The Struggle for Political Meaning*: Social Movements under Neoliberalism in the Thabo Mbeki Era

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight some of the ideological tendencies of the current nation-building project in post-apartheid South Africa in the age of neoliberalism particularly during the era of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's second democratically elected president. In pursuing this trajectory, I attempt to illustrate contemporary perceptions of the South Africa state by the people of South Africa on the one hand, and the various global pressures upon it to transform according the demands of the neoliberal ideology, on the other. In this way, we shall see that the expectations of the generality of South Africans about the state and what it promises (in terms of service delivery) are antithetical to the demands of the new regime of global capital. In addition, this discussion attempts a mediation between the production of locality and processes of contemporary globalisation. As mentioned earlier, a large number of the studies analysed here, are concerned with how seemingly local processes shape and define the affairs of the state and vice versa. In an age of neoliberal globalisation, most of the studies that feature in opening parts of this discussion do not deliberate upon how the processes of globalisation re-fashion previous ideologies and functions of the state and how this re-processing of Fordist statist ideology in turn affects the production of locality.

Résumé

L'objectif de cet article est de mettre en lumière certaines tendances idéologiques du projet actuel de construction nationale dans l'Afrique du Sud post-apartheid à l'ère du néolibéralisme, en particulier durant l'ère de Thabo Mbeki, deuxième président démocratiquement élu de l'Afrique du Sud. En poursuivant cette trajectoire, je tente d'illustrer les perceptions contemporaines de l'État sud-africain par la population sud-africaine d'une part, et les diverses pressions globales exercées sur lui pour se transformer conformément aux exigences de l'idéologie néolibérale d'autre part. De cette manière, nous verrons que les attentes de la majorité des Sud-Africains à l'égard de l'État et de ce qu'il promet (en termes de prestation de services) sont antithétiques aux exigences du nouveau régime du capital global. En outre, cette discussion tente une médiation entre la production de la localité et les processus de la mondialisation contemporaine. Comme mentionné précédemment, un grand nombre des études analysées ici s'intéressent à la manière dont des processus apparemment locaux façonnent et définissent les affaires de l'État et vice versa. À l'ère de la mondialisation néolibérale, la plupart des études qui figurent dans les premières parties de cette discussion ne s'attardent pas sur la manière dont les processus de mondialisation refaçonnent les idéologies et les fonctions antérieures de l'État, ni sur la manière dont ce reprocessus de l'idéologie étatique fordiste affecte à son tour la production de la localité.

Keywords : post-apartheid South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, neoliberalism, local governments

* This title is inspired by Paulin Hountondji's book, The Struggle for Meaning, Ohio University Press, 2002.

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Introduction

The protracted history of anti-apartheid struggle has obviously led to a relatively vibrant tradition of social activism and also the development of various civil society organizations in contemporary South Africa. It is clear that the multiple social technologies of political struggle have remained in place to meet some of the daunting challenges of the neoliberal age. South Africans just like other peoples who have to struggle against residual forms of apartheid (read colonization) as well as the problems, conditionalities and contradictions of the new global economy, in this instance, the new configurations being created by intense digitalization. In essence, there is a collective need to broaden and re-fashion (not always consciously) the ideologies and languages of political struggle and resistance. As in other parts of Africa, de-apartheidization just as the imperatives of decolonization has to be oriented towards the project of nation-building. As we know, projects of nation-building are ideologically fraught terrains.

The aim of this short essay is to highlight some of the ideological tendencies of the current nation-building project in post-apartheid South Africa in the age of neoliberalism particularly during the era of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's second democratically elected president (Adebajo, 2016; Gevisser, 2007; Glaser, 2010; Gumede, 2005; Osha, 2018). In pursuing this trajectory, I attempt to illustrate contemporary perceptions of the South Africa state by the people of South Africa on the one hand, and the various global pressures upon it to transform according the demands of the neoliberal ideology, on the other. In this way, we shall see that the expectations of the generality of South Africans about the state and what it promises (in terms of service delivery) are antithetical to the demands of the new regime of global capital. In making this claim, some of the work produced by researchers affiliated with the Centre for Civil Society in Durban will be examined. In addition, an attempt would made to investigate the place of race in the post-apartheid nation-building project in South Africa within a lingering context racist rhetoric and agitations: It is often assumed that Cape Town is the white man's last refuge, where defiant whites would rebuff the encroachments of the *swart gevaar*, the black peril, as P.W. Botha frequently classified it. Plans were kept in place to ship out women and children to safer climes if South Africa became to rough and dangerous. Links were maintained with countries such as England and Holland and France and Germany, or even the United States. In 2025, the Donald Trump administration welcomed white South Africans who fled the country amid fears of land grabs, unfair government policies and supposed reverse discrimination.

Anti-Neoliberal Struggles in the Mbeki Era

In particular, part of this discussion focuses on a volume of reports commissioned by the Centre entitled, *From the Depths of Poverty: Community Survival in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2005). Most of them are concerned with how local processes shape civic sentiments of resistance and the climate of protest. However other volumes and reports – *From Local to Global Processes* (2005) and *Problematising Resistance* (2005) – also commissioned by the Centre address the interactions between the legacies of the apartheid regime, the political orientations of the post-apartheid dispensation and the ideological features of broader global socioeconomic processes. A major suggestion this discussion makes is that an understanding of the current South African sociopolitical context entails an awareness of all three variables as opposed to just one of them. The handling of tensions and contradictions between these variables are likely to affect the long term performance of the South African nation. Some observers are likely to conceive a disconnect between apartheid's numerous excruciating legacies

and the increasing challenges of the post-apartheid dispensation. Others are likely to attribute the production of locality to local processes alone. Some others may read the flows of globality as the only credible mode of integration available to South Africa in the context of the new global economy. These tensions are reflected in the various studies addressed here.

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In conceptual terms, this discussion attempts a mediation between the production of locality and processes of contemporary globalisation. As mentioned earlier, a large number of the studies analysed here, are concerned with how seemingly local processes shape and define the affairs of the state and *vice versa*. In an age of neoliberal globalisation, most of the studies that feature in opening parts of this discussion do not deliberate upon how the processes of globalisation re-fashion previous ideologies and functions of the state and how this *re-processing* of Fordist statist ideology in turn affects the production of locality. However, some studies go against the grain: Gillian Hart (2005) and Gregory Albo (2005). In particular, Hart's study analyses how processes of contemporary globalisation affects the post-apartheid state and its modes of ideological reproduction. In other words, it identifies the shifts in the competing ideologies of the millennial state. Albo's study on the other hand, traces the displacements through which global capital reformulates the functions of the contemporary state. He suggests that if the state is a product of local forces, its future as an entity within the new economy lies more with the production of global processes.

The dematerialisation of politics and the economy under conditions of neoliberalism have created schisms as to how the functions and status of the state is perceived. This fragmentation of ideologies relating to the role of the state leads to a number of outcomes: some still prescribe a socialist orientation for the state; others advocate a new pan-African conception of the postcolonial state; arguably very few scholars in Africa entertain the neoliberal dematerialisation of the state in accordance to the conditionalities of the new global economy. There is a particular suspicion of the neoliberal ideology in Africa that is related to African forms of resistance to colonisation and the various postcolonial critiques of imperialism. Some scholars have equated the neoliberal age with a continuation of imperialism (Ellis, 2005). These conceptual differences run quite deep. Clearly, the South African state just as many other African nation-states is torn between addressing the entrenched dichotomous legacies of the apartheid regime – which means alleviating social ills such as unemployment, lack of basic necessities of life for the majority and also addressing the question of the redistribution of land and wealth (Dwyer, 2004; Greenberg, 2004) – and continuing South Africa's march into a world without borders.

The inabilities of the postcolonial state to meet all the expectations demanded of it have a number of consequences. On the one hand, in South Africa there has been a rise in the number of social movements which attempt to address the perceived shortcomings of the state. In other parts of the continent of Africa, there has arguably been an increase in primordial sentiments that enforce ethnic loyalties as opposed to broadly nationalist sentiments. It can also be argued that the rise in the number of South African social movements serves as a means of integrating the country in more fully globalised networks of social activism.

The difficulties that face many postcolonial African states are quite noteworthy. In neoliberal circles, the postcolonial African state is deemed an anachronism and a hinderance to the entrenchment of market fundamentalism (Nnoli, 2003; Ellis, 2005). In more graphic terms, it is perceived to have the following features; "predatory, prebendal, decadent, precarious, patrimonial, neo-

patrimonial, swollen, collapsed, criminalized, greedy, non-developmental, kleptocratic, crony, venal, vampire, soft, weak, irrational, incomplete and impotent" (Nnoli, 2003: 21). However, the history behind this kind of perception of the postcolonial state is more complex. The postcolonial African state is largely a product of a vulgarised and incomplete project of modernity. It emerged from an oppressive colonial apparatus and eventually grew into a sociopolitical scene of conflicting institutional loyalties, clashing ideological tendencies and opposing cosmological orientations. These series of colonially inherited contradictions are largely responsible for the weaknesses of the postcolonial state. Indeed, as events have demonstrated, the moment of political liberation from any kind of oppressive rule should not be a time of euphoria. Instead, it calls for institutional reconstruction and sociopolitical integration.

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At the beginning of the post-apartheid era, the elected government promised the provision of basic services, employment, the redistribution of wealth and the elevation of living standards for South Africans (Benjamin, 2005: v). The delivery of these goals was deemed an integral part of the South African democratic quest. Ntokozo Mthembu's study points out:

> [...] there appears to be no change from the old oppressive system of apartheid economics in terms of economic restructuring with regard wealth distribution to the poorest quarters of the population. Poverty is still continuing because African workers, in particular, remain compellingly oppressed: subjected to lower paid jobs, forced migrant labour with resultant family displacements, disruptions and unemployment. The consequences of this are linked to a rise in crime, starvation and exposure to diseases such as malnutrition, TB and AIDS. Government needs to revisit its current economic policy as well as the redistribution of land, to enable those who are unemployed to make a living off the land, as well as to provide job security and social security to the poor, together with the provision of free basic services to those who cannot afford these services (Mthembu, 2005: 2).

The extract above is most certainly instructive. It blends opinions about the current South African living conditions with general expectations regarding the state in addition with an unmasked psychology of race. The state, in Fordist terms, is expected to provide for all its citizens as enshrined in the democratic South African constitution. This production of locality makes assumptions about a universal human ethics that owes more to the project and validations of the Enlightenment rather than the new regime of global capital. It also reveals pre-1994 understanding of South African race politics which considers blacks as "Africans" over and above other races.

However, within an enduring racist and racialised framework, the black South African is frequently associated with statist dysfunction. Indeed Ronald Suresh Roberts explores the racist dimensions of the presupposition in his equally controversial book- *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligience of Thabo Mbeki* (2007). Black South Africans have to constantly contend with views such as proffered infamously by the British empiricist, David Hume:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all other races of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, not even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular (Hume cited by Roberts, ibid.29).

Furthermore, Thabo Mbeki points out that;

> Historically the European settlers in our country have always understood that the biggest threat to their very survival which they faced was being engulfed by the African savages into whose midst they had inserted themselves. In the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, these settlers made sure that they ended up as the majority of the population. In South Africa, despite their considerable numbers, they could not achieve this objective. In such countries such as Kenya, India and Zimbabwe, they exercised their "Right" to depart for the "mother country" and its white offshoots. (Mbeki cited by Roberts, ibid.61).

The white/black dichotomy is not maintained at the physical level alone. The difference reaches into the cosmological plane, and the nature of this disparity is based on existential perceptions of *being-in-the world*. In his book, *White Writing* (1988), J.M. Coetzee sheds light on this supposedly profound difference by counter-posing "Eurocentric conceptual schemes" to "native conceptual categories" and concludes by stating that a movement from the former to the latter would be "anachronistic". In his recontextualization of Daniel Dafoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Coetzee in *Foe* (1987) highlights the difficulties and confusion involved in "civilizing" the native. In this context, it becomes clear that once the native acquires some of the trappings of "civilization", she become unmanageable.

In spite of these counter-productive and racist presuppositions the major challenge for the politics of reconciliation and statecraft in post-apartheid South Africa has been to debunk the notion that the native was unfit to rule. And because the state has not been able to meet the expectations of the generality it has been argued that "democracy is now viewed as another apartheid because living conditions have neither improved nor changed, except that people are now fighting a battle for survival" (Lesisa, 2005: 50). There are harsher views of the present nature of the South African state. Ashwin Desai (2004:67) suggested that it is rapidly being tainted by a cult of personality or what he described as the notion of Mbekism.

However, the considerable backlog in the delivery of social services makes greater sense when viewed from the perspective of the legacy of apartheid. Under the apartheid system, "migrant 'tribal natives' were not, when young, supported by companies in the form of school fees or taxes for government schools to teach workers' children. When sick or disabled, those workers were often shipped back to their rural homes until they were ready to work again. When the worker was ready to retire, the employer typically left him a pittance, such as a cheap watch, not a pension that allowed the elderly to survive in dignity" (Bond: 2004: 8). Obviously, the anomalies and brutalities of the system continue to resonate up till the present moment.

On the one hand, the post-apartheid political dispensation concerned itself with providing services relating to social security, on the other, it implemented the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy which was widely condemned as a neoliberal initiative (Ibid.). We are also informed that "thousands of poor and marginalised South Africans have to face up to the reality of cost-recovery tactics" (Ibid.). Hermien Kotze, in her study, "Responding to the growing socio-political crisis? A Review of civil society in South Africa during 2001 and 2002 simply states:

> If anyone still entertained doubts about the effects of the government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), the last two years have witnessed the further unfolding of many of the negative predictions made by concerned social and political commentators since the adoption of the strategy in 1996. Similar to many other countries that have adopted neo-liberal economic policies, GEAR has had a devastating impact on the lives of millions of poor and low-income families in South Africa (Kotze, 2004: 1).

In order to resist these economic and sociopolitical trends, a number of social movements such as the Concerned Citizens' Group, Bayview Flats Residents Association, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, Environmental Justice Networking Forum, Jubilee South Africa, Indymedia SA, Freedom of Expression Institute, Landless Peoples' Movement, Khanya College and many other organisations were mobilised. These various anti-neoliberal organisations were established to agitate against the cost recovery trends of the state under the auspices of its numerous agencies. In plain terms, these were struggles against forced removals, unemployment, water and electricity cutoffs. In spite of the diversity of these organizations of civil society, it is sometimes pointed out that "South African civil society has long been deemed a highly contested terrain, not amenable to the traditional liberal definitions, such as: "the non-market sphere of organisational life lying between the family and the state" (Bond: 2004:2). It has been argued that the contestations in South African society increased when the ruling party "attempted to use civil society for its own ends or to demobilise grassroots organisations, and when that did not uniformly succeed, to demonise them as reactionary (as was common in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands during the early 1990s) or more recently as 'ultraleftists' or 'popcorn civic' (that pop up suddenly and immediately fall back)" (Ibid. 2). At the global level, there are other difficulties that face South African and South-based social movements generally. Resistance to the oppression of capital needs to be global and its organisation requires a new ethics of solidarity. Accordingly, it has been pointed out:

> [T]he Northern left, when able to exert real power, has ultimately made deals with its own bourgeoisies to secure a better deal from global domination for its working classes. The new Northern movements that seek to range themselves against global rather than national domination may well make different choices but, at the very least, we should secure organisationally and ideologically autonomous positions in the transnational movements of movements against millennial capitalism and push them to become more genuinely global (Pithouse, 2004: 174).

The politics of cost recovery is particularly dramatic in the housing sector. In this regard, it has been pointed out that "apartheid has left a legacy of severe inequality and socio-economic imbalances. This is evident in the lack of adequate housing for the poor and the continuing squalor that people have to endure in informal settlements, locations and townships. The post-apartheid period still sees a large section of the population condemned to the status of squatters. Homelessness still remains feature in South African society" (Brown, 2005: 84). And this state of chronic dispossession and enduring abjection can be traced back to the apartheid era when as Mbeki observes the native was considered a mere child:

> Above all, the "child" must be prevented from thinking independently! It must be prevented from ever coming to the conclusion that it can elaborate ideas and therefore determine for itself a programme of action outside of the framework that the colonial "mother" is manifestly destined to set for the "child".
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> For this reason, the colonial "mother" is quite ready to tolerate all signs of emotional and wayward arbitrariness on the part of the colonial "child", which might include the strongest radical denunciation of herself, provided that such arbitrariness represents the mere populism to which all politicians must bow, to earn the title-man/woman of the people!
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> After all, at her own home, the colonial "mother" trims her sails to fit in with the public messages communicated by the mass media, opinion polls and focus groups, with virtually no regard to the dull matter of loyalty to principle.
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> Accordingly, the colonial "mother" considers most bothersome those among its colonial "children" who can and do think

> independently and respect principled behaviour, even if what they say and do represents the very epitome of moderation.
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> This might appear to be somewhat of a conundrum, but it is not. To square the circle, one must understand that the colonial "mother" fears most the colonial "child" who can think, and not so much the "child" who poses as a radical, merely to garner the support and votes of the unwary (Mbeki cited by Roberts, ibid. 127).

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Due to the particularly severe prevalence of HIV/Aids, there are now many of what are termed as Child-Headed Households (CHH) in South Africa. Again, the sociopolitical dimensions of this scenario are quite numerous. The considerable number of Child-Headed Households has a telling impact on not only the organization of health care delivery systems but also on education, crime and security. The vacuum created by children not having parents creates cracks in the modes of socialisation of those who are directly affected whether older siblings or infants. Many more orphans and CHHs are expected due to the present rates of HIV/Aids infection. The reasons for this prognosis are not far-fetched. Orphaned children usually do not have access to education, life-saving skills, food, health-care, housing and so many other basic necessities of existence. Without all these essentials, they are exceedingly vulnerable to all kinds of plights, infections and diseases. In order to survive these harsh and difficult challenges, children in these kinds of circumstances rely on government grants apart from doing menial jobs (Kuzwayo and Tsekelo, 2005: 148).

The post-apartheid state is faced with two extremely demanding options. How does it meet the widening social, political and economic expectations of its people in the face of limited resources? How does it navigate the contradictions inherent in global neoliberal ideology? The challenges and debates these options dredge up appear to be quite central to future of the South African nation. By addressing them, other conceptual vistas and different discursive ramifications emerge. I shall now explore some of them. So far the studies from the observers of civil society discussed above have been largely concerned with how local processes attempt to direct the policies of the state. For now, it is significant to note that significant moments of transition have occurred in the perception of the state's role:

> The talk of the South African government went from campaigning and winning the 1994 election on the commitment to 'free basic services for all' to encouraging responsible citizenship' through payment for services in the Masakhane Campaign to today's calls for individual responsibility and 'control' over one's life through proper planning, budgeting, 'saving', and participating in the world of money, a world that all are assumed to be able to participate equally in, despite the existence of high levels of unemployment and poverty, and such glaringly obvious differences between the rich and the poor (Kuzwayo and Tsekelo, 2005: 159-160).

It is also conceptually important to examine studies that link the production of locality more directly to global forces. In this regard, a significant amount of work has been produced. In spite of the pressures emerging from local processes, it has been argued that post-apartheid municipal authorities generally favour "global-scale processes associated with intensified competitiveness and decentralisation of services" (Bond, 2004: 4). Bond (Ibid.) associates the withdrawal of social services by government to pressures mounted upon it by the World Bank: "Based upon its privileged policy advisory location in both national and municipal government, the Bank advocates a minimalist approach to urban infrastructure and services. This entails, firstly, decentralisation and corporatisation [...]; secondly, a lack of urgency in dealing with [...] residents who lack services; and thirdly, the promotion of 'competitiveness,' which often translates into business self-interest" (Bond, 2004:7). Here,

we note global processes intervening in more or less direct ways on the production of locality.

The global processes that affect the production of locality have become quite powerful. Scholars of global processes and the Pentagon's geopolitical map point to the fact that the world is now divided between the Functioning Core and the Non-Integrating Gap (Hart, 2005: 5). Between these two geographical and political categorisations lie what are regarded as 'seam states' such as Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia (Ibid.). The 9/11 event essentially prompted this line of reasoning within the Pentagon which now finds it more convenient to conceptualize security concerns in terms of the connectivity of globalisation. In similar terms, it has been suggested that critical ethnography can assist in the unravelling of global processes if it addresses "power-laden processes of constitution, connection, and dis-connection, along with slippages, openings, and contradictions, and possibilities for alliance within and across different spatial scales" (Ibid. 7). However, global processes are not linked to global security concerns alone. They transform and re-categorise the materiality of everyday life. As such, we also have to think about the ways in which "global finances are a major site of a negotiation under way throughout the world between paper-free cyber-cultures for moving money and what we may call 'file cultures' which are wedded to the materialities of stamps, seals, signatures, duplicates and other signs of material endurance and moral authorization" (Appadurai, 2005: 58). Indeed, a significant part of the new anthropologies of globalization attempt to come to grips with "the new links between liquid, solid and gaseous forms wealth (Ibid. 62).

So far we have noted how global processes affect security concerns, there are also conceptual shifts that have occurred between high velocity cyber-cultures and low velocity archival cultures and finally, the current modes of the financialization of the globe as advocated by the Bretton Woods institutional order. In addition to these features of global processes, David Harvey (2003) argues due to the crisis of the over-accumulation of capital, it is now forced to extend itself through forms of dispossession. This analysis of the current state of capital is related to the production of locality in South Africa and indeed other nations of the globe. As such, critiques of local processes in South Africa and elsewhere need to incorporate the dimensions of globality that are connected to the dynamics of the expansion of global capital through dispossession. It is this new level of dispossession that Harvey's work analyses that is causing forced removals of the underclass, the privatization of water and electricity supply, the degradation of the environment and biopiracy.

While Hart agrees that Harvey's theorization of dispossession is an analytically useful proposition, she also argues that "it needs to be infused with concrete understandings of specific histories, memories, meanings of dispossession" (Hart, 2005:14). In other words, "dispossession also needs to be rendered historically and geographically specific (Ibid.). Hart explores that proposition by addressing the land question in post-apartheid South Africa and the activities of small scale Taiwanese industrialists in the country. On the land issue, we are informed that it "has increasing become defined in terms of the 'willing buyer, willing seller' and radically under-funded land reform program that helped to propel the formation of the Landless People's Movement (Ibid. 15). Once again, the key policy thrust is commodification. The widespread commodification of the materialities of production leads to other somewhat unexpected conceptual openings. For instance, it is necessary to entertain the view that "a conception of place as nodal points of connection in socially produced space moves

us beyond 'case studies' to make broader claims- it enables, in other words, a non-positivist understanding of generality (Ibid. 22). In addition, in the aftermath of the 9/11 event, "relational understandings of the production of space and scale are crucial for forcing attention to mutually constitutive processes through which metropoles and (post)colonies make and remake one another (Ibid. 23).

The digitalization of existence and modes of production has also complicated notions of space and scale. The continuous accumulation of capital has led to a world market "increasingly dominated by the competition between multinational corporations and rivalry between new centres of accumulation in Europe, Japan and the U.S." (Albo, 2005: 235). It reached a situation where "a continuous hierarchy of states is being produced in a world market that has structural attributes characteristic of capitalism since its inception (Ibid. 239). It is important to note that "neoliberal globalization is, [...] a quite distinct historical phase of the capitalist world market (Ibid. 249), but more importantly, "neoliberalism represents a failure to discover a 'new institutional fix' matching regulatory modes with the new productive regime (Ibid. 246).

If indeed the neoliberal age represents an altogether different phase of capitalist production, the post-apatheid/postcolonial state is hurled into a flux of contradictions. It seeks to address the chronic anomalies and inequalities of apartheid through the espousal of a form of progressive politics but must also find ways to remain competitive within the global context. It is nudged into being "mean and lean" by global forces but must also address the problem of unemployment. It is expected to provide housing, health care, education and other forms of social security but must contend with the global trend toward the withdrawal of social welfare. It is shoved into providing water and electricity at the moment when they are being increasingly commodified on a global scale. These are all contradictions brought about the spread of neoliberal policies at a global level.

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Conclusion

In postcolonial contexts the process of commodification takes on quite dramatic forms (van Binsbergen, 2005). For instance, there is a blurring of the lines between commercial sex work and 'normal' relations of affect (Nyamnjoh, 2005). In addition, the materialities of the organ trade have become more pronounced (Appaduarai, 2005; Leach, 2005). These are but just two of the features of the growing commodification of everyday life. Another noteworthy development of increasing commodification in postcolonial contexts revolves around the conjuncture between security and dispossession. As neoliberalism continues with the expansion of capital by dispossession traditional modes of ascribing value to things get overturned. Young men are unable to marry and raise families because of endemic cash constraints (Roitman, 2005). So in order to accomplish a significant financial breakthrough they are compelled to adopt extraordinary and usually illegal measures such as recourse to the drug trade and financial theft. In order to become 'men', they are forced rupture conventional notions of value and legality. In other words, Roitman's study (which was conducted in northern Cameroon and which is relevant to other postcolonial contexts) argues many young men "could no longer expect to marry and found a family since they had no capital or credit for a dowry, property, and the responsibilities of a family. Hence many of them cannot attain the social status of a 'man' or a 'baaba saare'; they remain 'boys' because they are bachelors, which implies a low social ranking in the hierarchy of value. Being unable to reproduce the web of dependencies that gives sense to and narrates histories, these young men intervene to exercise claims of wealth. And they do so in ways that are frequently violent efforts to

come to terms with the sense of loss that pervades their present (Ibid. 117). Undoubtedly, these changes or perhaps even, transgressions of the conventional conceptions of value, success and legality have wider implications for global security, global interconnectedness and the increasing penetration of global capital. Dispossession creates radically different orders of value, success and belonging that are not always in agreement with the conventional paths of globalization and may therefore be considered heretical. And more of these disagreements can be expected in contexts where postcoloniality, neoliberalism, security and dispossession collide.

The postcolonial state has to confront these competing demands as well (Myburgh, 2019). Progressive political associations that manage to acquire power via the electorate do not always remain progressive (Baiocchi, 2005). Baiocchi adds that "there is no 'magic bullet' to solve the dilemmas of progressive governments in power" (Ibid. 300). This is because the nature of contemporary governance is filled with many competing demands, interests and institutions that tend to be tradition-oriented and therefore usually antagonistic towards change. This maxim is evident is contemporary South Africa where the government struggles to right the wrongs of a dreadful racial past in addition to its traditional role of managing the different arms, organs and agencies of the state. It must also contend with a scenario of increasing processes of globalization that leave behind mass dispossession, inequality, despair and widening insecurity while at the same time assuring its ever-expanding population of desperate citizens that it possesses the wherewithal to deliver on its mandate to provide a better live for all.

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