a more sensible approach, suggested by the African American philosopher Stephen Ferguson, involves accepting that there is actually no contradiction between the two and that they are both inseparable and reciprocal. That

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[845] Ibid., xi.

[846] Henry Odera Oruka, *Practical Philosophy: In Search of an Ethical Minimum* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1997), 171.

[847] Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, 83.

[848] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 28.

[849] Hountondji, "An Alienated Literature," 156.

[850] Aimé Césaire, *Lettre à Maurice Thorez*, 1956, cited in Paulin J. Hountondji, "An Alienated Literature," in *The African Philosophy Reader: A Text with Readings*, 2d ed., eds. P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (London: Routledge, 2005), 147.

> [t]he truth of particularity resides in its dialectical relationship to universality. Though particularity and universality are distinct categories, they must of logical necessity be seen as a pair. The relationship of particularity to universality is not an either/or proposition. Hence the call for particularity is not merely an act of transferring the citadel of philosophy from Mt. Olympus to Mt. Kenya, but a recognition that world philosophy is not located [exclusively] in Europe.[851]

In what follows, this line of reasoning is adopted to argue for the global relevance of aspects of indigenous African knowledge that counter mainstream modernist Western thought. The latter is underpinned by dualistic constructions, hyper-individualism, and the socially and environmentally disembedded imperative of economic competition. The aim of this chapter is to affirm that indigenous African knowledge – given greater philosophical coherence by contemporary Africanist thinkers – can be used to formulate an ethical alternative to neocolonization. This is because indigenous knowledge centers on embodied knowing not dualistic divisiveness; a relational personhood not narcissistic gender identities; and human community and dependence on nature. Not rivalrous exploitation of others and the environment. An embodied communitarian African philosophy is now, more than ever before, globally relevant, and resonates with the alternative visions of care-giving, meta-industrial labor – those people marginalized in conventional theorizations of labor yet exploited in the global economy. These alternative perspectives must be taken seriously and brought into play within the global North and the South alike, given the current pervasiveness and power of neoliberal ideology.

Ubuntu

Africa has a multiplicity of philosophies and cultures. Because of this, Richard Bell has identified any talk of a "singular" African philosophy as a "stumbling block," and as involving nothing less than "the chasing of a chimera."[852] In speaking of 'African philosophy' or an 'African moral theory,' it is important to remain sensitive to diversity and cautious of the trap of essentialism or uncritical universalism. For example, the Africanist thinker Thaddeus Metz and Botswanan philosopher Joseph Gaie admit that "one is expected to note the diversity of the continent, with more than 50 countries and at least several hundred ethnic groups and languages," but they contend that it is still necessary to treat "underrepresented

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[851] Stephen C. Ferguson II, "Philosophy in Africa and the African Diaspora," in *The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy*, eds. Jay L. Garfield and William Edelglass (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 462.

[852] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 42.

ideas from below the Sahara desert" in a unified manner, given the need for a powerfully coherent alternative ethic on a global scale. They believe this approach to be fairly unproblematic, since the ideas treated are those held in common by many indigenous African cultures.[853] In their article "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho*," Metz and Gaie adopt this approach by discussing several strands of traditional African moral thought under the unifying rubric of 'Afro-communitarianism.'[854] Their aim is to provide "a theoretical reconstruction of themes that are recurrent among many peoples below the Sahara desert and particularly in southern Africa."[855] In another paper Metz follows this same method by exploring *ubuntu* as an African moral theory. Through constructing a normative ethical theory on the basis of commonly held traditional values, argues Metz, it may be possible to situate *ubuntu* as a compelling alternative to mainstream moral frameworks,[856] which problematically prioritize possessive individualism.

In fact, the importance of legitimating indigenous ethical thought is evidenced by the South African philosopher Mogobe Ramose's censuring of Metz, for claiming that no one has made a concerted effort to analyze and formulate a normative African ethical model. To counter this claim, Ramose cites the work of both Kwasi Wiredu and the Congolese theologian Benezet Bujo, who had done such systematizing work.[857] All of these philosophers – Metz included – though differing in approach and sometimes antagonistic toward one another, contribute to clarifying an indigenous ethic diametrically opposed to the neoliberal mores. The following discussion, while drawing on these figures, contributes further

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[853] Metz and Gaie, "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho*," 274.

[854] Ibid., 273.

[855] Ibid., 277. Mogobe Ramose accepts a similar geographic demarcation for his discussion of African/Bantu philosophy of law. Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 81-82.

[856] Thaddeus Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory: Reply to Four Critics," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 26/4 (2007): 373. See also Thaddeus Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 15/3 (2007): 321-341. Metz likely follows Indian literary theorist Gayatri Spivak here, who promotes "strategic use of essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 205. To clarify, Spivak supports minority groups' employment of seemingly essentialist claims to gain a unified voice and so achieve recognition – provided that the resultant "identity does not then get fixed as an essential category by a dominant group." Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 75.

[857] Mogobe B. Ramose, "But Hans Kelsen Was Not Born in Africa: A Reply to Thaddeus Metz," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 26/4 (2007): 348-349, 351. In reply to Ramose's criticism, Metz stresses that he does acknowledge the work of Wiredu and Bujo, but distances himself particularly from Bujo's "primary aim," because it is underpinned by a Christian cosmology while Metz's intention is to develop a normative, "explicitly secular" ethical theory. Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory," 377-378.

coherence to the alternative indigenous ethic of *ubuntu* by identifying and elaborating on three interlocking principles central to it, namely embodied knowing, relational livelihood and personhood, and human embeddedness and dependency on nature.

Embodied knowing

Dualistic conceptions of the human being and of existence more generally, can be traced back to ancient Greece. Among others, Plato indicated a vast chasm between essence and truth on the one hand, and the appearances and routines of everyday life on the other. Such disembodied, non-relational thought was perpetuated through the Judeo-Christian tradition which unequivocally split mind from body, making the true self or identity ultimately independent of physical existence. Here, identity encompassed in the soul is not lost at the death of the body. The French physicist, mathematician and philosopher René Descartes promoted this idea of "substance dualism" in his famous dictum, *cogito, ergo sum* – 'I think, therefore I am.' Descartes virtually severed the relation between mind and body, associating "mind with thinking substance, and body with extended substance."[858] In his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), he indicated that his argument for 'substance dualism' supports the Christian belief in an afterlife:

> Now the first and most important prerequisite for knowledge of the immortality of the soul is for us to form a concept of the soul which is as clear as possible and is also quite distinct from every concept of body … [W]e cannot understand a body except as being divisible, while by contrast we cannot understand a mind except as being indivisible. For we cannot conceive of half a mind, while we can always conceive of half of a body, however small; and this leads us to recognize that the natures of mind and body are not only different, but in some way opposite … [T]hese arguments are enough to show that the decay of the body does not imply the destruction of the mind, and are hence enough to give mortals the hope of an after-life.[859]

On the basis of such arguments Descartes became regarded as the father of dualistic thought, and there followed the formulation of even more mechanistic dualisms. Dualistic constructs such as *logos*/*mythos*, reason/emotion, man/woman, civilized/savage, and man/nature,

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[858] Tad M. Schmaltz, "Descartes and Cartesianism," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought: Intellectual, Spiritual, and Moral Horizons of Christianity*, eds. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 160.

[859] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13: 10.

likewise generate the illusion of difference, distance and independence of 'thinking man' from his 'other' – woman, indigene, animal, and all the biological and ecological processes that constitute life. Adapting an argument made by Maria Mies, and by the American ecofeminist theologian Elizabeth Dodson Gray in *Green Paradise Lost*, the economist Julie Nelson pairs the dualisms of living consciousness versus inert material, and economic versus moral. She notes that the latter leaves "[m]orality … to the humanists, while mainstream economists pursue 'objective' study based on an assumed analogy between economic 'laws' … and the 'laws' of physical science."[860] This creates a superficial separation of capitalist patriarchal processes from their material fallout in the form of social discrimination and environmental destruction. Contemporary African philosophers have shown the sinister operation of dualistic thought in the colonial subjection of Africans and destruction of their traditions and livelihoods. They also have gone some way toward highlighting the bad fit of dualistic economic thinking to daily life. As Valentin-Yves Mudimbe summarizes, the colonizing structure, "a dichotomizing system … emerged, and along with it a great number of … paradigmatic oppositions … developed: traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed … subsistence economics versus highly productive economies" – all of which "trivializ[ed] the whole traditional mode of life and its spiritual framework."[861]

Kwasi Wiredu problematizes the hegemony of substance dualism more systematically than any other African thinker. He argues that the Western body/mind split "presupposes a mode of conceptualization that ill-coheres with traditional African thought habits which are frequently empirical." [862] For Wiredu, while contemporary Africans certainly discuss existential matters in dualistic ways, this is more than likely indicative of their uncritical embrace of Christian patterns of thought.[863] It must be noted that the European philosophical community, particularly the British empiricists John Locke, David Hume and their intellectual descendants, fiercely contested Descartes's rationalism. Yet, the dualistic thrust of his thought was taken up in the dominant ideology, particularly since it gave credibility to the Christian faith and served to legitimate colonization of 'lesser' heathen races. Many indigenous/traditional African perspectives conflicted with Christian cosmology. For

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[860] Julie A. Nelson, "How Did 'the Moral' Get Split from 'the Economic'?," in *Toward a Feminist Philosophy of Economics*, eds. Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper (London: Routledge, 2003), 135.

[861] Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 17.

[862] Kwasi Wiredu, "African Philosophy, Anglophone," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1998), 102.

[863] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 151; and Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 125.

example, in contrast to the dualistic Christian position that the spirits of the deceased, and god himself, reside somewhere 'beyond' the Earth, in the Akan conceptual scheme as well as that of the Central Luo spirits remain immanent in quasi-physical form.[864] Such beliefs compelled adherents to live ethically and with reverence for the ancestors on this Earth, rather than fixating on some heavenly plenitude beyond it. In Wiredu and other African arguments against substance dualism, emphasis falls on the strongly material inclinations of African village societies. There "the spirit-body divide has always been suspect," "embodied grounds of knowledge" are prioritized, and

> the village stands for an original point of departure in epistemic matters, and … in it, we find the anchor for the settled belief in the obduracy of bodies; the unavoidable fact of a physical universe that is confronted day in and day out by one and all.[865]

Indigenous African thought does contain "metaphysical or magico-religious speculation" on existential matters, but favors materialism.[866] This frustrated Christian missionaries terribly. As the Kenyan philosopher Dismas Masolo explains, missionaries admonished the Luo for insisting that their dead go to *piny*, a realm within the compass of the Earth. This idea was demonized and the Luo instead were taught the law of substance dualism – that that their dead go to *polo malo* – "above" to the heavens.[867]

Such indigenous African perspectives suggest a far more pragmatic, embodied stance on matters of life and death than that entailed in the missionary framework. Ironically though, it was the Africans who were deemed lacking in *logos* and being in possession of *mythos* alone. According to Mogobe Ramose, the *logos/mythos* dualism was used to frame the African as a savage. It was posited that the African is "defective in its ontology, that is, a being without reason;" the African "cannot qualify as a human being."[868] Armed with such

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[864] Dismas A. Masolo, "The Concept of the Person in Luo Modes of Thought," in *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, ed. Lee M. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91.

[865] Ifeanyi A. Menkiti, "Physical and Metaphysical Understanding: Nature, Agency, and Causation in African Traditional Thought," in *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, ed. Lee M. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 124-126.

[866] Lebisa J. Teffo and Abraham P. J. Roux, "Metaphysical Thinking in Africa," in *The African Philosophy Reader: A Text with Readings*, 2d ed., eds. P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (London: Routledge, 2005), 196.

[867] Masolo, "The Concept of the Person in Luo Modes of Thought," 88-89.

[868] Mogobe B. Ramose, "I Doubt, Therefore African Philosophy Exists," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 22/2 (2003): 116.

reasoning, colonial authorities gave themselves the "'right' to invade,"[869] and gave missionaries the right to convert, without ever running the risk of being accused of dehumanizing Africans as they were not thought properly human to begin with. With rare insight, Ramose contends that the same line of reasoning was used to justify European men's discrimination against women, similarly regarded as incapable of the rational calculation required for self-governance.[870] Mudimbe, in his turn, points out that this perspective indicated the colonists' own shortcomings. They "postulate[d] … a clear distinction between prelogism and Cartesianism, primitiveness and civilization," yet failed to realize that their dualistic thinking constituted "a refusal to face and think the implicit, the unthought … negated in their own cultural experience by the sovereignty of a history which was a mystifying socialization of the *cogito*."[871] They proved incapable of recognizing aspects of humanness denied within their hyper-rationalist framework, indicating their own limited reflexivity rather than any on the part of Africans abroad or women at home.

The colonizing mindset produced further 'evidence' for the African lack of *logos* and civilization by advancing that, just like women, 'natives' became too emotionally involved in matters. This placed both indigenes and women on the negative side of the reason versus emotion dualism. Emotional judgment and an ethic of care were fundamental to both groupings in their approach to social interaction and decision making, and in fact, this usually involved rational calculation as well. A very masculine gendered fear of emotionality and care made both of these 'othered' groupings highly suspect to those trained to disdain everything but coldly objective, instrumental rationality. The Senegalese cultural theorist Léopold Senghor provides important criticism of this highly schooled rationalism. He indicates that it is always imparted in combination with the injunction to "distrust the imagination and particularly the emotions: everything that distracted or beguiled rational thought."[872] Admittedly, under the auspices of the Negritude movement, Senghor tended to essentialize "[e]motive sensitivity" as a distinctly black/African characteristic.[873] In contrast, some of his contemporaries, such as the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, saw it rather as an attitude

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[869] Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," 29.

[870] Ibid., 28; and Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 1, 6, 15.

[871] Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, 203.

[872] Léopold Senghor, "The Revolution of 1889 and Leo Frobenius," in *Africa and the West: The Legacies of Empire*, eds. Isaac J. Mowoe and Richard Bjornson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 78.

[873] Léopold Senghor, cited in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 106.

that anyone can adopt toward the world.[874] More recently, materialist ecofeminists have recognized empathy to be learned through the labors of caring for bodies and for environmental nature. Senghor's contribution remains important within African philosophical thought. Perhaps most notable is his argument that emotion is a "manner of thinking" or "way of knowing,"[875] which should not be seen as inferior to reason. *Ubuntu* theorist Mogobe Ramose corroborates this, arguing that "African philosophy … [does] not subscribe to the radical opposition between reason and emotion," and that "[u]nderstanding thought as a system means recognising it as a whole-ness which includes not only the indivisibility but also the mutual dependence of the 'rational' and the 'emotional.'"[876] The Afro-French philosopher Frantz Fanon, in his admittedly vitriolic *Black Skin, White Masks*, suggests that the indigenous African schema, precisely because it is not dominated by dualistic thought patterns, allows a person to be "in the world," thus affirming "the bond between Man and the Earth."[877] Senghor, Ramose and others problematize dualistic constructions and reframe the emotional response as part of proper judgment taking place within an ecologically embedded social world. Through doing so, they draw attention to the shortsightedness of the reason versus emotion dualism, and they reveal the false split "between the rational mind and the disorderly life of the body and the emotions."[878] Feelings, intuitions, and the other senses,[879] no less than the 'rational' and the visual, form part of human being and human interaction with others and the world. So language is often incapable of expressing what a person experiences or even what they communicate to another. As the Dutch Africanist philosopher Bert Hamminga explains, when shaking someone's hand

> you should feel this hand carefully … [as t]he hand speaks. You should 'hear' it. And one might need pages of words to write what some hand sometimes said. The body speaks … [and] learning to speak with your body is *at least* as demanding as learning to speak with your mouth and vocal cords.[880]

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[874] See Jean-Paul Sartre, "Black Orpheus," in *Race*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 115-142.

[875] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 95.

[876] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 94.

[877] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 106.

[878] Michael Jackson and Ivan Karp, Introduction to *Personhood and Agency: The Experience of Self and Other in African Cultures*, eds. Michael Jackson and Ivan Karp (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1990), 17.

[879] Bert Hamminga, "Language, Reality and Truth: The African Point of View," in *Knowledge Cultures: Comparative Western and African Epistemology*, ed. Bert Hamminga (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 101.

[880] Ibid., 99.

The masculinist, disembodied, hyper-rationalist approach to life reflected in the celebrated contributions of Western thinkers like Plato, Descartes, and Sir Francis Bacon no less, is readily apparent in capitalist, colonial and missionary discourses, and now neoliberal ideology as well. The American ecofeminist philosopher Carolyn Merchant, in her celebrated historical work *The Death of Nature*, identified an intimate connection between the rise of abstract, disembodied thought particularly as it manifests in Western science, and the emergence of the capitalist state.[881] French philosopher Pierre Hadot, acknowledging Merchant's work, reflects on Francis Bacon's vision of a scientific establishment where nature is mimicked and experimented upon and overcome, just like a shackled woman.[882] He argues that "this project of dominating nature" led scientists to conceive the physical world as exploitable matter,[883] and this kind of thinking became pervasive in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. As Hadot puts it, "from the time production began to be industrialized and the flourishing of technology became universal … man's relation to nature was gradually modified in depth."[884] Through dualistic constructions, neoliberal pundits justify the exploitation of the majority of the world's population and natural resources for the sake of enriching the select few. Dualistic thinking invites some humans to conceive of themselves as independent of 'nature' rather than as part thereof. The capitalist patriarchal hegemony would have them forget that they too, are organisms needing healthy physical environments. As the British ecofeminist Mary Mellor explains it, the contemporary system

> has cut itself free from the ecological and social framework of human *being* in its widest sense. Its ideal is 'economic man,' who may also be female. Economic man … has no responsibility for the life-cycle of those goods or services [he consumes] any more than he questions the source of the air he breathes or the disposal of his excreta … 'Economic man' is the product of an ahistoric, atomised approach to the understanding of human existence.[885]

In contrast, an indigenous African ethic, taking as its inspiration lived dependencies and reciprocities integral to traditional village life, is rooted in a materialist and thus a highly

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[881] Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper, [1980] 1990).

[882] Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 121.

[883] Ibid., 123.

[884] Ibid., 137.

[885] Mary Mellor, "Ecofeminist Political Economy and the Politics of Money," in *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology*, ed. Ariel Salleh (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 254.

relational standpoint. This grounded ethic affirms a holistic vision of human be-ing, with the consequence that social relations and human ecological interdependence become primary in the conception of personhood. The ontological project of becoming a person through others, is diametrically opposed to the pursuit of narcissistic and rivalrous consumer masculinities and femininities under neoliberalism.

Relational livelihood and personhood

The Ghanaian-American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that "[o]ne of the reasons people act the way they do is because they have the theories of the person that they do."[886] Within neoliberal societies, people are encouraged to understand and fashion themselves in reference to consumer competence and artificially exalted gender identities. For those who are gendered men, this feeds back into a cycle of economic one-upmanship. But the pervasive gendering of young women as sexual objects equally calls them to act in egocentric, narcissistic and self-regarding ways. Africanist thinkers suggest that an indigenous African understanding of personhood radically contrasts with this neoliberal hegemony and its atomization of the individual. This implies that indigenous people who harbor or adopt an alternative conception of personhood are likely to act very differently to 'the Western model.' The same can be said of people in other parts of the world, whose alternative value systems contrast with neoliberal mores, and so inspire entirely different approaches to life.

In terms of an indigenous African ethic, personhood is not something that one has by virtue of being a *homo sapiens*. Instead, it is carefully qualified in reference to ethical conduct. Mogobe Ramose explains that while being a *homo sapiens* "is an existential datum, personhood is a title conferred upon this datum,"[887] and one only achieves such personhood or "humanness through and together with other human beings."[888] This rich conception of personhood is summed up in the ethical maxim *motho ke motho ka batho* – 'one attains humanity through others.' Kwasi Wiredu similarly emphasizes that personhood or humanness is not innate to the human being, but acquired through social interaction involving a reciprocal

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[886] Kwame A. Appiah, "Akan and Euro-American Concepts of the Person," in *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, ed. Lee M. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 31.

[887] Mogobe B. Ramose, 'Reply to Bewaji and Van Binsbergen,' in John A. I. Bewaji and Mogobe B. Ramose, "The Bewaji, Van Binsbergen and Ramose Debate on *Ubuntu*," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 22/4 (2003): 413.

[888] Mogobe B. Ramose, "The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy," *Journal of Moral Education* 39/3 (2010): 300.

process of obligation. He insists that "a human being deprived of the socializing influence of communication will remain human biologically, but mentally is bound to be subhuman."[889] He goes on to argue, in a supremely ecological relational way, that "no human society or community is possible without communication, for a community is not just an aggregation of individuals existing as windowless monads."[890] Wiredu suggests that humanness derives from social relations and the duties associated with it. This materialist claim counters any masculinist idea that humanness is underpinned by rationality alone, which would abstract "the essence of humanness wholly from any tradition, language or culture."[891] Most indigenous African understandings envisage the development of humanness through interaction with others, through work, through the sharing of ideas, and through fulfilling our obligations.[892] This is an ethical endeavor impossible in the absence of social participation. Given this, personhood depends on contributing to the physical survival of others; and their willingness to participate in one's own ethical growth.[893] Accordingly, an indigenous conception of personhood, as Dismas Masolo argues, is "grounded in the empirical fragility of human biology, which requires of the person a great degree of dependency on the specific and deliberate actions of other members of the species in order to grow, develop, and flourish."[894] This suggests a nurturant attitude akin to that promoted by care ethicists and ecofeminists – and indeed Mary Mellor speaks of women's labor as putting in "biological time."[895] In the West, care-giving activities have been treated as the province of women, remaining unvalued and marginal to the capitalist economy until the twentieth century when it began to monetize an emerging 'service sector.'

In honoring our species condition of interdependence, one is able to recognize the dignity of others both as beings aiding you in the development of your personhood, and as beings in the process of developing themselves. This embodied idea of dignity is rooted in a holistic relational ontology. As such, it departs radically from the neoliberal notion of a 'decent' life, measured in terms of individual economic success and competitive consumer display. Recall that sociologists such as Thorstein Veblen show how in the consumer society,

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[889] Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 13.

[890] Ibid.

[891] Will Large, "Inverted Kantianism and Interiority: A Critical Comment on Milbank's Theology," in *Explorations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Deane-Peter Baker and Patrick Maxwell (New York: Rodopi, 2003), 27.

[892] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 142, 160, 164.

[893] Ibid., 168.

[894] Ibid., 174.

[895] Mellor, "Ecofeminist Political Economy and the Politics of Money," 255.

self-esteem is not based on dignity but on a socially manufactured idea of decency. Today this is benchmarked by commodified paraphernalia to indicate an individual's purchasing power.[896] Decency is too often about self-aggrandizement at the expense of others, whose expected role it is to look on. This conception, integral to which is an ontology of mutual antagonism, stands completely opposed to Kantian and indigenous African understandings of human dignity as underpinned by recognition of others as ethical beings. For Kant, the task is to help others become autonomous, while in terms of an indigenous African schema, the point is to help one another belong. In both cases, though, dignity rests on reciprocity rather than enmity.

Here, relationality is crucial to the project of a *homo sapiens* becoming a person or achieving humanness.[897] The Nigerian philosopher and poet Ifeyani Menkiti argues that engaging "in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one's stations … transforms one from the it-status of early child-hood, marked by an absence of moral function, into the person-status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense."[898] However, the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye is critical of Menkiti's rather rigid qualification of personhood. He interjects that communal membership is not enough for its development. Echoing Kant's view that personal maturity depends on the capacity to judge independently cultural norms or traditions usually accepted as givens, Gyekye argues that achieving personhood also hinges on responsibly practicing critique of wider communal values that are unjust or discriminatory.[899] In this, he promotes a more moderate communitarian view. This perspective avoids the potential danger of communal tyranny exercised in the name of received tradition. Further, it guards against falling into an individualistic libertarian rights-based discourse, where rights constitute "essentially self-protection mechanisms that can be respected by simply leaving other people alone," and where "rights-based duties to others are limited to reciprocal non-interference."[900] The fundamental importance of obligations and caring relations is recognized, but room is also left for individual autonomy and expression. In fact, Mogobe Ramose claims that practicing generosity and care *is* individually edifying. He argues that genuine self-fulfillment rests on

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[896] Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 59, 117-118.

[897] Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory," 383.

[898] Ifeyani Menkiti, "Persons and Community in African Traditional Thought," in *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, 3d ed., ed. Richard A. Wright (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 176.

[899] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 54.

[900] Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 275.

embodying relational virtues, as this affirms one's humanity and testifies to the achievement of one's full human capacity.[901] If you do not approximate these virtues, you do not have *botho* (humanness), and as such, you are nothing more than a species of animal,[902] or "a thing, a non-human being."[903]

This developmental and obligations-oriented conception of personhood or humanness implies that the hyper-individualistic, rights-based bent of the neoliberal society dehumanizes people. Radical atomization in the workplace and in leisure-oriented consumption ruptures human relational orders, and causes people to contort themselves into self-regarding 'exemplary' men and women. With the global spread of neoliberal hegemony, a commodity-based aesthetics is in operation, where 'masculine virility' and 'feminine mystique' are 'demonstrated' by superficially augmenting physical beauty and flaunting clothes and objects "in excess of what is required for physical comfort."[904] By the standards of an indigenous African ethic, commodification-dependent men and women such as these would be framed as anything but exemplary, powerful or beautiful. Quite literally, they have turned themselves into 'things' fundamentally lacking in *botho* or ethical maturity. True beauty resides in a fully formed person who cares for others. The American philosopher Barry Hallen evokes the alternative vision as articulated by the Yoruba:

> 'True beauty is a good moral character.' In other words, when human beings are concerned, physical or bodily beauty is purely external and therefore of relatively superficial consequence. What matters most in rating a person as attractive or unattractive is the inner beauty that may be manifested by their moral character. This means that a person who, physically, is decidedly unattractive can still be referred to in discourse as extremely beautiful, in fact a virtual paradigm or model of 'beauty.'[905]

Human embeddedness and dependency on nature

The communal orientation of African traditional life, and how this contrasts with capitalist societal organization, was given lucid articulation by the anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko when he said:

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[901] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 43, 64.

[902] Metz and Gaie, "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho*," 275.

[903] Ramose, "The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy," 300.

[904] Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 117-118.

[905] Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy*, 40.

> We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life. Hence … our action is usually joint community oriented action rather than the individualism which is the hallmark of the capitalist approach.[906]

Because of this communal emphasis, most indigenous African concepts of law and justice are antithetical to neoliberal counterparts. The former are underpinned by emphasis on community, while the latter stress individualism. In line with this, Mogobe Ramose juxtaposes law in traditional African contexts, which is group- and obligations-oriented, with what he refers to as "Western legal thought," which predominantly is property-based, individualist- and rights-oriented.[907] Correlatively, the American philosopher Richard Bell maintains that the indigenous African approach to justice to be encouraged is nurturant, restorative, compassionate, and non-retributive, departing from the focus on punishment, incrimination and reprisal within "Western legal jurisprudence."[908] It may be added that such an approach to justice might also militate against the problematic vigilantism plaguing particularly rural and peri-urban communities today, manifesting in suspects being 'necklaced' or beaten to death by community members.[909] For Bell, the post-apartheid South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) constituted an embodiment of restorative, non-retributive justice, since even those who committed atrocities were pardoned by their victims or by the relatives of the deceased.[910] Notably, the TRC was chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the hearings both drew on Christian themes of forgiveness and used religious language.[911] This intimates that more positive aspects of Christianity may have become integrated into an *ubuntu* framework in this instance, manifesting in what has been described as Tutu's "*ubuntu* theology."[912]

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906 Steve Biko, "Some African Cultural Concepts" (1971), in Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004), 46.

907 Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 81.

908 Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 92.

909 Barbara Maregele, "Teenage 'Thief' Necklaced," *Cape Times*, November 19, 2012. Available at: http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/teenage-thief-necklaced-1.1425977#.VBk70vmSxqU. Date accessed: September 17, 2014; and Northern KwaZulu-Natal Courier, "Alleged Rapist Beaten to Death by Angry Mob," *northernnatalcourier.co.za*, August 25, 2014. Available at: http://northernnatalcourier.co.za/17569/alleged-rapist-beaten-angry-mob/. Date accessed: September 17, 2014.

910 Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 89-95.

911 Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 59, 69.

912 Ibid., 136.

In reference to social relations, the Nigerian philosopher John Bewaji suggests that an indigenous ethic emphasizing communality may produce interpersonal exchanges which contrast jarringly with the type of interaction that free market ideology encourages, and which is centered on "mutual antagonism" and "a constant struggle for possession and delimitation of space."[913] Mogobe Ramose corroborates this, arguing that consensual and cooperative human interaction is very difficult, if not impossible, in neoliberal societies. He argues this because the neoliberal ideology is informed by a "metaphysics of killing in the name of competition," involving "the survival of the fittest through the acquisition and possession of money … [as] the goal of human existence."[914] The communal ethic of *ubuntu/botho* undermines such individualistic and economistic neoliberal impulses through the claim: "I am because *we* are."[915] The Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, the legacy of which culminates in detachment from others and supposed independence from life processes, is countered in an indigenous ethic by an "existential *cognatus sum, ergo summus* [I am related, therefore we are]."[916] Dismas Masolo clarifies this communal orientation as "a state of social and moral order, visible in the practices of mutual dependence as indicators of … concern … for and commitment to … the creation or sustenance of a common good."[917] In this type of order human beings clearly are valued over money, and so a culturally distributive rather than a capitalist accumulation logic is followed.

The indigenous ethic of *ubuntu*, as articulated by contemporary African political, social and moral philosophers, may seem somewhat idealistic. Indeed, their treatment of *ubuntu* does not often stray too far from philosophical or discursive reflection, inviting accusations that they reify, essentialize, or quite simply fabricate, a concept that was never actually lived. However, anthropological findings evidence the practice of a communal ethic for thousands of years prior to colonization. Quite likely, such ethical thought actually developed on the basis of indigenous subsistence-oriented ways of life. Maria Mies confirms that even in contemporary Africa, whereas indigenous men often are drawn into salaried work, women "still play … [a] most crucial role in subsistence production,"[918] and in such

[913] John A. I. Bewaji, 'Beyond Ethno-Philosophical Myopia: Critical Comments on Mogobe B. Ramose's *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*,' in John A. I. Bewaji and Mogobe B. Ramose, "The Bewaji, Van Binsbergen and Ramose Debate on *Ubuntu*," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 22/4 (2003): 398.

[914] Ramose, "The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy," 297.

[915] Emphasis added. Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 59.

[916] Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic* (New York: Crosswood Publishing Company, 2001), 22.

[917] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 50.

[918] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 115.

labor a reciprocal rather than competitive logic is followed. Understandably, though, broad-based subsistence practices were disrupted irremediably after common resources were annexed by colonizers, myriad wars broke out,[919] plagues such as smallpox hit in the 1890s, rainfall declined between 1895-1920, and cattle plague struck indigenous herds.[920] Yet, there is considerable evidence of inter- and intra-communal cooperation among Southern African indigenes before this. Temporary depletion of a natural resource, specific areas inhabited, and other factors such as population fluctuations, strongly influenced subsistence patterns and agricultural methods. Internal collaboration was crucial given the need for provisioning adaptations in response to environmental changes.[921] Further, the interdependence between men, women and children was explicitly recognized, each undertaking different duties to keep the group alive. John Campbell, a British missionary to South Africa in the 1810s, reported that in settled indigenous South African communities men milk the cows and provide military protection, women cultivate the fields and build the houses and animal enclosures, and either men or women make clothing depending on the particular ethnic group.[922] Generally their sons herd the cattle.[923] In later times, gender-allocated roles changed or were moderated. The British-born James Walton, a specialist in South African vernacular architecture, indicates that in more recent Nguni communities, huts were constructed by both genders, men doing the heavy lifting and women the plastering of the walls and floors.[924] What archeologists have identified as a constant among Southern African indigenous communities for centuries, though, is the association of men with herding and women with cultivation.[925] At any rate, each member of the indigenous subsistence community was indispensable for the well-being of all. Elders played a key role, providing moral guidance to the community and regulating any "[a]ggressive and avaricious behaviour" on the part of younger members.[926]

Collaboration with other communities also was required. The British anthropologist John Reader suggests that subsistence-oriented communities could not risk destruction of their infrastructure, expend unnecessary energy, or become dispersed through warfare or

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[919] Reader, *Africa*, 596; and Marika Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 126.

[920] Reader, *Africa*, 575, 581-582.

[921] Ibid., 147.

[922] John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa* (Cape Town: C. Struik, [1815] 1974), 190, 370.

[923] Ibid., 202.

[924] James Walton, *African Village* (Pretoria: J. L. Van Schaik, 1956), 136.

[925] Ibid., 127; and T. M. O'C. Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld* (Pietermaritzburg: Council of the Natal Museum, 1976), 23.

[926] Reader, *Africa*, 260.

conquest. Equipment such as spears and bows and arrows, though employable in war, still were items "used in acquiring food … [and] were neither so numerous nor so easily replaced that their availability as provisioning tools could be risked in conflict with the neighbours."[927] Fear of weakening the community through dispersal of its members even caused the Iron Age Tswana to impose "heavy sanctions against building proper dwellings at [distant] cattle-posts or … cultivated lands as this was seen as a centrifugal force that threatened group unity."[928] However, since subsistence specializations developed because of climatic variations, neighborly peace was also necessary for trade in essential items. According to Reader, already over four thousand years ago "a cultural landscape of subsistence specialists mirrored the ecological landscape." That is, "[h]unters, gatherers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and agriculturalists occupied distinct niches – each group dependent to some extent upon the others."[929] The need for inter-communal cooperation was self-evident.[930] Even as pastoralists with expanding herds became more powerful than people in other provisioning niches, they still

> required the services of craftsmen for iron tools and pots … depended on agricultural communities for supplies of essential carbohydrates, and needed to maintain good relations with [surrounding] populations … who would absorb people from the pastoral populations which the grasslands could not support and provide relief during … drought years or following heavy losses through cattle disease.[931]

Campbell documented an intriguing trade relation between even the Bushmen and the Coranna, Matchappee and Morolong communities, testifying to significant inter-ethnic collaboration. The honey-gathering Bushmen had an implicit agreement with their pastoral neighbors. The Bushmen claimed possession of the beehives in the mountains on the basis of them having right of access to the bees, which fed only on flowers. Their neighbors, who possessed cattle and sheep, saw this as a fair settlement since their animals ate the grass. They willingly purchased honey from the Bushmen, and if the Bushmen found that a hive had been raided in breach of the agreement, they would be "sure to carry off the first cow or sheep they meet."[932]

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[927] Ibid.

[928] Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld*, 282.

[929] Reader, *Africa*, 171.

[930] Ibid., 261-262.

[931] Ibid., 300.

[932] Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 261.

That said, when pastoralists drifted further south in search of grazing,[933] they happened upon the prime grasslands of Southern Africa. Their cattle thrived and carnivorous pastoralists began accumulating surpluses. Some became richer than others, and far wealthier than agriculturalists or hunter-gatherers, as “cattle converted expanses of otherwise worthless grass into items of wealth that could be *owned*, *controlled*, and *inherited*.”[934] This led to previously unknown class divisions, and intense territorial conflicts ensued.[935] For dominant clans seeking territorial expansion, cattle became currency to acquire wives, gain subjects’ loyalty, and symbolize power. The importance of cattle was given architectural expression as well. Archeological digs of Later Iron Age settlements reveal that “cattle … were kept in the middle of communal villages,” and esteemed individuals “were often buried beneath these central cattle byres.”[936] This is known as the Nguni-Sotho settlement pattern, and is typical of many Bantu kraals.[937] The Bantu ‘cattle culture’ may have led to societal stratification particularly between different clans, but in principle intra-communal collaboration (*letsema*) remained a priority. Still, rivalries among prominent male community members may well have emerged at that time, and with it the draw of personal aggrandizement at the expense of others. Perhaps to counter such a tendency, traditional maxims emphasized prioritizing the common good over individual affluence. One such maxim, *feta kgomo o tshware motho* (go past the cow and hold the human being),[938] reflects the need to value humans over wealth. In view of the great value attributed to cattle within Bantu culture, this maxim understandably demands incredible sacrifice. Mogobe Ramose argues that maxims such as this, if actualized “in practice … will be the antithesis to the timocracy that has now superseded democracy in our time.”[939] He defines timocracy as tyrannical “rule by money” concealed beneath the veneer of democracy, which in contrast should entail consensual rule by people.[940] Because such maxims are not permitted expression in the contemporary era of global neoliberalism, havoc is wreaked upon people and environments in the name of profitable accumulation benefiting the elite few.

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[933] Reader, *Africa*, 433.

[934] Emphasis added. Ibid., 304.

[935] Ibid., 355.

[936] Brett Hilton-Barber and Lee R. Berger, *Field Guide to the Cradle of Humankind: Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai & Environs World Heritage Site*, 2d rev. ed. (Cape Town: Struik Publishers, 2004), 36.

[937] Walton, *African Village*, 150, 160.

[938] Ramose, “The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy,” 291.

[939] Ibid., 301.

[940] Ibid., 292.

Indeed, for Ramose, timocracy and its consequences spell ecological destruction. Poverty is considered 'unnatural' because 'by nature,' all human beings should be able to share common natural resources. For the same reason, the hyper-exploitation of labor to enrich the few is unnatural and unjust, according to Ramose.[941] He considers the growth rate of money to be another unnatural idea. It is absurd "that money, as an artificial cow, is supposed – in principle – to give birth to a fully-fledged calf every day," because "a cow which gives birth to a fully-fledged calf every day is anything but natural."[942] Phenomena surely are supposed to follow growth cycles rather than mechanically forced ones, and biological rather than clock time. In fact, Ramose argues that an indigenous African perspective on existence is both communal and holistic. It opposes "the fragmentation of be-ing" and instead promotes an understanding of "be-ing … as a perpetual and universal movement of sharing and exchange of the forces of life." Neither individual identity nor universal "'order'" can "be once established and fixed for all time,"[943] since everything exists in dialectical reciprocation. Admittedly, there is a dialectical tradition spanning from the sixth-century Greek philosopher Heraclitus to the twentieth-century Frankfurt School,[944] and further via the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. In fact, although he has rightly been accused of racist thinking for identifying the Western Christian tradition as the height of civilization, G. W. F. Hegel too promoted the primacy of community and social interaction while cautioning against social atomism.[945] Yet, this is a minority tradition in the West and remains so. However, ecofeminist scholars interested in alternative ways of knowing point out that the conceptualization of dialectical reciprocity and fluidity is incompatible with both the reductionist methodologies introduced by Baconian science, and the capitalist drive to monetize all of life as units of a certain value.[946] Ramose and others claim that such dialectical ways of knowing are prevalent in Africa. The idea of mechanically measuring space is anathema. A rural African may tell a group of travelers that the village they are trying to reach is not far, knowing that it actually is far in terms of measurable distance. Their aim is not to deceive but rather to "*make* it not far"

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[941] Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," 30.

[942] Ramose, 'Reply to Bewaji and Van Binsbergen,' 409.

[943] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 46-47.

[944] Barry Sandywell, *Dictionary of Visual Discourse: A Dialectical Lexicon of Terms* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 245.

[945] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. Samuel W. Dyde (New York: Prometheus Books, 1996), § 243.

[946] Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, 83; Salleh, "Contribution to the Critique of Political Epistemology," 33; and Shiva, *Staying Alive*, 20, 25.

for the travelers by giving them "courage (power)" and hope.[947] Equally, the use of straight lines was unpalatable to the Iron Age-period Sotho-Tswana, for example. Missionaries in fact deemed them primitive and heathen because they built oval huts rather than square or rectangular homes.[948] Strictly specifying times for human interaction is frowned upon as well, and locals were scorned by their colonizers for living in 'African time,' denoting tardiness.[949] Ramose affirms 'African time' on the basis of the fact that "human beings make time and they are not made by time … [and so] it is both natural and logical to live time" rather than to live "in time" with the economic orchestrations of the capitalist system.[950] Finally, while disrespect for the concept of private property is criminalized within Western legal jurisprudence, this concept contravenes the 'natural right' to share resources for sustenance.[951] In rural African communities, people have been "more concerned about using land than owning it," and so if land is not cultivated rights of use are forfeited and allocated to another.[952]

Because of its emphasis on the common good, the indigenous African ethic described above has been likened to Western humanism and tied to socialism.[953] These associations also have been encouraged by the dominance of marxist theory in African political philosophy from the 1930s onward.[954] Two of the founders of African socialism – Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania – promoted socialism as the obvious alternative to capitalist tyranny because of its overlaps with indigenous African frameworks.[955] Still, it is argued that significant differences exist between Western humanism and socialism, and the indigenous African ethic variously identified by theorists as African humanism, *ubuntu/botho*, or Afro-communitarianism. Richard Bell contends that, on the one hand, Western humanism emphasizes "education and civilization" in the interest of emancipation, and is a tradition

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[947] Emphasis added. Hamminga, "Language, Reality and Truth," 98.

[948] Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld*, 24.

[949] Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, *Search for Greener Pastures: Igbo and African Experience* (Kearney: Morris Publishing, 1998), 134.

[950] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 49.

[951] Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," 31.

[952] Reader, *Africa*, 251.

[953] Thaddeus Metz discloses the anti-capitalist orientation of the *ubuntu* ethic when he argues that "[t]he 'empire building' of a Warren Buffet is anathema here, where the point of work should not be to amass wealth for oneself or for its own sake, but rather to benefit others." Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory," 326.

[954] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 43.

[955] Guy Martin, *African Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 102-103; and Hallen, *A Short History of African Philosophy*, 73-74.

based "on ancient Greek ideals such as balance of the arts and sciences, [and] cultivation of individual virtues." On the other hand, 'African humanism' centers on the individual's "place in the larger order of things: one's *social* order, *natural* order, and the *cosmic* order." This is because it derives from the long-standing practices of communities who recognized that they depend on one another and had to live frugally with limited "means … and natural resources."[956] Some have objected that, in this case, the communality and frugality practiced by indigenous African communities constituted a 'forced choice' necessary for survival. Archeological evidence cannot prove or disprove such accusations. Evidence exists for ecologically sensible resource use, provisioning practices, and settlement patterns during the Iron Age,[957] even subsequent to the rise of pastoralism.[958] However, whether such 'precautionary' ecological practices were motivated by necessity or genuine concern for the environment as an end-in-itself, cannot be confirmed. Similar suspicions have been raised over the supposed conservation practices of Native Americans.[959]

However, *ubuntu* theorists reject the charge that human communality among Southern African indigenous groupings was purely instrumental.[960] Bert Hamminga in fact argues that the three principal African goals are survival, procreation, and togetherness, but that "the first requirement is considered to be *togetherness*."[961] The ontological force of togetherness is evident in the African conception of the community as a tree, where ancestors constitute the roots, adult humans the trunk, and their children the branches, leaves and flowers. To them not a single part of this tree, which is one "body … can *meaningfully* survive cut off from the rest."[962] At work here are ontological, ethical and epistemological factors rather than mere instrumental considerations. Ramose confirms that the communitarian ethic of *ubuntu* bears ontological and epistemological import, since it is inextricably linked to the project of be-coming human (*umuntu*).[963] To stress its onto-epistemological nature, Ramose insists that *ubuntu* should be written in hyphenated form, as *ubu-ntu*, and translated as human-ness rather

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[956] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 39.

[957] Walton, *African Village*, 59; and Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld*, 106, 128, 225, 275, 278, 293-294.

[958] Maggs, *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld*, 136, 312; and Walton, *African Village*, 142.

[959] Raymond Hames, "The Ecologically Noble Savage Debate," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36 (2007): 181.

[960] Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory," 372.

[961] Bert Hamminga, "Epistemology from the African Point of View," in *Knowledge Cultures: Comparative Western and African Epistemology*, ed. Bert Hamminga (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 75.

[962] Emphasis added. Ibid., 59.

[963] Ramose, "But Hans Kelsen Was Not Born in Africa," 354; and Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 40.

than humanism. He explains that "ubu**-** as the generalized understanding of be-ing may be said to be distinctly ontological … [w]hereas **-**ntu as the nodal point at which be-ing assumes concrete form or a mode of being in the process of continual unfoldment may be said to be distinctly epistemological."[964] In turn, be-ing and be-coming human or acquiring personhood (*umu-ntu*), shares the root (**-***ntu*) of *ubuntu* but focuses in on the ethical mode of being *human* (*umu-*). So the thinking, speaking, embodied "[u]muntu is the specific entity which continues to conduct an inquiry into be-ing, experience, knowledge and truth."[965] Such knowledge and truth can be sought only with others. Significantly, Ramose extends this onto-epistemological understanding of personhood from the interpersonal to the environmental. For him, a holistic and dialectical understanding of existence

> applies also with regard to the relation between human beings and physical or objective nature. To care for one another, therefore, implies caring for physical nature as well. Without such care, the interdependence between human beings and physical nature would be undermined. Moreover, human beings are indeed part and parcel of physical nature even though they might be a privileged part at that … The concept of harmony in African thought is comprehensive in the sense that it conceives of balance in terms of the totality of the relations that can be maintained between human beings amongst themselves as well as between human beings and physical nature.[966]

In light of these profoundly embodied and materialist dimensions of *ubuntu* often absent from abstract and lofty Western -isms, trying to compare African human-ness with Western humanism is for Ramose like "holding in … [one's] right hand a green pumpkin that … [one] insists should be compared with the green apple in … [one's] left hand."[967]

That said, any embodied, communitarian indigenous ethic stands to be crushed through neoliberal globalization. The potency of capitalism was noted by Kwame Nkrumah as early as 1970, when he criticized the Ghanaian bourgeoisie for its neocolonial complicity with monopoly capital and abandonment of social responsibility.[968] Frantz Fanon also condemned the post-independence indigenous bourgeoisie and elite for throwing "a superstructural mask over [their] class interests."[969] In related vein, the Congolese philosopher Ernest Wamba-dia-

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[964] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 41.

[965] Ibid.

[966] Ibid., 124.

[967] Ramose, "But Hans Kelsen Was Not Born in Africa," 352.

[968] Kwame Nkrumah, Author's Note to *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization*, 2d rev. ed. (London: Heinemann, 1970).

[969] Irele, "Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa," 279.

Wamba has criticized the modern African nation-state as a farce, because "national independence was won on the basis of the abandonment of emancipatory politics rooted in the large masses of the people and their needs and aspirations."[970] The same evidently holds true for South Africa and its people, as the post-apartheid ruling elites push the neoliberal capitalist agenda. They have abandoned social responsibility in favor of personal enrichment, and allowed transnational corporations to annex and pillage local environments in the interest of profitable accumulation. Here, destitution of the majority and ecological breakdown intersect. Many ordinary South Africans also have succumbed to the neoliberal hegemony, particularly in relation to deep felt aspirations of their sexual self. Dismas Masolo believes that individual resistance is broken down by the potent "engineered psychology of the indigenous consumer." People come "to believe that things processed in and put out as finished products of metropolitan centers in the West are indisputably superior" to indigenous ones.[971] These valorized artifacts, images and ideas, tied to homogenizing consumerist gender identities, are sold across the globe. North and South, they result in political debilitation. Further, the "unlovable … fallout" of industrialization, namely "the ethic of austere individualism,"[972] could not be more at odds with the communitarian vision of *ubuntu*. Its ecological fallout similarly flies in the face of an indigenous grasp of the interconnectedness of nature and humans-as-nature,[973] which ensured subsistence-based survival for millennia. The twenty-first-century global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss show that the social and ecological insights of an indigenous African ethic will be critical in reconstructing the future of life on Earth.

It is imperative to resist the neoliberal hegemony through forms of "truly *human … conscious, social activity*."[974] However, simply resuscitating a body of indigenous African concepts and practices risks aestheticizing pre-industrial African civilization. Also, such an approach is insensitive to the globalized nature of contemporary human experience.[975] Instead, the point is to discover "legitimate starting points for the production of

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[970] Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Africa in Search of a New Mode of Politics," 251.

[971] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 25.

[972] Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 71.

[973] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 46-47.

[974] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 53.

[975] As the Eritrean philosopher Tsenay Serequeberhan contends, it is necessary that "ancient/ossified customs and traditions are not merely discarded out of hand … nor … desperately held on to … Rather, their preservation loses its inertia and becomes a process by which society is historically reinstituted out of the needs of the present mediated by the struggle." Tsenay Serequeberhan, *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1994), 100.

developmentally relevant knowledge and skills."[976] A qualified way forward, attuned to the relational orientation of human beings and to their embeddedness in precarious physical environments, necessitates "subject[ing] … Africa's local knowledges … to critical and constant appraisal and modification."[977] Significant strides have been made by African and Africanist philosophers who are drawing a core ethical framework from indigenous knowledges that opposes the neoliberal mores. Equally important are their criticisms of unjust aspects of old African culture, such as arranged child marriages, gender discrimination,[978] and the tyranny of village elders justified on the basis "of the practice of tradition."[979]

How to engender appreciation for an ethic that poses such a strong critique of the neoliberal paradigm? This question is pertinent particularly because the indigenous African ethic detailed above asks the individual to sacrifice personal wants for the common good.[980] At a local level, appreciation for this ethic might be cultivated through emphasizing its indigeneity, in the sense that Africans should take pride in the moral, political, and ecological value of 'their' indigenous ethical framework in a globalizing era marked by social and environmental precariousness. As the American feminist theorist Drucilla Cornell suggests, what is promising is "the widespread use of [the word] ubuntu, everywhere from beauty shops to television," which "at least signal[s] its political and ethical potency."[981] However, most people are oblivious to the philosophical substance of the term. A pragmatic approach might be to place this indigenous ethic in dialogue with resonant movements globally, particularly those with a firm standing in alternative globalization politics. Such 'transversalism'[982] can provide opportunities for comparative and critical reflection by each movement on its own politics and on that of others. This, in turn, might reveal neglected areas to be remedied, as well as addressing potentials for alliance building.[983] A recent attempt at theoretical transversalism involving the normative indigenous African ethic of *ubuntu*, was undertaken

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[976] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 62.

[977] Ibid.

[978] Bell and Metz, "Confucianism and *Ubuntu*," 81.

[979] Masolo, *Self and Community in a Changing World*, 105, 108. Similarly, Thaddeus Metz and Joseph Gaie criticize traditional moral educators for glibly "hand[ing] down … (often gendered) roles" that are hierarchical and oppressive in orientation. Metz and Gaie, "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho*," 280.

[980] Ramose, "The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy," 301.

[981] Drucilla Cornell, "Exploring Ubuntu: Tentative Reflections," *fehe.org*. Available at: http://www.fehe.org/index.php?id=281. Date accessed: October 8, 2014.

[982] Hosseini, "Occupy Cosmopolitanism," 425.

[983] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 10; and Willem L. van der Merwe, "African Philosophy and Multiculturalism," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 16/3 (1997): 77.

by the Africanist thinker Thaddeus Metz and the Canadian philosopher Daniel Bell. They engaged in a parallel research comparison between *ubuntu* and Confucianism, in reference to community, partiality, and age. Their study uncovered certain affinities between these traditions, but revealed that Confucianism lacks the reconciliatory spirit of *ubuntu*, while the latter lacks emphasis on self-development through education.[984] They expressed the hope that these "preliminary reflections can inspire further … dialogues between long-standing and large-scale non-Western traditions … as non-Western societies assume greater importance in the global system and as the search continues for a 'global ethic.'"[985] Parallels exist between the *ubuntu* ethic and other schools of thought as well. For instance, the perspective of the American philosopher and sociologist George Herbert Mead resonates with *ubuntu* when it comes to "the complex interdependence of self and society," because for him "humans have no 'original and independent existence' apart from others," and "become social only through contact with others."[986] The Mead proponent Hans Joas also discloses a parallel between Mead's vision and the ontological dimension of *ubuntu* community. He explains that "[f]or Mead, the assumption of a pre-social substantial self was one of the cornerstones of the possessive individualism which he was combating on both a moral and a political level and which made societies appear to be groupings of atomistic individuals."[987] Parallels can also be drawn between *ubuntu* and the indigenous Andean philosophy of *vivir bien* – living well – which is life "in balance with all other elements of … the universe … according to the basic principles of … relatedness, complementarity, correspondence, reciprocity and cyclicality."[988] Such transversal engagements are possible and indeed imperative at this juncture, if the neoliberal hegemony is to be countered and another future is to be sought. With the intention of widening this important global politics of transversalism, this chapter brings the indigenous African ethic as outlined above into a dialogue with ecological feminism. This gendered, and often racialized 'other' political perspective, shares the *ubuntu* interest in non-dualism, caring labor, communality and sustainable subsistence.

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[984] Bell and Metz, "Confucianism and *Ubuntu*," 85, 89, 92.

[985] Ibid., 80.

[986] Thomas J. Morrione, Editor's Introduction to Herbert Blumer, *George Herbert Mead and Human Conduct*, ed. Thomas J. Morrione (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004), 5.

[987] Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, 137.

[988] Josef Estermann, cited in Pablo Solón, "Notes for the Debate: Vivir Bien / Buen Vivir," *Systemic Alternatives*, July 30, 2014. Available at: https://systemicalternatives.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/buen-vivir-english-30-jul-2014.pdf. Date accessed: September 29, 2014.

These convergencies suggest that a potential alliance among these "subordinated others" and "minority voices" may enhance both perspectives and become powerful in contesting the neoliberal monologue.[989] A tacit invitation to such transversal bridging is already affirmed by Ramose, when he makes reference to how women, like indigenous peoples, have been, and continue to be, subordinated and exploited in the capitalist world system.[990]

A transversal dialogue with ecological feminism

As noted at the beginning of this thesis, transversal practice may occur at several levels. It may imply a transdisciplinary critique within academia; it may take place between distinct activist strands in the political arena; or it may involve a critique of academic theory guided by that same political praxis. Either way, it always involves a dialectic between the universal and the particular. The latter form of transversality is demonstrated in a number of books about women's initiatives for change, texts that draw lessons from grassroots political struggles and apply these in critiques of science, economics and ethics, as these fields have unwittingly served neoliberal expansion. Materialist ecofeminists such as Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, Ariel Salleh, and Mary Mellor, are invariably both activists and thinkers.[991] Indeed, the idea of an ecological feminist philosophy and politics was inspired by the activism of women across the globe in reaction to the exploitation of their bodies and the parallel-resourcing of nature. This concern was manifest in material issues as varied as the nuclear question, reproductive technologies, forest conservation and processed foods.[992] The common thread was the protection of livelihood and community justice. Ecofeminist politics has grown in activist momentum throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, and women thinkers have interpreted it using whatever cultural frameworks were at hand.[993] The seminal text

[989] Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," in *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, ed. Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger (London: Zed Books, 1996), 271.

[990] Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," 28; Ramose, "The Death of Democracy and the Resurrection of Timocracy," 292; and Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 1, 6-7, 15.

[991] This approach is advocated for and exemplified in Mary Mellor's *Breaking the Boundaries: Towards a Feminist Green Socialism* (London: Virago Press, 1992), Vandana Shiva's *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books, 2002), and Ariel Salleh's edited volume *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

[992] Ariel Salleh, "Eco-Socialism, Eco-Feminism," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 2/1 (1991): 129.

[993] Ibid., 130.

Ecofeminism, co-authored by Maria Mies with Vandana Shiva, has already run through five impressions and two editions. It is clear from this remarkable analysis that by identifying commonalities between life-affirming knowledges in both the global North and South, bridges can be built and new alliances formed. These bridges already transcend differences of gender, race, and class by identifying the colonizing exploitation of women and indigenous peoples – both diminished as 'nature' – while at the same time remaining sensitive to the specificities of local discriminations.[994] Ecofeminism may be said to have an 'Africanist' tenor, given the extent to which its formulations overlap with *ubuntu*, in thematizing non-dualistic thought, caring labor as meaning giving, and humanity-nature interdependence. Conversely, it may be said that *ubuntu* seems to resonate with a global 'womanist' voice, even though its current theoretical production is dominated by men. Certainly, there is a real need to hear more voices from Africanist women thinkers, particularly ones such as Sophie Oluwole, advancing that "[t]he African pursuit of humanism as a concern for human behavior and existence is its greatest cultural heritage to the whole world." [995] Yet, in global North and South, predominantly it has been men who are the academic theorists, movement leaders and experts, while women 'do the activism,' yet another unacknowledged and unvalorized service role. This happened in fights for racial equality in 1960s America, for indigenous rights in Australia, for environmental justice in the US during the 1990s, as well as in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.[996] In any event, ecological feminists endorse that the overlap of "a 'womanist' sensibility … with Third World and indigenous knowledges"[997] now makes hybrid, post-gendered political alliances a long overdue step. Forging these links is particularly urgent as both African radicals and materialist ecofeminists are themselves still marginalized in much conventional socialist and ecological politics.[998]

What follows is a deeper look at the themes of non-dualistic logic, caring and subsistence labor, and material embodiment of humans within nature – all of which are anathema to the neoliberal framework.

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[994] Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Books, 1993), 1-3.

[995] Sophie B. Oluwole, "The Africanness of a Philosophy," in *Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika*, eds. Herta Nagl-Docekal and Franz M. Wimmer (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), 122.

[996] "The Role of Women in the Struggle against Apartheid," *African National Congress*, July 15, 1980. Available at: http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4667&t=Women`s%20Struggles. Date accessed: October 8, 2014.

[997] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 104.

[998] Mellor, "Eco-Feminism and Eco-Socialism," 43.

Non-dualistic logic

Like the African philosophers Kwasi Wiredu, Dismas Masolo, Mogobe Ramose and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, ecofeminists are extremely critical of dualistic reasoning. This is because dualisms justify the dominant essentialized capitalist patriarchal conception of the masculine individual, his sovereign identity and independence from sustaining 'others.' These freely gifting sustainers may be reproducing women, laboring indigenes, or environmental processes. Dualistic thought is deeply imbricated in this gendered logic of domination, as has been demonstrated by the colonial enterprise and later neoliberal globalization. One materialist ecofeminist, Ariel Salleh, draws on the critical cultural marxism of the Frankfurt School to describe the Eurocentric dualism as originating in

> the ancient *splitting* of the so called higher faculties from immediate sensuous experience; the predilection for the *static visual* and *manipulable* properties of objects; their formal *objectification* in specular terms and representation through *binary analytics* as against dialectical logic; *the cogito*; the ostensible dissociation of *pure fact* from value; and the *productivist* thrust towards *instrumental mastery* of the material environment culminating with modern industrialization and science.[999]

Like most ecological feminists, Salleh judges dualism to be central to the interlocking domination of women and 'other living natures,' capturing this idea in her formulation M/W=N. This mock formula caricatures "the triangular ideological dynamic between iconic 'men,' 'women,' and 'nature,'"[1000] as 'economic' man dominates both 'nature' so called and women's 'bodies-as-nature.' Exposing the workings of this hegemonic M/W=N configuration does more than just indicate the disembodied and essentializing character of the capitalist patriarchal perspective, groomed as it has been by the philosophies of Plato, Descartes, and Bacon. This transversal activist critique – at once feminist, socialist, and ecological – draws attention to the fact that the regenerative caring labor for which women are predominantly responsible has been a free resource of the capitalist system – even more so now, with the dismantling of state services under neoliberalism. Indigenous peoples – their bodies, lands, and knowledges – are resourced in a similar fashion. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European colonists, for instance, exploited indigenous peoples and natural resources in the Third World, paralleling the exploitation of their wives as reproducers and free labor at home. Accordingly, Maria Mies observes that the power dynamic of the 'little colony' of the nuclear

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[999] Salleh, "Contribution to the Critique of Political Epistemology," 25.

[1000] Salleh, "Embodied Materialism in Action," 188.

family, had its counterpart in the 'big colonies' abroad.[1001] Among African philosophers, Kwasi Wiredu and Mogobe Ramose claim that the domination of indigenes is 'legitimated' by framing them as inferior on the basis of dualisms such as mind/body and reason/emotion – permitting their exploitation as sub-human, 'natural resources.' Ecofeminists likewise contest the legitimacy of the mind/body, *logos/mythos* and reason/emotion dualisms. They reveal that the operation of these binaries serves as a license to dominate and exploit women as well.

Ecological feminists indicate that in patriarchal societies women have been associated with 'body,' and men with 'mind,' paving the way for resourcing of women as sexual objects and free reproductive work sites. However, ecofeminists contest the mind/body dualism, by pointing out that people are already nature in embodied form,[1002] and that body and mind likewise are inseparable. Salleh argues that materially embodied identities are biologically and historically overdetermined. Thus, what is most relevant to the economic context of this thesis is the way in which discursive dualisms determine the traditional labor forms carried out by women. In the global North, the practices of humanity-nature bridging – cleaning, cooking, birthing – belong to household work. In the global South, parallel forms of ecosystem management are the responsibility of indigenous communities. People whose labor routinely encounters natural processes, cannot easily think of themselves as separate from their environment.[1003] Ecofeminist arguments are not essentialist accounts of fixed sex-gender types. Neither are they accounts of gender as a discursively learned performance.[1004] Rather, materialist ecofeminists adopt a critical realist approach, whereby sensuous interaction with the world is understood to shape learning, perception, attitudes, skills, and vice versa.

Ecofeminist analyses of household labor may raise the ire of equality feminists, who claim that this glorifies 'motherhood' and so impedes women's liberation.[1005] However, such attacks disclose a typically modernist one-dimensionality on the part of liberal feminists, one that is complicit with capitalism. Significantly, this blind spot has been noted by the South African *ubuntu* philosopher Ramose.[1006] Ecological feminists also observe how women, like indigenous peoples, have been discriminated against on the basis of the *logos/mythos* binary.

[1001] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 110.

[1002] Ariel Salleh, "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital: Living the Deepest Contradiction," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 6/1 (1995): 35.

[1003] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 164.

[1004] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Femininity and the Subversion of Identity*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[1005] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 13; and Salleh, "Contribution to the Critique of Political Epistemology," 24.

[1006] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 137.

Colonists and missionaries in Africa deemed indigenous peoples deficient for ostensibly harboring only a false, mythical understanding of existence. This was paralleled in the persecution of knowledgeable and independent women during the European witch hunts of the twelfth to the seventeenth century.[1007] As Mies puts it, "[t]he counterpart of the slave raids in Africa was the witch hunt in Europe."[1008] Just as the African, supposedly lacking *logos*, could not "qualify as a human being,"[1009] the woman, ostensibly lacking rationality, could not be construed "as a properly human presence" and so was accorded "prehuman" status.[1010] Like indigenes, then, women could be exploited without casting any doubt on the moral legitimacy of their oppressors. Rendering women inferior cowed them into purely subservient roles as sites of reproduction and "agent[s] of consumption" for the bourgeois home.[1011] Such subjugation was also facilitated by the reason/emotion binary. The idea was that women's rational capacity was also considered tainted by their emotionality. On the grounds of women's 'sexual saturation' and their 'proclivity' for wild emotional outbursts, they were pathologized and hysterized by medical professionals. The latter consequently claimed that the only position that a woman – a most "nervous" creature – could safely occupy was "the family space … [and] the life of children."[1012] Ecological feminists, like radical African thinkers such as Léopold Senghor and Mogobe Ramose, maintain that reason and emotion are complementary rather than opposed, ungendered, and both are required in proper judgment. For instance, it would not do simply to judge a person's claims or actions in reference to a set of detached legalistic principles. Rather, to be fair one should incorporate a relational, care-based approach, focusing on the "concrete individual" including his or her "concrete history, identity and affective-emotional constitution."[1013]

[1007] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 81. See also Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, 2d ed. (New York: The Feminist Press, 2010).

[1008] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 69.

[1009] Ramose, "I Doubt, Therefore African Philosophy Exists," 116.

[1010] Ariel Salleh, "On Production and Reproduction, Identity and Nonidentity in Ecofeminist Theory," *Organization & Environment* 12/2 (June 1999), 208, 213.

[1011] Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, 102-103, 106.

[1012] Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), 104.

[1013] Sara Ahmed, *Differences That Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 52.

Caring and subsistence labor

Materialist ecofeminists share the African focus on the critical importance of caring relations to the constitution of personhood or humanness. However, whereas the Ghanaian-American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah emphasizes that one's understanding of personhood directly influences one's behavior,[1014] as noted, Ariel Salleh stresses that "people's *experiences* in the world shape their perceptions and knowledges" as well.[1015] Thus, instead of promoting the social constructionist perspective that discourse dictates one's self-understanding and behavior, ecofeminists take the influence of embodied learning, particularly caring labor, just as seriously. The African philosophers suggest that from an indigenous perspective centered on *ubuntu*, to be a real man or a beautiful woman one needs to participate in "communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one's stations," reflecting "a widened maturity of ethical sense."[1016] But this exemplary humanness is not achieved for all time. Through engaging in ethical, reciprocal relations with others, one is continuously affirmed as human, one continuously becomes a person. It is an ongoing, ethical-relational process just as a caring labor is. This contrasts markedly with exaggerated neoliberal conceptions of masculinity and femininity, oriented around individual distinction at the expense of others. Certainly, achieving an exalted consumer identity is an ongoing process given the relentless shortening of fashion cycles. However, pursuit thereof is psychologically and socially destructive, as well as ecologically malign since it runs on unsustainable levels of natural resource appropriation. Conversely, the development of personhood, though ongoing, is meaning giving and given its independence from unnecessary resource use, ecological as well.

Along similar lines, but stressing experientially developed understandings, ecological feminists maintain that reproductive labor and maintenance work in the household ideologically 'relegated' to women, provide insights challenging the shallow neoliberal idea of womanhood. Rather than encouraging a self-regarding attitude, care giving requires "immediate altruism," since "it is carried out for only incidental personal gain (the pleasure of close personal relationships) and … it cannot be 'put off' or slotted into a work schedule."[1017] Despite the life-affirming character of such labor, it is reviled in free market thought, while

[1014] Appiah, "Akan and Euro-American Concepts of the Person," 31.

[1015] Emphasis added. Salleh, "On Production and Reproduction, Identity and Nonidentity in Ecofeminist Theory," 208.

[1016] Menkiti, "Persons and Community in African Traditional Thought," 176.

[1017] Mellor, "Eco-Feminism and Eco-Socialism," 54.

the destructive activities of the so-called ‘productive’ economy are valorized, including the military-scientific complexes integral to capitalist patriarchal economies. In fact, regenerative care-giving work is not even seen as labor, but rather it is essentialized away as something that women ‘naturally’ do.[1018] Despite this, the global economy depends on women to birth and raise children, provide support to workers, and take care of the elderly and precarious workers ejected from the system.[1019]

Notwithstanding the denigration of women’s labor, such work shapes what Mary Mellor refers to as a ‘women’s-experience-reality’ and ‘WE’ economy. These entail intimate knowledge of the necessity of care to the sustenance of all life systems.[1020] The ‘male-experience-reality’ and ‘ME’ economy, in sharp contrast, consist in a paradigmatic approach involving belief in absolute autonomy from others and life processes,[1021] generating a tremendously socially and ecologically disembedded attitude. This attitude, in turn, is near indispensable to men and women keen on distinction and success within the dominant discourses of contemporary globalizing societies. But from an ecological feminist as well as an Afro-communitarian perspective, this attitude dehumanizes because it entails an atomistic sense of self. So too, it informs debilitating gender identities which glorify competitive individualism based on consumption and display, and so precipitates unsustainable resource use as well as the domination of the unacknowledged care-giving class. As Mellor explains, women bent on neoliberal success might pursue the purely wealth-oriented, consumerist vision of femininity and reject all “domestic responsibilities … [and] pass them on to someone else … [–] usually another woman” of a ‘lesser’ class or race.[1022]

The value of the relational, care-giving work, for which women predominantly are responsible, should be recognized. It evidences the growth of “subjectivity as a signification-in-process, permanently forming and reforming itself in collision with the social order … based in a living and embodied materialism that defies the limits of bourgeois epistemology”[1023] and the neoliberal mores developed upon it. At the same time, care-giving labor, the nurture of living metabolisms – in bodies or in ecologies – also encourages the development of a tentative and relational epistemological stance. This is the precautionary, ‘barefoot epistemology’ of those who tread lightly on the Earth. Such labor manifests

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[1018] Ibid., 45; and Waring, *Counting for Nothing*, 70.

[1019] Salleh, “Eco-Socialism, Eco-Feminism,” 134.

[1020] Mellor, “Eco-Feminism and Eco-Socialism,” 56.

[1021] Mellor, “Ecofeminist Political Economy and the Politics of Money,” 254.

[1022] Mellor, “Eco-Feminism and Eco-Socialism,” 55.

[1023] Salleh, “Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital,” 38.

sensitivity toward the fragility of life-sustaining systems, radically bridging the ideological divide between 'humans' and 'nature.'[1024] The false dualism between production versus reproduction explains why those who undertake care-giving labor, mainly women, are not remunerated under capitalist patriarchal economics. Just as an African indigenous ethic involves careful qualification of personhood, a materialist ecofeminist analysis of daily provisioning work discloses a grounded, ecologically responsive ethic from which all can learn.[1025] The latter point is critical, because the argument deriving ethics from labor implies that men are equally capable of an embodied ecological rationality – particularly those "work[ing] … at the socially constructed margin where culture meets nature."[1026] These alternative life-affirming practices of being and becoming a 'person' deserve serious consideration, since they diametrically oppose the atomization and mechanism of the globally dominant neoliberal hegemony. As the Finnish ecofeminist and UN worker Hilkka Pietilä writes:

> The world of nurturance and close human relationships is the sphere where the basic human needs are anchored and where models of *humane* alternatives can be found. This world, which has been carried forward mainly by women, is an existing alternative culture, a source of ideas and values for shaping an alternative path of development for nations and all humanity.[1027]

Material embodiment of humans within nature

Like those who speak for the indigenous African ethic of *ubuntu*, ecological feminists emphasize the importance of community. Most societies, even today, are organized in favor of masculine interests and rest on an invisible ideological foundation of unresolved attitudes toward the first care-givers. It is ideologically taken for granted as 'common sense' that women are relational or communal beings, both biologically as bearers of children, and in terms of their expected social roles. Their care giving entails constant negotiation with others and precludes insular, competitive attitudes. To 'hold' a relationship in place properly, a person must adapt to changing needs, intuit, and above all, relate. Accordingly, the many women actively engaged in caring labor learn to avoid the centralizing imperative of fixing,

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[1024] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 144.

[1025] Salleh, "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital," 39.

[1026] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 144.

[1027] Hilkka Pietilä, "Alternative Development with Women in the North." Paper given to Third International Interdisciplinary Congress of Women, Dublin, July 6-10, also published in *Alternativen Akademilitteratur*, eds. Johan Galtung and Mars Friberg (Stockholm, 1986), 26.

hierarchizing or separating everything out. Instead, if given the opportunity they are more likely to "choose to work in small, intimate collectivities, where the spontaneous flow of communication 'structures' the situation."[1028] Their activities suggest an intuitive awareness of the fact that everything exists in a reciprocal dialectic. Thus many women do not require theoretical education to grasp that where instrumental rationality and mechanistic approaches enter, humaneness, caring adaptability and ecological integrity are lost.[1029]

The communitarian aspects of relational, care-giving work have led some to regard it as socialist in orientation. Recall that this claim was also made of the indigenous African ethic on the basis of its similarly communal focus. Many thinkers in fact deem ecofeminism and eco-socialism to be "complementary … political strands."[1030] Yet, ecological feminists reject the productivist thrust of unexamined forms of socialism whose technological optimism threatens ecological sustainability to the same extent that industrial capitalism does.[1031] And although eco-socialism, in virtue of its environmental emphasis, tends to avoid this shortcoming, many eco-socialists remain gender blind or refuse to take the link between nature's and women's exploitation seriously. In their turn, eco-socialists have criticized ecofeminists for ostensibly "privileg[ing] 'body' over mind," dogmatically opposing technology and science, and overemphasizing a care ethic which diverts focus from the problem of capitalism.[1032] The American social theorist Joel Kovel identifies this rift between ecofeminists and eco-socialists as theoretical apartheid.[1033] There is in fact a major methodological difference between socialism and ecological feminism – the same as that between socialism and an indigenous African ethic. Ecofeminism is socially and environmentally embedded as it focuses on the daily practices routine to a large body of women, just as the indigenous ethic is grounded in earlier communal practices. On the other hand, much of Western humanism or socialism consists in intellectualist theorization designed for "education and civilization," or for a politically elite vanguard.[1034] This results in a 'top down' bias against valuing the everyday actions of people living relationally and sustainably.

[1028] Ariel K. Salleh, "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection," *Environmental Ethics* 6 (Winter 1984), 343.

[1029] Salleh, "Eco-Socialism, Eco-Feminism," 131.

[1030] Ibid., 129.

[1031] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 76, 79.

[1032] Salleh, "Eco-Socialism, Eco-Feminism," 133-134.

[1033] Ariel Salleh, "Moving to an Embodied Materialism," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 16/2 (June 2005): 14.

[1034] Bell, *Understanding African Philosophy*, 39.

Marx's own disparagement of village life as idiotic and stagnant lives on in the urban industrial prejudice of the Left.[1035]

For materialist ecofeminists, feminism, socialism, postcolonial struggle, and environmentalism should be grasped as one and the same politics. In advancing a relational and subsistence-oriented approach to human existence, based on long-standing low-carbon practices,[1036] both ecofeminism and *ubuntu* are inherently ecological. Both affirm life rather than money. Recall Mogobe Ramose's discussion, detailed earlier, of the indigenous maxim *feta kgomo o tshware motho*, which enjoins one to value life over material wealth. This is paralleled in ecological feminist criticism of capitalism as anti-life – it does not cherish "[l]iving things" precisely because it "does not value what it does not itself produce."[1037] Ecofeminists suggest that care-giving labor does not defer to a life-denying economistic logic of exchange value. Instead, it involves going

> beyond dualistic structures by recognising that ecology and society form a relational web where everything flows bio-energetically in/out of everything else. This ontology of internal relations implies a both/and logic, which means that [the] … epistemology [is] … a dialectical one dealing with process and contradiction. The terms *identity* and *non-identity* refer to moments in the ongoing transformations of 'nature's' – always including our own – material embodiment.[1038]

Such an understanding of existence as "cycles of energy, in which fields we as material beings are embedded,"[1039] is also integral to indigenous African ontology, epistemology and ethics. As Ramose articulates it, "entities … [are understood] as the dimensions, forms and modes of the incessant flow of simultaneously multi-directional motion,"[1040] and "being or the universe … [is regarded] as a complex whole-ness involving the multi-layered and incessant interaction of all entities."[1041] These ideas frame the human being as something de-centered, because in a dialectical or reciprocally interrelated world, "no single human being nor any other entity is the centre of the universe," as "[t]he universe is understood as the unceasing unfoldment of interaction and interdependence between and among all that there

[1035] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968), 36.

[1036] Ariel Salleh, "Climate Strategy: Making the Choice between Ecological Modernisation or Living Well," *Journal of Australian Political Economy* 66 (2011): 129.

[1037] Salleh, "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital," 27.

[1038] Salleh, "On Production and Reproduction, Identity and Nonidentity in Ecofeminist Theory," 211.

[1039] Ibid., 215. See also Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 54, 118.

[1040] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 88.

[1041] Ibid., 124.

is."[1042] While Ramose describes a sensibility that is found in the global South, the labors conventionally assigned to women in the global North similarly manifest "the fundamental reality of human existence, the body's life in *biological time*[:] the time it takes to rest, recover, grow up and grow old."[1043] For care-givers time is not money and so liberal emancipatory objectives miss the mark.

Among other commonalities between an ecofeminist and indigenous African ethic is a shared perspective on weapons systems. The *ubuntu* theorist Ramose exposes the irrationality of the prospect of nuclear war, and critiques the 'right' of the few to nuclear armaments as an explicit form of neocolonialism. He also decries the increasing militarization of African ruling elites by arms companies, which take advantage of unstable postcolonial societies, guaranteeing their continued exploitation and poverty.[1044] In the words of American ecofeminist Ynestra King:

> While technocratic experts (including feminists) argue the merits and demerits of weapons systems, ecofeminism approaches the disarmament issue on an intimate and moral level. Ecofeminism holds that a personalized, decentralized, life-affirming culture and politics of action are crucially needed to stop the arms race and transform the world's priorities.[1045]

Neoliberal monologue or meta-industrial diversity?

Resonances between the indigenous African ethic and ecological feminist perspectives are too striking to dismiss or to treat merely as an intellectual curiosity. Neither movement can be reduced to the other, because their similarities have arisen out of "different circumstances relating to particular human experience."[1046] Yet, their common recognition of the inhumanity and 'unnaturalness' of the neoliberal capitalist system has something universal about it. Postmodern thinkers may balk at any hint of universalism,[1047] but this multifaceted overlap of cultural visions cannot be denied. The particular as well as the universal are acknowledged, and a complex dialectical both/and logic is at work in this transversal dialogue.

[1042] Ibid., 127.

[1043] Mellor, "Ecofeminist Political Economy and the Politics of Money," 255.

[1044] Ramose, "*Logos* and Justice in Africa's International Relations," 33-34.

[1045] Ynestra King, "Toward an Ecological Feminism and a Feminist Ecology," in *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader*, 2d ed., eds. John S. Dryzek and David Schlosberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 406.

[1046] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, vii.

[1047] Salleh, "On Production and Reproduction, Identity and Nonidentity in Ecofeminist Theory," 210.

Both subsistence-oriented African communities in the global South and many care-giving women North and South, engage in struggles for recognition and validation, since the alternative ethic inscribed in their experiences continues to be belittled under the crushing hegemony of neoliberalism, underpinned as it is by modernist Western thought. In at least three broad respects these two 'minority perspectives' manifest astonishing convergence, and a strong possibility of fruitful transversal political alliance. An indigenous African ethic and a materialist ecofeminist politics each promote a relational non-dualism opposing discrimination against the 'other;' qualify personhood in reference to ethical human activity rather than narcissistic consumerist gender identities; and valorize human embodiment and interdependence over the monadic subjectivity of neoliberal individualism.

The foregoing analysis proposes that women constitute a majority ally of marginalized indigenous communities in the fight against neoliberal hegemony. The labor usually allocated to women evidences an embodiment of *ubuntu* on both sides of the equator and both sides of the neoliberal divide. This insight builds on South African *ubuntu* theorist Ramose's pioneering work on the common domination of women generally and Africans in particular as a violation of *ubuntu*. African philosophers of *ubuntu*,[1048] as well as ecological feminists, recognize the importance of dialogue and cooperation between those "disadvantaged in the formal economic system, yet empowered by alternative knowledges and skills."[1049] Both women and indigenous people "as colonised subjects … carry the discursive slur of being 'closer to nature.'" That is, even indigenous men, although traditionally positioned over indigenous women, "have never been fully accorded club membership in humanity."[1050] The voices of these "problematic marginals" are best situated to critique the neoliberal hegemony and propose models for another future,[1051] and initiating collaboration between them is a matter of urgency. Even as the global capitalist patriarchal economy falters, neoliberalism continues to exacerbate social injustices and life-threatening environmental degradation, and the geographic margins of globalization are being obliterated by cultural homogenization.[1052] The more women in the global North and metropolitans of the global South are pulled out of relationally skilled provisioning and into the dehumanizing, consumerist neoliberal vortex, the

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[1048] Bell and Metz, "Confucianism and *Ubuntu*," 78.

[1049] Salleh, "On Production and Reproduction, Identity and Nonidentity in Ecofeminist Theory," 213.

[1050] Ibid., 211.

[1051] Ariel Salleh, "From Eco-Sufficiency to Global Justice," in *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology*, ed. Ariel Salleh (London: Pluto Press, 2009), 297.

[1052] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, x, 12, 91, 143; and Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 2, 142.

more care-giving and subsistence capacities are denigrated and lost.[1053] Such de-skilling is precipitated further by corporate annexation of the commons or 'land grabs' in the global South, pushing livelihood-oriented people toward the cities where they seek paid employment. There, they succumb to the spell of neoliberal hegemony even though they are victims of this same political-economic system.[1054] Indigenous politicians, business elites, and even some African academics, make matters worse by demeaning subsistence labor as 'backward' and unbecoming of nations pursuing high-tech development.[1055]

As the living environment of peoples everywhere is cut down by global industrial consumerism, who has the capacities and values needed to build life-affirming communities? What is promising is the fact that women, peasants, herders, fishers and gatherers constitute a skilled global majority, a meta-industrial labor class largely outside of the monetary system.[1056] There are more women than men on Earth, and there are currently more rurally-based indigenous people than metropolitans in the global South. As Ramose puts it, "even the blind can see that the largest majority of humanity lives by the side of and not through a globalizing economy … exist[ing] in the sphere of subsistence economy."[1057] Further, Ramose recognizes that this section of humanity – "[w]omen, the African, the Amerindian and the Australasian [–] all have a common cause."[1058] They have historically been regarded as 'not quite human' on the basis of their apparent lack of rationality, their physicality, their emotionality and their supposedly deficient ontology and epistemology. This has been used to legitimate their subjection and exploitation at the hands of patriarchs, colonists, preachers, socialists, and most recently neoliberals.[1059] However, this unnamed class may hold the key to an alternative future, beyond the "reductionist, fragmentative and empiricist rationality" that breaks "the precarious balance between the human being and its environment."[1060] In Vandana Shiva's words: their principles "stand … for ecological recovery and nature's liberation, for women's liberation and for the liberation of men who, in dominating nature and women, have sacrificed their own human-ness."[1061]

[1053] Salleh, "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital," 39.

[1054] Sachs, *Planet Dialectics*, 11.

[1055] Salleh, *Ecofeminism as Politics*, 61; and Salleh, "Climate Strategy," 138.

[1056] Salleh, "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital," 38.

[1057] Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 143.

[1058] Ibid., 6.

[1059] Ibid., 15.

[1060] Ibid., 127.

[1061] Shiva, *Staying Alive*, 53.

Conclusion

I begin my concluding remarks with a recapitulation of the five thesis chapters. Chapter 1 adopted a political-economic approach. It outlined the ‘origin account’ of neoliberalism provided by scholars from the global North, and traced the globalization of neoliberalism as it was introduced to the world under the benevolent guise of ‘development.’ The Washington-Wall Street policy alliance, which advocated development through deregulation, was scrutinized. After this, the chapter focus shifted to the spread of neoliberalism, facilitated by ‘Washington Consensus’ reforms in the Third World via World Bank-IMF-WTO mechanisms. Finally, consideration was given to social and environmental damage resulting from neoliberal reforms. Chapter 2 examined the emergence and development of neoliberalism in South Africa, disclosing its neocolonial character. The colonial and apartheid periods were discussed, and their capitalist economic underpinnings highlighted. Thereafter, drawing on a detailed political economic critique of post-apartheid South Africa, the chapter considered the new ANC-led government alliance with global neoliberal institutions and businesses that had previously supported the apartheid regime. New indigenous governing elites quickly forgot the socialist promises of justice and independence made to the people during the anti-apartheid struggle. Chapter 3 introduced a ‘socio-cultural’ perspective on neoliberalism, stressing the role of ordinary people in the rise and maintenance of the neoliberal hegemony. The principal insight here was that political economy, consumerism and gender regimes are intimately interconnected. Important sociological, cultural and philosophical texts on consumer society were used to clarify the micro-macro interconnections. Key themes included worker alienation and loss of subjective autonomy through industrialization, and how consumerism becomes a compensatory mechanism for people stripped of dignity in the workplace. Attention was given to the powerful link between consumerism and ‘idealized’ types of masculinity and femininity promoted in the neoliberal mass media. Consumerism was shown to debilitate participating individuals politically. Chapter 4 took as its object of analysis the ‘South African Dream,’ based on the American Dream ideology of hyper-consumerism. The ideas of esteem and success promoted under its auspices disparage alternative visions of non-neoliberal indigenous economic and cultural independence. First, an overview was offered of indigenous South African battles for autonomy during colonial and apartheid times. The association of black liberation with consumer competence was noted, particularly from the last three decades of the twentieth century onward. Thereafter, the chapter reflected on the loss of indigenous self-conceptions,

including communally-oriented forms of gender identity. Chapter 5 proposed that the process of dismantling the neoliberal complex of politics, economics and socio-cultural organization may take as one of its starting points the critical appropriation of non-neoliberal Southern African indigenous perspectives. The alternative indigenous ethic that could be derived from this, could then gain strength by being placed in dialogue with resonant movements forming part of the alternative globalization struggle. Chapter 5 considered the indigenous ethic of *ubuntu* emphasizing embodied knowing, relational livelihood and personhood, and human embeddedness and dependency on nature. *Ubuntu* was then placed in dialogue with a cousin thought stream – ecological feminism – which likewise thematizes non-dualistic logic, caring and subsistence labor, and material embodiment of humans within nature. Such a dialogue connects environmental, postcolonial and gender concerns, manifesting the politics of transversalism needed to contest neoliberal hegemony. It also stands to guard against excessively anthropocentric and idealist tendencies in Western philosophy and perhaps sometimes in *ubuntu*, by joining the profoundly communal ethic of *ubuntu* thought with ecofeminism.

The thesis has offered a critical reading of neoliberalism, with specific attention to its development and repercussions in post-apartheid South Africa. This system of domination, entailing "economic and social transformation under the sign of the free market,"[1062] was shown to have aggravated socio-economic inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime, and damaged local environments through privatization, deregulation, and export-oriented trade. Further, under the neoliberal hegemony, South African citizens continue to suffer political debilitation as the notion of liberation has become equated with consumerism. The use of consumer goods to achieve 'idealized' types of masculinity and femininity has decimated culturally rich indigenous conceptions of personhood and humanness. Like earlier imperializing or colonizing practices, neoliberalism constitutes a system of social domination using local people and natural resources for profitable accumulation by regional and foreign financial elites. In view of its resourcing of humans, animals and environments, the globalizing free market system can be said to rest on a range of unacknowledged moral and material 'debts,' owed to workers, peasants and indigenous peoples, women, children, animals, and the living ecosystem. On the international political scene, there are many separate political movements attempting to conscientize people about such 'debts,' though in large part alternative globalization activists have been slow in coalition building. Socialist movements tend to focus on paid workers' rights, postcolonial movements on the loss of

[1062] Connell, "Global Tides," 5.

indigenous livelihoods, feminist groups on women's continued subordination, the Animal Liberation movement on inter-species violence, environmental groups on ecological degradation, and so on. Yet, some are beginning to realize that these political dominations intersect. In the alternative globalization movement, one witnesses an ever greater synthesis of opposition against neoliberalism, and with this the coherent formulation of a common vision for the future. The World Social Forum (WSF) is particularly instrumental in this process, since it provides the platform needed for coalition building between seemingly divergent interest groups. Here, ethics, philosophy, human rights, ecology, gender, production, economics, consumption, commoning, governance, power, political subjectivity and other topics are given equal consideration. This transversal activity makes it possible to cultivate understanding of the interconnectedness of dominations of gender, race, class and nature under neoliberalism, facilitating in turn "openness for exchanging experiences and ideas across a variety of local fields of resistance."[1063] In the last analysis, transversalism is caring labor in action; peacemaking as a rehearsal for politics.

As argued at the outset of this research, I believe that the transversalism emerging among alternative globalization movements is urgently required in academia as well. Thus, in this thesis, the respective chapters have related political economy to socio-cultural analysis, and these to critical philosophical reflection on neoliberal hegemony in South Africa. A 'general' Northern account of neoliberalism provided the backdrop against which the specifics of its manifestation in South Africa could be identified and analyzed. It was important to focus on South Africa because this country constitutes a regional hegemon, and a so-called exemplar of what a developing African country should look like. In addition, it recently joined a powerful 'sub-imperial' economic alliance known as the BRICS, and has enduring associations with Washington and Wall Street, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. As Raewyn Connell points out, these institutions have been "used … as agents of the globalization of neoliberal doctrine and policies," and contain their own neoliberal "gender regimes,"[1064] among other socio-cultural 'norms.' These socio-psychological regimes get communicated to publics in the global South through the mass media. In the case of South Africa, the neoliberal hegemony inculcated thereby threatens to politically neutralize citizens, immersed in the work-and-spend cycle of consumerism. The American sociologist William Robinson could not have been more right when he advanced that "the culture of global capitalism attempts to seduce the excluded and … channel their frustrated aspirations into

[1063] Hosseini, "Occupy Cosmopolitanism," 428.

[1064] Connell, "Global Tides," 10.

petty consumption and fantasy as an alternative to placing political demands on the system through collective mobilization."[1065] This dynamic is increasingly playing out in South Africa, despite the fact that neoliberal reforms have led to the enrichment only of governing and business elites, to further impoverishment of the needy, and to the destruction of local environments that might have offered many a base for subsistence livelihoods. Recently, the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe corroborated this thesis, by arguing that "[t]he single most important transformation brought about by the end of apartheid was an acceleration in turning South Africa … from a society of control into a society of consumption." In his words: "the conflation of the form and substance of democracy and citizenship with the rule of consumption … has mistakenly been given the name of a transition to democracy."[1066]

[1065] Robinson, "Global Capitalism and Its Anti-'Human Face,'" 666-667.

[1066] Achille Mbembe, "Class, Race and the New Native," *Mail & Guardian*, September 26, 2014. Available at: http://mg.co.za/article/2014-09-25-class-race-and-the-new-native/. Date accessed: September 30, 2014.

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